

# THE GENERIC STRUCTURE POTENTIAL OF AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION'S TRANSACTIONAL CONVERSATIONS

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**Abstract:** This article explores the application of Halliday and Hasan's Generic Structure Potential (GSP) framework. By analyzing 20 conversations through qualitative and quantitative methods, the study identifies the American Psychological Association's transactional conversations following linearity with obligatory elements consisting of "initiating", "presenting the topic", "main discussion", "conclusion" and "call to action" which are complemented by optional elements such as "guest greeting", "specific concerns", "theoretical implications", and so on. These elements follow a logical sequence and allow for some iteration in the main discussion or serve to make the content comprehensible and engaging for any audience who are concerned about psychology topics, regardless of their prior knowledge of psychology. Analysis reveals the following overall GSP of the American Psychological Association's transactional conversations:

[<INT>PT>^(GG)]^ [<MD>^ {SC^PF^CS}^ (ES^PA^MI^TI^FO)^∪]^ [<CON>^<CA>]

*Keywords:* Transactional conversation, genre analysis, generic structure potential, American Psychological Association

## 1. Introduction

Genre analysis offers a framework for understanding the structure and function of conversations within specific communicative contexts. According to Martin (1984), genre is "a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" (p. 25). Halliday and Hasan's (1985) Generic Structure Potential (GSP) framework further expands this concept, identifying obligatory and optional elements that define the organization of a genre. By applying GSP, researchers can uncover the typical patterns and structures that characterize professional conversations, providing a deeper understanding of how language functions to achieve specific interaction purposes.

Interaction is of crucial significance in daily life. Regardless of who you are, you are bound to engage with individuals. According to Tajeddin and Alemi (2018), spoken interaction genres relate to conversations that occur between two (dialogic) or multiple (multiparty) participants in everyday or institutional contexts. There is a diverse range of genre interactions, including job interviews, small talk, classroom discourse, and service encounters. Each type presents a distinct structure, and various genres typically possess their own unique characteristics and stages. Despite the extensive application of GSP in analyzing traditional spoken and written texts, there is a gap in research on its application to digital media, particularly professional conversations conducted online. The increasing popularity of podcasts and other forms of digital communication highlights

the need to explore how the GSP framework applies to these contexts. Specifically, how professional conversations, such as those in APA's podcasts, adapt the structural patterns of traditional transactional interactions to suit an online, audience-oriented format.

The American Psychological Association (APA) is the primary scientific and academic organization that represents the field of psychology in the United States. It possesses a membership of over 157,000 individuals, including researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students. Its YouTube channel "Speaking of Psychology" is an audio podcast series that showcases contemporary noteworthy psychological research. In each audio, the transactional conversations between host and guest aim to assist listeners in applying the principles of psychology to their daily lives. The choice to use APA's conversations can be explained by two considerations. First, the topics of APA's conversations are related to the field of psychology which is one of the most developed and precise branches of knowledge. This opens a rich foundation for understanding the structure of APA's transactional conversations reliably. Second, the participants in these conversations are experts and professionals, often leading figures in their respective fields, which adds depth and credibility to the interactions. These two factors make APA's transactional conversations a valuable and fertile source for investigating the generic structure of transactional conversations within a professional and specialized context.

Overall, this article seeks to answer the question: *How is the GSP framework reflected in APA's transactional conversations on YouTube?* Understanding these structural elements not only contributes to genre analysis literature but also offers practical implications for enhancing the effectiveness of professional digital interactions.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Genre and Generic Structure Potential**

#### **2.1.1 Definition of genre**

The concept of genre has attracted significant interest in multiple fields of study (Alyousef & Alyahya, 2018). It is a crucial concept, providing a framework for comprehending the organization and application of language across diverse contexts. Given the circumstances, scholars have proposed numerous genre definitions and approaches to genre analysis (Hyland, 1998; Martin, 1984; Miller, 1984; Paltridge, 2012; Swales, 1990). According to Martin and White (2005), genre in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) represents the systems of social processes that constitute a culture (as cited in Nagao, 2019). In general, genres are ways people "get things done" through their use of spoken and written discourse (Paltridge, 2012, p. 62). With such a variety of definitions of the term genre outlined above, it is crucial to consider how it is used in practice. Because it involves the examination of how genres are created and used in given communicational contexts, genre analysis offers a further understanding of how language, form, and function interact. Therefore, in the next part, the article discusses genre analysis which affords profound knowledge concerning the interaction of language, form, and function, particularly as applied in certain communicational contexts.

