

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES/INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MAIN EXAMINATION 2008/2009

COURSE : CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS
COURSE CODE : ENG 303
DURATION : TWO (2) HOURS
INSTRUCTION : i) ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS IN ALL, QUESTION 1 AND ANY OTHER.
ii) EACH QUESTION IS WORTH 30 MARKS

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QUESTION 1 – COMPULSORY

Using the excerpt below, discuss the characteristic structures and sequences of a conversation.

Sue: Hi.
Jill: Hi.
Sue: So, how have you been.
Jill: Not so well really.
Sue: Oh I'm sorry to hear that.
Jill: How about you?
Sue: Not too bad, I guess.
Jill: Yes, one muddles through.
Sue: By the way, I'm looking for Al.
Jill: I just saw him at Lou's.
Sue: Really? Who else was there?
Jill: Fred.
Sue: Wow. Are you busy right now?

Jill: Not really.
Sue: Would you do me a favor?

Jill: Sure.
Sue: Would you call Al for me?
Jill: Sure. No problem.
Sue: Great. Thanks.
Jill: No problem.

QUESTION 2

- i) What is turn-taking? [5marks]
- ii) What are the criteria for recognizing turns in a conversation? [25marks]

QUESTION 3

Study the passages below and

- i) identify the discourse markers used therein. [10marks]
- ii) Discuss the significant role of each discourse marker you have identified. [20marks]

This extract is from a lengthy conversation between three friends on holiday who are cooking eggs for breakfast.

ACTIVITY

Study the following conversation, which has been taken from Christie (1989: 51)

1m

J. *Oh, this is beautiful!*

R. *Oh, yes, that's right.*

J. *Is that how you . . . you wanted it hard boiled, didn't you?*

R. *Yes, that's what I call hard.*

J. *Well, do you want to have this one?*

R. *No, you have that one, 'cause this one must be harder, mustn't it?*

J. *Doesn't necessarily follow.*

F. *Yes, surely it . . . oh, you're right . . . it doesn't.*

J. *Depends which one went in first.*

R. *Yes, you're right, well look, in a minute we'll know.*

Now consider a written account of the conversation.

1n

Fran, Jim and Ros went away together one Easter holiday weekend. They spent the first night in a holiday cabin they had rented. In the morning, having slept well they got up and prepared breakfast in the tiny kitchen.

Ros and Jim both decided to have a boiled egg, while Fran, who didn't like eggs, settled simply for a toasted Easter bun and coffee. The breakfast preparations proceeded very cordially, though some confusion was caused by the fact that Ros placed the two eggs in the boiling water at different times. Subsequently, she was not able to tell which egg had been in the water longer, though she particularly wanted a hard-boiled egg herself.

Ros removed one egg from the saucepan in which it was cooking and gave it to Jim who discovered it was quite hard. Ros concluded that the other egg must be hard too, though as Jim pointed out, she had no reason to believe this, since there was no way of knowing which egg had been placed in the water first. The matter was only resolved when the removal of the second egg from the water revealed that it was as hard as the first egg.

QUESTION 4

Discuss Brown and Levinson's concept of face. [30marks]