

TYPES OF INFORMAL TEXTS

INTERVIEWS

In many interview situations the speakers do not have equal status, for example in a job interview. However in a radio interview where a speaker is being consulted as an expert then the speaker and the presenter have equal status

The structure of turn-taking is based on adjacency pairs

It will have a clear purpose

MONOLOGUES

A piece of speech or writing that is produced by a single person

The most common forms are those which accompany sports events on TV and radio. Other examples are those from important events like natural disasters, royal weddings and state funerals.

The function of a commentary is to describe a sequence of actions, to give a viewer background information and to entertain

Live coverage means presenters must describe and comment on events as they happen, therefore they must speak spontaneously.

UNSCRIPTED COMMENTARIES

Radio commentators must use language to convey an exact description of developing action

Turn-taking is orderly like an interview

Often there will be two people involved; one as the commentator and one who advises and summarises e.g. a sportsperson

UNSCRIPTED COMMENTARIES

CONVERSATIONS

Phatic communication-builds rapport and relationship

Exchange of adjacency pairs-politeness

Relay information

Equal turn taking expected within this mode of dialogue

SPOKEN NARRATIVES

The dominant speaker is the storyteller

The opening and closing of the narrative provide a framework for the story

The speaker needs to monitor audience response, with discourse particles such as 'you know' to ensure there is no breakdown in communication.

Interruptions effect the smooth development of the story, and can destroy the atmosphere and momentum

Prosodic features are used to emphasise certain points in the narrative

SPOKEN NARRATIVES

The speaker may begin by using *a self-related comment* to explain their relationship to the story

Narrative techniques such as *characterisation* through the use of direct speech can be used for dramatic effect

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The purpose is to persuade or to inform (or both)

Visual elements/graphology-layout, logos, typographical variations, logos, colour

Form – does it adopt a particular style of writing, such as a personal letter

Structure (begin with a ‘hook’ and end with a ‘signature line’)

Attitudes to the reader/audience- use of informal tone, flattery, use of direct address (‘you’ ‘your’) designed to involved the readers and make them feel they are being personally addressed.

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Lexis- may use brand names, catchphrase, slogans, conversational language, everyday expressions, clichés, positive lexis, comparatives, superlatives, puns, word play and non-standard spelling

Syntax- use of short sentences, often grammatically incomplete. Use of imperatives.

Phonology- rhythm, alliteration and rhyme

Content- use of stereotyping, humour and intertextuality (a text includes a reference to another text)

JOURNALS

The manner may be formal (work record) or informal (a personal record of ideas). Usually they are private and not for publication but novelists and historians can write them for publication.

Lexis-can be subject specific or very personal. There are verbs in past tense and lots of personal pronouns as the text is related to the writer.

Syntax-reflects the writer. There may be ellipsis and the rambling structure of speech. Declarative sentences will be most common, but imperatives and interrogatives will also feature. Compound sentence structures.

Factual diaries vary little from person to person, but personal diaries are idiosyncratic, revealing a lot about the person keeping it.

BLOGS AND WEBSITE ARTICLES

Email is a form of written communication that is close to spoken language

Lexis is conversational with frequent use of colloquialisms and contractions. There is more of a tolerance for spelling errors. Use of abbreviations.

Syntax- loosely constructed sentences, like the natural flow of speech. Punctuation may be left out and lower case letters used, in order to type messages more quickly. Use of ellipsis.

EMAIL AND BLOGS

Prosodic features- Upper case letters to indicate emphasis, non-standard spelling to suggest pronunciation and punctuation marks to indicate intonation

Body language is expressed through emoticons.

However it can be different to speech in that phatic communication is left out in the interests of speed and communication.

NARRATIVES PRODUCED BY A WRITER

Some examples; comic strips, play scripts for pantomimes and comedy sketches

Expression is mostly personal in nature, but with a wider more diverse audience in mind than a journal. The audience is not usually directly engaged but authors draw the reader into the fictional world they create.

Lexis- links to the characters, locations and relationships created by the author

Most informal narratives are in the present tense

NARRATIVES PRODUCED BY A WRITER

The function of a narrative text is to entertain, but they can also educate and inform

Narratives are chronological, but authors may not relate events in order (they may use flashbacks and retrospective reflection)

The dialogue in plays will be more formally structured than in everyday conversation, but the author will want it to sound like spontaneous speech.