

## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIALOGUE, INTERVIEW, AND CONVERSATION AS COMMUNICATIVE FORMS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20055151>

**Annotation:** This article examines dialogue, interview, and everyday conversation as three related but distinct forms of verbal interaction. The study focuses on their structural organization, participant roles, communicative aims, pragmatic features, and linguistic markers. Although all three forms are based on turn-taking and interaction between speakers, they differ in their degree of planning, the distribution of communicative control, the role of questions, and the level of formality. The article argues that interview is usually a goal-oriented and institutionally organized form of discourse, conversation is a spontaneous and socially motivated form of communication, while dialogue can function as a broader communicative model that includes both natural and constructed exchanges. A comparative table and a conceptual scheme are provided to show the relationship between these forms.

**Keywords:** dialogue, interview, conversation, communication, discourse analysis, pragmatics, interaction, turn-taking.

### Introduction

Human communication is realized through different types of speech interaction. Among the most common forms are dialogue, interview, and everyday conversation. At first glance, these terms may seem close in meaning because each of them involves at least two participants, exchange of utterances, response to the previous statement, and cooperation between speakers. However, from the perspective of discourse analysis and pragmatics, these three communicative forms are not identical. They have different aims, structures, levels of spontaneity, and role relations.

The relevance of this topic is connected with the need to distinguish communicative forms more clearly in linguistic research. In many studies, the word dialogue is used as a general term for interaction, while interview and conversation are treated as particular types of spoken discourse. Nevertheless, each form has its own internal organization. For example, an interview is usually based on a question-answer pattern, whereas everyday conversation develops more freely and may include interruptions, repetitions, emotional reactions, and topic shifts. Dialogue, in a broader sense, may include both spontaneous and planned communication, and it can occur in real-life speech, literary texts, classroom discourse, media discourse, and dramatic works. The aim of this article is to compare dialogue, interview, and conversation according to several criteria: definition, communicative purpose, structure, participant roles, language features, and pragmatic functions. The study also shows how these forms overlap and why they should be differentiated in linguistic analysis.

In linguistic theory, spoken interaction is often studied within discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and pragmatics. Discourse analysis examines how language is organized above the sentence level, while pragmatics studies how meaning is created in context. *Dialogue, interview, and conversation* are especially important for these fields because they show how speakers coordinate their actions, negotiate meaning, and respond to each other in real time.



*Dialogue* may be understood as an exchange of utterances between two or more participants. Its basic feature is reciprocity: one speaker produces an utterance, and another reacts to it. Dialogue can be spontaneous, as in daily speech, or constructed, as in literary and dramatic texts. Therefore, dialogue is the broadest of the three terms. It can include everyday conversation, institutional dialogue, classroom dialogue, political debate, and interview interaction. *Interview* is a more specialized communicative form. It normally involves an interviewer and an interviewee. The interviewer asks questions, controls the topic, and guides the communicative process, while the interviewee provides information, opinions, explanations, or personal experience. Interviews may be journalistic, academic, sociological, professional, or entertainment-oriented. Unlike ordinary conversation, an interview usually has a clear purpose and planned structure. *Conversation* is generally considered a spontaneous and informal form of communication. It is not necessarily directed toward collecting specific information. Its main function is social interaction: maintaining relationships, sharing feelings, exchanging impressions, and creating interpersonal closeness. Conversation is often characterized by flexibility, emotionality, informal vocabulary, hesitation markers, incomplete sentences, overlapping speech, and frequent changes of topic.

*A dialogue* is an interactive speech form in which participants exchange utterances and jointly construct meaning. It can be formal or informal, planned or spontaneous. Its essential feature is the alternation of speaking turns. Dialogue is not limited to everyday speech; it may also appear in literature, film scripts, interviews, debates, educational discourse, and institutional communication.

*An interview* is a communicative event organized around the exchange of questions and answers. It is usually asymmetrical because one participant has the right to ask and manage the communicative direction, while the other is expected to answer. The interview is often designed to obtain information, reveal opinions, introduce a person, or clarify a public issue. For this reason, interview discourse is more controlled than ordinary conversation.

*A conversation* is a natural form of interpersonal communication. It is usually not strictly planned, and participants are free to introduce new topics, change the direction of talk, express emotions, interrupt each other, or use informal expressions. Conversation is less institutional and more socially oriented. It reflects everyday human interaction more directly than interviews or formally organized dialogues.

