

Discourse Features and Patterns among Nigerian Students

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Abstract

Discourse encompasses the complex interplay of language, context, and social dynamics in communication, shaping how individuals convey meaning, and construct shared understanding within various contexts. This paper investigated the various strategies employed by Nigerian students with a focus on discourses of students of Grace Court International School, Awka. It sought to find out how the discourse participant that initiates a talk can affect a conversation. Data were collected through recordings of random conversations of students outside the classroom, in the classroom and telephone conversations. Adopting Conversational Analysis as its theoretical framework, the study identified some features such as turn taking and move as well as some discourse genres. Through qualitative analysis of spoken interactions, the study uncovers patterns, linguistic strategies, and cultural influences shaping communication within this demographic. The findings contributed to understanding the dynamics of Nigerian student discourse, shedding light on language use and social interactions. The findings in this study among others are: (1) follow up move is a reinforcement tool as it helps in developing confidence in students. (2) In a conversation, certain participants may transition from one topic to another abruptly, as they feel that the topic is either not fitting, intrusive or impolite.

Keywords: Discourse, Language, Communication, Public Speaking, Turn Taking and Turn Allocation

Introduction

This study investigated the features of discourse in the interaction among students of Nigerian schools. Language is essentially made up of spoken and written modes and there are formats and methods of analysis attached to each of the modes. While the written language has a long history of analysis, the spoken form only gained attention recently in linguistic analysis. Our interest in this research is to further the development of the analysis of spoken language as the most important attribute of man. Peng (2005),

in his view, said that, “A language consists of symbols that convey meaning, plus rules for combining those symbols that can be used to generate an infinite variety of messages”. Language is essentially rule governed but there are other ways which language works. Bruce (2008) defined language as: “A system of communication using sounds or symbols that enables us to express our feelings, thoughts, ideas and experiences”. This means that language can be used in many forms primarily through oral and written communication. Body language can equally be used for communication. Omachonu (2013), believes that, “As far as the use of language to foster unity among people is concerned, all that one needs to do to influence one’s people and seek cooperation from them is to speak to them in their language and in a manner that what is said is what is meant”. He further claimed that it is important to note that: By influencing others through meaningful communication and interactions, cooperation among different dimensions is made possible. Besides, language can be used to influence the behavior and attitudes of others as it relates to their responses to commands, directives, orders, requests, appeals, pleas and so on (p. 6). Considering the above stated affiliation, we can deduce that the importance of language cannot be overemphasized. It is difficult, if not impossible for students to interact without language. Language fosters understanding and helps stimulate the behavior and responses of others to a statement. In the Nigerian context, for instance, the English language is the colonial legacy and has remained a useful tool in the hands of people from different classes, religion and ethnic groups. Speech errors has been discovered to be one of the problems encountered by discourse participants during communication. It causes disorderliness, misinterpretation and inconsistency as the speaker tends to lack words to express his idea. Overlap in speeches also stops the free flow of communication as the one holding the floor would feel rudely interrupted and disrespected which might bring misunderstanding between two interlocutors. This study investigated the efficacy of language in achieving communication goals with some features of discourse found in the interaction of Nigerian students. This paper aimed to investigate the features of discourse in the interaction among Nigerian students as we find out how the discourse participant that initiates a talk can affect a discourse, point out some common features of discourse in the interactions among Nigerian students, know some discourse features that affects discourse participants, as well as know why some participants use overlap in speeches.

Significance of the Study

This study would be beneficial to students as they rightly choose discourse features during conversations in order to communicate effectively and also public speakers would become conscious of discourse moves, devoid of speech errors and aspire to attract and sustain listener’s attention.

Research Questions

1. How does the discourse participant that initiates a talk affect a discourse?
2. How does some discourse features affect the discourse participants?
3. Why do some participants use overlap in speeches?

Scope of the Study

This study centres on investigating the efficacy of language in achieving communication goals while analyzing some features of discourse in the interactions among students in Awka South. In order to manage the topic effectively, this study is further limited to Grace Court Secondary School Awka. The choice of this school is based on the fact that the school is among the leading schools in Awka and it comprises of students from different cultural and social background in Nigeria. This work adopts conversational analysis theory to describe how conversationalists achieve orderliness in their interaction.

