



PREFERRED AND DISPREFERRED RESPONSES IN DRAMATIC DIALOGUE

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Abstract

This article examines the linguistic nature of dramatic dialogue and analyzes the role of stimulating and reactive replicas in the organization of dramatic communication. The study explores the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic relationships between replicas as the fundamental units of dialogue and discusses their contribution to the continuity and coherence of communicative interaction. Particular attention is paid to the classification of dramatic dialogues into preferred-response and dispreferred-response types, highlighting their structural and functional characteristics. Through examples from Uzbek dramatic texts, the article demonstrates how different types of reactive replicas influence the rhythm of communication, interpersonal relations, and the development of dramatic conflict. The findings show that dramatic dialogue functions not only as a means of information exchange but also as a complex communicative mechanism that reflects social, psychological, and pragmatic aspects of interaction. The study contributes to the linguistic understanding of dramatic discourse and provides insights into the communicative organization of dramatic texts.

Keywords: Dramatic dialogue, dramatic discourse, dialogue structure, replica, stimulating replica, reactive replica, preferred-response dialogue, dispreferred-response dialogue, communication, pragmatics, discourse analysis, dramatic text, speech interaction, communicative strategy, conflict dynamics.

Introduction

In determining the linguistic nature of dialogue, many scholars primarily recognize minimal units consisting of two replicas, namely the pair of a stimulating replica and a reactive replica, as the fundamental dialogic unit.



Therefore, dialogue is regarded as an integrated communicative whole composed of two or more replicas that are semantically, pragmatically, and syntactically interconnected [1, p. 352]. Having investigated the lexical, grammatical, intonational, and communicative aspects of dialogue, I.P. Svyatogor identifies the structural-grammatical criterion as the leading aspect among these research directions [2].

Replicas are generally classified into two types: stimulating replicas and reactive replicas. In most cases, the first replica functions as a stimulating replica, whereas the second appears as a reactive replica. This is because the reactive replica usually contains additional information, a question, or an attitude that continues the conversation. Thus, the close interconnection between replicas ensures the continuity and natural linguistic flow of dialogue and determines its logical development [2].

Although dialogue and monologue are often interpreted as opposing forms of speech, defining their precise boundaries is rather complex, since these forms possess both distinctive and overlapping characteristics. While monologic speech is traditionally regarded as an individual form of discourse, it is in fact based on an “internal dialogue” with the listener, because the speaker constructs the speech while anticipating possible questions, objections, or responses from the audience [3, p. 160]. In determining the linguistic nature of dialogue, some scholars emphasize the number of participants and the continuity of interaction, whereas others regard thematic unity as the primary criterion. It is well known that dialogic and polylogic forms of speech are generally contrasted with monologue as an individual speech form. This is because contemporary scholarship interprets dialogue and polylogue as forms of communication involving more than one participant. However, the term dialogue derives from the Greek words *dia* (“through,” “by means of”) and *logos* (“word,” “speech”), where the element *dia* does not denote the numeral two but rather the exchange of words. Consequently, some scholars regard the term polylogue as a later-developed concept.

The complexity of dialogue as a linguistic phenomenon stems from the fact that it combines several levels of communication within a single speech event. Unlike isolated utterances, dialogic speech is inherently interactive and context-dependent, requiring participants to continuously interpret, evaluate, and respond



to one another's contributions. For this reason, the meaning of a replica cannot be fully understood outside the communicative environment in which it occurs. Every utterance enters into semantic and pragmatic relations with preceding and subsequent replicas, creating a chain of interconnected meanings that contributes to the coherence of discourse. Such interdependence distinguishes dialogue from other forms of speech and highlights its role as a collaborative process of meaning construction.

Furthermore, dialogue is characterized by a high degree of spontaneity and adaptability. Speakers constantly adjust their linguistic choices according to the reactions of their interlocutors, the communicative goals of the interaction, and the social circumstances surrounding the conversation. As a result, dialogic communication often contains incomplete sentences, repetitions, interruptions, ellipses, and other features that reflect the dynamic nature of real-time speech production. These characteristics are particularly evident in dramatic discourse, where dialogue is designed not only to imitate natural conversation but also to perform artistic and communicative functions within the structure of a literary work.

Another important aspect of dialogue concerns its role in the expression of interpersonal relations. Through the exchange of replicas, speakers negotiate social status, express agreement or disagreement, establish solidarity, and manage interpersonal distance. Consequently, dialogue serves as a valuable source for examining the social and psychological dimensions of communication. In dramatic texts, these functions become even more prominent because the audience gains access to characters' intentions, emotions, and attitudes primarily through their verbal interaction. The choice of linguistic forms, the sequencing of replicas, and the strategies employed by speakers all contribute to the construction of character identity and the development of dramatic action.

