

Conversational Strategies in One Episode of How Did I Get Here by Dive Studios Podcast

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Abstract: *The study examined conversational strategies used in Episode 34 of the Dive Studios podcast, entitled Are We Narcissists? A qualitative descriptive approach was applied to analyze utterances produced by Jae and Alexa. Data were collected through documentation, repeated observation, transcription checking, note-taking, and classification using Coates's conversational strategy framework. The findings revealed six strategies: minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, questions, directives, and swearing and taboo language. Compliments were not identified. Minimal responses expressed agreement and encouraged continuation. Hedges reduced certainty and softened sensitive judgments. Tag questions requested confirmation and supported interpersonal alignment. Questions obtained information, encouraged explanation, and developed topics. Directives managed speaking roles and guided conversational movement. Swearing conveyed shock and emotional intensity. The findings demonstrate conversational strategies supported cooperation, politeness, topic organization, mutual understanding, and audience engagement within natural informal podcast interaction between both hosts during the episode.*

Keywords: *conversational strategies, podcast discourse, conversation analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Communication represents a social activity that requires coordinated participation between speakers and listeners. Gumperz, as cited in Wardhaugh, explains that communication occurs between a speaker and a hearer. Conversation becomes a part of daily life because people use it to exchange information, express attitudes, develop relationships, and negotiate social roles. Effective interaction requires linguistic knowledge and an understanding of spoken patterns. English learners may experience difficulty maintaining interaction when they lack awareness of conversational rules, appropriate responses, and strategies for managing communication problems. Conversational competence involves more than grammatical accuracy because speakers must recognize when to speak, how to respond, and how to preserve interaction.

Conversational strategies refer to deliberate linguistic and interactional choices used to manage spoken communication. Dörnyei and Thurrell describe these strategies as resources for overcoming communication difficulties, including misunderstanding, uncertainty, or the inability to recall an expression. Kehe and Kehe regard them as practical methods that help speakers and listeners sustain a natural conversational flow. Riggensbach also views conversational strategies as conscious techniques that support communication. These perspectives show that conversational strategies allow participants to prevent breakdowns, clarify meanings, signal involvement, and achieve interpersonal purposes. Questions, minimal responses, hedges, interruptions, compliments, silence, and tag questions can indicate agreement, hesitation, solidarity, control, or emotional engagement. Speaker choices reveal how language is adjusted according to the topic, relationship, and situation.

The importance of conversational strategies can be observed in formal and informal communication. Professional interaction depends on precise responses, respectful turn management, and clear expressions of agreement or disagreement. Informal interaction relies on strategies that create familiarity, demonstrate empathy, and encourage participation. Podcast conversations provide a valuable setting because speakers usually combine planned topics with

spontaneous responses. The audio or video format captures turn exchanges, overlapping speech, laughter, hesitation, clarification, and topic development. Sa'adah, Setyaningrum, and Daulay (2024) demonstrate that turn-taking patterns in an English podcast contribute to conversational organization and allow participants to manage speaking opportunities.

Recent studies have examined conversational organization in podcasts and online talk shows. Untari, Afrilesa, and Magria (2024) analyze turn-taking in the Jay Shetty Podcast and show how speakers take, hold, and yield turns. Jasmir and Magria (2024) focus on overlap in the same podcast and illustrate that simultaneous speech may signal enthusiasm, support, competition, or an attempt to enter the conversation. Tango and Afriana (2024) investigate turn-taking strategies involving Will Smith and Ellen and identify how speakers manage speaking rights in a broadcast interaction. Juliano and Afriana (2024) examine turn-taking in Piers Morgan Uncensored and emphasize strategies used to claim conversational space. These studies confirm that digital spoken discourse offers rich material for understanding participation and audience engagement.