Conceptual Review

Discourse

The term discourse is a widely studied concept with reference to many disciplines, including linguistics, philosophy, sociology, and political theory. Coulthard (2007) approaches discourse as structured language use beyond the sentential level, focusing almost exclusively on spoken interaction and its implications for social communication. Coulthard spent years demonstrating how discourse, context, and meaning can come together to create meaning, particularly in institutional contexts such as the courtroom, within police interviews, and in educational settings. Coulthard believes that Discourse is mainly Interactive and Contextual. Consider an example that is courtroom discourse or teacher-student interaction. In such talk, the language follows specific rules, expectations, and power structures.

Foucault (1972) opines that discourse is not merely a language but a system of representation, knowledge, and power. Discourse thus is not an accurate representation of reality; rather discourses constitute actively the objects that are spoken of. Medical discourse does not just describe disease but creates the diseased in a certain historical and cultural way. In addition, he also brings together discourse with power structures, for example institutions such as the legal system, medicine, or education to impose certain truths through discursive practices. What discourses do is to regulate not just how a person should speak but also what can be thought.

Fairclough (1995) launched the critical discourse analysis so that one could critically assess the manner in which language works as a form of social practice. It's a three-dimensional model of discourse that involves: The text (spoken or written), the discursive practice (how the text is produced and

interpreted), and the social practice (the wider context within which the text operates). It allows for the analysis of discourse as both for and against various social identities and relations as well as systems of knowledge. Fairclough has also added that discourse is ideological in that it maintains and even affects relations of power that exist in society regarding class, gender, and race, among others. Dijk (1997) takes up a multidisciplinary standpoint which mixes linguistics, psychology and sociology. To him, discourse can no longer be characterized only linguistically, but as something cognitive and social as well. His approach concentrates on mental models which include how people comprehend, process and remember what they hear and understand from discourse.

Conversation

Emerson (1864) opines that “conversation is the laboratory and workshop of the student”. This emphasizes on the role of conversation in the learning process. By referring to it as “laboratory and workshop”, he suggests that conversation is not merely a passive exchange of words but an active, hands-on experience where ideas are tested and constructed.

Grice (1989) believes that a conversation is built on certain conventions, such as: The people involved do share some common grounds, such as a culture, a belief or norm, the people involved do share some common grounds, such as a culture, a belief or, their conversation is guided by these culture, norms and beliefs, the people know that ideas are being shared, so no one dominates, except they are allowed by convention or by the conversationalists, the conversationalists respect one another's views despite their differences. The whole idea of conversation is based on the understanding that turns have to be taken. Tannen (2001) claims that conversation is "a tool not only for conveying information but for negotiating relationships" (p. 16). This view recognizes the informational and interpersonal duality of conversation, believing that speakers engage in talk not just to pass on information but also to perform identity, to establish rapport, and to negotiate social distance.

Turn and Turn Taking

Yule (1996) noted that successful communication relies on participants understanding and applying rules that signal the beginning or end of a turn. These signals may be verbal signs, such as intonation and pauses, or nonverbal signs, including eye gaze and gestures that vary in different languages and cultures. According to Levinson (1983), turn-taking is basically a cooperative interaction between participants that allows the interaction to be effective and fair by providing an opportunity to each speaker to alternate with one another while he/she is talking. A close observation that he made is that in-joint turn-dependent overlapping and interruption could be conceived as violations of the rules but could also be very tactical devices in a conversation-type particularly in high involvement speech communities.

Coulthard (1985) Speakers and listeners change their roles in order to begin their speech. Turn taking mechanisms may vary between cultures and languages. A set of rules govern turn taking in discourse. These are: When the current speaker selects the next speaker, the next speaker has the right to and is obliged to commence the turn, if the current speaker does not select the next speaker, any one of the speakers has the right to self-select and become the next speaker, if neither the next speaker selects the next speaker nor the next speaker self-selects, the current speaker may resume his or her turn (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, p.704).

There are signals to turn taking that are called turn-eliciting signals. The dominant referring tone, the interrogative functions of tones and phatic questions serve a role in turn taking. For instance, a speaker may use a rising tone rather than a falling tone in ending a sentence to hold his turn by underlining his/her present status as the dominant speaker. This indicates that the speaker expects to be allowed to go on without an interruption. Story tellers are fond of using this continuative rising tone (Brazil, 1997, p. 93).

Adjacency Pairs

Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974) note the issue in their analysis of conversation. Everyday talk, they said, is organized into sequences without randomness and has one of the most basic units of adjacency pairs. Examples are: Greeting - Greeting: 'Hi!' / 'Hello!', question - Answer: 'How are you?' / 'I'm fine', 'Offer - Acceptance/Refusal: 'Would you like some tea?' / 'Yes, please' or 'No, thank you', 'complaint - Apology: 'You stepped on my foot.' / 'Oh, I'm sorry.'

