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Title

Affordances of Online Interaction: Analyzing Algerian Facebook Users' Sequence Organization of Comment Threads

Dedication

To mom and dad

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Abstract

The present study attempts to describe the sequence organization of Facebook comment threads of Algerian users and to show how such organization shapes and is shaped by the site's technological affordances. In this regard, a structured observation was carried out in collecting a corpus of 54 comment threads from Algerian groups, pages and personal profiles. Adopting a descriptive method, the corpus was analyzed qualitatively using conversation analysis. The results revealed that the comment threads are organized in sequences of adjacency pairs, and that the variety and the nature of the linguistic actions of the adjacency pairs are affected by (1) the affordances of the post's layout and (2) the nature of the property in which they were produced: personal or shared. In addition, the results showed that Algerian users comment with dots to take advantage of the notification service of Facebook in keeping them updated with the development of the thread.

***Keywords**:* conversation analysis, sequence organization, technological affordances, Facebook, Algerian users

List of Abbreviations

CA: Conversation Analysis

EM: Ethnomethodology

FB: Facebook

FPP: First-Pair Part

SPP: Second-Pair Part

TCU: Turn-Constructional-Unit

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General Introduction

General Introduction

1. Research Background

Since the late 90s, Computer-Mediated-Communication (henceforth CMC), human's communication via computers, has become the home of sociolinguistic studies. Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) is one of the widely used methodologies to investigate online talk. At its core, CA attempts to elucidate how conversation participants structure their talk in mundane, institutional and virtual settings, i.e. online chats. By "online chat" we refer to social media, since it is the most growing type of online interaction (Lester et al., 2016). In this regard, Conversation analysts try to describe order production by co-participants through examining features of sequential organization (turn taking, overall structure organization and sequence organization).

In their article about the application of CA to online discourse, Paulus et al. (2016) summarized the results of 86 studies that conducted digital CA between 2011 and 2015. These studies were categorized into four groups. The major category deals with comparing face-to-face talk with online talk. The second focuses on how participants maintain coherence online, with an interest in sequence organization: how people organize their actions in turns-at-talk. The third category deals with how people manage and compensate for problems online (repair), and a final category investigates the accomplishment of action in asynchronous interaction. Although these works are invaluable in describing the shift our language has taken moving to an increased use of social websites, the field is still in its infancy compared to pure conversation analysis (Meredith, 2017). Accordingly, situated within the second category, the present study attempts to enrich the literature on the topic by describing how Algerians are able to maintain coherence online through examining their sequence organization of Facebook comment threads.

2. Statement of the Problem

In order to understand how interaction is maintained and organized online, we should seek to understand what services and options as well as constraints the technology in which we interact offers. Here, we draw on the concept of 'affordances' (Hutchby, 2001). Hutchby (2001) argues that technology and interactional processes are intertwined in that technology shapes and is shaped by interactional processes. He adapts Gibson's concept of affordance to explain that any object (technological platform in our case) affords and/or constraints a set of

services for interaction. The technology's properties are not pre-determined, but they rather emerge from the technology-actor interaction. Put differently, the technology's properties might impact the way in which a user interacts with the technology, but not independently from the user's social norms and expectations (Meredith, 2019). Practically, using the concept of affordances side by side with conversation analysis means that the researcher should first examine the interaction with respect to CA methodology, and then explains it with reference to the relevant technological affordances of the platform (ibid).

One of today's most powerful social media companies is Facebook. The latter owns the four most downloaded applications of the decade (Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp) with its main platform design features (Facebook) inserted in the other applications. Considering the high interest in the four platforms empowered by the same company, we are driven to question whether there are particular affordances of Facebook that establish it as the chosen destination for those in search of virtual communication. To answer a broad question as such, the platform must be seen not as a whole, but as a combination of toolkits that need to be examined separately (Smock et al. 2011). On this account, the present study aims at using the lens of affordance to describe how Algerian users maintain sequence organization on Facebook comment threads.

3. Significance of the Study

The present study is significant for two main reasons: First, despite that investigating the concept of affordances is identified in a number of studies on CA and online interaction, as far as we are aware, the present work is the first to deal with the affordances of Facebook that emerge from Algerian's sequence organization of comment threads. Second, it is in the service of social websites designers who wish to develop the medium for better communication and to meet the interactional demands of its users.

4. Objectives

The aims of the study are to describe how Algerian Facebook users maintain sequence organization in the comment threads of Facebook, and how their organization shapes and is shaped by the affordances of the platform's features.

5. Research Questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do Algerian Facebook users maintain sequence organization on Facebook comment threads?
2. How is the sequence organization affected by the affordances of Facebook?

6. Research Methods

Structured observation was used to collect a corpus of 54 comment threads produced on four groups, four pages, and six personal profiles using screenshots. The observation concerned two criteria: the population (Algerian users) and the language (English). After collecting the data, it was analyzed qualitatively through the lens of affordances.

7. Definition of Key Terms

Conversation Analysis is the study of "the methods participants orient to when they organize social action through talk. It investigates rules and practices from an interactional perspective and studies them by examining recordings of real-life interactions." (Mazeland, 2006)

Computer-Mediated-Communication means "any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more networked computers." (Yu, 2011)

Facebook Comment Thread is a public conversation that consists of comments that are chronologically organized, and that are provoked by a given post on the wall of a user's profile, page, or group. It is a post and its comment section.

Sequence Organization means **"**the organization of courses of action enacted through turns-at-talk – coherent, orderly, meaningful successions or "sequences" of actions or "moves" (Schegloff, 2007). In our context, sequence organization refers to the organization of actions enacted in the comment threads.

Affordances is a term used by Hutchby (2001) to argue that technology affords as well as restricts the interactional potential of its users, i.e. How the platform affects its users' interactional system.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part is theoretical whereas the second is practical. The theoretical part consists of three chapters that cover the review of the relevant literature. In the first chapter, we review the area of Conversation Analysis, its definition, and development both as a theory and a methodology for describing mundane talk. The second chapter deals in detail with our aspect of investigation, sequence organization.

The third chapter is dedicated to Computer-Mediated-Communication and some of its most defining features like social websites and emojis. The second part consists of one chapter devoted to the methodology. In this chapter, the data collection instruments opted for and the analysis procedure followed are explained. Results are also reported and discussed in the last part.

Part One: Literature Review

Chapter One: Conversation Analysis

Introduction

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Introduction

Because conversation is the most common form of human communication, and one of the earliest processes we involve in since birth, we tend to take it for granted, and seldom that we question what conversation is. As a term, conversation might not be very contradictory amongst most people. For any layman, the verb 'to converse' simply means the act of two or more people talking to each other. The case is different in the realm of social sciences and humanities. Conversation has been a subject of research in fields such as ethnography of speaking, pragmatics, communication, and most exclusively in conversation analysis, the study of talk in interaction. The latter has a distinctive view, focus, and method of research. Accordingly, the present chapter attempts to provide a brief review of the literature on the discipline, firstly, by highlighting what is meant by conversation when it is used by conversation analysts, secondly, by tracing its origins and developments, and finally by specifying its approach of describing conversation.

1.1. Conversation

Conversation is defined differently by different scholars. In a larger sense, Blyth (2009) regards conversation as the business of making different types of connections, from the most intimate to the most professional. However, other scholars like Have (2007) consider "Conversation" as the act of people talking with each other with the intention of socializing or any interactive talk disregarding its goal. On their part, Fitch and Sanders (2005), specify a set of criteria to treat a given form of talk as conversation. They explain that interlocutors should produce utterances with *responsive* and *anticipatory* meanings. That is to say, they should, from one side, respond to the meanings that all participants emphasized before and to the social matter that generated the talk in the first place, and from another side, they should anticipate their intended meaning and make sure that it could be used by the other. Based on these definitions, the term *conversation* can be used to cover any form of interaction, verbal, non-verbal, or both, mundane or professional, and which aims at maintaining any type of social relationship.

Still, other authors try to determine what a "good" conversation is. Conklin (2007), for instance, defines what conversation is by what it is not. Setting a list of elements, he explains, "Conversation, above all, is dialog, not monolog. It is a partnership, not an individual affair. It is listening as well as talking." (p. 11). Although it seems more practical, such definition is an example of how human interaction has been tackled for decades,

prescribing how people should talk rather than describing how they actually talk (Have, 2007). It is necessary, then, to point out that conversation is not only an "elite" activity but also a form of structurally organized social phenomenon (Liddicoat, 2007). It is this sense that sets up the core of what is called "conversation analysis", and therefore, it is the sense adopted in the present study.

1.2. Conversation Analysis

In social sciences, a myriad of works was published in which conversation is central. Areas like ethnography of speaking, discourse analysis, pragmatics, experimental studies, semiotics, corpus linguistics, etc. all targeted conversation (Sidnell and Striver, 2013). However, one discipline dominates the study of human social interaction, Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA). What distinguishes the latter is its view of conversation as "a microcosm of what happens between people in social life" (Sanders, 2005, p. 67). It aims to explain how human sociality is exemplified and concretized in talk (Peräkylä, 2007). As a concept, CA can be used on two levels (Have, 2007). On the broad level, it means any study of 'oral communication' or 'language use', whereas on the narrow level, CA refers to the collaborative work of Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (ibid.).

The three scholars have initiated an approach to investigating social interaction's structure and process that is distinctive from the prior approaches in five ways. In *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*, Sidnell and Strivers (2013) explain that Social interaction is (1) orderly and its orderliness is the result of shared reasoning and action between all competent social interactants. It aims at describing (2) the structure rather than the content. Accordingly, it emphasizes (3) the collection of natural and spontaneous data rather than laboratory one. Later, it engages with (4) detailed transcription of the talk for more precise and rigorous analysis. Audio recordings are very important here in that they enable the researcher to transcribe unobservable details of interaction like silence and tone. After the transcription, data is analyzed via (5) qualitative method since it highlights a case by case analysis to describe and explain the structure of conversation.

Because 'order' is remarkably emphasized in CA, Psathas (1995) arranged the three main assumptions of CA as follows (Liddicoat, 2007):

- *Order is produced orderliness.* Order does not pre-exit; it is, rather, the cooperation of the participants what creates orderliness, and therefore, interaction.

- *Order is produced, situated, and occasioned.* Order is produced by participants for the conversation they are involved in. It is the participants who orient this order, and it is their behavior that reflects it. Academically, this means that the order of a given interaction is not determined by external expectations (the researcher's pre-conception of what is ought to happen), but it is rather the result of internal accomplishments of the participants.
- *Order is repeatable and recurrent.* The patterns of orderliness re-occur. They are visible across groups of speakers, which shows a shared understanding of the methods employed to achieve the order.

1.2.1. Origins of Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis originated in sociology, particularly in the works of Harvey Sacks at the University of California in the 1960s. It seems fair to describe the beginning of the field as accidental when the interest of Sacks was not directed to language or conversation per se, but it was due to the corpus of Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center's phone calls that he came across when working in the center (Clift, 2016). Because of his daily exposure and engagement with the recordings, Sacks noticed how people perform social actions through social interaction, and as a result, the field of conversation analysis emerged (Have, 2007).

Sacks and his colleagues, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, treated language as a means of transportation of what happens in society, and whose analysis would ultimately solve the problem of social structure (Sidnell and Strivers, 2013). For them "Interaction order is not only the basis of social interaction, but also social institution" (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Goffman, 1983; Schegloff, 2006, as cited in Sidnell & Strivers, 2013, p. 666). This idea along with two distinct, but complementary, theories demonstrates the sociological roots of CA. The first is Erving Goffman's notion of interaction order, which claims that social interaction should not be deemed a means through which social aspects such as gender and personality are expressed, but rather a separate social institution with its own norms that are related to social aspects (Heritage, 2003). The second is Harold Garfinkel's notion of shared method of reasoning and actions, i.e. Ethnomethodology.

1.2.2. Conversation Analysis and Ethnomethodology

As mentioned above, conversation analysis started in sociology as a product of Harold Garfinkel's tradition of ethnomethodology (henceforth EM). Liddicoat (2007) states that EM as a sub-field of sociology is interested in "the common sense resources, practices and procedures through which members of a given society produce and recognize mutually intelligible objects, events and courses of action" (P. 2). Differently put, EM's focus is on the methods that people employ in order to create order in their social life (common sense knowledge and practical reasoning). It was this work of Garfinkel in the 1950s that influenced Sacks in developing CA.

The connection between CA and EM is undebatable, but the extent to which the two fields are related is relative. Have (2007) states that some scholars regard CA as a part of the ethnomethodological movement (ethnomethodological conversation analysis), whilst others believe that the notion of CA is useful in doing ethnomethodological studies, but not as a part of it. A different viewpoint is considered by those arguing that CA has disintegrated from EM as an independent discipline in contrast to the phenomenological inspiration of Garfinkel's approach (ibid.). Nevertheless, the influence of EM on CA is still observed in Sack's paper "On Sociological Description". The paper includes instances of some shared assumptions between the fields: 1) As a criticism of sociology, language should be treated as a subject matter of its own, 2) common sense knowledge is investigated from natural language use instead of utilizing other activities to criticize, clarify and reconcile the language use, and 3) Incomplete description should be regarded as a site for sociological problems rather than an issue that should be fixed through the application of social scientific methods (Sidnell & Strivers, 2007). However, it is important to stress that the field of conversation analysis has developed and grew to include more than what ethnomethodology can solely offer.