The podcast *How Did I Get Here?* by Dive Studios presents a relevant object for analysis because its interaction is shaped by friendship, shared hosting responsibilities, and informal topic exploration. Both presenters occupy relatively equal roles as hosts rather than following a rigid interviewer–guest hierarchy. This equal position may produce natural exchanges involving spontaneous questions, brief responses, humor, teasing, agreement, interruption, and collaborative topic development. The conversational environment resembles everyday interaction more closely than highly structured interviews. Audience accessibility strengthens the significance of the podcast because its discussions sound personal, entertaining, and relatable. Episode 34 provides a specific context in which the speakers employ strategies to sustain interaction and communicate their attitudes.

The present study focuses on conversational strategies used by the two speakers in Episode 34 of *How Did I Get Here?*. Coates's classification provides the analytical framework for identifying seven forms: minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, questions, directives, swearing and taboo language, and compliments. Each form may perform different functions depending on its placement and context. Minimal responses may display attention or agreement, while hedges may reduce certainty or soften an opinion. Questions may request information, invite elaboration, or guide topic movement. Directives may influence another speaker's action, while compliments may express approval and strengthen interpersonal connection. Swearing and taboo language may convey emphasis, intimacy, humor, frustration, or informality. Tag questions may seek confirmation, encourage participation, or establish shared understanding.

The investigation addresses the types of conversational strategies appearing in the podcast and the reasons the speakers select those strategies. The analysis aims to describe the linguistic forms found in the episode and interpret their interactional functions. Speaker intention is examined through the relationship between each utterance, its context, and the response it produces. The study limits its discussion to Coates's strategies and to the interaction between the two hosts in the selected episode. This focus distinguishes the research from studies that mainly examine unequal roles between hosts and guests. Equal hosting roles provide an opportunity to observe conversational cooperation, mutual influence, and natural negotiation between friends. The study is expected to enrich conversational discourse analysis by explaining how strategic language choices support continuity, rapport, and meaning in contemporary podcast interaction.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to examine conversational strategies used in one episode of the *How Did I Get Here* podcast. The primary data consisted of utterances produced by Jae and Alexa in Episode 34, entitled "Are We Narcissists?",

uploaded on the Dive Studios YouTube channel on September 14, 2020. The episode lasted 27 minutes and 30 seconds and featured an informal English conversation about narcissism. Secondary data were obtained from relevant previous studies and theoretical references. Documentation and observation techniques were used to collect the data. The researchers first obtained the automatic YouTube transcript, checked it manually, and watched the video repeatedly to ensure transcription accuracy. Relevant utterances were identified, underlined, recorded through note-taking, and organized using a checklist table. Qualitative content analysis was applied to classify words, phrases, and utterances according to the conversational strategy framework proposed by Coates (2004). The data were grouped based on strategy types and functions, then interpreted in relation to their conversational contexts. The findings were presented informally through descriptive paragraphs. Selected dialogue excerpts were included to illustrate each strategy, followed by explanations of its form, function, and contribution to maintaining interaction between the two podcast hosts throughout the selected episode.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Types of Conversational Strategies in The Podcast

The analysis of Episode 34 of *How Did I Get Here?* reveals that Jae and Alexa used six conversational strategies from the seven categories proposed by Coates. The strategies were minimal responses, hedges, tag questions, questions, directives, and swearing and taboo language. The category of compliments was not found. This pattern indicates that the conversation was mainly constructed through agreement, uncertainty, inquiry, topic control, and emotional reaction rather than direct praise. The informal relationship between the hosts influenced how these strategies appeared. Jae and Alexa interacted as friends and equal presenters, allowing both speakers to respond spontaneously and develop the discussion collaboratively. Each strategy contributed to the continuity and interpersonal quality of the podcast.

Minimal responses appeared through expressions such as *mhm*, *yeah*, *right*, and *true*. These expressions indicated that the listener followed the discussion without attempting to control the speaking turn. Alexa's use of *mhm* after Jae introduced narcissism demonstrated attention and readiness to participate. Jae also produced *mhm* when Alexa connected narcissism with gaslighting. His response gave Alexa sufficient space to continue explaining her opinion. The expression did not introduce new information, yet it confirmed that her contribution had been heard. This supportive role is important in podcast communication because prolonged silence may make an interaction sound disconnected. A brief response reassures the current speaker that the listener remains involved.