### 2.1.2 Generic Structure Potential

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), genre analysis is also often enriched by tools such as Halliday and Hasan’s (1985) Generic Structure Potential (GSP) which helps identify genre-specific patterns. The framework of GSP, therefore, describes the obligatory and optional elements within a genre, as well as the sequence and iteration of the elements. It can be inferred that what determines the generic type of one text are the obligatory elements it involves. We can describe a text belonging to a particular genre only if it is conclusive of all the obligatory elements required by that genre type. The generic structure can be also regarded as genre staging, as it caters to sequencing and formalization within a cultural experience. Halliday and Hasan (1985) introduced the concept of GSP, which suggests some elements of a text’s structure are: (1) Obligatory elements - What elements must occur?; (2) Optional elements - What elements may occur?; (3) Sequencing of elements - What arrangement of elements is obligatory and optional?; (4) Iteration - How often may the elements occur?

The generic structure potential catalog is used for analyzing the structure and elements of the interaction of the discourses being investigated. Hassan (1985) gave some symbols with which a text can be written and interpreted in a genetically coded form, some of these symbols of generic structure potential include: ^, [ ], ( ), { } and <>. ^ - This is a caret sign that shows the sequence. The GSP formula of *sales encounter* introduced by Hasan is illustrated in Figure 1.

[(<Greeting> ^) (Sale initiating) ∪] [(Sale Enquiry ∪) {Sale Request ^ Sale Compliance } ∪ ^ ] Sale ^ Purchase ^ Purchase Closure (^ Finish)

**Figure 1**

*Hasan’s GSP Formula of Sales Encounter (as cited in Fakhruddin & Hassan, 2015)*

( )	- defines the optional elements or selection
^	- defines a fixed order or sequence
:	- defines an element not restricted by sequence
[ ]	- defines the limitation of the mobility of elements assigned by a dot
<>	- defines an element that may be embedded within another element
∪	- defines an element that can reoccur or iteration

### 2.2 Definition of transactional conversation

Kumar (2020) believes that “the transactional model of communication is the exchange of messages between sender and receiver where each takes turns to send or receive messages” (p. 126). Transactional conversation is a kind of communication that serves the objective of exchanging information. It might include activities like information-gathering interviews, role plays, or discussions. An interaction refers to a situation when a certain result is achieved, such as making a purchase at a store or enrolling in a school. In these circumstances, the language employed is very restricted and hence somewhat predictable. This is because speaking occurs in real-time and is typically marked by incomplete statements, restating ideas, overlapping speech, and grammatically incorrect utterances (Nuha, 2014).

The conversations found on the American Psychological Association (APA) website are categorized as transactional because their primary aim is to exchange information rather than to build relationships. These conversations primarily involve a host asking questions and psychology experts answering to share relevant and useful information about psychology topics.

### 2.3 Previous studies on transactional conversations and research gaps

Analyzing the generic structures of different types of transactional conversations gives valuable insights into the patterns and conventions underlying these interactions (Hak & Campion, 1999; Schiffrin, 1990). Several studies have explored the generic structure of transactional conversations in various contexts. For example, Ventola (1987) proposes that a typical structure in service encounters in Western shops involves the following sequence (^ = followed by): Service offer ^ Service request ^ Transaction ^ Greeting. This structure captures the core elements of service interactions and provides a framework for analyzing similar conversations. In addition, Halliday and Hasan (1985) provided another example of the structure of service encounters, which begins with the sales request. This example highlights stages within the service encounter including: Sales initiating ^ sales request ^ Sales compliance ^ Sale ^ Purchase ^ Purchase closure ^ Finish. Another example of transactional conversation is presented in a general practitioner consultation in Australia where people expect the structure to be: Opening ^ Eliciting of symptoms ^ Examination ^ Diagnosis ^ Treatment ^ Closing (as cited in Burns, Joyce, Gollin, & Burns, 1996, p. 4). In these studies, the common elements of transactional conversations are initiation, demand/request, and closure.

While existing research covers a range of transactional conversations, including goods transactions (Ventola, 1987), services (Halliday and Hasan, 1985), and consultations (Burns et al., 1996), there remains a lack of focus on interactions involving high-functioning and expert-led transactions, particularly in the field of psychology. Another gap is the participants that engage in conversation. A number of prior works have examined the transactions involving general participants; however, few studies have focused on expert-led conversations, such as those involving a PhD holder in a specific field. Lastly, most studies on transactional conversations have focused on in-person interactions, such as traditional market transactions or face-to-face service encounters. However, there is little research on the generic structure of transactional conversations in online environments, particularly those designed for a large audience. Hence, examining the structure of these professional podcasts can help identify how the online context influences the flow, content, and organization of the dialogue.

