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TANNEN, Deborah

Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue and imagery in conversational discourse (2nd edition)

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Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue and Imagery in Conversational Discourse is a study by Deborah Tannen on the role of language in human relationships and strategies used in conversational discourse. With this book, Tannen makes a great contribution to the field of discourse by putting forward the idea of “a poetics of conversation”. The main idea of the book is that linguistic strategies, which are referred to as involvement strategies by Tannen and are conventionally considered to be literary, make up ordinary conversation, and are spontaneous and functional in everyday speech. By giving actual samples from everyday conversations, Tannen provides a solid foundation to this core idea of the book.

Tannen provides an interesting title to her book as usual and manages to attract the attention of readers familiar with her previous work which are similar in style. Actually, the book addresses different audiences and is a multi-purpose study. It has been an essential resource for researchers who have been using it for their academic studies and other researches. Furthermore, teachers have used it as an integral part of their discourse classes and students all around the world have used it as a comprehensive textbook in language programs since its first publication. With her fluent narration, Tannen makes the book easy to read for both the experienced researchers of discourse analysis and the new starters in the field. In this respect, the book is a must-read for all those who are interested in discourse studies, specifically conversational discourse.

The book consists of seven chapters in total. As the name of the book suggests, Tannen focuses especially on the three strategies of repetition, dialogue, and imagery. Each one of these core strategies is explained thoroughly in separate chapters. To be more specific, Tannen discusses repetition in chapter three, dialogue in chapter four, and imagery and details in chapter five. Therefore, it can be said that Tannen’s ordering of these chapters follows a

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path from the sound and music of language to meaning and sense. One interesting part of the book is that Tannen manages to attract the readers' attention to the topic of each chapter by starting them with quotes from renowned works of famous authors.

Tannen starts by giving the general aim of the book in chapter one, *Introduction to first edition and introduction to second edition*. Firstly, Tannen sets the ground for the basis of the book by giving an overview of chapters in the previous edition which was published in 1989, and explains the basic concepts related to the three involvement strategies: dialogue, discourse and repetition. Secondly, as this study is related to the field of discourse analysis, the term of "discourse" is explained in detail as "*being nothing less than language itself*" and therefore "*it is by nature interdisciplinary*". In addition, Tannen emphasizes the importance of the term "intertextuality", provides a comprehensive summary on it, and points out that this term can be used to describe the entire second edition of the book. Last but not least, the readers get the opportunity to explore research findings that have been obtained since the publication of the first edition, and get a better and clearer understanding of the topic through recontextualized chapters. All in all, these reshaped chapters with new updates make the content much more easier to receive.

In the second chapter *Involvement in discourse*, Tannen focuses on how involvement is linked to linguistic strategies in nature as part of a project exploring the relationship between conversational and literary discourse. In this respect, the studies and ideas of various linguists and researchers are presented to allow the readers the opportunity to have a clearer understanding on the topic. Firstly, Tannen explains her view on "involvement" by showing the difference between Gumperz (1982) and Chafe's ideas (1982, 1984). According to Gumperz (1982), as Tannen agrees, involvement defines an active and observable participation in conversation. However, Chafe suggests that involvement "*describes a more psychological and internal state which shows itself in observable linguistic phenomena*" (1982). By providing these two opposing claims and his own ideas in the matter, Tannen enables the readers to fully grasp the core of the topic before exploring it further with examples from everyday life. Before concluding the chapter, Tannen lists involvement strategies in two groups: sound and meaning. Each strategy is explained shortly, giving their basics. However, as can be seen clearly in the title of the book, Tannen takes the three strategies of repetition, imagery and dialogue as the basis and explores what roles language play in human relationships and conversations according to these three strategies. The chapter ends with an emphasis on how scenes and music creates meaning and involvement in discourse through linguistic strategies.

In the third chapter *Repetition in conversation: toward a poetics of talk*, Tannen aims to answer the question: *Why is there repetition in conversation?* To achieve this, Tannen deals with production, comprehension, connection and interaction. Tannen also explains pre patterning by exemplifying cases of fixed expressions and collocations. In this case, Tannen supports the view that combining fixed expressions with other linguistic items without losing their meaning is possible and common. In fact, based on her own experiences, Tannen claims that these altered forms convey meaning just as accurately as the fixed expressions do. Tannen further elaborates the topic of fixity by its dimensions: form, context, time. This chapter also deals with repetition and variation in conversation and their functions which are explained thoroughly. In this context, Tannen provides a set of short conversational excerpts taken from actual conversations for each function allowing the readers to internalize the information which might be similar to their own everyday experiences. Before the conclusion of the chapter, Tannen also divides the range of repetition under some categories.