The expressions *yeah*, *right*, and *true* performed more specific forms of agreement. Alexa responded with *yeah* when Jae stated that he sometimes felt lower than other people, indicating recognition and shared feeling. Alexa used *right* during the comparison between Korean and American interpretations of *I love you*. The response confirmed Jae's cultural explanation while permitting him to refine the distinction. The word *true* appeared when Alexa accepted Jae's argument that artistic development would be difficult for people who already considered themselves superior. Dewi and Ayomi (2024) explain that discourse markers help organize spoken interaction and connect ideas produced by different speakers. Minimal responses in this podcast fulfilled a related function by linking adjacent turns, marking agreement, and supporting conversational movement.

The presence of minimal responses also demonstrates that participation in conversation does not always require lengthy utterances. A listener may contribute meaningfully through brief verbal signals that display attention, agreement, or understanding. Jae and Alexa frequently allowed the current speaker to complete an idea before responding with a short expression. This pattern created an orderly exchange despite the informal character of the

podcast. The responses also reduced the possibility of conversational breakdown because the speaker continuously received evidence that the message was being followed. Minimal responses consequently functioned as supportive devices that maintained cooperation and encouraged elaboration.

Hedges formed an important part of the discussion because narcissism is a sensitive psychological topic. The expressions you know, like, I feel like, I think, maybe, and kind of allowed the speakers to present personal interpretations without claiming complete certainty. Jae used you know while describing an imagined narcissistic person who repeatedly checked their reflection. The form invited Alexa to recognize the situation as familiar. His use of like introduced an example of what such a person might say. These expressions made the explanation sound conversational rather than technical because the imagined situation was presented as a personal illustration instead of a clinical definition.

The forms I think and I feel like marked Jae's statements as personal judgments. Jae employed them when reflecting on manipulative people he and Alexa may have encountered and when suggesting that viewers could experience similar realizations. These expressions showed that his conclusions originated from personal reflection. The forms also created room for Alexa or the audience to hold different interpretations. Alexa used kind of when connecting narcissism with gaslighting, showing that she was exploring a possibility rather than declaring a definite relationship. Jae used maybe before suggesting that narcissistic people might talk down to others. The hedge softened a negative evaluation and protected the discussion from sounding absolute.

The use of hedges was especially relevant because neither host presented themselves as a professional psychologist. Their discussion depended on an article, personal experiences, and spontaneous interpretations. Strong or absolute statements could have caused their opinions to sound like medical diagnoses. Hedges allowed them to acknowledge uncertainty and limit the strength of their claims. Wynn, Barrett, and Borrie (2024) argue that conversational behaviors strongly depend on context. The frequent hedges reflect a setting in which entertainers discussed psychological information informally rather than presenting professional diagnoses. The strategy also helped preserve politeness because negative descriptions of narcissistic behavior were expressed cautiously.

Tag questions allowed the hosts to transform individual claims into shared positions. Jae used right? after explaining that successful musicians continue searching for better sounds because they recognize the abilities of others. The tag invited Alexa to confirm his interpretation. Alexa's answer, right, provided confirmation and encouraged him to continue. The sequence shows that the tag question did not primarily seek unknown information. Its main function was to check agreement and maintain interpersonal alignment while allowing Jae to retain the turn.

The tag is it? appeared when Jae reacted to the description of the devaluation stage in a narcissistic relationship. His utterance, This cannot be intentional, is it?, expressed disbelief that someone could deliberately weaken a partner's confidence. The grammatical form requested confirmation, while the context communicated shock. Jae appeared to expect Alexa or the information she was reading to confirm whether such behavior was intentionally performed. The tag question consequently expressed both an informational need and an emotional reaction.