Yule (1996) asserts that adjacency pairs assist speakers in directing their interlocutors' expectations of responses, which in turn lend some predictability to the interaction and allow smooth flow of conversation. The absence of, undue delay in responding to, or ill-timed answering of the second pair part may lead to disruptions in conversation that may call for repair kinds of talk to restore coherence. From the angle of pragmatics, adjacency pairs are social acts as much as they are linguistic. Levinson (1983) notes that they represent social obligations, being that the first pair part puts certain pressure-on encouragement to respond. Answers are expected, and ignoring a question may be socially deemed impolite or inappropriate.

Insertion Sequence

An insertion sequence is a sequence of conversational moves that temporarily interrupts a basic adjacency pair-a paired sequence of conversational acts such as a question and an answer-to create space for something subsidiary or clarifying to be accomplished before the original sequence is taken up again. According to Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977), insertion sequences are an integral accomplishment in managing the complexities of everyday conversation while maintaining order and coherence. For

Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks (1977), insertion sequences are the central organizing mechanism for the various complexities that have been injected into everyday conversation in order to tie them together coherently. Drew & Heritage (1992) and Sidnell (2010), this is very important, particularly within institutional talk, where the principles of conversational order and turn-taking are more formalized. These studies emphasize that insertion sequences highlight the flexibility and adaptability of conversational structure, enabling participants to handle contingencies in an orderly fashion.

Error and Repair Mechanisms

Corder (1967) pioneered Error Analysis (EA) for use within second language acquisition. Corder insisted that errors were not arbitrary blunders, but meaningful signs of the learner's interlanguage-being-system, which is the language system that a learner develops as he or she tries to acquire a new language. Corder -on error and mistake- has separated his differences. Errors-systematic deviations which are as a result of incompleteness in the language competence. Mistakes,' performance slips due to fatigue or distraction. According to Richards' typology (1971) errors can be classified into errors relating to types-e.g. phonological, lexical, grammatical-and intralingual errors, i.e. those induced by the learner's native language. Intralingual errors are a result of the system of the target language itself (overgeneralization, incomplete rule application).

Repair mechanisms are strategies used by speakers or listeners to resolve problems in communication — such as misunderstandings, mispronunciations, or incorrect information — to maintain conversation flow. Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974) were the first to systematically study repair in natural conversation within Conversation Analysis (CA). They introduced a widely used typology: Self-initiated self-repair: Speaker notices and fixes their own problem, Self-initiated other-repair: Speaker signals a problem; listener repairs it. Other-initiated self-repair: Listener indicates a problem, and speaker corrects it. Other-initiated other-repair: Listener points out and fixes the issue. They discovered that speakers prefer self-repair over being corrected by others — as it is less face-threatening and maintains social harmony. Jefferson (1987) focused on the subtle details of how repairs are signaled, such as pauses, hesitations, and cut-off words, showing the conversational sensitivity to errors. Schegloff (1992) extended the study of repair by exploring the epistemic function — how people use repairs to claim, confirm, or contest knowledge within conversation.

Overlap in Speeches

Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson (1974) in their foundational paper on turn-taking in conversation, these scholars identified speech overlap as one of the ways turn-taking systems can break down. They proposed a turn-taking model where: Talk is organized into turns. A speaker change occurs at a Transition

Relevance Place (TRP). Overlap happens when multiple speakers target the same TRP or one speaker misjudges the end of a turn. Overlap types they noted: Turn-competitive overlaps: When two speakers compete for the floor. Supportive overlaps: When one speaker overlaps to show agreement or encouragement (e.g., “Yeah!”, “Mhm!”). They emphasized that while overlap is sometimes viewed as disruptive, it can also demonstrate solidarity, enthusiasm, or active engagement.