1.3. Development of Conversation Analysis

In 1974, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson described how turn-taking is maintained in conversation in their seminal paper "a simplest systematic for the organization of turn taking for conversation", arguing that "talk is locally managed and structurally organized through norms that govern conversational practices" (White, 2018, p. 3). It is due to this paper that CA was established as an independent scientific method. By the death of Sacks in 1975, the approach of CA was already found; a framework for studying talk in interaction, basic concepts, and exemplary studies were set up. What remained was a work of extension,

application and filling the gap (Have, 2007). The continuous works of Jefferson's transcription system and Schegloff's detailed work on sequence organization (see chapter 2), are the most significant contributions to the field's growth.

Another remarkable development that was expected to be highly influential was video recordings. Despite the crucial role that audio recording played in data collection, and therefore, data analysis, the development of video recordings had not had a similar impact on the area. Have (2007) states that although video recordings are useful in understanding what is going on throughout the conversation through following the gaze of the participants, and their gestures, they fail to bring to the matter more than that. This is, essentially, because unlike the transcription system of audios, non-verbal actions have no symbolic system that would enable analysts to treat them properly (ibid.).

1.4. The interdisciplinarity of Conversation Analysis

As mentioned in section 2.1, the pioneers of the field had a sociological motive and not a linguistic one. However, early works in the area were published in journals of linguistics, anthropology, psychology, etc. which led people to regard CA as part of the study of "oral communication" and "language use" rather than sociology (Have, 2007). With the expansion of CA to include talk in institutional settings, other journals of Sociology, Health and Communication, Education, and Political Sciences incorporated its studies (Sidnell & Strivers, 2013). This interference and connection that the area has built with other fields was essential in gaining an interdisciplinary nature, whose importance relies on the insights needed for an exhaustive understanding of talk since the latter is a medley of culture, grammar, prosody, pragmatics and social interaction (ibid.) Nowadays, CA studies are carried out by sociologists, anthropologists, linguists and communication scientists, each with predetermining conceptions, vocabularies and orientation (sociologists with a more ethnomethodological orientation than linguists) (Have, 2007).

1.5. Pure Vs. Applied Conversation Analysis

Most of what has been discussed so far about conversation analysis as an independent field of study is under what Have (2007) calls "pure CA", i.e. conversation analysis as an enterprise per se. Another term suggested by Have is "applied CA". The latter has two senses: the first refers to the application of CA in institutional settings like classroom, medicine, courtroom, news interview, etc. whilst the other sense is related to the use of CA

insights to solve problems in the institution in which it is applied (Antaki, 2011). Disregarding the disagreement in defining what applied CA is, we can infer how much the method expanded to cover not only mundane talk, but also other forms of interaction in more restricted and professional settings across different disciplines like education, health, business, and computer-mediated-communication.

1.6. Types of Interactional Organization

The works of conversation analysts resulted in many theories that account for the order and structure of conversation. Three are the most crucial: turn-taking organization, sequence organization, and repair organization.

1.6.1. Turn-Taking Organization

The most prominent and, in fact, the starting point of any CA inquiry is the turn-taking system. The latter starts with the observation that the speaker in a conversation is continuously changing, i.e. the speaker and the listener switch turns throughout the conversation (Liddicoat, 2007). Turn are the amount of time given to a participant to take the floor, and the boundaries of each turn are set the moment that the speaker gives the floor to the listener with expected gap or overlap between the turns (Flowerdew, 2013). Each turn consists of what is called *turn constructional unit* (TCU). This is an utterance through which the speaker produces action. It might be linguistic, including clauses, sentences, phrases, or it might be non-verbal, like facial expressions, laughter, and continuers (ibid.). Each turn comprises one or more TCUs, and each speaker has the right to complete only one TCU with the second TCU up to negotiation. In special cases, like storytelling (see chapter 2), the speaker is likely to produce more than one TCU at a turn (ibid.). Conversation analysts call the completion points of turns "*transition relevance places"*. In order to identify them, Flowerdew (2016) suggests three criteria: a turn is complete if it is composed of a *syntactically* complete TCU; if its *intonational* patterns indicate its end, or if it performs an identifiable *pragmatic* or social action.

1.6.2. Sequence Organization

Turns can be grouped according to the topics they deal with, or according to the action they perform. Conversation analysts consider the second approach more beneficial to understand conversation (Schegloff, 2007). Approaching turns this way enables treating the conversation similarly to how participants do. That is, judging the utterance for what it does

rather than what it is about. Put simply, instead of treating the utterance 'it is cold in here' as talking about the weather, it is treated as a request for closing the window (in a particular context). When the recipient closes the window, the conversation becomes no longer about the weather. Scholars call the analysis of this set of turns 'sequence organization'. Chapter Two is devoted completely to this aspect.

1.6.3. Repair Organization

The process of going back in talk by a participant to compensate for a particular problem is called repair. It is a phenomenon that occurs at all levels of talk (turn-taking, adjacency pairs, storytelling, etc.), and which allows speakers and listeners to use particular strategies to solve a problem that occurred previously in the conversation. This entails more than correcting mistakes (Liddicoat, 2007). In this regard, "conversation analysis uses the term repair rather than correction to indicate the overall phenomenon of dealing with problems in talk and the terms repairable or trouble-source to indicate the thing in talk which needs to be repaired (Jefferson, 1987; Schegloff *et al*, 1977)" (ibid, p. 171). Often, repair is observed in cases in which no mistake was plainly made, like helping the speaker to find the appropriate word or letter (ibid.). Four types of repair were suggested by Schegloff (1977). They are outlined below.

- *Self-initiated self-repair:* The producer of the trouble-source is the one who indicates the problem and repairs it.

- *Self-initiated other-repair:* The producer of the trouble-source indicates the problem, but it is the recipient who repairs it.

- *Other-initiated self-repair:* The recipient is the one who points out to the trouble-source, and the producer repairs it.

- *Other-initiated other-repair:* The recipient points out to the trouble-source and initiates its repair.

1.7. Doing Conversation Analysis

Methodologically, the variety of works on CA is known its consistency. This is due to the approach's general procedure of data collection and transcription along with its data analysis techniques (Wooffitt & Hutchby, 1998).

1.7.1. Transcribing Conversation

As previously stated, CA emphasizes the collection of naturally occurring talk using audio and video recordings. Because the recordings involve more than language (like breath, laughter, gaps, and overlaps), researchers need to take a pre-analysis step, transcribing the data. Transcribing means converting all the details detected in the talk into a written form. Gail Jefferson developed a transcription system that covers all the details of the interaction (as displayed in table 1.1.). The notation system was stimulated by the idea that every conversational feature, no matter how miniscule it is, should not be dismissed as "disorderly, accidental or irrelevant" (Heritage, 1984, p. 241). It is important to note, however, that the transcription should not be treated as the data itself, but as a more accessible version of the original interaction that allows for a thorough analysis (Have, 2007). This is because unlike recorded talk, transcriptions are not natural and objective. Liddicoat (2007) explains, "Transcripts are in every case subjective representations of the talk in which the transcriber has made decisions about what features of talk to include or exclude from the transcription." (p. 13). Thus, transcribers must be very careful to determine what features are relevant to their inquiry.

Table 1. 1.

Jeffersonian transcription system.

Notations	***Descriptions***
[	overlap onset.
]	the point at which an overlap terminates in relation to another utterance.
=	no gap between the two turns. This is called latching.
>	no gap between a speaker's turn constructional units.
(0.0)	Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in silence by tenth of seconds. This works within a turn, a turn constructional unit or between speakers.
(.)	a tiny gap of less than 0.2 s within or between utterances.
Word	Underscoring a word or part thereof indicates some form of stress.
::	Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged sound.
-	Cutoff
*	Creaky voice

$		Smiley voice
.		Stopping fall in intonation
,		Slightly rising, continuing intonation
?		Rising intonation
¿		Stronger rise than a comma but weaker than a question mark.
_		An underline symbol after the word indicates a level pitch contour.
.hhh		In breath.
Hhh		Out of breath.
( )		The length of empty parentheses indicates the length of talk that the transcriber was unable to hear.
(( ))		Transcriber descriptions are indicated by double parentheses.
↑		A marked shift into higher pitch in the utterance-part immediately following the arrow
↓		A marked shift into lower pitch in the utterance-part immediately following the arrow.

(Adapted from White, 2018, pp. 16-17)

1.7.2. Describing Conversation

After transcribing the data, the analysis begins. It is noteworthy to consider that there is not a single way to do conversation analysis. The analytic procedure chosen to follow depends on the objectives of the researcher. One approach suggested by Have (2007) in case when the researcher's aim is to make a case by case analysis of the data is as follows:

1. Researchers Start purposively or arbitrarily with a selected part of the transcribed data and go through it turn-by-turn in terms of one of the four organizations (turn-taking, repair, sequence organization and turn-design).
2. They can take manual remarks on a printed transcript; add codes and observations to the transcript, or use a specialized computer programmes.
3. They summarize their observations and formulate general statements and rules.

If the researcher aims at furthering the analysis to describe unfamiliar or reoccurring patterns in the data, the approach "interactional phenomena and building collection" explained by Hoey and Kendrick (2018, pp. 5-17) is in use. This is an eight-step process:

1. *Identify a candidate phenomenon:* The analysis begins with the observation of a certain phenomenon in the collected data. A phenomenon is anything in the conversation that the analyst perceives as interesting or unfamiliar. It can range from

the structure of the entire sequence episode to the transaction of courses of action. The phenomenon is primarily described and prepared for the next step.

2. *Build a collection of cases:* The next step is to examine other conversations to find similar situations in which the phenomenon occurs, and build a collection of cases that would act as an empirical foundation of the analysis.

3. *Start with the clearest cases first:* Of all the collected cases, the clearest should be signaled out for analysis. Clarity is embedded in cases that are close to the beginning of a course of action and not as a part of a complex sequences, or in cases that are familiar to the researcher from reviewing the literature.

4. *Analyze each case in the collection:* After analyzing the clearest case, the researcher moves to examine each case in the collection. First, they start by observing any practical details of the interaction like the activity of the participants during the interaction, the role each of them occupies during the activity (their participation), or the position of something in the interaction (at the beginning of the sequence, before a particular action, etc.).

5. *Analyze variation in the collection:* In this step the analyst looks for variant cases of the phenomenon under investigation and puts them into ad hoc categories that are comparable.

6. *Define the boundaries of the phenomenon:* Cases that resemble the phenomenon, but are analytically proven not to be variants of it are identified and excluded.

7. *Analyze deviant cases and look for normative evidence:* Since the ultimate goal of CA is to describe those normative practices that participants engage in in organizing their talk, the analyst should consider deviant cases in order to expound the normative organization of the phenomenon. These cases are recognized as a departure from an expected pattern, and, therefore, a departure from an expected norm. These are cases in which the participants judge the absence or the disrespect of the phenomenon as a problematic.

8. *Produce a formal account of the phenomenon:* Taking into account all the previous steps, the analyst produces a formal account for the phenomenon. That is, they should

describe the phenomenon, its boundaries and variations, how it operates, and the social-interactional problem for which it provides a solution.

Conclusion

Studying conversation is not modern; it has been conducted for ages, but with a more normative perspective. Contrarily, conversation analysis attempts to describe those unobserved taken for granted rules of interaction that people adhere to in creating order and producing structure, i.e. stressing structure over content. A qualitative paradigm is, thereby, followed to make sense of naturally occurring stances of talk in mundane and institutional settings. In this chapter, the emergence and the development of conversation analysis as a field motivated by sociology and conducted within a variety of disciplines was reviewed. Moreover, some of the most essential aspects of conversational structure like turn-taking, repair, and sequence organization were outlined. In the next chapter, sequence organization, the aspect in which the present work is interested, will be discussed.

Chapter Two: Sequence Organization

Introduction

2.1. Sequential Organization and Sequence Organization

2.2. Action and Sequence

2.3. Adjacency Pairs

2.4. Preference Organization

2.5. Sequence Expansions

2.5.1. Pre-expansion

2.5.2. Insert expansion

2.5.3. Post expansion

2.6. Storytelling

2.7. Other Forms of Sequential Organization

Conclusion

Introduction

CA is built on the belief that an utterance (turn-constructional unit) is the result of prior utterance(s), and it affects upcoming ones. It considers every single utterance as a crucial part of building the whole talk and, therefore, establishing social relationships. Each utterance does a social action, and each action is positioned in a social interaction as responsive to a past action or as an anticipator of the next one (Strivers, 2013, p. 191). That being said, the present chapter is devoted to discuss the homeland of action in talk, sequence organization. Two concepts are first distinguished, sequence organization and sequential organization. Then, the dominant form of sequence organization, adjacency pairs is reviewed, and its expansion types are explained. Finally, other forms of sequential organization are demonstrated.