The tags used in the conversation created small opportunities for Alexa to participate without fully changing the topic. A complete question might have transferred the speaking turn, but a tag question only requested brief confirmation. This structure enabled Jae to maintain his explanation while acknowledging Alexa as an active conversational partner. Astyanto (2025) notes that talk-show strategies vary according to participant relationships and interactional

goals. Jae's use of tag questions reflected his close relationship with Alexa because he expected her to recognize and respond to his reaction immediately.

Questions were among the most productive strategies because they generated information, opinions, explanations, and topic development. The episode contained WH-questions and yes-or-no questions. Jae asked, What is considered a narcissist in your opinion?, to invite Alexa's personal definition. The question positioned Alexa as an active contributor rather than a passive listener. Her uncertainty became part of the discussion and motivated Jae to offer his own example. The question also shifted the episode from reading general information toward interpreting narcissistic behavior in everyday life.

The question Why? appeared when Alexa chose cats during the listener question segment. The short form requested a reason and created a lighter exchange after the serious discussion of narcissism. The question demonstrated Jae's interest in Alexa's personal preference and allowed the interaction to move naturally into an entertaining topic. Alexa responded by explaining that cats were cute and tended to remain relatively small. The answer would not have appeared without Jae's request for clarification. Questions consequently helped the speakers avoid responses that were too brief or insufficiently developed.

Jae's question How do you know you love that person? performed a more evaluative function. The question challenged declarations of love made after a short period and invited reflection on emotional commitment. Alexa answered by explaining why couples should spend substantial time together before marriage. Her response expanded the discussion from narcissistic phrases into a broader evaluation of romantic relationships. The question encouraged her to provide reasoning rather than a simple factual answer. Nahas, Rajistha, and Kasni (2025) identify organized exchanges and collaborative participation as important features of podcast conversation. The questions used by Jae and Alexa similarly expanded the content and enabled both hosts to construct interpretations together.

Questions also supported the entertainment value of the episode. The hosts did not merely read information about narcissism because they repeatedly questioned its meaning and relevance. Their questions represented possible reactions from listeners who might also feel confused, curious, or surprised. Audience members could follow the discussion through the questions even though they could not participate directly in the recorded conversation. The strategy consequently connected the hosts' interaction with the imagined reactions of the audience.

Directives were used to manage contributions, introduce topics, and address the audience. Jae produced the explicit directive Give me an example of an everyday narcissist after asking Alexa for her opinion. The imperative form requested a specific response and narrowed the expected contribution. His command Explain! invited Alexa to tell a story about power relations during high school. The direct form remained acceptable because the speakers shared a friendly relationship. Alexa's detailed response indicates that the directive successfully encouraged elaboration rather than creating interpersonal conflict.

The inclusive directive Let us talk about narcissistic personality disorder functioned as a topic-management device. The pronoun us included both speakers and reduced the controlling force of the instruction. Jae did not simply order Alexa to discuss the subject because he presented the transition as a shared activity. The directive marked the movement from their earlier discussion into a more focused examination of narcissistic personality. This form helped maintain the structure of the episode without making the conversation sound rigid or scripted.

Jae also directed listeners during the closing section through please send your questions, let us know, and do not forget to subscribe. These utterances connected the recorded interaction with audience participation beyond the episode. The expression please send softened the request through politeness, while let us know invited listeners to contribute ideas for future

discussions. The form do not forget reminded listeners to support the podcast through subscriptions and reviews. Aryanti et al. (2024) demonstrate that speaking strategies and turn management are related to communicative roles and institutional goals. Jae's greater use of directives may reflect his role in guiding the episode, introducing segments, and delivering promotional information.