Jefferson (1983, 1984) Developed a nuanced classification of overlaps based on their interactional function and timing. They include: Terminal overlaps: Occur as a current speaker approaches the end of a turn. Continuers: Short utterances (like “uh-huh,” “right”) signaling understanding, without trying to take the floor. Choral or collective talk: When multiple participants speak together intentionally (e.g. chanting, greetings). Jefferson demonstrated that not all overlaps signal competition; many overlaps function positively within conversation.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frame work adopted for this study is conversational analysis (C.A). Conversational analysis was a method introduced by Emmanuel Schegloff, Harvey Sacks and Gail Jefferson in the early 1970s. C.A has now become an established force in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, speech-communication and psychology. It is an approach to discourse analysis that is concerned with the study of talk in interaction. The major aim of C.A is to describe how conversationalists achieve orderliness in their interaction. It studies how interactions are structured in a sequential manner. It is done by collecting and transcribing natural spoken interactions, then examining the structure, organization, and turn taking patterns within the conversation. C.A studies any instance of talk, which may include institutional discourse, such as: classroom discourse between the teacher and the students, doctor-patient interaction, antenatal discourse, courtroom discourse. It also studies routine or casual conversations.

Empirical Studies

In the work of Yahaya (2021), titled “*Analysis of discourse features of the interactions of Federal University Gusau*”. The paper unveiled various strategies employed by the students of tertiary institutions in conversational exchanges with a focus on discourses of Students of Federal University Gusau. The objective is among other things to identify discourse features and genres in the social interactions. Data were gathered from the students taking 'Use of English' which is a compulsory course/subject for all students of the federal University Gusau. Adopting the functional approach to discourse analysis as its theoretical framework, the study identified some features such as turn taking and speech events, as well as some discourse genres. The paper speaks to variation of discourse features in the context of different social interactions.

Hellman (2022) in her work titled “*Turn taking in university seminars*”, analyzed turn-taking in spoken discourse in seminar settings of higher education. The aim of the study is two-fold, (i) to explore how teachers organize their classroom discourse in terms of turn-taking structure, discursive organization and the subject positions of teachers and students and (ii) to further explore how power asymmetry in the teacher-student relationship may be realized in institutional discourse settings such as classrooms. Through the frameworks of institutional discourse, conversation analysis (CA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA), the study encompasses analyses of seminar data culled from The British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus. The study analyses the discourse organization of two different seminars in social studies and sciences by their turn taking structure, turn-distribution and activity types to discuss the institutional properties of the interactions and the power asymmetry between participants. The analysis shows that the discursive subject roles of “teacher” and “student” have different claims to power and that the participants are more or less restricted by both the structure of the turn-taking systems and the activity types of the seminars. The teachers of the two seminars are further shown to restrict their students’ speaking rights and discursive mobility, using different discursive strategies to achieve their goals and to exercise control over the discourse, but that some students more or less effectively resist this control by utilizing the discourse structure and its resources to their advantage.

Summary of Review

This review focuses on how language functions in social contexts, emphasizing the relationship between linguistic elements and the social situations in which they are used. In conversational analysis, features such as turn-taking, pauses, interruptions, and overlaps are crucial. These elements reveal how speakers negotiate meaning and manage the flow of conversation. The analysis shows that the discursive subject roles of “teacher” and “student” have different claims to power and that the participants are more or less restricted by both the structure of the turn-taking systems and the activity types of the seminars. From the works reviewed, one can say that academic attainment, age, and sex can be used to measure whether one is qualified to take a turn or not.

Methodology

This study investigates the efficacy of language in achieving communication goals with some features of discourse found in the interaction among SS1-3 students, ranging from age 14-16 years of Nigerian students. The research employs the conversational Analysis approach, beginning with data collection and indirect observation in order to record telephone conversations, listen to them and analyze the conversations among the students. The data for this study were drawn from various voice recordings of conversations among students in Grace Court International School. The sampling technique adopted by

the researcher is random sampling. This choice was made so as to get various types of discourse from students. A content analysis method was used in this paper because it allows for the collection of sounds, images and words and it also gives room for knowing the underlying motives and desires of human behavior. The content of the data were analyzed based on the theory adopted and the set of objectives of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents data based on the various voice recordings of discourses among students and analysis was made to show how they convey meaning.

Conversation 1

ST. 1: Ada! (Opening). When are you going to church? (Elicitation in talk).

ST. 2: I am not going to church. I don't want to go to church, that's why am here. (Feedback).

ST.1: You need to go to church because.....

ST. 3: She is a pastor's daughter.

ST. 2: If I go home early, they will say that i have rested enough and when it is 4 they will tell me to go.

ST. 1: What is the time?

ST. 2: It's 3:18pm.

ST. 1: When is the time?

ST. 2: It's by 5pm.

In the above conversation, there are three interlocutors who are taking turns. Student 1 opened the conversation by calling the name of student 2. He asked a question which student 2 answered, but while student 1 was still talking, Student 3 overlapped into the conversation.