Moreover, contemporary discourse studies emphasize that dialogue should be analyzed not only from a structural perspective but also in relation to communicative effectiveness. The success of dialogic interaction depends on the extent to which participants recognize each other's intentions and produce responses that are relevant to the ongoing communicative situation. This principle explains why the relationship between stimulating and reactive replicas occupies



a central position in dialogue studies. The way a reactive replica responds to a preceding stimulus determines the direction, rhythm, and communicative outcome of the interaction. Accordingly, the investigation of response patterns provides important insights into the mechanisms through which dialogue achieves coherence and communicative continuity.

Therefore, the linguistic study of dialogue extends beyond the analysis of individual utterances and encompasses the broader processes of interaction, interpretation, and meaning negotiation. Such an approach makes it possible to reveal the structural organization of dialogic discourse, identify the communicative functions of replicas, and explain how dialogue operates as a fundamental mechanism of human communication. These considerations are particularly relevant to dramatic discourse, where the interaction between stimulating and reactive replicas forms the basis for the development of plot, characterization, and conflict.

Dialogue is a type of speech that emerges through the exchange of replicas between two or more participants in communication. The constituent parts of a replica may take various forms, ranging from a single word to a complex sentence or, in some cases, even an entire text. In defining the linguistic nature of dramatic dialogue, attention must be paid not only to the linguistic units employed but also to extralinguistic factors such as the stage situation, the specification of time and place, the relationships between characters, and their shared experience. These multilayered factors enrich the content of dramatic communication while simultaneously making it more difficult to establish rigid boundaries for dialogue. In world linguistics, dramatic dialogue is divided into two main types according to the principle of preference organization. This classification is based on criteria that determine the predominance of socially acceptable and conventional response forms that ensure the smooth continuation of interaction:

1. Preferred-response dialogue;

2. Dispreferred-response dialogue [4, pp. 57-101].

A preferred-response dialogue is characterized by the immediate provision of an expected and socially acceptable response to a stimulating replica. In such dialogues, the reactive replica is usually brief, affirmative in meaning, and expressed without delay. As a result, the rhythm of communication is rapid,



communicative tension remains low, and the conversation proceeds to the next semantic stage without obstruction.

S → R (expected) → Fast rhythm → Continuous communication

For example:

Suvon: Peace be upon you and God's mercy. Fine, fine... Please, have a seat here.
(To Qo'chqor.) Bring a bowl of water.

Qo'chqor (rising from his seat): Yes, sir.

(Sharof Boshbekov, "The Iron Woman")

In this dialogue excerpt, Suvon's stimulating replica, "Bring a bowl of water," expresses a request naturally made by a person occupying a socially superior position. In such a situation, the expected reactive response is an affirmation and an immediate willingness to carry out the command. Qo'chqor's prompt reply, "Yes, sir," perfectly corresponds to the principle of preferred-response dialogue, as the reactive replica is brief, direct, and delivered without hesitation. This reaction accelerates the rhythm of the dialogue and allows the stage action to develop continuously. Since communicative tension is low in this type of dialogue, there is no resistance, refusal, or additional explanation. The expected form of response ensures the unobstructed transition of communication to the next semantic stage and contributes to the natural continuation of social relations between the characters.

A dispreferred-response dialogue is a type of dialogue characterized by a reactive replica that deviates from the expected and socially acceptable response to a stimulating replica. Instead of direct affirmation, the response may involve refusal, answering with another question, or changing the topic. In such dialogues, the reactive replica is generally not expressed through short syntactic constructions. Consequently, the rhythm of communication slows down, communicative tension increases, the transition to the next stage of conversation becomes more complicated, and the possibility of conflict intensification emerges.

S → R (unexpected) → Slow rhythm → Potential conflict

For example:

Qo'chqor: Olimtoy, is it true that the water of the Black Sea is really black?

Olimjon: Did you come out just to ask that?



(Sharof Boshbekov, “The Iron Woman”)

In this dialogue excerpt, Qo‘chqor’s question, “Olimtoy, is it true that the water of the Black Sea is really black?” functions as a stimulating replica that seeks to continue communication in an informative direction. The natural and expected response would be a short, clear, factual answer in the form of “yes” or “no.” In this situation, the preferred-response model would require precisely such a reaction to ensure the rapid and uninterrupted continuation of the conversation. However, Olimjon’s reply, “Did you come out just to ask that?” deviates from this expected model and therefore functions as a dispreferred reactive replica. Instead of providing information, he responds with a question that casts doubt on Qo‘chqor’s intention. As a result, the reactive component moves beyond a simple syntactic form of affirmation or negation and becomes a construction that introduces a semantic shift into the interaction. Consequently, the rhythm of the dialogue slows down, and the semantic progression of communication is momentarily interrupted because the original question remains unanswered. This increases the likelihood of misunderstanding or the escalation of minor conflict in the subsequent stage of the conversation.

In conclusion, the linguistic nature of dramatic dialogue is formed through the close semantic and syntactic interrelationship between stimulating and reactive replicas. It functions not only as a means of information exchange but also as a complex communicative unit that reveals social relations, psychological states, and the dynamics of conflict between characters. Therefore, the study of dramatic dialogue through an integrated framework combining structural, semantic, functional, and pragmatic criteria provides a solid scholarly foundation for evaluating it as a central organizing component of literary texts.

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