2.1. Sequential Organization and Sequence Organization

Improperly, the two terms “sequential organization” and “sequence organization” are used interchangeably. Schegloff (2007) makes the distinction between the two. He explains that “sequential organization” is more general. It covers any system of organization that is related to utterances or actions. The turn-taking system is one type of sequential organization because it deals with the way in which speakers, different types of turn-constructional units, and utterances are ordered. Another type is the overall structural organization, where in talk certain actions are placed, at the beginning like greetings or at the end like farewells. Likewise, sequence organization is a type of sequential organization since it concerns the organization of actions in turns-at-talk, i.e. describing coherence, orderliness, and meaningfulness in successions of actions (sequences) (Schegloff, 2007).

2.2. Sequence and Action

When talking about sequence organization, two interrelated notions come to light: “action” and “sequence”. Generally, “action” refers to the things we do with words (Clift, 2016), and “sequence(s)” reflects “courses of action implemented through talk” (Schegloff, 2007). The two concepts might not be patently obvious in language use, but they make a center of investigation for those interested in language (Clift, 2016). In fact, it is argued that although the origins of language are disputable, there is evidence that about 2 million years ago, cooperation and coordination between our ancestors, involved in reciprocal action, was fundamental for the evolvement of about seven thousand languages (ibid.). Studying this

diversity generates important questions concerning language structure and its cultural and cognitive background (ibid.). Furthermore, fields such as psycholinguistics and formal linguistics also focused on interaction with a special interest in linguistic actions like requesting, inviting, agreeing, etc.

Sequence, however, was not as central for linguists. This is, in fact, the reason behind it being a distinguishing aspect of CA (Clift, 2016). The latter does not only investigate action production, but focuses on describing how actions are presented in sequences as well; it investigates the natural understanding and production of language "in time" (ibid.).

2.3. Adjacency Pairs

Based on the idea of 'nextness' (Schegloff, 2007), and the fact that each turn in interaction has background and forward connections to other turns, the concept of 'adjacency pair' (Sidnell and Strivers, 2013) was inspired. The latter revolves around "the idea that with particular actions, social actors impose a normative obligation on co-interactants to perform type-fitted response at the first possible opportunity" (ibid.). To explain, turns are the system which makes a conversation hangs together, and they are, often, identified in interrelated pairs that are governed by a set of rules. These pairs are called adjacency pairs and their features are described according to Schegloff (2007) as follows.

1. They consist of two turns;
2. They are produced by two speakers;
3. They have adjacent positioning, one after the other;
4. The first pair part (henceforth FPP) is initiative and always precedes second pair part (henceforth SPP) which is responsive;
5. They are pair type-related: the two parts must belong to the same type of pair.

Besides, adjacency pairs are normative in organizing conversation in the sense that they establish a kind of prediction of how the conversation will proceed (Heritage, 1984, as cited in Liddicoat, 2007). This is due to the interrelation between the two parts of the adjacency pair sequence in which the first part makes the second relevant, i.e. the *response relevance* model. The model shows that a response (SPP) is relevant if it corresponds to the type of the pair initiated by the FPP, and that both speakers and recipients regard not producing a relevant response, or not producing a response at all as a failure (Sidnell and Strivers, 2013). The following are some types of adjacency pairs according to Flowerdew (2007).

Table 2. 1.

Adjacency Pairs (Adapted from Flowerdew, 2013, p. 121)

First-pair parts	*Second-pair parts*
Accusation	Denial-confession
Announcement	Response
Apology	Acceptance-refusal
Assertion	Agreement-dissent
Boast	Appreciation-derision
Challenge	Response
Closing	Closing
Complaint	Apology-denial
Compliment	Acceptance-rejection
Insult	Response
Invitation	Acceptance-refusal
Offer	Acceptance-refusal
Question	Answer
Request	Acceptance-rejection
Summons	Answer
Threat	Response
Greeting	Greeting

2.4. Preference Organization

Some types of adjacency pairs have only one way of responding to their FPP; that is, they have only one type of SPP. Examples of this are opening sequences like greeting and terminal sequences like farewell (Liddicoat, 2007). To respond to a greeting, there is a variety of forms one can use *(hi, hello, what's up),* yet these possible varieties belong to the same category of greeting. However, if one looks at the list of adjacency pairs suggested by Flowerdew above, one will notice that most adjacency pairs contain more than one type of SPP. Take the first adjacency pair in the table, for instance. If a speaker accuses their interlocutor, the recipient might confess or deny the accusation. These two options (confessing or denying) are not equivalent alternatives (Schegloff, 2007, P. 59). Liddicoat (2007) explains that the term "preference" (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984), which refers to the possible ways in which some conversational action may be accomplished, was proposed to describe these asymmetrical alternatives. Simply put, one of the possible SPPs is preferred whereas the other is dispreferred. Some of the adjacency pairs in table 2.1 above are divided into their preferred and dispreferred pair parts in table 2.2.

Table 2.2.

Preference Organization of Some Adjacency Pairs

First-pair parts	Second-pair part	
	Preferred	*Dispreferred*
Apology	Acceptance	Refusal
Compliment	Acceptance	Rejection
Assertion	Agreement	Dissent
Complaint	Apology	Denial

Flowerdew (2013) clarifies that whether the SPP is preferred or not is related to its structural properties rather than the psychology of the participant. Preferred parts have a simpler structure compared to dispreferred parts which include more complexity (ibid.). To illustrate, compare the following extracts.

(1) **invitation – accept**

Amy: d yuh like tuh come over t' morrow night

Jane: yea:h.= that' d be nice.

(Liddicoat, 2007, P.110)

(2) **invitation - decline**

Harry: I don' have much tuh do on We:nsday.

(.)

W’ d yuh like tuh get together then.

(0.3)

huh we: :llhh I don' really know if yuh see

i' s a bit hectic fuh me We:nsday yih know

Harry: oh wokay

(Liddicoat,2007, p.110)

The first extract presents an invitation followed by a direct acceptance (preferred), whereas the second shows a decline (dispreffered) of the invitation. Structurally, the first conversation is simpler and shorter compared to the second one. This is because participants feel the need of justifying their decline.

Another type of preference in adjacency pairs is contiguity (Flowerdew, 2013). FPPs and SPPs have the preference of occurring next to each other. Most of the time, only pairs that are comprised of dispreferred SPPs are not adjacent. In similar cases the two parts may be interfered by a gap represented by silence, or by a delayed response such as hedges, discourse marker, or anticipatory accounts combined by turn initial marker, and account (Flowerdew, 2007).

2.5. Sequence Expansion

Actions in conversation are presented in adjacency pairs, but these pairs with their limited parts are not sufficient for speakers to engage in expressive conversations. Speakers need more turns, and accordingly, more pairs to communicate their thoughts. Therefore, participants are found using other sequences to expand their base adjacency pairs. Three types of expansions are identified: those which precede the first pair part (pre-expansion sequences), those which come after the second pair part (post-expansion sequences) and those which come between the two parts (insert sequences) (Liddicoat, 2007; Schegloff, 2007; Sidnell & Strivers, 2013).

2.5.1. Pre-expansions

A pre-expansion is a sequence comprised of a pre-first pair part (pre- FPP) and a pre-second pair part (pre-SPP) and which precedes a specific base FPP (Schegloff, 2007). This sort of expansion does not only lay the ground for base adjacency pairs to occur (Strivers,2013), but is also significant in projecting possible base FPPs. They help the speaker to decide, based on the pre-SPP, how to construct their FPP's turn-constructional-unit. Pre-expansions can be either specific to a particular action, and in this case, they are called *type-specific pre-sequences* (Schegloff, 2007) like the pre-invitation "what's your plan for Tuesday?" and the pre-announcement "guess what!", or they can be *generic*: designed to catch the interest of the interlocutor (Flowerdew, 2013).

A: **FPP** **pre**

B: **SPP** **pre**

A: FPP **base**

B: SPP **base**

Starting by type-specific pre-sequences, Schegloff (2007) mentions four types: pre-invitation, pre-offer, pre-announcement and pre-telling. For reasons of space, we will try to briefly go through each type.

Pre-invitation is divided into: (1) *go-ahead*: pre-invitations that permit the existence of the base FPP based on the response of the recipient, (2) *blocking*: pre-invitations which suggest that the invitation might be declined, and, therefore, stops it from existing in the first place, and (3) *hedging*: the response depends on the invitation itself (Flowerdew, 2013). For Schegloff (2007), the border between offer, invitation and request is blurry, and invitation is a sub-set of offer. He explains,

> Just as prospective inviters may seek evidence that their invitations will be accepted if tendered, so may those with something to offer try to assess whether their offer will be welcomed or not, and the actual offer may be made contingent on the outcome of that assessment. (p.35)

Other two comparable action types are pre-announcement and pre-telling. When doing announcements, speakers usually try to convey unknown information 'news' to their recipients, unlike tellings which are sometimes elicited by a question (Schegloff, 2007). Announcements are, then, a way of doing "telling". Other types of telling will be discussed in section 2.5. Back to announcement, there are *two* relevant responses which predict issues implicated in the announcement: whether the announcement is treated as "news" or is rather assessed by the recipients (good or bad) (ibid.). Pre-announcements address the former type of response because, generally, participants do not "tell" others what they suppose they already know (ibid.). To express pre-announcement, participants are, oftentimes, found using the "guess what" form. Other forms are summarized in the following schematic diagram.

2.5.2. Post-expansions

Post expansions are sequences which come after the base adjacency pair (Flowerdew, 2013). They can be *minimal*, consisting of single turns (ibid.), and aiming at closing the conversation instead of initiating further sequences (Strivers, 2013). This is the reason behind calling them *sequence closing thirds* (SCTs) (Schegloff, 2007). This type comes in the form of particles like *oh*, *okay*, or lexical items like *great*, *good*. Notice the following example.

(3) 1 Dora: An' d' yuh think you' 11 still be able tuh come

2 up on the weekend^

3 Helen: Uh. hh well no I don' think we' 11 be able tuh

4 do it this weeken'.

➡ 5 Dora: ↓ O uh.

A: FPP base

B: SPP base

A: SCT

Another type of post sequence is the *non-minimal* type**.** Unlike the first one, this type tries to create a context to further the talk, and it usually takes place when a trouble (of mis-hearing for example) happens with the SPP and some repair is required (Flowerdew, 2013).

A: FPP base

B: SPP base

A: FPP post

B: SPP post

Notice in conversation (4) how Nick is not sure of Sasha's response, and therefore tries to expand the "question-answer" sequence through repeating the words 'sixth', creating by that a post-sequence. The conversation is ended when, finally, Elvis confirms Nick's question.

(4) Nick: on- [which] day' s your anniversary?

Sasha: sixth. June.

➡ Nick: the sixth,

➡ Elvis: yeah, (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 159)

2.5.3. Insert Expansions

Insert expansions are sequences which separate FPPs and SPPs of base adjacency pairs, and which give the opportunity to the second speaker to ask for clarification before producing a relevant SPP (Liddicoat, 2007). This type can be backward or forward connected, meaning that it can either be related to the FPP and in this case, it is called *post-first insert expansion*, or it can be related to the SPP and in such case, it is called *pre-second insert expansion* (ibid.).

A: FPP base

B: FPP insert

A: SPP insert

B: SPP base (Liddicoat, 2007, p. 144)

Post-first insert expansions are connected to the base FPP in the sense that they try to elicit more information or seek clarification on the FPP's utterance. Such sequences are relevant in situations where a problem happens and a repair must be undertaken. The repair comes right after the utterance in which the problem happened (Schegloff *et al*, 1977, as cited in Liddicoat, 2007). For example, in extract (5), C produces an utterance which suggests that there is a problem in relation to the FPP produced by D, and which should be repaired, in this case mishearing or misunderstanding. This entails that although C's utterance is not a response to D's question, it creates an FPP which requires an SPP based on the repair of the base FPP, and based on which the base SPP would be possible (C's response at the end).

(5) D: Wul did' e ever get married' r anything?

C: Huh?

➡ D: Did jee ever get married?

C: I have / / n o idea

(Schegloff *et al*, 1977, as cited in Liddicoat, 2007, p. 144)

Post-first inserts are generic; they are not distinguished according to the type of sequence they are presented in. Most pre-second inserts are, however, type-specific (Schegloff, 2007). These expansions are related to the SPP rather than FPP. Liddicoat, 2007 states, "Pre-second insert expansions are designed to do some work relevant to the upcoming SPP and the work which needs to be done is different for different SPPs." (p. 147). For example, in extract (6), Kim requests from her husband Mark to buy a ticket for her friend. He does not provide her with a clear response. He neither accepts nor rejects the request, but rather produces another FPP based on which his upcoming base SPP will rely. Mark asks his wife when her friend needs the tickets. It was not until she responded to his insert FPP that he "agrees" to ask a friend

(7) Kim: Oh.