To summarise, previous studies clarified the generic structure of various transactional conversations, but there remain some gaps regarding transactional conversations for psychology topics that are conducted by experts. This gap opens up the opportunity to explore the generic structure of APA's transactional conversation. Understanding the structure of conversations can provide crucial information about strategies for effectively conveying psychological information to large audiences.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research approach

In order to understand all the communicative practices best analyzed in the context of professional communication, it is obligatory to use both qualitative and quantitative analysis. This dual approach enables the researcher to have a holistic view of these interactions by offering a detailed account of them as seen from different perspectives. First, the study employs a qualitative research approach in order to analyze the structure of the transactional conversations in the APA podcast for a deep exploration of the underlying dynamics, contextual factors, and interpersonal

interactions that shape the communication patterns within these professional exchanges (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). Besides the qualitative investigation, this research utilizes the quantitative method to support the findings, and the contextual count procedure is used in this study to determine the frequency and patterns of particular communicative constituents in the APA's transactional conversations. This method helps to triangulate the qualitative findings, whereby the numerical results can either validate or modify what was said qualitatively to enhance understanding of the generic structuring of transactional conversations (Bryman & Cramer, 2012).

### **3.2 Theoretical approach**

The study applies Halliday and Hasan's (1985) generic structure potential concept to identify the specific stages of the conversations. The study analyzes APA's transactional conversations using this concept, because it provides a framework for understanding the elements that comprise a communicative event's context (Cardon, 2008).

### **3.3 Source of material**

The material for this study includes twenty transactional conversations extracted from videos available on APA's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheAPAVideo>. The twenty transactional conversations were carefully chosen from about over one hundred podcasts that have been published on APA's YouTube channel. These videos have over 1000 views, as well as just two people sharing information with each other. In addition, the research also cites data from the APA's website, which can be accessed at <https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts>. This website provides transcripts of each video which are a valuable resource for comprehending the genre-specific characteristics of APA's transactional conversations on YouTube because they provide comprehensive data that facilitates the coding and categorizing.

### **3.4 Research procedure**

The procedure of the study consisted of four main steps as follows.

#### **Step 1: Corpus building**

A corpus was constructed by selecting data from twenty transactional conversations.

#### **Step 2: Collecting and reviewing transcripts**

In this phase, the researcher obtained transcripts of twenty selected videos from the APA's website: <https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology>. Then, the researcher reviewed the transcripts to understand the content, context, and overall structure of the discussions.

#### **Step 3: Intuitive transcript analysis**

In this phase, the researcher applied Halliday and Hasan's (1985) contextual configuration concept, focusing on:

1. Identifying obligatory elements: Determining which elements must be present in the conversation.

2. Identifying optional elements: Determining which elements may appear, but are not required.
3. Sequencing the elements: Establishing the required and optional arrangement of the elements in the conversation.
4. Determining iteration: Assessing which elements that may be repeated throughout the conversation.

**Step 4:** Coding the generic structure potential of transaction conversations

In this part, the research applied the generic structure of Halliday and Hasan (1985).

**4. Findings**

**4.1 Obligatory elements**

**Table 1**

*Obligatory Elements in APA’s Transactional Conversation*

Element	Purpose	Example
Initiating (INT)	To introduce the topic, set the stage, and introduce the guest speaker	<p>“<b>Mills:</b> Hello and welcome to Speaking of Psychology ...Our guest today has been doing research into how much workplace surveillance is acceptable to employees and at what point do people feel that the nosey boss has gone too far... Welcome, David Tomczak”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 11: “Your Boss is Watching You. Is that OK?”</i></p> <p>“<b>Mills:</b> Our guest today is Dr Emma Adam...Everyone is stressed these days, but young people are feeling the stress...”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 1: “Why Gen Z is feeling so stressed”</i></p>
Presenting the topic (PT)	The host often raises a specific issue or topic that will be discussed in the episode	<p>“<b>Mills:</b> Let’s start with your research on expressive writing. You’re a social psychologist by training, not a clinical psychologist. So how did you get started studying what eventually became recognized as this powerful therapeutic technique?”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 2: “Expressive writing can help your mental health”</i></p> <p>“<b>Mills:</b> Let’s start with the Stress in America report...”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 1: “Why Gen Z is feeling so stressed”</i></p>
Main discussion (MD)	Core content where the primary subject matter is explored	<p>“<b>Luna:</b> I first want to start off with defining what Seasonal Affective Disorder. What is the definition?”</p> <p><b>Rohan:</b> Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, I think I’ll just call it SAD moving forward, is a form of clinical depression that’s recurrent...</p> <p><b>Luna:</b> Can you explain the difference between SAD and depression in general?”</p> <p><b>Rohan:</b> Really, the only thing that makes SAD different from garden variety depression that’s not seasonal is the seasonal pattern that Seasonal Affective Disorder follows...</p> <p><b>Luna:</b> What are some of the symptoms people experience?”</p> <p><b>Rohan:</b> We’re diagnosing major depression. The criteria are pretty much the same. We’re just looking for the seasonal pattern. The symptoms include things like feeling pretty persistently down or sad. Losing interest or pleasure in things that a person would normally enjoy, like their hobbies, interests, social activities...”</p>