It is important to note here that the relationship between intertextuality and repetition is questioned in this chapter again.

As the title itself suggests, Tannen discusses about forming dialogues in conversation in chapter four "*Oh talking voice that is so sweet*": *constructing dialogue in conversation*. In relation with the topic of the previous chapter, Tannen highlights the fact that people have conversations and talk about situations by repeating words within a discourse. Therefore, the polyphonic nature of dialogue is discussed to be crucial in this chapter. The main argument of the chapter is that even though speech uttered in one context is repeated later on, it is basically changed and only reported accurately. To prove this argument, Tannen provides solid examples of casual conversations from narratives recorded by various participants to her project. In this respect, dialogues among the participants, their families and friends with clear explanations are presented. As a result, the readers get the chance to deal with real examples. Tannen concludes the chapter by expressing her views on the term "reported speech", how it has an abstract basis regarding interaction, and how constructing dialogue creates involvement as dialogue is not just merely a kind of report.

In the fifth chapter *Imagining worlds: imagery and detail in conversation and other genres*, Tannen describes the role of details and images in creating involvement. The meaning of the word "imagine" is made clear as it is used both for images, and the sense of individual imagination suggested by Friedrich (1986). By presenting a story-within-a-story (Hymes, 1973, as cited by Rosen, 1988) at the beginning of the chapter, Tannen manages to attract the attention of her readers as she does not reveal her reason for adding this text and comment on it just yet. In fact, she refers to this mysterious story only at the conclusion part which helps readers keep their attention alive through the chapter. In addition, Tannen defines the terms of internal and external evaluation and emphasizes her own views that images provide internal evaluation. In this chapter, Tannen also explains how details contribute to what one's saying and enhances imagination by providing a short narrative from Greek women regarding the Americans. With these examples, Tannen seeks to answer the question: *Where do details appear in stories?* Chapter five ends with the importance of details in conversations being stated once again as the words would only be words without the details to enrich them and invoke imagination. Like the previous chapters, this one also includes various samples from ordinary conversations. Combined with Tannen's fluent narrative, these samples make the book intriguing for the audience to keep reading.

At the beginning of chapter six *Involvement strategies in consort: literary nonfiction and political oratory*, Tannen focuses on how the three strategies of repetition, constructed dialogue and imagery are combined with each other as well as other strategies mentioned in the second chapter to create involvement in conversational discourse. The main aim of this chapter is to present the inseparability of emotion and thought by a focus on nonconversational genres. To provide this, Tannen studies thoroughly on samples of an academic written text and a political speech including involvement strategies. In relation to this, Tannen also clarifies strategies occurring in written discourse which seek to reflect the actual meaning as it is portrayed in spoken discourse. Similarly, Heimerdinger supports the same idea in his discourse studies of the Hebrew language, arguing that these strategies are used in written language just as they are expected to occur in spontaneous conversations (1999, p. 47). Last but not least, Tannen identifies that there is a relationship between involvement strategies and oratorical power, and she simply refers back to the examples presented in the previous chapters to explain this relationship, thereby moving on to the next and the final chapter of the book.

Tannen concludes the book with the last chapter *Afterword: toward a humanistic linguistics* for this study is intended to be a contribution to the field of humanistic linguistics. Therefore, Tannen underlines the fact that linguistics should have the characteristics of being not only humanistic, but also scientific and aesthetic. To sum up, Tannen emphasizes that a humanistic approach to discourse analysis is inevitable as it is multi-disciplinary and not bound on only one type of approach. This way, Tannen reconnects her ideas regarding intertextuality, which she has presented in chapter one, with discourse analysis and humanistic linguistics.

After the main chapters are finished, Tannen presents “a list of major sources of examples and background information about their collection and choice” which has been used to gather data for this comprehensive study. Transcription conventions and Greek transliteration are also explained in detail to provide detailed explanations of the sample conversations presented in the book in general. This part of the book ends with the *Notes* section in which Tannen adds some further explanations shedding light on the references and quotes provided throughout the book.

All in all, this book is a very useful resource for researchers and learners interested in discourse studies. Tannen provides her readers with a smooth and clear framework for understanding the role of language in human relationships and its place in everyday conversations with this user-friendly book. Furthermore, it shows how Tannen’s studies on the topic have expanded since the publication of the first edition. Like most of Tannen’s other books, this book is fluent and natural regarding the language used in narration. To agree with Charles L. Brigg’s endorsement regarding this second edition of *Talking Voices*, Tannen should be applauded for pulling together such a stimulating and easy-to-read work.

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