1-table. Comparative Table

Criterion	Dialogue	Interview	Conversation
General nature	Broad interactive form of speech	Institutional or semi-institutional communicative event	Spontaneous everyday interaction
Main purpose	Exchange and construction of meaning	Obtaining information, opinions, or explanations	Maintaining social contact and sharing experience
Structure	May be structured or semi-structured	Usually planned and question-answer based	Flexible, unplanned, and topic-changing
Participant roles	Relatively balanced or context-dependent	Fixed roles: interviewer and interviewee	Flexible roles; speakers alternate freely
Control of topic	Shared or contextually determined	Mostly controlled by interviewer	Shared and negotiated spontaneously



<b>Formality</b>	Can be formal or informal	Often formal or semi-formal	Mostly informal
<b>Language features</b>	Turn-taking, response, coherence	Questions, answers, clarifications, hedging	Fillers, repetitions, emotions, interruptions
<b>Typical examples</b>	Literary dialogue, classroom dialogue, debate	Radio, TV, academic, job, and research interviews	Friendly talk, family talk, everyday discussion

**Conceptual Scheme.** The following scheme summarizes the relationship between the three communicative forms. Dialogue is presented as the widest category, while interview and conversation are treated as specific realizations of dialogic interaction.

2- table. Conceptual Scheme

	<b>DIALOGUE</b> (general exchange)      interactive	
<b>INTERVIEW</b> (goal-oriented, structured)	↔ shared turn-taking ↔	<b>CONVERSATION</b> spontaneous, social
	<b>COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTION</b> meaning is jointly produced	

**Structural Comparison.** The structural organization of these forms is one of the most important differences. Dialogue may have different degrees of organization. In a literary text, dialogue can be carefully constructed by the author. In spontaneous speech, it may develop naturally. In formal settings, such as academic or political discussion, dialogue can follow a planned order. Therefore, dialogue is structurally flexible.

Interview has the clearest structure. It usually begins with an introduction, continues through a sequence of questions and answers, and ends with a closing remark. The interviewer decides which topic should be discussed, when the topic should change, and how the discussion should be developed. Even when the interview sounds natural, it usually remains goal-oriented.

Conversation is structurally the most open form. It may begin without a formal introduction and end without a clear conclusion. Topics may appear, disappear, and return later. Speakers may interrupt each other, complete each other’s sentences, laugh, hesitate, or use gestures and intonation to support meaning. This structural freedom makes conversation a highly natural and socially rich form of communication.

**Participant Roles and Interactional Balance.** Participant roles in dialogue are usually more balanced than in interview, although the degree of balance depends on the communicative situation. In a philosophical dialogue or debate, both sides may have equal rights to ask, answer, object, and explain. In classroom dialogue, however, the teacher may have more control than the student. Thus, dialogue does not always guarantee equality, but it is based on interaction and response.

In an interview, participant roles are more fixed. The interviewer is responsible for initiating topics, asking questions, and maintaining the direction of communication. The interviewee is expected to provide answers. This asymmetry does not mean that the interviewee is passive. On



the contrary, the interviewee may expand answers, avoid questions, express emotions, or redirect the discussion. However, the basic role distribution remains stable.

In conversation, roles are flexible. Any participant may ask questions, answer, introduce a new topic, or change the emotional tone of the discussion. The speaker-listener roles constantly alternate. This flexibility allows conversation to reflect natural social relations and interpersonal closeness.

**Communicative Purpose.** The communicative aim of dialogue is broad. It may be used to exchange ideas, solve problems, express disagreement, create artistic effect, or develop interpersonal understanding. Dialogue is therefore both a linguistic and social process. It is not only the exchange of words but also the joint construction of meaning.

The interview has a more specific purpose. Its main aim is to obtain information or reveal the position of the interviewee. In media discourse, interviews help audiences learn about public figures, cultural events, political opinions, or personal experiences. In academic research, interviews are used to collect data. In professional contexts, interviews are used to evaluate candidates or clarify competence. In all cases, the interview is purposeful and information-oriented.

Conversation is mainly relationship-oriented. People do not always converse in order to obtain new information. They may talk to show attention, express sympathy, reduce distance, entertain each other, or maintain social bonds. For example, small talk about weather, daily life, or personal impressions may have little informational value, but it performs an important social function.

**Linguistic Features.** The linguistic features of dialogue depend on context. Dialogue may include questions, answers, agreement, disagreement, clarification, repetition, and response markers. In written or literary dialogue, utterances are often more organized and stylistically polished. In oral dialogue, speech may be more spontaneous and contain pauses or hesitation.