**Excerpt from conversation 13: “How to know if You have seasonal affective disorder”**

**“Luna:** Can you explain some of the most common sleep issues you see with clients in your practice?

**Haight:** By far, the most common complaint that I hear is that people have trouble falling asleep...

**Luna:** How do you address that? How do you shut off your brain when it's just going a million miles an hour? Do you get up, do you change positions, read a book, turn on the TV, start texting your friends?

**Haight:** Well, let's back up maybe 30 minutes before all of this happens because, a lot of times, what I hear people talk about falling asleep...

**Excerpt from conversation 17: “Psychologically Sound Tips for Better Sleep”**

Conclusion (CON) To summarise the discussion and close the conversation

**Luna:** Just to wrap this up for our listeners. We've touched on a lot of different areas of nostalgia. I want to know, is there a way for society to collectively use nostalgia to better itself? How can we tangibly benefit from it?

**Batcho:** I think it's really a very important resource and it's underutilized...”

**Excerpt from conversation 10: “Does Nostalgia Have a Psychological Purpose?”**

**“Luna:** Absolutely, thanks for those wonderful tips. I think that will be very helpful for people who, whether they've experienced ghosting or not, I'm sure if you haven't you know someone who has, or to prep you for the future knowing all these tips is very helpful as we approach dating. Dating, friendships and beyond.

**Vilhauer:** Yes, I think these tips apply to all relationships, absolutely.

**Luna:** Mm-hmm, absolutely. Well thank you again for joining us. It's been a really interesting episode. I appreciate your time.”

**Excerpt from conversation 16: “What to do when you've been ghosted”**

Call to action (CA) To encourage listeners to engage further

**“Mills:** You can find previous episodes of Speaking of Psychology on our website at [www.speakingofpsychology.org](http://www.speakingofpsychology.org) or on Apple, Spotify, YouTube, or you get your podcasts. And if you like what you've heard, please subscribe and leave us a review. If you have comments or ideas for future podcasts, you can email us at [speakingofpsychology@apa.org](mailto:speakingofpsychology@apa.org). Speaking of Psychology is produced by Lea Winerman. Our sound editor is Chris Condayan.”

**Excerpt from conversation 2: “Expressive writing can help your mental health”**

**“Luna:** To our listeners, thanks for tuning in. Don't forget to let us know what you think about our podcast. You can email your comments and ideas to [speakingofpsychology@apa.org](mailto:speakingofpsychology@apa.org) , that's speakingofpsychology, all one word, .org. Please give us a rating on iTunes. You can find previous episodes of Speaking of Psychology on Apple, Stitcher, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts. You can also go to our website [speakingofpsychology.org](http://speakingofpsychology.org) to listen to more episodes.”