(1.2) Uh:m (0.5) Lorraine's comin' tuh town

ya know? an' she wants tuh go t'thuh Dodger game?

Mark: Mm mm?,

Kim: Fb >So d'you< think you c'n get some tickets?

(1.5)

➡ Mark: Fi When=d=she need 'em.

.

.

.

Kim: Si She'll be here June sixth.=She says they're in tow:n

Si June sixth and seventh,

(4.0)

➡ Kim: Cu- >So that's fine.< so it's .hh They're in tow:n,

(1.0) Monday night, Tuesday night,

(2.5)

Mark: Sb °I can ask my (friend,)°

(Strivers, 2013, p. 195)

The three sequence expansions are summarized in the table below.

Table 2. 3.

Types of Sequence Expansions

Sequence expansion type	*Function*
Pre-expansion	- A sequence that occurs before the main adjacency pair, and that is used to lay the ground for it. - It is two types: 1) type-specific, like pre-invitation, and 2) generic, it is used to catch

	the interest of the addressee.
Insert-expansion	- A sequence that occurs between the two pair parts of the main adjacency pair. It is used to seek clarification before producing the second part. - It is two types: 1) post-first insert: it is generic and backward related, or 2) pre-second insert: it is type-specific and forward related.
Post-expansion	- A sequences which occurs after the main adjacency pair to generate further discussions or close the discussion. - It is two types: 1) minimal expansion: it consists of one part, that is a particle or lexical items, or 2) non-minimal expansion: it consists of two pair parts, which are usually in the form of other-initiated repair.

2.6. Storytelling

As mentioned before, adjacency pairs are the most recognized and common type of sequential organization, but it is not the only one. Another type is called by Schegloff (2007) *extended telling* or more commonly, storytelling. During storytelling, participants are led to agree on the suspension of turn-taking rules for the favor of one of them, and recipients are only able to add something that is of a direct relevance to the story (Strivers, 2013).

In order to understand how storytelling works, comparison should be made between the organization of storytelling and adjacency pairs. Fundamentally, the two sequential organizations contrast in two major points. Firstly, adjacency pairs are built around a system of pairs, actions enacted via FPPs and SPPs, whereas storytelling is based on conveyance (of

an event for example) (Strivers, 2013). Story prefaces such as pre-telling which are similar to (guess what happened to X) are very important in storytelling in that they lexically, grammatically and phonologically indicate to the recipient what the telling will about and when will it end (Jefferson, 1978; Sacks, 1974; Stivers, 2008, as cited in Strivers, 2013). Secondly, in adjacency pairs recipients are able to interfere *after* the completion of TCUs, recipient tend to respond with acknowledgement tokens such as *(Mm hm, uh huh)* to indicate that they are actively aligned with the speaker. In storytelling, however, affiliation tokens such as *Great*, *Wow*, or *nodding* that take part *during* the telling are more popular (Strivers, 2013).

Despite their differences, adjacency pairs and storytelling appear more similar at their completion. By the end of storytelling, an evaluative stance towards the telling is expected. A preferred way is for the recipients to take a similar stance of the event told by the first participant, whether it was sad, strange, funny, etc. A less common way is to adopt a stance which is different from that of the teller (Strivers, 2013).

2.7. Other Forms of Sequence Organization

Although adjacency pairs and storytelling are different types of sequential organization, they are both similar in that they require a response by the completion of the first turn. Other forms of sequential organization do not share this property with them. To put it in a nutshell, the relationship between the turns is not necessarily normative (Strivers, 2013.). Minimal post expansions for instance are not always normatively present. Indeed, the extent to which they should occur is debatable (ibid.). Additionally, actions performed at first position are not always responded to, and if so, they are sometimes considered irrelevant. These utterances usually contain assessment or commenting actions which do not aim at eliciting responses from the other participant. As a case in point, Mark and his wife Kim in extract (8) are having dinner. While Mark seems to give many comments about the dish, Kim does not respond to him, and this is not viewed to cause any problem to both participants.

(8) Mark: It’s not ba:d_ ((gazing down))

(0.5)

Mark: M ya know:,

(1.0)/((Kim’s gaze down; drinking milk))

Kim: #h#m:. ((voiced sigh as she finishes gulp of milk))

(4.0)

Mark: -> (It goes) good with This dressing's really good

with it.

=> (11.4)

Kim: Hahh. ((voiced sigh; not a response to Mark))

(4.0)

Mark: I don't like thuh bean one.

(Strivers, 2013, p. 205)

This shows that whilst non-response is treated as unusual in requests, invitations and offers, some contexts of announcement, assessment and noticing do not call for a response. This discrepancy has two possible justifications according to Strivers (2013): The first possibility is that there are two types of actions: one which makes the relevant response mandatory, and another which invites response but does not make it conditionally relevant. The second analytical possibility is to take into consideration the action type and its sequential position in relation to the turn design in order to understand whether a response is expected or not. Striver (2013) explains,

> In particular, actions deployed with turn designs that include interrogative morphology and/or syntax, interrogative prosody (e.g. rising intonation), speaker gaze or recipient - tilted epistemic bias, place increasingly more pressure on their recipients than actions deployed with turn designs that lack these features. (p. 206)

It is evident, then, that although adjacency pairs tend to overwhelm the sequence organization of talk, their conditional relevance is not always expected.

Conclusion

Conversation is not chaotic. It conforms to a system of high organization and structure. Interactants, together, engage in building a system of talk that enables them to perform and achieve a mutual understanding of diverse linguistic actions. This system consists of sequences that are organized consistently following particular patterns. The most

common form of sequence organization is the adjacency pair. Conversation participants organize their turns in pairs that are tightly connected. These pairs consist of two parts each is produced by one of the participants with the first part boosting the existence of the second. The adjacency pair is expanded in three ways. Before it comes into existence (pre-expansion sequences), between its two parts (insert-expansions sequences), and after the pair is complete (post-expansion sequences). Other types of sequential organization do not unconditionally follow the turn taking system. Storytelling, for instance, involves uneven distribution of turns between the interlocutors, and assessment, among other actions, does not always require more than a turn to be complete. In this chapter, the skeleton of conversation, sequence organization, was discussed. In the next chapter, one of the most popular channels of communication to which CA is applied, computer-mediated communication, will be explored.

Chapter Three: Computer-Mediated-Communication

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Conclusion

Introduction

From the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in 1976 to the present day, man has been on a journey of search for new means that would enable communication over time and space. Computer-mediated communication is the output of a successful journey. In the present chapter, some of the literature on this type of communication is reviewed. Key concepts like communication, computer-mediated-communication and social websites are first defined. Then, the way in which new technologies affect our language is explained. The chapter also draws attention to the importance of studying language in its technological context, and the technological affordances that enable understanding how technologies are perceived by their users. Finally, the reasons behind studying Facebook are outlined, and some of its main features are highlighted.

3.1. Definitions

3.1.1. Communication

Generally, communication means an exchange of information, feelings, and ideas between people through using verbal and none-verbal resources and signs to transfer a meaning in their society (Aruma, 2018). Etymologically, the term is derived from the Latin word *communis* which means common. From this vantage point, the concept can also be defined as the process of "transmitting information and achieving common understanding" (Keyton, 2011 as cited in Lunenburg, 2010). This transmission is the result of three main components: the sender, the receptor and the medium. The sender is the person who initiates the communication through encoding it in a message of words and symbols; the receptor is the one to whom the message is addressed and whose task is to decode it, and the medium is the channel of communication (face-to-face, telephone, e-mail, etc.) (Lunenburg, 2010).

3.1.2. Computer-Mediated-Communication

One of today's most popular channels of communication is computer-mediated-communication (henceforth CMC). The latter is as "any communicative transaction that occurs through the use of two or more networked computers" (Yu, 2011, p. 531). That is to say, CMC is a new form of communication that incorporates and extends former features of communication through the use of a wide range of audios, videos, emails, bulletin broads, etc. (ibid.). Moreover, the new communicative system is created, ameliorated and used by

humans, which means that it is humans who make the system significant, and without them, it is a mere dysfunctional apparatus (ibid.).

3.1.3. Social Websites

Social Networking Sites (SNSs), also called social media, are the model of a rapidly developing CMC. They function as web-based services and sites that foster interpersonal interaction between their users (Page et al. 2014). Examples of popular social websites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. These sites offer to their users the ability "(1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system." (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211)

3.2. Language in the Digital World

It is important to think of the changes that technological developments bring to our language. Whether these changes are negative or positive is debatable, but what is inevitable is that language is continuously changing and the effects that social media have on the development of language are enormous. This is noticeable in the redefinition of concepts like 'text'; the reassessment of sociolinguistic notions like 'contact' and 'community'; the complexity of 'author-audience' ideas; the redefinition of written and spoken language features, and the discrepancy between notions of turn-taking in face-to-face and online interaction (Barton & Lee, 2013). Moreover, social websites are different in terms of their design and services, which affects the way in which language is used in each (Jimma, 2017). The fact that Twitter, for example, enables a limited number of characters resulted in quicker writings and readings, contrarily to Facebook that, with the limit of 63,206 linguistic characters (Sproutsocial.com, 2020), is used for more pithy and in-depth messages. (Jimma, 2007)

3.3. Reasons for Studying Online Discourse

The pivotal role that language plays in social websites and the rapid change it has been undergoing for the last century is one reason for studying language online. Ten more reasons were suggested by Carmen Lee & David Barton (2013). They are summarized below in three main points:

1) Writing in a world of textually mediated communication: Ordinarily, we write on a piece of paper, but moving from page to screen, the properties of what is called text have

changed. For instance, texts which are traditionally a stable piece of language became more flexible and are now a subject to modification and contribution by different users.

2) Representing oneself through linguistic and semiotic resources: Research on language and identity targets how people represent themselves online where language choice is one of the most essential elements that indicate identity practices. They also investigate questions like how writing in different languages facilitates people's negotiation of their identity on a local and global level. Furthermore, people make use of different semiotic resources like images and videos with written texts. Accordingly, new image-language intertwinements are impressively developing.

3) The development of new methods of searching language: The internet is a rich place from which a plethora of variable data could be collected, which means that different disciplines like cultural studies, sociolinguistics, computer science could be entangled in answering new questions. Besides, linguistic methods like corpus linguistic and discourse analysis can be used side by side.

3.4. Conversation Analysis and Online Interaction

Conversation analysis and technology have a long history. CA began with the analysis of technologically-mediated communication. As discussed in chapter one, the interest of Sacks in analyzing telephone conversations was the starting point of the new approach to talk. However, the attention of conversation analysts was directed for a long time towards face-to-face conversation. With the popularity of social websites in the 1990s and 2000s, the area witnessed a great shift in interest towards the study of online talk (Meredith, 2019). This concern was inspired by the nature of online discourse in which analysis is possible without the intervention of the researcher in transcribing the data (ibid.).

In broad terms, CA research on social media tends to be grouped according to two criteria: whether the talk is synchronous (e.g. Ngaleka & Uys, 2013) or asynchronous (e.g. Gibson 2009). Synchronous talk requires the presence of both participants at the same time, like in a private chatroom. Asynchronous talk, however, is possible even when one of the participants is absent like in online forums and emails (Meredith, 2019). Lately, the distinction between the two types blurred with the growth of social media and the development of new platforms, and the studies shifted since talk in these websites is different from that of real-life (ibid.). Paulus et al. (2016), show that there are four categories of digital

CA. The first is comparing face-to-face with online talk. The second category focuses on how participants in online talk maintain coherence, with an interest in sequence organization. The third category draws upon how people deal with problems online (repair), and a final category investigates the accomplishment of action in asynchronous interaction.

3.5. Affordances

Instead of mere comparison of face-to-face and online media of communication discourses, CA scholars shifted their interest to study each discourse per se. Now, they are aware of the limited extent to which concepts and findings of spoken interaction can be used in digital CA. The latter should be studied "for the shape, form, trajectory, content, or character of the interaction" (Schegloff, 1991, p.53, as cited in Meredith, 2017, p. 3). Studying 'affordance' is one way to understand the role of technology in interaction.

The term "affordance" was coined by the psychologist James Gibson in 1966. He defines it as the opportunities provided by an object to an actor, with the interaction between both a defining factor of the object's properties (Meredith, 2017). The concept was developed later by Norman (1988). For him, affordance is not the object's property, but is rather the product of the actor-object relationship (ibid.). The difference between the two approaches is that for Gibson, affordance is directly perceived, whereas for Norman, affordance is achieved from the relationship between the properties of the object and the capacities of the agent (Hafezieh & Harwood, 2017). In 2001, Hutchby showed how the technology can afford as well as restrict the interaction potential (Meredith, 2017). Hutchby (2001) used the concept of affordance as an alternative to the two opposite positions "realism" and "constructivism" to argue that "affordances are functional and relational aspects which frame, while not determining, the possibilities for agentic action in relation to an object." (p. 444). Adopting this sense of the term, affordances emerge from enactment: perceiving how an artifact can be used (Hafezieh & Harwood, 2017). In social websites, affordances do not determine how the users act, but they structure the technological context in a way that shapes the users' participation (Boyd, 2010).