Swearing and taboo language occurred only once. Jae reacted with Dude, what the hell? after Alexa read examples associated with the idealization stage of a narcissistic relationship. The expression communicated surprise, discomfort, and disbelief. Its purpose was emotional rather than insulting because it was not directed at Alexa or a particular person. The swear expression intensified Jae's response and showed the audience that the examples sounded alarming. Alexa's following statement that she disliked the phrases reinforced their shared evaluation.

The limited frequency of swearing indicates that taboo language was used selectively. Jae employed it at a moment when an ordinary expression of surprise might not have represented the strength of his reaction. The phrase also maintained the informal and youthful style of the podcast. Excessive swearing could have distracted listeners from the main discussion, but its single occurrence created emphasis without dominating the interaction. The strategy functioned as an immediate and authentic emotional response to the information presented by Alexa.

The absence of compliments can be explained by the subject and structure of the discussion. The episode focused on identifying narcissistic traits, evaluating relationship behavior, and reacting to manipulative expressions. These activities created more opportunities for questions, hedges, warnings, and emotional reactions than praise. The missing category does not indicate a lack of rapport. Their closeness was displayed through shared laughter, brief agreement, collaborative completion, and mutual understanding. Astyanto (2025) emphasizes that conversational features are shaped by communicative situations. The absence of compliments reflects the demands of this topic rather than a general feature of Jae and Alexa's relationship.

The six strategies formed an interconnected system that sustained the episode. Minimal responses demonstrated attention, hedges reduced certainty, tag questions requested alignment, questions developed ideas, directives managed participation, and swearing expressed emotional intensity. Each strategy contributed to the impression of a spontaneous conversation while supporting the organization required by a public podcast. The findings correspond with Dewi and Ayomi's (2024) discussion of discourse markers, Aryanti et al.'s (2024) analysis of turn management, Wynn et al.'s (2024) emphasis on contextual dependence, Astyanto's (2025) comparison of talk-show strategies, and Nahas et al.'s (2025) account of podcast interaction. The conversation demonstrates that casual digital communication depends on systematic linguistic choices that maintain participation, express attitudes, move between topics, and engage listeners.

The Function of the Conversational Strategies Used

The conversational strategies used by Jae and Alexa perform several interactional functions throughout Episode 34 of *How Did I Get Here?*. Each strategy helps the speakers manage participation, organize topics, express attitudes, and maintain interpersonal connection. Their equal status as co-hosts creates a cooperative environment in which both participants can introduce ideas and guide the discussion. Their friendship also permits direct commands, humorous reactions, and informal expressions without damaging their relationship. The identified functions include showing agreement, encouraging continuation, reducing assertiveness, requesting confirmation, obtaining information, directing conversational movement, and expressing strong emotions.

Minimal responses mainly function as signals of attention, agreement, and encouragement. Alexa's responses *true* and *mhm* in Data 3-18 show that she follows Jae's clarification about narcissistic expressions. The response *true* confirms her agreement that using one phrase does not automatically make a person a narcissist. The response *mhm* allows Jae to continue explaining without surrendering his speaking turn. These brief forms show that the listener remains involved even when no new information is added. Jae's response *yeah* in Data 3-19 similarly confirms information and gives Alexa space to explain the Greek myth of Narcissus.

The supportive function of minimal responses becomes important when a speaker pauses. A lengthy answer might redirect the topic, while silence could indicate confusion or disinterest. Minimal responses acknowledge the message without competing for conversational control. Ishfaq, Sultan, and Healy (2025) associate turn-taking choices with politeness and identity. Jae and Alexa's brief responses construct a cooperative identity because each host gives the other enough space to complete an idea. Khalid, Noor, and Abid (2025) also describe podcast discourse as a coordinated process of turn allocation. Minimal responses support that coordination.

Hedges function to express uncertainty, reduce commitment, and soften negative evaluations. Alexa's expressions *I do not know*, *I feel like*, *kind of*, *like*, and *you know* in Data 3-20 show that she does not present her interpretation of narcissism as an unquestionable fact. The phrase *I feel like* identifies the statement as a personal impression, while *kind of* weakens the direct connection she makes between narcissism and gaslighting. This function matters because the discussion concerns psychological behavior and negative personality characteristics. Alexa avoids sounding like a professional who can diagnose others and creates space for Jae to offer another interpretation.