**Excerpt from conversation 15: “Coronavirus Anxiety”**

**4.2 Optional elements**

**Table 2**

*Optional Elements in APA’s Transactional Conversations*

Element	Purpose	Example
<p>Guest greeting (GG)</p>	<p>Initial exchange of pleasantries</p>	<p>“<b>Mills:</b> Our guest today is Dr. Emma Adam, a Developmental Psychologist and Professor in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University... Welcome to Speaking Of Psychology, Dr. Adam.  <b>Emma Adam, PhD:</b> Thanks very much, Kim, I'm delighted to be here.”  <i>Excerpt from conversation 1: “Why Gen Z is feeling so stressed”</i>  “<b>Luna:</b> We're going to get to that soon with our guest today, psychologist Dr. Jennice Vilhauer. ... Welcome, Dr. Vilhauer.  <b>Dr. Jennice Vilhauer:</b> Hi, thank you so much for having me. It's a pleasure to be here.”  <i>Excerpt from conversation 16: “What to do when you’ve been ghosted”</i></p>
<p>Specific concerns (SC)</p>	<p>To address particular issues or questions</p>	<p>“<b>Luna:</b> Can you elaborate on the importance of allowing yourself to feel those negative emotions that accompany experiencing a tragedy?  <b>Tedeschi:</b> Post traumatic growth starts with, of course, something that's very aversive for people and generally not something that people are trying to invite into their live ...”  <i>Excerpt from conversation 12: “Transformation after trauma”</i></p>
<p>Positive findings (PF)</p>	<p>To highlight positive outcomes or data points</p>	<p>“<b>Mills:</b> What are you working on now?  <b>Barrett:</b> ... To me this seems first of all, very plausible from a neuroscience standpoint. And what it means is that when we go in and we get people to change how they think in order to change how they feel, what we're doing is actually just breaking a cycle...  <b>Mills:</b> Well, it just sounds amazing the work that you're doing....  <i>Excerpt from conversation 20: “Your Brain Is Not What You Think It Is”</i></p>
<p>Advice/coping strategies (CS)</p>	<p>To provide practical advice or coping mechanisms</p>	<p>“<b>Luna:</b> Yes. A suggestion that has worked for me is just managing it, and then just maybe trying to keep yourself up to the nighttime...  <b>Haight:</b> It's hard. It's much easier to say how to do it than it is to do it. You can't force yourself to go to bed at 8:00 PM if you're used to going to bed at 11:00 PM. It's hard to do that.”  <i>Excerpt from conversation 17: “Psychologically sound tips for better sleep”</i>  “<b>Luna:</b> Yes, it does. How can people better cope with rejection?  <b>Kross:</b> Well, many of the tools that exist for coping with negative experiences more generally like experiences that might cause you to feel anxiety or anger or sadness, also apply to coping with rejections...”  <i>Excerpt from conversation 18: “Inner monologues”</i></p>
<p>Exploring subtopics (ES)</p>	<p>To delve into related subtopics within the</p>	<p>“<b>Tedeschi:</b> What we’ve researched what we call vicarious Posttraumatic growth.  <b>Luna:</b> Interesting, can you talk about that a bit?  <b>Tedeschi:</b> Being around trauma survivors and helping trauma survivors, some of it rubs off on you we could say...”</p>

	main discussion	<i>Excerpt from conversation 12: “Transformation after trauma”</i>
Personal anecdotes (PA)	To share personal stories or experiences	<p>“<b>Mills:</b> You've done research on breakups and you have a popular TED talk called Why Break-Ups Don't Have to Leave Us Broken. What did you find? What do you mean that breakups don't have to leave us broken? Lewandowski: ... And so when I was a grad student, you kind of look into your own life and think about how your life is going and use that as a way to create some research ideas. And I thought to myself, when I was learning about breakup, you know what? I've had some breakups, they're actually quite good. They're tough at the time, but very quickly you realize, "Wow, that was necessary to get out of that relationship..”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 19: “The science of relationships”</i></p>
Methodological insights (MI)	To discuss specific research methods or approaches	<p>“<b>Mills:</b> So what are the big unanswered questions in your field and what are you working on now?  <b>Barrett:</b> Oh my God. Well, I have a lab of 25 full-time people and 100 or so undergraduate researchers. So we have many, many questions that we are trying to understand. But one thing we're trying to understand for example is, the name for your brain sensing your body is called interoception...”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 20: “Your Brain Is Not What You Think It Is”</i></p>
Theoretical implications (TI)	To connect findings to broader psychological theories	<p>“<b>Luna:</b> Can you explain why it's important for something like light therapy to be done under supervision?  <b>Rohan:</b> Light therapy is very interesting to me and that it is not FDA regulated. It's a cottage industry...”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 13: “How to Know if You Have Seasonal Affective Disorder”</i></p> <p>“<b>Luna:</b> And so, what are some of the most effective psychological treatments?  <b>Beth Darnall:</b> ...For instance, mindfulness-based stress reduction. Also, acceptance and commitment therapy, which is a variation of CBT. The best evidence exists for CBT...”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 9: “Using Psychology for Pain Relief &amp; Opioid Reduction”</i></p>
Future outlook (FO)	To speculate on future trends or research directions	<p>“<b>Thomas Insel:</b> And I think the future of mental healthcare is going to be both high-tech and high-touch. How we put those together and how we build both the high-tech and a better high-touch system, it's going to be really interesting. And we're going to see that over the next four or five years.  Mindstrong is one of many companies pushing on this high-tech side...”</p> <p><b>Kaitlin Luna:</b> So, I do have one more question. One more, I know it's supposed to be my last. So, where is Mindstrong at this point? Where are you right now? Is it available for people that, where are you?</p> <p><b>Thomas Insel:</b> Right, so Mindstrong is a work in progress. It's a company that's a little over a year old...”</p> <p><i>Excerpt from conversation 8: “Smartphones Are a Problem: Can They Be a Solution?”</i></p>