3.6. Reasons for Studying Facebook

Facebook (henceforth FB) is a social networking site that was launched in 2004 by the Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg to be used by Harvard students only. However, around 2006, it gained great popularity among the youth (Bodomo, 2010). Today, FB is the most

used social platform in the world with a cumulative total of 2.86 billion users by the end of 2019 (Clement, 2020). This excessive use of the medium has caught the attention of scholars for three main reasons: firstly, because the wealthy daily content posted on the platform provides invaluable opportunities to study phenomena that were difficult to examine in the past. Secondly, the popularity of FB makes it a topic worthy of study in itself. The website is a crucial part of many people's lives which provides a chance to understand the social conducts and behaviours of the contemporary world. Finally, because each website has its positive and negative effects, FB should be examined to understand how to monitor its positive and negative effects on our society (Wilson et al, 2012).

3.7. Facebook Features

Like the rest of social websites, Facebook has its identifying features. On the platform, users become a part of the website through creating a personal profile. They can connect with other users on the site, through adding them to their friends' list, exchange messages with them, receive automatic notifications, and comments when they post on their profiles. Users might also join groups that fit their interest (Edosomwan, 2011).

3.7.1. Profile

Boyd (2010) states, "Profiles both represent the individual and serve as the locus of interaction" (p.42). Users do not only use their profile to create an identity that would represent them, their interest, their political or religious orientations, but they also use it as a place in which different conversations can be held between them and those belonging to their network, or others that do not, depending on the privacy of the profile and the posts. Besides, the discussions on the user's profile reflect their engagement with the post (ibid.)

3.7.2. Public Interaction

Facebook allows different types of communication that are public or semi-public through the post feature on user's profiles or groups (Boyd, 2010). On their timelines, or on groups, users can stimulate different types of interactions through posting about various topics that might receive or not receive comments from their "friends", other users that are part of their network. It is important, however, to consider that "Comments are not simply a dialogue between two interlocutors, but a performance of social connection before a broader audience" (ibid. p, 45). That is, comments are purposeful in the sense that they are used similarly to how people converse in offline settings.

3.7.3. Emojis

Before moving to the use of Emojis on Facebook, a terminological distinction should be made between '*emoticon*' and '*emoji*'. Usually, the two terms are used interchangeably since both of them function similarly, expressing emotion. However, they are rather different in terms of their form. 'Emoticon' is a word coined by blending the two words 'emotion' and 'icon', and it is used to mean an icon formed with numbers, characters and punctuations to express the online speaker's emotions like this smiley face (:-)) (Britannica.com). Emojis, however, are the new form of emoticons, the word "emoji" is adapted from the Japanese word '絵文字' with the "e" meaning picture and the "Moji" meaning a letter or character, to mean as a whole a 'picture-word'😊 (Danesi, 2017). Although it might seem bizarre to call a smiling icon that does not consist of any letter a "word", in 2015 the tears-of-joy emoji was chosen as the word of the year by *Oxford Dictionary* (ibid.). This confirms that the language of the internet is not a form of language only; it is developing to become the norm.

Facebook like any other social website makes use of emojis. Hundreds of emojis are available for interactants to use both privately and publicly. Moreover, in 2016, Facebook launched five emoji-reaction options, giving its users the ability to express more emotions on posts. These reactions are internationally recognized due to the fact that emojis are not mere emotional pictures but are also an abbreviated, yet effective way to express oneself.

Conclusion

With the huge role that the internet plays in our social life, now, more than ever, it is possible to observe and understand its effects in the process of their occurrence. Conversation Analysis is advantageous in understanding how the social norms of interaction are being respected or violated in social websites and retrospectively what these changes bring to offline discourse. In this chapter, the topic of computer mediated communication was covered with respect to one of the most popular websites on earth, Facebook. Features that distinguish the latter were stressed, and the importance of studying how they are used was justified. Further, the chapter discussed the definition of "affordance" and the insights that it would bring to our understanding of how the technology is used when combined with linguistic approaches.

Part Two: Practical Part

Chapter 4: Methodology and Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

The study in hand examines the sequence organization of Facebook comment threads produced by Algerian users with respect to the effect of the platform's affordances. This chapter is devoted to account for the research design and methodology followed to achieve the study's objectives. Firstly, the study's general approach and methodology are decided. Next, the instrument selected to collect data is demonstrated, and the corpus from which the data was elicited is described. Finally, the results are reported and discussed.

4.1. Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature with a qualitative underlying approach. The goal of descriptive research is to make different types of comparisons, descriptions, classifications, and interpretations of individuals, groups, institutions, methods and materials by casting light on a particular phenomenon or event (Tavakoli, 2012). In this regard, descriptive research does not always require a hypothesis. Indeed, its ultimate purpose is to "develop data base from which hypotheses may be generated or tested in future studies" (Dulock, 1993, p. 155). Accordingly, both of qualitative and quantitative approaches are compatible with descriptive research. However, considering the study's objectives, the qualitative type is adopted. Situated within constructivist paradigm, qualitative approach stresses the usage of small samples of non-numeric data, and the emic interpretive analysis of emerging phenomena. Conversation analysis as an approach to discourse analysis combines the aforementioned qualitative-descriptive research characteristics. According to Baxter (2010), CA is founded on the assumption that talk-in-interaction is an orderly apparatus, which adheres to a set of norms identified and reflected in a socially organized world. To describe this order, a thorough micro-analytic inductive analysis of naturally occurring data, which does not begin with pre-categorization or assumption about the data, was undertaken.

4.2. Methods

To collect data for the present study, a structured observation was carried out. The observation concerns comment threads on Facebook that are produced in English by Algerian users. Grammatical accuracy of the comments was not highlighted. The reason lies in the "netspeak" nature of the internet language in which the properties of written and spoken languages combine and merge with electronically mediated properties (Crystal, 2001). This

nature is reflected in unusual spelling, innovations, distinctive grammar, neologisms, absence of capitalization, and so on (Hadziahmetovic et al., 2016).

4.3. Corpus

A random sampling strategy was conducted in collecting a corpus of 54 comment threads that corresponded to the structured observation, and that appeared on the researcher's newsfeed for a 5-month period. The comment threads were generated on 4 private groups, 4 public pages, and 6 timelines of users that are friends with the researcher, and were created with text(s), image(s), video(s), link(s), or a combination of two or more. After locating the threads, they were saved using screenshots, and they were coded from 1 to 54.

Ethical procedures were considered through gaining electronic informed consents from the users and the founders of the groups; however, taking the public nature of the pages used, no consent was required from their administrators. Moreover, all of the posters and repliers were used anonymously, and any information that might reveal their identity was disguised. To report the results, some users were asked to suggest pseudo names of their choice.

4.4. Data Analysis

Two analytical procedures were followed to achieve the study's objectives. The first is "systematic analysis of single cases" and the second is "interactional phenomena and building collections". In the former, the findings of sequence organization were used to analyze each comment thread of the corpus. However, during the analysis, an unusual phenomenon in which users comment with "dots" was spotted in one of the threads. Consequently, the second procedure "interactional phenomena and building collections" was required to account for it. The two procedures are explained in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, respectively.

4.4.1. Systematic Analysis of Single Cases

To analyze the sequence organization of a given conversation, Schegloff (2007) suggests that one way is to take a bottom-up approach through identifying smaller sequences and building them up to reach the larger structure they compose. Table 4.1 displays the step-by-step bottom-up procedure adapted from Schegloff (2007) to analyze the sequence organization of Facebook comment threads.

Table 4. 1.

Analysis of Sequence Organization

Coding the data	• Firstly, each turn in the thread was assigned a number in ascending order (1 for the post, 2 for the first comment, and so on). • If a turn consisted of more than one turn-constructional unit (see chapter 1, section 1.5.1.), each TCU would be given a letter. For example, if in comment 14, the user answers a question, and then produces another question, the answer would be referred to as 14a and the question as 14b.
Adjacency pairs	• In each thread, multiple conversations were located (comments and their replies). • Then, simple two-pair adjacency pairs that constitute the conversations were identified.
Action formation	• Later, the action(s) performed in the parts of each adjacency pair were determined. • To identify what action(s) the TCUs perform, we began by observing "how a bit of talk is done" (Schegloff, 2007, p. 08). According to him, this is achieved by asking questions like what could someone be doing in talking in this way, what does a bit of action appears to be designed to do, what is the action that it is a practice for, etc. (ibid.). To answer these questions, he shows that the researcher is guided by the co-participation of the interlocutors; that is, how the producers of both parts understand the actions produced in each part. The researcher cannot, for instance, claim that the action produced in a given post is an invitation until showing that the reply(s) is an acceptance or a decline of the invitation.
Preference Organization	• After deciding the actions performed in each part of the pair, whether second pair parts are preferred or dispreferred was determined. See chapter 2 for more about preference organization.
Larger sequences	• The rest of the thread was finally examined to see what larger sequences the adjacency pair is part of (pre-sequence, insert sequence, or post sequence).

After analyzing the sequence organization, the theory of affordance was used to achieve a full description of how the organization was achieved. That is to say, the services of Facebook were examined to decide whether they had an effect on the organization and the variety of the threads' linguistic actions.

4.4.2. Interactional Phenomena and Building Collections

To analyze the dot phenomenon, the analytical procedure "interactional phenomena and building collections" was adapted from Hoey & Kendrick (2018, pp. 5-16) as demonstrated in the table below.

Table 4. 2.

Identifying Phenomena and Building Collections

Identifying a particular phenomenon	• This is a phenomenon that was found interesting for the researcher in the sense that it is dissimilar to the majority of threads described above. • The phenomenon spotted was commenting using one or multiple dots.
Building a collection of cases	• After locating the phenomenon, it was first given a preliminary description. Then, the same pages and groups were explored again, and interactions that seemed to correspond to the preliminary description were gathered to build a collection of similar cases. • The collection of the phenomenon consists of 23 cases (comment threads).
Analyzing the collection	• Every interaction in the collection was analyzed beginning with the simplest cases. • The analysis was conducted with regard to participation, position, composition and action. • **Participation** refers to the roles that the interlocutors occupy in the thread (author or replier). • **Position** is about where the phenomenon occurred in the interaction (an initial sequence, responsive to previous turn, etc.). • **Composition** is any verbal or material resources that shaped the action like emoticons, emojis punctuation and so on. • **Action** is the result of analyzing position and composition, that is, what a user is doing is the result of how s/he constructed her/his turn and what relation her/his turn holds with prior and following turns.
Identifying the variations	• After analyzing each case, interactions which conform to the preliminary description of the phenomenon, but with a somehow variant actions, compositions, positions or participation were used to modify the preliminary description of the phenomenon.
Defining the boundaries	• The boundaries were defined by excluding cases which are similar to the structural description of the phenomenon, but are analytically proven not to be variants of it.
Analyzing deviant cases and looking for normative evidence	• Cases that present a departure from the expected pattern are perceived as a departure from the norms. Accordingly, normative evidence was achieved by showing how participants themselves treat the deviation as problematic.
Producing a formal description of	• After using variant and deviant cases to continuously modify the preliminary descriptions, the phenomenon was formally described

the phenomenon	and a title was attached to it.

After providing a formal description to the phenomenon, the affordances of the platform were examined similarly to the first analysis to decide whether they have an effect on the phenomenon.

4.5. Results and Discussion of the Findings

In this section, the results of the two analyses are reported and discussed.

4.5.1. Results of the First Analytical Procedure

The system of conversation imposes a particular order that is accomplished by the co-participation of the interlocutors in maintaining coherence and realizing intersubjectivity. Coherence, as explained in chapter 2, is the result of adjacency pairs in which the second-pair part performs a relevant action to the first-pair part. If the first participant produces a greeting, for instance, her/his recipient is expected to produce another greeting in response. Results show that this system of organization is maintained in common threads by Algerians through making use of the tool's affordances. In this section, a step by step description of the sequence organization of comment threads is reported with emphasis on the affordances that contributed to it.

4.5.1.1. Reactions

When a post is published, the first level of interacting with it is the reaction feature served by the platform. The five reactions exhibited in table 4.3 were introduced by the designers to enable expressing emotions that the classical-like button was incapable of expressing (McAlone, 2015), as well as provoking different types of assessments of the post without having to comment on it.

Table 4. 3.