The second question by student 2, "*what is the time?*" and the direct feedback by student 2 "*it's 3:18pm*", is an example of a question and answer adjacency pair. The elicitation in the talk demands a particular type of response which the second student gave. This is also applicable in the last question by student 1 "*when is the time?*" and the last answer by student 2 "*It's by 5pm*".

Conversation 2

Classroom Conversation

Teacher: Consequences of political apathy. Udosolum tell us (Initiation).

Udosolum: Political instability (Response).

Teacher: Very good! (Follow up move).

The conversation above is an example of a classroom exchange where the teacher initiated a talk by asking the question, “*consequences of political apathy*” and summoned a student, “*Udosolum*”, to supply the answer, which he gave and then the teacher gave a feedback, “*very good*”, commending the good answer supplied.

Conversation 3

ST. 1: This is my phone.

ST. 2: This is not your phone. Your phone is not like that Kaima.

ST. 3: Whose phone is that?

ST. 2: Miss Daberechi. It has a password.

ST. 4: I want to make kinky, but I don’t want it to cut my hair.

ST. 2: Did you see her Whatsapp? She was chatting a boy.

ST 4: It will be very long.

ST 2. Please we are not talking about your hair and we actually don’t care.

From the above conversation, we can deduce that the students 1, 2 and 3 were taking their turns when student 4 overlaps into the conversation, saying something entirely different from the topic of the conversation.

Conversation 4

ST. 1: God forbid o!

St. 2: Thank youuuuu!

St 3: Amanda, God forbid o!

St. 2: Thank youuuuu!

St. 4: Is it because you are not the one bringing the money?

St 5: Is it not your parent’s money?

St. 6: How can you finish 40k in a month?

St. 5: she said it’s not even too much.

St. 6: You know Amanda eats expensive small food.

St. 7: She wants to collect 100k a month o.

St. 2: Can you chill?

St. 4: If they give you provision, you should be thanking your stars.

St. 2: Obviously, they will and that’s why I love them.

St. 4: And you will use your money and buy manuals.

St. 2: That’s a lie! My allowance is for me and me alone.

St. 4: Don't buy manual and fail!

St. 3: My mummy said the chances of ANSU giving me admission is slight.

St. 2: See what I will use the 40k to do; I will wake up in the morning, go for lectures, go to the restaurant.

St. 4: Why will you go to the restaurant? Why can't you go to the cafeteria?

St. 2: Me cafeteria food? No darling.

St. 4: Eat cafeteria food and save your money!

St.2: If you calculate how much you spend on data in a month, won't it reach 10k?

St. 3: it's a lie, mine no reach 10k.

St. 5: I use social bundle o. social bundle na-aruru.

St. 4: My mummy has found out what hotspot means, now I can't even use her hotspot again.

The discourse above is a conversation between 7 secondary school students aspiring to be in the university, none of them is taking their turn which brought about many overlap in the conversation, but these two are prominent;

St. 4: *Is it because you are not the one bringing the money?*

St 5: *Is it not your parent's money?*

St. 2: *See what I will use the 40k to do; I will wake up in the morning, go for lectures, go to the restaurant.*

St. 4: *Why will you go to the restaurant? Why can't you go to the cafeteria?*

In the two examples, ST. 6 and ST. 4 did not allow ST.4 and ST. 2 to finish what they were saying before interrupting them which resulted in an overlap.

Conversation 5

Classroom Exchange (error and repair mechanism)

Teacher: John scrubs the floor every Saturday, what is highlighted is what? (Elicitation)

Students: Saturday. (Feedback)

Teacher: That's wrong right?

Students: Yes!

Teacher: Listen up! Have explained right?

Students: Yes!

Teacher: If you fail, you have eerrr scored zero.

Student: Sir I don't understand.

Teacher: yes! If you fail you have scored zero! I don't want any question.

In the above class exchange, the teacher committed a speech error by saying, "eerrr" but repaired it when the student expressed his confusion.

Conversation 6**Phone conversation (insertion sequence)****Speaker A:** Hello!**Speaker B:** How are you?

Speaker A: I'm fine. Where are you?

Speaker B: Why do you ask?

Speaker A; I just want to know.

In the above conversation, speaker A opens a discourse and asks a question but speaker B did not answer the question directly instead she said, "*Why do you ask?*" and this is referred to as "insertion sequence".