### 4.3 Sequencing the elements

As has been indicated in the transactional conversations of APA, the elements are arranged in a logical manner where the presence of some of these elements is obligatory while others are optional. The obligatory elements are tightly connected with the structure of the conversation, such elements include initiating (INT) in which the topic and the guest are introduced. After that, there is the presentation of the topic (PT) through which the host introduces the specific issue or topic to be discussed. This is then followed by the main discussion (MD) which is the core part in the conversation. The next element is the conclusion (CON) where the host gives a summation of the discussion. The last element is a call to action (CA) that encourages listeners to engage further, such as by visiting a website or participating in related activities.

However, there are also several optional elements that might be included depending on the topics of the conversation. These optional elements, such as guest greeting (GG), specific concerns (SC), positive findings (PF), and advice/coping strategies (CS), can be integrated into the conversation to make the conversation richer. For example, guest greeting is carried out just after initiating in order to create rapport, while specific concerns (SC) and positive findings (PF) may be integrated into the main discussion when focusing on a particular issue. Other optional features such as subtopics (ES), personal anecdotes (PA), methodological insights (MI), theoretical implications (TI), and future outlook (FO), give an opportunity to focus on specific topics, the guest's expertise or listeners' interest. Besides sequencing, there is another feature that deserves significant attention when describing these conversations that is the iteration of some of these elements. Therefore, the subsequent part is going to discuss iteration in the APA's conversations.

### 4.4 Iteration

In APA's transactional conversations, the frequency of certain elements can vary depending on the nature of the discussion, the complexity of the topic, and the interaction between the host and the guest. In particular, the obligatory elements including the initiating, presentation of the topic, main discussion, conclusion and call to action are normally used only once within a conversation because each of them describes a particular phase of the logical flow of the conversation. In contrast, in the main discussion, some elements may recur multiple times. For example, in specific concerns, positive findings, and advice/coping strategies, the host may ask a question several times, thereby creating a cycle of iterations that prompt further exploration of the topic. Or else, in the personal anecdotes or methodological insights, a guest might share multiple stories to support different aspects of the discussion or offer several insights into their research methodology as different subtopics are addressed. This iterative process allows the discussions to focus on the development of the subject matter as the question or subtopic propels the conversation back to the previous topic in an effort to give more elaborative information.

After identifying and exploring the specific elements as well as sequence and iteration of APA's transactional conversations, it becomes necessary to integrate these findings into a broader framework. The next section provides a holistic understanding of how these components function together.

#### 4.5 Overall generic structure potential of APA's transactional conversation

Figure 2 below presents the overall GSP of APA's transactional conversations as analyzed through the framework provided:

##### Figure 2

*Generic Structure Potential of APA's Conversations*

$$[\langle \text{INT}^{\text{PT}} \rangle^{\wedge} (\text{GG})]^{\wedge} [\langle \text{MD} \rangle^{\wedge} \{ \text{SC}^{\text{PF}^{\text{CS}}} \}^{\wedge} (\text{ES}^{\text{PA}^{\text{MI}^{\text{TI}^{\text{FO}}}})^{\wedge} \cup ]^{\wedge} [\langle \text{CON} \rangle^{\wedge} \langle \text{CA} \rangle]$$

##### Explanation of sequence:

- $[\langle \text{INT}^{\text{PT}} \rangle^{\wedge} (\text{GG})]^{\wedge}$ : The initiation (INT) and presenting the topic (PT) are recursive at once, meaning they occur in one interaction. Guest Greeting (GG) is optional and may or may not occur.
- $[\langle \text{MD} \rangle^{\wedge} \{ \text{SC}^{\text{PF}^{\text{CS}}} \}^{\wedge}$ : The main discussion (MD) is recursive at once, with the specific concerns (SC), positive findings (PF), and coping strategies (CS) elements allowed to recur as a whole.
- $\{ \text{ES}^{\text{PA}^{\text{MI}^{\text{TI}^{\text{FO}}}} \}$ : The exploring subtopics (ES), personal anecdotes (PA), methodological insights (MI), and theoretical implications (TI), The future outlook (FO) can occur as a whole and are recursive in the conversation.
- $[\langle \text{CON} \rangle^{\wedge} \langle \text{CA} \rangle]$ : The conclusion (CON) and the call to action are recursive at once and obligatory.