Interview discourse is marked by interrogative structures, topic-management phrases, clarification requests, evaluative comments, and discourse markers. Interviewees often use hedging expressions such as I think, maybe, probably, or it seems in order to avoid overly categorical statements. Interviewers may use follow-up questions to obtain more precise information.

Everyday conversation contains many informal linguistic elements: fillers such as well, you know, and I mean; repetitions; unfinished utterances; emotional words; slang; and implicit references to shared knowledge. These features do not make conversation less meaningful. On the contrary, they show how naturally speakers adapt language to real social interaction.

**Pragmatic Features.** From a pragmatic point of view, dialogue, interview, and conversation differ in how speakers manage politeness, implicit meaning, and communicative responsibility. In dialogue, participants often negotiate meaning directly. They may challenge each other, ask for clarification, or build on previous utterances. The pragmatic effect depends on the purpose of the dialogue.

In interviews, politeness and strategic self-presentation are especially important. Interviewees often avoid absolute statements, especially when discussing uncertain or sensitive issues. They may use modal expressions, hedging, reformulation, or indirect answers. Interviewers also use pragmatic strategies: they may soften difficult questions, repeat key words, or frame a question in a neutral way.

Conversation relies heavily on context and shared background knowledge. Speakers may leave information implicit because they assume that the listener understands the situation. Humor, irony, emotional reactions, and non-verbal cues often play a central role. Therefore, the meaning of conversation cannot be fully understood without considering the social context.



### ***Similarities Between Dialogue, Interview, and Conversation***

Despite their differences, dialogue, interview, and conversation share several important features. First, all three are interactive. They require at least two communicative roles: speaker and listener. Second, all three are based on turn-taking. Even when one speaker dominates, communication develops through alternating contributions. Third, all three involve cooperation. Speakers must understand the previous utterance and respond appropriately. Fourth, all three forms may include questions, answers, explanations, evaluations, emotions, and implicit meanings.

Another similarity is that meaning is created jointly. A speaker's utterance receives its full communicative value only when the listener reacts to it. For example, a question in an interview becomes meaningful through the answer, and a joke in conversation becomes successful through the listener's reaction. This joint construction of meaning is the foundation of dialogic communication.

### ***Differences Between Dialogue, Interview, and Conversation***

The main difference lies in the degree of institutionalization. Interview is the most institutionalized because it normally follows a recognized format and serves a clear purpose. Conversation is the least institutionalized because it is spontaneous and socially motivated. Dialogue occupies an intermediate position: it may be institutional, artistic, educational, or informal depending on context.

Another difference concerns control. In interviews, control is usually concentrated in the hands of the interviewer. In conversation, control is distributed more equally and negotiated by participants. In dialogue, control depends on the situation and may be either balanced or hierarchical.

A further difference is connected with language. Interview language is often more careful and organized. Conversation language is more relaxed and emotionally expressive. Dialogue may combine both features, depending on whether it is natural, literary, or institutional.

### ***Discussion***

The comparison shows that dialogue, interview, and conversation should not be treated as identical terms. Dialogue is a general communicative category based on interaction and response. Interview is a structured and goal-oriented type of dialogue. Conversation is a spontaneous and socially oriented form of dialogic interaction. Thus, interview and conversation may be considered specific forms within the broader field of dialogue. This distinction is important for linguistic analysis. If an interview is analyzed as ordinary conversation, the researcher may ignore the role of institutional structure and interviewer control. If everyday conversation is analyzed as a formal dialogue, the researcher may miss its spontaneous and emotional nature. Therefore, correct classification helps explain language choices, pragmatic strategies, and the organization of speech.

The comparative approach also shows that communicative forms are not completely isolated from one another. A radio interview may become conversational when speakers joke, interrupt each other, or share personal stories. A conversation may become interview-like when one participant asks many questions. A dialogue in literature may imitate everyday conversation or formal interview. This overlap makes the study of communicative forms complex but also productive.

### ***Conclusion***

Dialogue, interview, and conversation are closely related forms of communication, but each has distinctive structural, functional, and pragmatic features. Dialogue is the broadest category and includes different types of interactive speech. Interview is characterized by planned organization, fixed participant roles, and information-oriented purpose. Conversation is



spontaneous, flexible, informal, and socially motivated. The article demonstrates that these forms can be compared according to structure, participant roles, purpose, language features, and pragmatic functions. The comparative table and conceptual scheme show that the three forms are connected by the principle of interaction but differentiated by their degree of formality, planning, and communicative control. Understanding these distinctions is useful for discourse analysis, pragmatics, media studies, language teaching, and research on spoken communication.

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