The work of this device is prominent and so visible that it cannot be overlooked. Let us take an instance from conversation 3:

ST. 3: *Whose phone is that?***ST. 2:** *Miss Daberechi. It has a password***ST. 4:** *I want to make kinky, but I don't want it to cut my hair.***ST. 2:** *Did you see her Whatsapp? She was chatting a boy.*

The pronoun "*it*" in the second line was used to refer back to "phone" in the first line.

It was also used to refer back to "*kinky*" in the third line. This is also applicable in the last line where the pronouns "her" and she was used to refer back to "*Miss Daberechi*". All these were done in order to avoid redundancy.

Conversation 7 (A discourse between a teenager and 2 adults)**Teenager:** hey guys, can we talk about the plans for this weekend?**Adult 1:** sure, what's on your mind?**Teenager:** I was thinking it would be cool if we could go camping. It's been forever since we have had a family trip.**Adult 1:** Look, we appreciate your suggestion, but we have other responsibilities to take care of. Maybe we can plan a camping trip for another time.**Teenager:** But it feels like you never want any fun. It's all about work and chores.

Adult 2: Excuse me? We work to provide for this family, and you should show some respect. **Adult 1:** That's enough. We are not going to tolerate this attitude. You need to understand that there are priorities in life, and sometimes fun activities have to wait. From the above conversation, it is obvious that the two adults lost interest in the conversation because the teenager does not know what it means to shoulder

responsibilities and set priorities. He is obviously bothered about things he cannot even take care of and for the fact that he (teenager) initiated the talk, it was seen as disrespect.

Discussion of Findings

It was observed that *discourse moves*, particularly those performed by teachers, serve as significant reinforcement mechanisms within classroom conversations. In *Conversation 2*, for instance, a student responded correctly to a question posed by the teacher. The teacher's follow-up utterance, "very good," represents a classic example of a discourse follow-up move, which functions to affirm the student's response and results to a boost in the students' confidence. Such moves not only reinforce desirable contributions but also foster student participation by creating an encouraging interactional atmosphere. This finding addresses the second aspect of research question One and corroborates Danjuma (2021), who emphasized that role-based conversational exchanges are guided by contextual features such as age, educational attainment, and institutional roles. In this case, the teacher's role as an evaluator and facilitator is affirmed through their strategic use of reinforcement discourse moves.

Another significant finding is the role of talk initiation in conversation among students. The study found that for any discourse event to proceed, an initiating act must be performed by one of the participants. This aligns with Danjuma's (2021) assertion that role sharing influenced by sociocultural variables like age, gender, education, and social hierarchy determines turn-taking rights. For instance, in the data, certain conversational openings by younger students directed towards elders or authority figures were perceived as inappropriate or disrespectful, particularly in culturally sensitive contexts. This was highlighted in *Conversation 7*, where a teenager's conversational initiation was viewed unfavorably, reflecting broader cultural norms of conversational propriety and role expectations in Nigerian society. Thus, this addresses research question one by illustrating how sociocultural awareness shapes the management of talk initiation in interactional encounters.

The study also revealed that topic management is a sensitive aspect of interaction that can affect interpersonal relations and conversational flow. Specifically, when a speaker abruptly shifts or abandons a topic without clear negotiation, it may be interpreted as impolite, dismissive, or disruptive. In *Conversation 3*, *Student 4's* sudden topic shift was perceived as intrusive and inconsiderate, provoking an openly rude response from *Student 2*. This interaction illustrates the importance of topic continuity and conversational coherence in maintaining harmony and mutual respect in discourse. It also highlights how Nigerian students, like participants in other cultural settings, employ subtle conversational norms to

regulate topic management, ensuring that interactions remain socially appropriate and contextually relevant. This observation responds directly to research question three, shedding light on the ways participants manage conversational topics and the interpersonal consequences of violating such conventions.

Conclusion

Generally, the findings of this study affirm that discourse moves, talk initiation, and topic management are critical variables that structure student-student and student-teacher interactions within Nigerian classrooms. Through our exploration, we found out that peer influence and social hierarchies are key elements that played significant roles in shaping the discourse amongst students. The observations are consistent with the theoretical positions of scholars such as Danjuma (2021) and Hellman (2022), supported by broader discourse analysis literature, which underscores the role of cultural expectations, power dynamics, and role-based conversational norms in shaping interactional patterns.

Recommendations

More researches can be made on, interview discussions and conference presentations to investigate disciplinary norms, and argumentation strategies.

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