#### 4.6 Discussion

This part discusses and evaluates the study results in relation to what is previously presented in the literature review, compares the current findings with the related studies, as well as fills in the research gap. This study attempted to answer how generic structure is reflected in APA's conversations. After examining 20 APA's transactional conversations, it was found that unlike face-to-face or personal transactions where the audience or participants are known and directly involved, APA's conversations are designed that are suitable for a podcast. Therefore, they have clear staging, linearity, conformity, and predictability in the flow of conversation. The inclusion of distinct stages such as "initiation, main discussion, specific concerns, theoretical implications, and closing", especially the flexibility elements in "main discussion" depending on context and guest, serves to make the content comprehensible and engaging for any audience who are concerned about psychology topics, regardless of their prior knowledge of psychology.

Secondly, an APA's conversation has the structure that corresponds to that of a transactional conversation, matching Halliday and Hasan's (1985) theory. Like other transactional conversations, APA's conversations also include the three obligatory elements: "initiation", "main body", and "conclusion". The consistency elements have supported the goal of making advanced psychological content accessible to a wide audience. However, one factor that enhances the clarity of content and topics related to psychology is evident in the "main body" sections. Compared with the elements of other conversations, in "main body" of consultation conversation are: "eliciting symptoms", "examination" (Burns et al., 1996, p. 4) or a conversation about banking service: "request for customer's complaint", "request for account details",

“confirmation of customer details”, “apologies for delay” (Omoniyi & Akinseye, 2020, p. 67-74), APA’s conversations contain some sections such as “theoretical implications”, “methodological insights”, and “future outlooks”, “personal anecdotes”, “advice strategy”. This indicates a departure from the conventional elements found in simpler transactional interactions, highlighting the complexity and multifaceted nature of APA’s conversations.

Lastly, given the online context, the staging of the APA’s conversations becomes highly structured, with clear transitions from one stage to another. Although the dialogues occur between two individuals: the host and the guest, they are ultimately designed for a diverse third party that is online audiences. Therefore, the need for clarity and accessibility for an unknown audience demands that each conversational move be easily identifiable and the overall flow be predictable. This clear and linear staging ensures that listeners can follow the discussion easily, regardless of their prior knowledge or background.

In summary, while APA’s transactional conversations and other types of transactional conversations share common elements, APA’s conversations have some distinct elements shaped by the advanced nature of the field and the dynamics of an online, public-oriented discourse. This research contributes to the understanding of how transactional conversations in specialized fields, delivered in an online mode, are organized to cater to a broad and diverse audience. This focus on predictability, staging, and linearity sets APA’s conversations apart from other transactional interactions, making them a distinct area worthy of further exploration.

**5. Conclusions and implications**

In conclusion, the specific elements identified in APA’s conversations include 14 elements, of which 5 are obligatory (Initiating, Presenting the Topic, Main Discussion, Conclusion, and Call to Action), while 9 are optional (Guest Greeting, Specific Concerns, Positive Findings, Coping Strategies, Exploring Subtopics, Personal Anecdotes, Methodological Insights, Theoretical Implications, and Future Outlook). These elements follow a logical sequence and allow for some iteration in the main discussion. The overall GSP of APA’s transactional conversations as analyzed through the framework provided:

$$[<INT^PT>^<(GG)>]^<[MD]>^<[SC^PF^CS]>^<(ES^PA^MI^TI)>^<U>^<FO>^<[CON]>^<CA>]$$

The findings have both theoretical and practical implications. As for theory, the research applies Halliday and Hasan’s (1985) GSP framework to a psychology transactional conversation. Besides, the study employs the GSP framework in identifying the structural elements of these conversations which provide an understanding of how transactional conversations are organized in a digital setting. As for practical usages, this research provides useful insights for content creators, English teachers and English major students, as well as professional communicators who are speakers, MCs, interviewers, and reporters to help them create and organize effective conversations.