The hedge *you know* invites shared understanding. Alexa uses the form while describing people who consider themselves superior and fail to recognize their weaknesses. The expression *kind of* also protects social image. Alexa calls herself a Greek mythology *kind of nerd* in Data 3-21, reducing a self-description that might sound boastful. Jae uses the same hedge when saying that he is *kind of starting to stay away from dogs*. The wording prevents his preference from sounding like a complete rejection. Kebar, Laksmi, and Agung (2025) connect successful podcast interaction with cooperation, while Pacalna and Villasor (2025) emphasize rapport management in informal talk-show discourse.

Tag questions function to seek confirmation, reduce assertiveness, and invite the listener into the speaker's evaluation. Jae's repeated use of *is it?* in Data 3-24 expresses uncertainty and disbelief after hearing about intentional behavior during the devaluation stage. A direct statement could sound like rejection, but the tag changes it into a request for confirmation. Alexa responds by providing more examples of manipulative phrases. The form produces further information while communicating Jae's emotional reaction.

Alexa's use of *really?* in Data 3-25 requests elaboration after Jae claims that he struggles with empathy. The question conveys surprise and encourages him to explain the claim. Jae describes himself as highly logical and denies possessing an exaggerated sense of self-importance. The tag *right?* in Data 3-26 requests agreement with Jae's view about artistic development. Alexa's confirmation allows him to finish the argument. Ishfaq et al. (2025) connect conversational politeness with participation management. Jae's tag questions support equality because they recognize Alexa's right to evaluate his opinions. Yang and Yang (2025) also show that listening and speaking styles shape mediated participation.

Questions function to obtain definitions, request explanations, clarify unexpected behavior, and generate extended discussion. Alexa's questions *What is narcissism?* and *What does it mean to be a narcissist?* in Data 3-27 introduce the central subject and prompt Jae to provide an interpretation. The questions give the episode a clear thematic direction and create

curiosity for the audience. Jae's answer develops into broader reflections about whether narcissism exists as a meaningful category. The questions establish the conceptual foundation for the discussion.

Jae's question *What was that?* in Data 3-28 performs a repair function. Alexa suddenly sings after hearing the word *bombing*, interrupting Jae's explanation of love bombing. His question identifies the interruption and requests an explanation. Alexa apologizes and connects the word to one of her songs. The exchange repairs the disruption and allows Jae to return to the topic. Khalid et al. (2025) emphasize repair and turn management in public conversational discourse. Jae's question resolves confusion without creating conflict.

The question *Why do you believe in ghosts?* in Data 3-29 requests a reason rather than simple confirmation. Alexa responds with experiences involving herself and her mother. The question transforms a short answer into a narrative and gives the audience more information about her beliefs. The question *How do you know you love that person?* in Data 3-30 performs an evaluative function by challenging rapid declarations of love. Alexa initially admits uncertainty and then develops an opinion about knowing a partner over time. The answer shows that questions can generate reflection without producing immediate factual information.

Yes-or-no questions mainly function to verify information and check assumptions. Jae's question about whether *megalomania* means power tripping allows Alexa to confirm his interpretation. Alexa's question about whether Jae learned the origin of narcissism at school checks her assumption about his educational experience. Jae answers negatively and adds that he knew the word from an SAT academy. These examples show that closed questions can produce expanded answers. Kebar et al. (2025) argue that cooperative interaction requires relevant and informative responses. Jae and Alexa often provide details beyond a basic *yes* or *no*.

Directives function to allocate speaking tasks, encourage elaboration, move between topics, and organize the podcast. Jae's question *You want to explain what the show is for the people who are viewing us for the first time?* in Data 3-33 works as an implicit directive. The interrogative form softens the instruction and gives Alexa freedom to accept the task. Alexa responds positively and introduces the program. The directive achieves the practical goal of explaining the podcast while preserving a friendly and equal interaction.