Facebook Reactions and their Meanings

Emoji						
Meaning	Liking (Like)	Admiring (Love)	Laughing (Haha)	Surprised (WOW)	Sorrowful (Sad)	Annoyed (Angry)

Superficially, the use of the service seems to result in the sequence “post-reaction” in which the “post” presents an unlimited range of actions, and the “reaction” offers a limited range of assessments in response. However, the results show that these reactions are not consistently used as presumed_ they are also utilized to generate actions apart from assessments. To illustrate, in figure 4.1, one of the users updates her profile picture. The thread shows that she received some love and like reactions, which are commonly used to assess personal profile pictures. However, she also receives some laughing reactions, which are not very common reactions for a case as such. In the first comments, one of her friends demonstrates this unusual use if the laughing reaction by questioning the reason behind it. In response, three users react to her comment with “haha”, and one user replies to her by humorously showing annoyance over the “likes” and not the “Hahas” on the post.

Figure 4. 1.

A User's Profile Picture Update

(Thread 07)

It is evident that the question was not plainly answered, but the reactions and the reply to it imply the reason behind using “haha” to react to the post. To clarify, if an assessment

was the only possible interpretation of the Haha emoji, we would expect that the picture exhibits a funny scene, but this is not the case_ it is an ordinary picture of the user. Therefore, the probability that the users who reacted with "haha" found the picture laughable is eliminated. It seems, then, that the replier in the first comment, by producing a question that indicates her treatment of the reaction as having a laughing purpose, fails to recognize this, or at least intends to fail. The humorous reply and the reactions she received indicate that using the haha emoji was intended to tease the user and not to assess her profile picture update. It is deduced, then, that the reaction feature of Facebook, although primarily inserted to express emotions in assessing the post, affords more actions that are generated by the users.

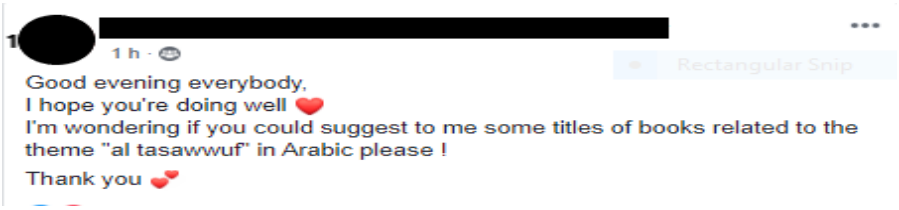
4.5.1.2. Adjacency Pairs and Double Actions

To precisely express their intentions, users might extend their reactions with comments, but this is not a norm. Some posts are left without comments and sometimes without a single reaction. However, when the first comment is published, a conversation is open. The results revealed that the conversation's sequence organization is similar to the adjacency pairs system described in chapter 2.

This organization is exemplified in figure 4.2, which displays a post that appears on a Facebook group for reading books, mostly in English. After greeting the audience and producing a phatic expression, the author makes a request for books on Sufism in Arabic by transliterating the Arabic word "التصوف" into "Al tasawwuf" to specify the type of books she demands. She completes her request with a closing statement.

Figure 4. 2.

A Comment Thread in a Reading Group



(Thread 31)

As the figure shows, at line 2, one of the group members replies to the post with three TCUs. First, she makes an other-initiated repair to the Arabic word by stating its English counterpart at 2a. She next makes an account at 2b for her main action, the suggestion at 2c, by guiding her co-participant to a different corpus (English books). It appears, then, that she is aware of the suggestion's failure to meet one of the two criteria established by the author: the topic (Sufism), and the language (Arabic), and therefore attempts to manifest it before being regarded as irrelevant. At line 3, the author replies first to the comment with an acceptance and a thanking statement, and then post-expands the sequence by producing a question that receives a dispreferred answer at line 4 (I haven't read the book yet but planning to). As mentioned in chapter 2, dispreferred SPPs are responses that are negative and require more linguistic efforts compared to preferred SPPs. Indeed, the user avoids stating, "I don't know" and provides a justification and an alternative instead. Her answer is appreciated at line 5, and the conversation is closed at line 6 with a self-initiated repair of the dispreferred answer at line 4. The analysis of this thread shows that participants organize their actions in adjacency pairs, and they are able to expand their sequences and use repair strategies.

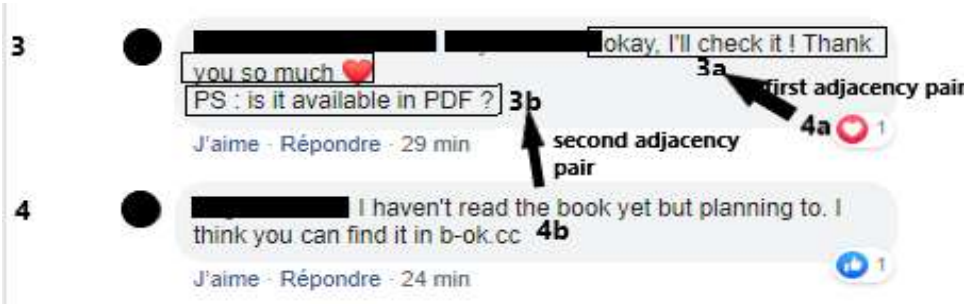
This is facilitated due to two affordances of the platform. The first one concerns the tool's design. *The layout* of the tool is significantly important. Comments are chronologically organized in a vertical order in which main comments (those which respond to the post) are

placed in parallel to the post, and sub comments (those which reply to the main comments) occur right below the main comments with little displacement towards the right. Such design makes the sequences of adjacency pairs and their parts identifiable, and reduces the frequent "disturbed adjacency pairs" phenomenon found in instant messaging in which the two parts are not consecutive (see Berglund, 2009; Meredith, 2017). In fact, no thread that exhibited this phenomenon was detected in the data.

The second affordance concerns the use of the reactions, as mentioned before. For instance, we notice that the love reaction signifies two different actions at lines 2 and 3, appreciation and acceptance respectively. The appreciation on line 2 is typical in that it is one of the *heart* interpretations; however, using a love reaction to perform an acceptance of a thanking statement is not. To explain, check figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4. 3.

A Section from Thread 31



Line 3 consists of two actions, a thanking and a question, which implies that the reaction must address one or both of them. The love reaction, with all its possible interpretations (appreciation, admiration, etc.), cannot provide a relevant response to the question, which leaves us with the other possibility that the reaction responds to the thanking statement, signifying a similar meaning to "you're welcome". In other words, instead of using her turn to produce two comments, the replier produces two actions in parallel. She uses the love reaction to accept (first action) the thanking at 4a, and uses her turn to answer (second action) the question at 4b, generating by that two adjacency pairs 3a-4a (thanking-acceptance) and 3b-4b (question-answer). We shall refer to this phenomenon with the term *double-action:* two actions performed by the same user on a particular turn in which one is linguistic (reply) and the other is not (reaction).

Put together, the tool's reactions, despite being limited in number and primarily initiated to assess posts and comments, afford a variety of actions, and therefore more than a sequence at a time. Instead of producing actions each in a turn, reactions are used to gain both time and space without violating the norms of conversation, nor breaking coherence. This is not possible in off-line discourse in which actions are demonstrated by turns.

4.5.1.3. Opening Posts

Concerning opening posts, also called initiating posts, the findings revealed that telling actions are dominating. 29 out of the 54 posts perform a telling action, whereas the rest 25 posts vary from requests, apologies, invitations and offers. To illustrate, figure 4.4 exhibits a typical thread found in a user's timeline. The user, Radz, opens the thread by creating a post that discusses her optimistic opinion on how the Corona Virus pandemic should make racists reconsider their beliefs. In the first TCU, the author introduces her topic by establishing two interrelated issues (the virus and racism), separating them with the verb "to hope" to show her optimistic vision on how one can affect the other. She also writes the three words "RACIST", "ONE", and "ONE RACE" in all-capital, highlighting by that the issue at the core of the discussion. In the second TCU, she uses the first issue (the virus) to produce an argument against some racist beliefs, and in the last one, she makes a call for stopping racist thoughts. Finally, she closes her post with the all-capital word "PERIODT" to signify her strong opinion and the end of the discussion.

Figure 4. 4.

A Comment Thread of a Telling Post

(Thread 16)

Three actions are performed in Radz's post: a telling in the first TCU, an argument in the second and a recommendation in the third. To decide the overall action conveyed by these three, the comments were examined. Exploring how the post was replied to by its recipients and how the author treated the replies shows whether the post was appropriately comprehended and thus reveals the action it performs. In the present case, the three comments perform a positive assessment (supporting Radz opinion). Radz replies by thanking the first and last comments and by hoping for a better future in response to the second one. This indicates that their interpretation was appropriate and that an assessment is relevant to her post. Since assessments are relevant SPPs of telling actions (Schegloff, 2007), it is indubitable that the post performs a telling action.

After explaining how telling actions are determined, it is important to note that the fact that tellings dominate the data is not random. It is rather the result of one of the platform's affordances, the tool's prompt statement. Prompt statements of different properties (group or timeline) affect the range of actions produced in each.

4.5.1.3.1. Status Prompt Statement

Posts produced by users on their timeline are used to inform those belonging to their network of whatever they choose to share regarding their mental, physical, emotional, and professional state (the reason behind the name "status update"). The status update's prompt statement "What's on your mind?" (see figure 4.5 below) is used to guide the profile owner in using the tool. The statement is a judicious choice for sharing several topics ranging from introspective contemplations to celebrations with family and friends, and therefore, provoking different types of comments and interactions. However, the findings confirm that the significance of the statement lies not only in the topics it generates, but also in the actions it originates.

Figure 4. 5.

Status Update Prompt Statement of Facebook

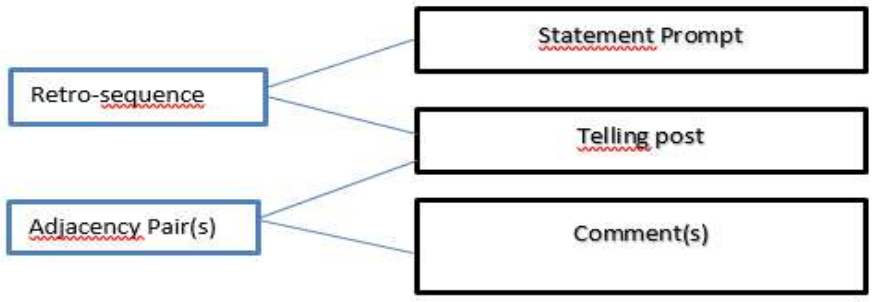
To clarify, the results show that 23 out of the 29 tellings were produced in the users' timelines and pages. These are the properties that contain the prompt statement mentioned above, whereas only 5 tellings were spotted in groups_ groups have a different statement prompt that will be discussed below. It is observed that a telling action is the most relevant response to the question "what's on your mind?", and therefore, the latter question is treated as the first part action to which users reply. Although it is not plainly understood as so by the

users because it disappears when they start constructing their posts, the statement prompt is the source action and tellings are its outcome.

That being said, the concept of retro-sequence (Schegloff, 2007) is adapted to account for the relationship between the prompt statement and the initial posts. In contrast with adjacency pairs, retro-sequences proceed retrospectively in which first pair parts are not relevant until second pair parts occur (ibid.). Accordingly, when a user produces a telling post, it is understood that the telling did not come from scratch, but it is the product of a source action (question) that is determined by the platform designers in attempting to guide the use of the tool. According to Schegloff (2007), the defining feature of retro-sequences is "noticing" something that was not noticed until an action like laughter or other-initiated repair occurs. On Facebook, "understanding" is the defining feature. This is because users do not question the production of certain actions that might be questioned in other real-life contexts due to their understanding of the source of such actions.

Figure 4. 6.

Retro-sequence and Adjacency pairs Organization of FB Threads



The results are supported by the analysis of the groups' posts in which the statement "write something ..." (see figure 4.7. below) does not influence the users' decision on what to write, which justifies why telling actions are not found dominating. Further, given this broad nature of the statement, group moderators (decision-makers) are given more room to control the activities of the members: approving or disapproving posts according to the policy they set, creating by that a group that satisfies their objectives.

Figure 4. 7.

Prompt Statement of FB Group

Nonetheless, the fact that the prompt statement affects the range of actions posted does not mean that it pre-determines the user's choice of what to post. Indeed, telling posts are regular because they enact a typical action to the objective stated by the tool, encouraging thought-sharing. Instead, the rest 25 actions that are not "tellings" show that Facebook users have the authority over what actions to produce. Said differently, despite that the statement prompt affordance affects, and sometimes, shapes the actions produced, users recognize that the tool affords more than what it states since posts that do not correspond to the statement are never suspended.

4.5.1.3.2. The Property: Personal or Shared

Another difference between groups and timelines resides in the structure of the post itself. Although the actions produced in posts are shaped by prompt statements to some extent, there seems to be no restrictions over the post's level of formality and structure. Still, users are found structuring their posts differently based on the property on which they post, the timeline or the group.

All the posts collected from timelines are straightforward in the sense that they do not begin with a greeting, nor do they end with a closing statement. However, on the groups, the majority of posts were organized in greeting-action, and sometimes, greeting-action-closing structure. The nature of each property is what affects this structure. For example, in the post in figure 4.8, published on a user's timeline, the author does not use any form of greeting before producing her action; instead, she directly poses a question that seems to address all the people on her network.