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## CẤU TRÚC THỂ LOẠI CỦA CÁC HỘI THOẠI GIAO DỊCH CỦA HIỆP HỘI TÂM LÝ HỌC HOA KỲ

**Tóm tắt:** Bài viết này khám phá việc áp dụng khung lý thuyết cấu trúc thể loại (GSP) của Halliday và Hasan. Bằng cách phân tích 20 cuộc hội thoại thông qua phương pháp định tính và định lượng, nghiên cứu xác định rằng các cuộc hội thoại giao dịch của Hiệp hội tâm lý học Hoa Kỳ tuân theo một trình tự với các yếu tố bắt buộc bao gồm “mở đầu”, “trình bày chủ đề”, “thảo luận chính”, “kết luận” và “kêu gọi hành động”, được bổ sung bởi các yếu tố tùy chọn như “chào hỏi khách mời”, “các mối quan tâm cụ thể”, “phương thức nghiên cứu”, v.v... Các yếu tố này tuân theo một trình tự hợp lý và cho phép có sự lặp lại trong phần thảo luận chính hoặc giúp nội dung trở nên dễ hiểu và cuốn hút đối với khán giả quan tâm đến các chủ đề tâm lý học, bất kể kiến thức nền tảng của họ về chủ đề này. Kết quả nghiên cứu đã tìm ra cấu trúc tổng thể của GSP trong các cuộc hội thoại giao dịch của APA như sau:

[<Int<sup>PT</sup>>^(GG)]^ [<MD>^{SC<sup>PF</sup>CS}^(ES<sup>PA</sup>MI<sup>TI</sup>FO)^∪]^ [<Con><sup>CA</sup>]

*Từ khóa:* Cuộc hội thoại giao dịch, phân tích thể loại, cấu trúc tiềm năng thể loại, Hiệp hội Tâm lý học Hoa Kỳ

**APPENDIX**

**List of chosen podcasts**

Order	Selected Video	URLs Transcript
1	“Why Gen Z is feeling so stressed, with Emma Adam, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/gen-z-stress">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/gen-z-stress”</a>
2	“Expressive writing can help your mental health, with James Pennebaker, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/expressive-writing">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/expressive-writing”</a>
3	“How music, memory and emotion are connected, with Elizabeth Margulis, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/music-connection">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/music-connection”</a>
4	“How memory can be manipulated with Elizabeth Loftus, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/memory-manipulated">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/memory-manipulated”</a>
5	“ Raising Children Responsibly in the Digital Age with Roberta Golinkoff, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/digital-children">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/digital-children”</a>
6	“Suicide Contagion with Christopher Ferguson, PhD (SOP58)”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/suicide-contagion">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/suicide-contagion”</a>
7	“Understanding Perceptions of Online Risks with Emma Williams, PhD (SOP61)”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/online-risks">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/online-risks”</a>
8	“Smartphones are a problem: can they be a solution? (SOP 65)”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/smartphone-wellbeing">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/smartphone-wellbeing”</a>
9	“Using Psychology for Pain Relief & Opioid Reduction w/ Beth Darnall (SOP67)”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/pain-opioid-reduction">“https://www.apa.org/research/action/speaking-of-psychology/pain-opioid-reduction”</a>
10	“Does Nostalgia Have a Psychological Purpose? with Krystine Batcho, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/nostalgia#:~:text=Batcho%3A%20Most%20of%20the%20research,self%2C%20our%20identity%20over%20time.">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/nostalgia#:~:text=Batcho%3A%20Most%20of%20the%20research,self%2C%20our%20identity%20over%20time.”</a>
11	“Your boss is watching you. Is that OK? with Dave Tomczak”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/workplace-surveillance">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/workplace-surveillance”</a>
12	“Transformation After Trauma with Richard Tedeschi, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/transformation-trauma">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/transformation-trauma”</a>
13	“How to know if you have seasonal affective disorder with Kelly Rohan, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/seasonal-affective-disorder">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/seasonal-affective-disorder”</a>
14	“Why people hoard with Julie Pike, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/hoarding">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/hoarding”</a>

15	“Coronavirus anxiety with Baruch Fischhoff, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/coronavirus-anxiety">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/coronavirus-anxiety”</a>
16	“What to do when you've been ghosted with Jennice Vilhauer, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/ghosting">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/ghosting”</a>
17	“Psychologically Sound Tips for Better Sleep with Robin Haight, PsyD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/better-sleep-tips">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/better-sleep-tips”</a>
18	“Inner Monologues with Ethan Kross, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/inner-monologues">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/inner-monologues”</a>
19	“The science of relationships, with Gary Lewandowski, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/science-relationships">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/science-relationships”</a>
20	“Your Brain Is Not What You Think It Is, with Lisa Feldman Barrett, PhD”	<a href="https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/brain-myths">“https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/brain-myths”</a>