The explicit command *Explain!* in Data 3-34 directs Alexa to describe her experience with power tripping. Their close relationship allows the direct form to sound playful rather than authoritarian. Alexa responds with a high-school story, showing that the command produces elaboration. Jae later says *Let us talk about narcissistic personality disorder*, using an inclusive directive to shift the topic. The pronoun *us* presents the activity as shared work. The expressions *we are going to talk about* and *if you want to help us with those* in Data 3-35 similarly guide Alexa toward the next section. Pacalna and Villasor (2025) describe talk-show interaction as involving strategic topic management and coordinated roles.

The command *Give me an example of an everyday narcissist* in Data 3-36 narrows the expected answer and encourages concrete illustration. Jae's frequent directives reflect his responsibility for maintaining the podcast's structure and keeping the topic moving. His forms remain cooperative because implicit requests and inclusive pronouns balance his authority. Alexa's willing responses show that she interprets the directives as part of their shared hosting activity rather than personal domination. The strategy preserves structure without removing the spontaneous quality of the podcast.

Swearing and taboo language function to express shock, frustration, and emotional involvement. Jae's reaction *Dude, what the hell?* in Data 3-37 follows Alexa's list of phrases associated with narcissistic idealization. The expression communicates that he considers the phrases disturbing and manipulative. The swear word is not directed at Alexa and does not function as an insult. Its target is the behavior described in the article. The form gives listeners

immediate access to Jae's emotional response. Alexa's statement that she dislikes the phrases creates shared emotional alignment.

The rarity of swearing strengthens its expressive effect. Frequent taboo language could reduce emphasis, while a single occurrence marks a striking moment. Yang and Yang (2025) explain that conversational styles contribute to interpersonal positioning in mediated interaction. Jae's spontaneous expression positions him as an emotionally involved participant rather than a detached reader. The reaction also supports the entertainment value of the episode because it sounds natural and relatable.

The combined functions of these strategies demonstrate that the conversation is systematically managed despite its casual appearance. Minimal responses sustain the speaker, hedges soften opinions, tag questions request validation, questions develop information, directives organize participation, and swearing communicates emotional intensity. The strategies support politeness, cooperation, identity construction, topic management, and audience engagement. The five supporting studies reinforce the view that conversational choices depend on participant roles, relationships, discourse settings, and communicative goals. Jae and Alexa's interaction illustrates how co-hosts use linguistic strategies to maintain continuity, negotiate meaning, express attitudes, and create an accessible podcast discussion.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that conversational strategies play an essential role in maintaining the interaction between Jae and Alexa in Episode 34 of *How Did I Get Here?* by Dive Studios. Six strategies were identified, namely *minimal responses*, *hedges*, *tag questions*, *questions*, *directives*, and *swearing and taboo language*, while *compliments* were not found. Each strategy performed a distinct function in organizing the discussion and sustaining the relationship between the two hosts. Minimal responses showed attention, agreement, and encouragement. Hedges reduced certainty and softened sensitive or potentially negative statements. Tag questions requested confirmation, expressed uncertainty, and invited the other speaker's involvement. Questions obtained information, encouraged explanation, clarified meaning, and developed the topic. Directives guided the conversation, allocated speaking roles, introduced new sections, and encouraged audience participation. Swearing expressed surprise, frustration, and strong emotional reactions. The findings indicate that the conversational flow was not produced randomly, although the podcast sounded spontaneous and informal. The speakers selected linguistic strategies according to the topic, their equal roles as co-hosts, and their friendly relationship. These strategies created a cooperative, engaging, and understandable discussion. The study confirms that conversational strategies are important resources for managing meaning, participation, politeness, topic movement, and emotional expression in contemporary podcast communication.

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