Figure 4. 8.

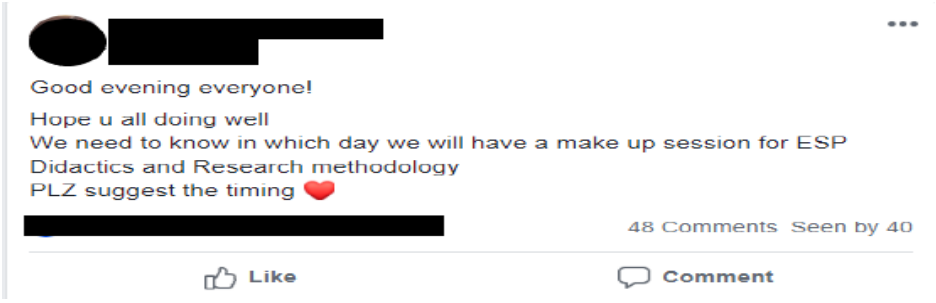
A Straightforward Post on a User's Timeline

(Thread 19)

This is compared to the post in the figure below in which a user produces a question in a group that begins with a greeting of the group members before asking her question.

Figure 4. 9.

Unstraightforward Post on a Group



(Thread 40)

This disparity results from the nature of each property. Timelines are personal properties in which people are networked with others they know on a more personal level compared to groups that are shared properties in which people from different backgrounds with a mutual interest in the group's theme come together. The fact that each property affords a different level of formality despite the absence of any form of control and management from the part of the designers, entails that users apply offline social norms to online discourse, in which strangers are addressed with a higher level of formality compared to friends.

In brief, the analysis of initiating posts reveals that the variety and structure of the linguistic actions produced in the platform is the result of both the affordances of the prompt statement and the users' social norms of interaction.

4.5.1.4. Closing sequences

Comment threads on Facebook do not have closing sequences because of their open-ended nature. Anyone can contribute to the thread at any time unless s/he is disabled from commenting, or the privacy of the post was changed. The tool, however, affords many options to close conversations in it. These affordances are not established by the platform, but they are understood by the users. Three types of conversation closings were identified.

The first is typical. Discussions are closed with closing sequences in which both pair parts are present. An example is the thanking-acceptance sequence displayed in the figure below.

Figure 4. 10.

Closing Sequence

(Thread 36)

The comments are related to a picture that exhibits extracts from a book. One of the group members requests the title of the book. After receiving it, she produces a thanking statement, and receives an acceptance by her addressee. No further expansions were made afterward, and therefore the conversation was closed.

The second type concerns closings using the reaction service. As mentioned before, reactions are multifunctional. They can serve as parts of closing sequences as figure 4.11 shows.

Figure 4. 11.

A Reaction Closing

(Thread 42)

The comments here were published in response to a question on astrology. One of the users admits that she does not have insights on the topic, but she hopes that the other members do. After a while, she reads the comments and tells her opinion on them. The author of the post agrees with her, and the replier reacts to her with "love" to indicate agreement, signifying the end of the discussion.

The final way is not closing the discussion at all. The conversation is left open like in figure 4.12 in which the author asks the group members about the type of songs they like to listen to when reading. One of the group members comments that she likes piano music. The author replies to her, showing her admiration of piano music, by suggesting a famous pianist to the replier. However, the latter does not respond to the suggestion, nor does she react to the comment.

Figure 4. 12.

Absence of Closing Sequence

(Thread 33)

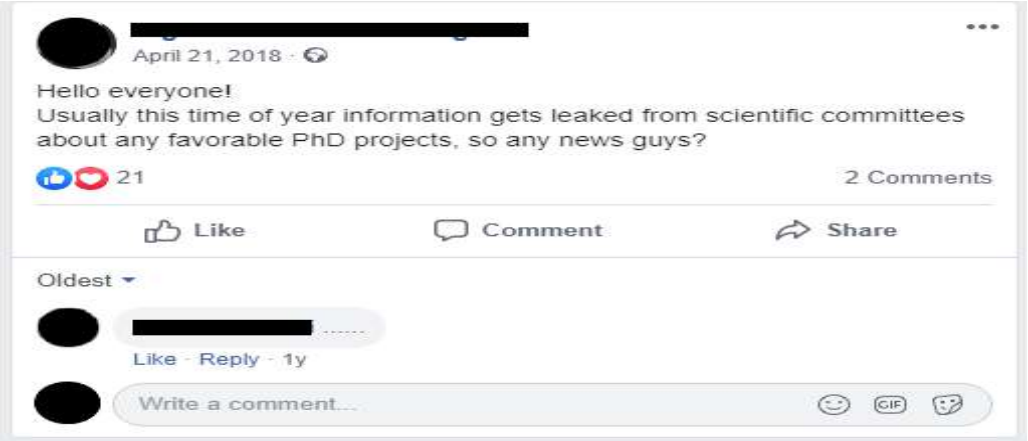
The asynchronous nature of the platform, in which not all participants are simultaneously present, plays part in the latter type. One of the constraints of the tool is the inability to know whether both interactants are present during the discussion because of the absence of the online status for those who are not friends on FB. Usually, it is expected that the other part will receive a notification, but there is no guarantee on whether s/he will check it or not. As a result, users are given space to decide whether they want to respond to the comment or ignore it.

4.5.2. Results of the Second Analytical Procedure

A salient phenomenon noticed in the collected data is the use of “dot(s)” in the comment section, as figure 4.13 shows. In the thread below, the admin of the page, after greeting her followers, produces a question about new Ph.D. projects. The sole reply received is a short line of dots. The purpose of the comment appears vague in that it does not consist of a clear composition that would enable deciding whether it is relevant to the action of the post.

Figure 4. 13.

A Question-Dot Sequence



(Thread 01)

To grasp the replier's motive behind commenting with a dot, the phenomenon was, first, given the preliminary title "action-dot sequence" that covers threads in which a dot is used in response to initial posts. Comment threads that correspond to the title were collected, building a collection of 23 comment threads that were, next, analyzed. In this section, the results of analyzing the collection are reported.

4.5.2.1. The Updating Dot

The thread in figure 4.14 is developed in a group for discussing and reviewing books. The author posts a request for suggesting religious or spiritual books, which receives various significant recommendations apart from one comment constructed with a dot, and another stating, “Interested!” It is noticed that all comments received a *Like* from the author except for the two uncommon ones. To understand the reason behind such behaviour, and considering that the dot reply does not provide many insights about the action it performs, the only other comment that was equally treated by the author was examined instead. For reasons of space, only the relevant part of the thread is displayed in the figure below

Figure 4. 14.

A Comment Thread on a FB Group

(Thread 03)

Because the members of the group are not native speakers of English, the use of the word "interested!" in the first reply is obscure. It seems blurry whether the replier made a mistake while trying to say “interesting!”, and in this context s/he is expressing her attitude and positively assessing the post, or s/he intended to say “I am interested (in knowing the responses of the request)”, and in this context s/he is not precisely contributing to the post, but

declaring personal interests. The “Like button” affordance of Facebook is useful to clear the picture.

To explain, the chronological organization of FB mentioned before entails that if the author interacts with any reply, s/he is assumed to be conscious of the comments published before it. In the present case, although the author (and other members in this context) likes the second comment in the thread, she does not react to the first one, which implies that the author is aware of it, but regards it, unlike the second comment, irrelevant, and consequently neglects it. It is concluded, then, that the *like button* is not only a feature that demonstrates action but also a means to claim the coherence or incoherence of the interaction. Accordingly, the fact that the comment does not receive a like signifies that the user does not contribute to the thread, but expresses her interests in knowing the responses.

Back to our primary concern, the fact that the dot comment was treated similarly to the first comment indicates that it is also irrelevant to the post, and might have been employed to mean "I am interested!". Yet, the reason behind using a dot to convey the message of being interested instead of plainly uttering it is still unclear. Examining the next thread will remove confusion.

The comment thread displayed in figure 4.15. is produced in a group created for people who desire to improve their English level via practice. The author informs the group members of some news to be announced at 10 PM. The comment section of the post appears divided into two parts: the first part consists of comments of interest, excitement, and dots that occurred before 10 PM, whereas the second part consists of comments published after 10 PM to remind the author of her promise. The author *likes* all comments and replies to the reminding comments that the news was announced on time.

Figure 4. 15.

A Pre-announcement Opening Post

(Thread 19)

The nature of the second part unveils the reason behind some of the first part's actions. To clarify, the repliers' insistence on the time in which the news was supposed to occur implies that they expected it to be announced on the same thread, not elsewhere. The absence of the announcement after 10 PM means breaking the promise, and therefore, questioning the

honesty of the author. Likewise, those who commented before 10 PM had similar expectations. Accordingly, some of them used a dot to take advantage of the *notification* affordance of Facebook, which informs repliers of subsequent comments. Simply put, dots are not used for reasons of interaction with the post itself, but for the replier to be notified of the news when announced.

Indeed, the other service that may be used to remember revisiting the thread, saving the post, does not afford the ability to follow up with the development of the thread, i.e. users will never know if someone commented after them or not. In this case, the saving service has a constraint that was compensated for by utilizing another affordance of the platform, the "notification service". This corresponds to the analysis of the previous thread in which the dot was interpreted as showing an interest in the post's replies. Furthermore, the author of this post "likes" the dot and the "interested" comment because they present a typical adjacency pair in connection to the post (assessment of the pre-announcement) contrarily to the previous case in which an assessment was produced in response to a request. This, again, confirms that *liking* a comment signifies coherence.

The study of the whole collection reveals that dots occur only in posts that perform a request, a question, a promise, an uncertain announcement, and an announcement of a future event. What these actions have in common is their prediction of something that might occur in the future. Analyzing these different variations, the following interpretations were drawn: 1) dots are used to say "I do not know, but I am interested in knowing.", 2) to know whether an announcement is true or false, and 3) to stay tuned with a particular announcement. Furthermore, to identify the boundaries of the phenomenon threads that are initiated with a request to make a sign in the comment section were excluded from the collection.

In general, the reason behind using a dot rather than commenting with a complete utterance is due to the uninterest of the replier in the post per se. A dot is used to make use of the notification feature in order for the user to be updated with the thread's development. For this reason, the phenomenon was entitled "the updating dot". Considering the size of a dot, this could as well justify the use of a dot particularly rather than any other symbol.

4.6. Recapitulation

The analysis of the comment threads has revealed that Algerian users of Facebook organize their conversations on the platform coherently following the adjacency pairs organization system. This organization is affected by the affordances of the platform.

The tool is occupied with a variety of emojis (reactions) that are initiated to assess posts and comments. Results revealed that these reactions afford the users the ability to generate other actions like teasing, accepting and so on. Sometimes, they result in a phenomenon that we have called double-action in which two adjacency pairs are produced in parallel. In addition, the layout of the tool, in which the turn taking rules of offline conversation are adopted, affords the users the ability to organize their sequences in adjacency pairs.

Furthermore, the results have revealed that the majority of initial posts (opening posts) exhibit the action of telling. The statement prompt is the reason behind such dominance. However, users recognize that other actions like invitation, apology, and request can be produced via the tool, which means that the tool affords more actions that are not plainly demonstrated by the design. Moreover, the structure of the initial posts seems to vary depending on the property on which they are created. That is to say, posts produced on timelines are less formal than those produced on groups. This is the result of the users' recognition of the social norms that govern each property.

For closing sequences, three types of closings have been identified: 1) using a complete closing sequence in which both parts are present, 2) using the reaction service to indicate the end of the discussion, and 3) not using a closing sequence at all and leaving the interaction open. The constraint of the asynchronous nature of the tool in which participants are not always present and the absence of the online status of users that are not friends on the platform is what enables choosing one of the three ways mentioned above.

Finally, the analysis of the minor cases has revealed that dots are used to comment only on posts in which a future event is expected to occur. Users, therefore, take advantage of the notification affordance of the platform to keep up with the development of the thread.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology, the data collection tool, and the analysis procedures were outlined. Facebook comment threads generated by Algerian users were analyzed qualitatively using conversation analysis methodology. The analysis concerned the sequence organization of the threads and the affordances that enabled it. The results revealed that the threads have an identifiable sequence organization which centers around adjacency pairs and which is the result of the interrelation of the platform's affordances and the users' social norms. On the whole, it was possible through this analysis to spot light on online conversational tendencies and identify the common and minor patterns.

General Conclusion

1. Summary and Conclusions

The aim of Conversation Analysis is to describe the structure and order of mundane and institutional talk. Social websites provide a convenient context of analysis since they present natural environments of different types of conversation. In applying CA to online talk, the theory of affordance was found useful in understanding the intertwinement between social websites and our interactional norms. As a result, this study attempted to investigate the role that Facebook affordances have in shaping the sequence organization of Facebook comment threads.

