

SOCIAL CONVERSATION AT THE WORK PLACE

by

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ABSTRACT

In order to promote integration at the workplace, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems should support users to engage in social conversation. Systems such as TALK and CHAT, especially designed for the purpose of social conversation, make use of pre-stored text as a rate enhancement technique. Research into relevant conversational topics within contexts such as the workplace can make the use of pre-stored text for conversation more effective.

For the present study, a total of 3 hours, 47 minutes of social conversation of 12 nondisabled participants across two employment contexts were recorded on 11 specific days. The samples were analysed for topics referenced under the three referential frames time, person and content. Results indicate that 'present', 'self' and 'food' were the most frequently referenced categories under each of the three frames. Further analysis of the content frame indicated the presence of topics, which were frequently referenced and referenced consistently across the 11 samples, while other topics were found to be referenced with a high frequency only in some samples. Comparisons are made between these findings and previous research into meal-break topics at the workplace. Overlap in especially the more frequently referenced topics suggests the presence of topics, which are generally appropriate to workplaces characterised by the Western culture. These topics seem to be influenced by participants adhering to basic conversational rules and principles, but also by the context of conversations. Knowledge of both generally appropriate topics, as well as conversational rules can aid AAC specialists in pre-storing text conducive to social conversation at the workplace. However, ecological inventories of specific work contexts are always necessary in order to optimise access to relevant topics.

KEY WORDS

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), conversational analysis, employment, integration, little or no functional speech (LNFS), pre-stored text, rate of conversation, social conversation, topic, workplace,

OPSOMMING

Ten einde integrasie by die werksplek te bevorder, behoort aanvullende en alternatiewe kommunikasie (AAK) sisteme die gebruiker in staat te stel om aan sosiale gespreksvoering deel te neem. Sisteme soos TALK en CHAT wat spesifiek vir die doel van sosiale gespreksvoering ontwerp is, gebruik vooraf gestoorde teks as 'n tempoversnellingstegniek vir gesprekke. Navorsing rakende relevante gesprekstemas binne kontekste soos die werksplek, kan die gebruik van vooraf gestoorde teks effektiewer maak.

Vir die huidige studie is 'n totaal van 3 ure, 47 minute van sosiale gesprekke deur 12 nie-gestremde deelnemers opgeneem. Die opnames is op 11 spesifieke dae by twee werksopsette gemaak, waarna dit volgens drie verwysingsraamwerke nl. tyd, persoon en inhoud geanaliseer is. Resultate dui daarop, dat 'hede', 'self' en 'voedsel' telkens die drie kategorieë onder elk van die drie raamwerke is waarna die meeste verwys word. Verdere analise van die inhousoverwysingsraamwerk dui daarop, dat daar temas bestaan waarna dikwels en konstant oor die 11 dae verwys is, terwyl ander temas net op sommige dae met 'n hoë frekwensie voorgekom het. Vergelykings tussen hierdie bevindinge en vorige navorsing oor die gesprekstemas tydens etenstye by die werksplek is gemaak. Oorvleueling in veral die temas waarna dikwels verwys is, dui daarop dat daar sekere temas is wat oor die algemeen geskik is vir gebruik binne werksplekke wat deur die Westerse kultuur gekenmerk word. Die feit dat deelnemers basiese gespreksreëls en beginsels aanhang blyk 'n invloed op die temas te hê. Die konteks waarbinne gesprekke plaasgevind het, het egter ook dikwels die tema beïnvloed. Kennis oor algemeen toepaslike temas sowel as kennis oor basiese gespreksreëls kan AAK spesialiste in staat stel om teks vooraf te stoor wat sosiale gespreksvoering in die werksplek sal bevorder. Ekologiese inventarisse van spesifieke werkskontekste sal egter steeds nodig bly om toegang tot relevante temas te optimaliseer.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Aanvullende en alternatiewe kommunikasie (AAK), gespreksanalise, indiensneming, integrasie, min of geen funksionele spraak (MGFS), onderwerp, sosiale gespreksvoering, tempo van gesprek, vooraf gestoorde teks, werksplek

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(Deut 1: 30-31)

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