To achieve the study's objectives, two questions were raised: 1) how do Algerian Facebook users maintain sequence organization on Facebook comment threads? And 2) how is the sequence organization affected by the affordances of Facebook? To answer these questions, a corpus of 54 comment threads was collected from Algerian pages, groups and personal profiles. The threads were analyzed qualitatively following two methods of analysis: "systematic analysis" to describe the general sequence organization pattern of the threads, and "interactional phenomena and building collections" to describe minor cases.

The results of the first analysis revealed that Algerian users are able to maintain sequence organization on comment threads through structuring their actions in sequences of adjacency pairs. This is due to some site's affordances like the remarkable layout that embraces the offline turn-taking design, and the reactions that enable communicating a variety of linguistic actions without having to type a comment. For initial posts, the results showed that the variety of actions produced is affected by the prompt statement "What is on your mind?" on pages and personal timelines and the prompt statement "Say something…" on groups. Further, the nature of the property in which the post was produced, whether it is a group or a personal timeline, was found affecting the structure of the post itself. For closing sequences, the results showed three ways of closing discussions on comment threads: using a complete closing sequence, using reactions, or leaving the discussion open.

The results of the second analytical procedure revealed that Algerians comment with one or multiple dots to keep themselves updated with the thread's development. The dot enables them to receive notifications about whether a comment was added to the thread.

To conclude, the study showed that there is a recognizable sequence organization of comment threads that is similar to that identified in offline discourse (adjacency pairs), and which shapes and is retrospectively shaped by the affordances of Facebook.

2. Limitations of the Study

It should be noted that one of the limitations of CA is its pure qualitative nature, which means that its findings are not generalizable to other contexts. Although some authors specify the number of cases in a collection that might enable quantification (60 cases for Schegloff (1996) and 84 cases for Robinson (2007)) (White, 2016), the corpus used in this study was not sufficient to quantify the findings.

3. Further Recommendations

The findings of this study apply only to Algerian users who comment in English, which raises other questions on whether the updating dot is used only by Algerians or it is a common strategy used by all Facebook users from other social backgrounds. In addition, Algerian comments in Arabic could be investigated to see whether the range and organization of actions are similar to or different from that in English.

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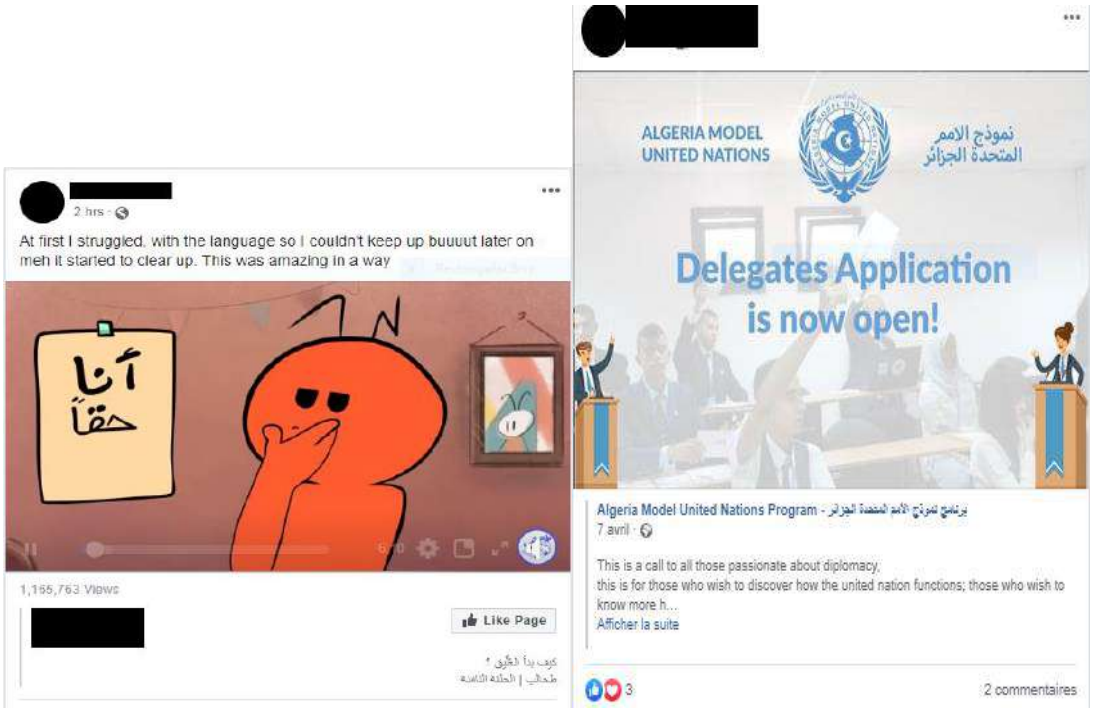
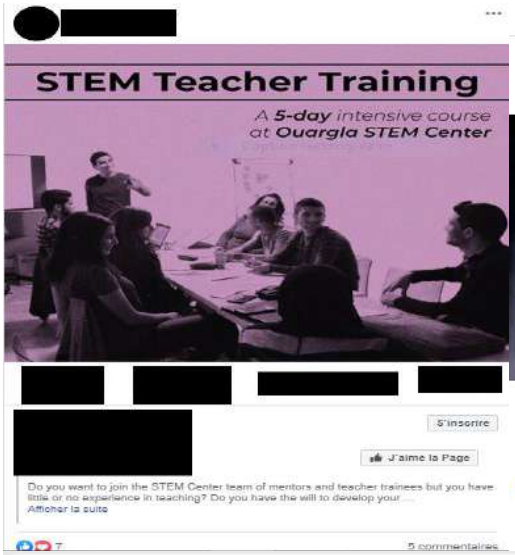
Appendix: Users' Posts

By reason of space and users' privacy, the appendix includes only the initial posts taken from users that are Facebook friends of the researcher. Threads taken from groups and pages are not included.

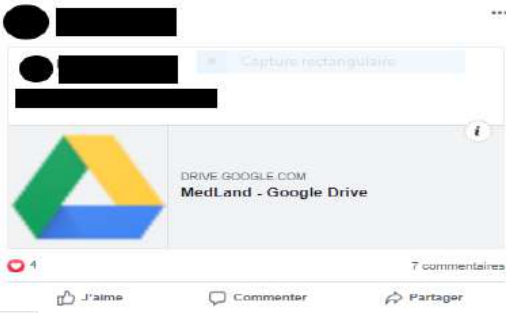



STEM Teacher Training
A 5-day intensive course at Ouargla STEM Center
S'inscrire
J'aime la Page
Do you want to join the STEM Center team of mentors and teacher trainees but you have little or no experience in teaching? Do you have the will to develop your
Afficher la suite


WHY IS THIS ME..
J'aime la Page
12
4 commentaires
J'aime
Commenter
Partager

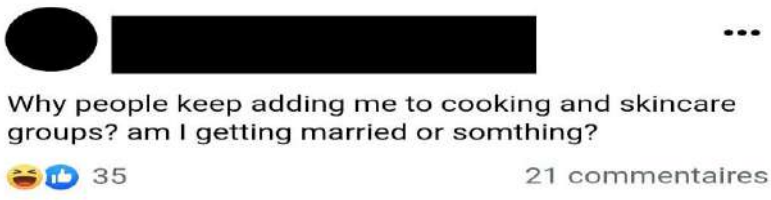

The longest part of preparations for Aiesec Ouargla open day in Guerrara is almost done, whereas the second part will be completed as soon as you join us in this event. Whoever is interested in living an experience abroad and aged between 18 - 30 is so welcomed on April 25th. We can't wait to see you there.
#Aiesec_Ouargla_act_to_impact
#Aiesec_Algeria
See More
YOUTUBE.COM
إشهار للتوم المفتوح حول منظمة AIESEC من طرف AIESEC OURGLA في مدينة


13 h
I dont know exactly how_but I managed to destroy ever social relation I had with ppl
et 19 autres personnes
12 commentaires
J'aime
Commenter
Partager


DRIVE.GOOGLE.COM
MedLand - Google Drive
7 commentaires
J'aime
Commenter
Partager


Lately, I have been told that I am emotionless quite a number of times. Can anyone refute this statement and give us an example because I cannot tell anymore xD
Simple mention an event where I was being emotional like any other human being
12
17 Comments
Like
Comment
Share


Anyone in the field of Comparative politics or Western/International politics?
6


Why people keep adding me to cooking and skincare groups? am I getting married or somthing?
35
21 commentaires

[redacted]

Why people keep adding me to cooking and skincare groups? am I getting married or somthing?

[redacted] and 33 others 21 Comments

Like Comment

[redacted]

I think every parent should take a step back and look at how they are treating their children, what wrong may happen and in what way they may destroy them psychologically and physically intentionally or non intentionally... this passage from Franz Kafka's letter to his father gives us an alternative view of how children react to certain behaviors of their parents, how their behaviors mark eternal scars on their children...

"One night I kept on whimpering for water, not, I am certain, because I wasthirsty, but probably partly to be annoying, partly to amuse myself. After severalvigorous threats had failed to have any effect, you took me out of bed, carried meout onto the pavlatche (the long balcony in the inner courtyard of old houses inPrague), and left me there alone for a while in my nightshirt, outside the shutdoor… I dare say I was quite obedient afterward at that period, but it did me innerharm. What was for me a matter of course, that senseless asking for water, andthen the extraordinary terror of being carried outside were two things that I, mynature being what it was, could never properly connect with each other. Evenyears afterward I suffered from the tormenting fancy that the huge man, my father,the ultimate authority, would come almost for no reason at all and take me out of bed in the night and carry me out onto the pavlatche, and that consequently Imeant absolutely nothing as far as he was concerned." (Dearest Father, 38)

[redacted]

Please stop adding me on "girls facebook groups", which are full of negativity, hate and gossip. I don't want non of this energy to pop up into my page. Please be thoughful and don't add me to non of these groups 🙏🙏

[redacted] and 18 others 22 Comments

Like Comment Share

[redacted]

With all this trauma that we are going through, and the massive terror that the huumanity is living lately, I hope that every RACIST realised that there is only ONE race; which is the HUMAN RACE. The virus doesn't infect us because of our colors, religions, or ideologies, it infects us as 'Humans' and no other than that. Thus please reconsider your thoughts and beliefs about who's inferior and who's supperior and what ethnic group is the 'choisen' one. PERIODT

[redacted] and 30 others 18 Comments 2 Shares

Like Comment Share

[redacted]

[redacted] your stories reminded me of this scene from Eat Pray Love

The sweetness of doing nothing is all I'm doing those days after a burn out after months of work, depression, and anxiety .

#DolceFarNiente ❤️

[redacted] and 10 others 29 Comments 1 Share

الملخص

تهدف هاته الدراسه الى وصف المتواليات التحادثية في تعليقات المستخدمين الجزائريين على موقع الفيسبوك وكيف أن الإمكانيات التكنولوجية للموقع تؤثر و تتأثر بها. وفي هذا الصدد تم جمع 54 تعليقا من مجموعات خاصة و صفحات عامة و شخصية . حللت التعليقات نوعيا بإتباع المنهج الوصفي من خلال أسلوب تحليل المحادثة. أظهرت النتائج أن المنشورات و التعليقات منظمة في متتاليات تتكون من ثانئيات متجاورة و أن طبيعة و نوعية الأفعال الكلامية في التعليقات هي نتيجة بعض الإمكانيات التي يوفرها تصميم المنشور الفايسبوكي مثل خاصية التفاعل و طبيعة الصفحة عامة كانت أم شخصية. علاوة على ذلك أظهرت الدراسة أن المستخدمين الجزائريين يقومون في بعض الأحيان بالتعليق بنقاط للإستفاده من خاصية الإشعار التي تبقيهم على دراية بما يحدث عندما يقوم مستخدم ما بالتعليق على نفس المنشور.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحليل المحادثة، وحدة المتواليات، فايسبوك، الإمكانيات التكنولوجية، المستخدمين الجزائريين

Résumé

L’étude actuelle tente de décrire l’organisation séquentielle des fils de commentaires Facebook des utilisateurs Algériens pour montrer comment une telle organisation façonne et est façonnée à son tour par les « affordances » de Facebook. Pour cela, une observation structurée a été menée en collectant un corpus de 54 fils de commentaire de groupes, pages et profils personnels. En adoptant une méthode descriptive, le corpus a été analysé qualitativement en utilisant l’analyse conversationnelle. Les résultats ont révélé que les commentaires sont organisés en séquences de paires adjacentes et que la variété ainsi que la nature des actions linguistiques des paires adjacentes sont affectées par (1) les affordances de la mise en page du post, et (2) la nature de la propriété dans laquelle ils ont été produit : personnels ou partagés. De plus, les résultats ont montré que les utilisateurs Algériens commentent avec des points pour profiter du service de notification de Facebook pour les tenir au courant du développement du fil.

Mots-clés : analyse conversationnelle, l'organisation séquentielle, affordances technologiques, Facebook, les utilisateurs Algériens