

# **Fictional Dialogues Reported by Benjamin in Faulkner's *The Sound and Fury*: A Taxonomical Stylistic Study**

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## **Abstract**

The present paper seeks to investigate the internal structure of dialogues reported by Benjamin, the mentally –retarded narrator of the first section in Faulkner's *The sound and Fury*. The dialogues are analyzed according to a repartee taxonomy proposed and elaborated on by Robert E. Longacre (1996). The taxonomy outlines many types of dialogue paragraphs including simple, complex, abeyance, execution/stimulus – response, and compound. Upon applying the taxonomy to Ben's dialogues, results crop up supporting the exactness and precision of Ben's reports. Handicapped himself and unable to speak, Ben shows mastery over the task of the adequate reporting of dialogues he happens to overhear involuntarily. The dialogues filtered through his damaged consciousness are copied with neither modification nor distortion. The detailed analysis of the internal structure of sample dialogues displays the variety and complexity of the dialogues reported. An array of dialogue types and almost all sub-branches appear in the text. The minute analysis strikes one for the prevalence of compound dialogues where Ben could handle long stretches of speech with many speakers conversing with each other, and on various topics. Ben asserts himself as the objective narrator who records machine-like furtively what is said before him without any intrusion on his part.

## **Introduction**

Retrospectively, discourse analysis used to concentrate on studying the factual linguistic input derived from the linguistic interaction of participants through speech. Dialogue represents, thus, the best and most familiar and reliable data consequently studied in the field. However, discourse analysis has, later on, taken some new turn in its orientation when less factual data came to be investigated resulting in stretching out its domain to subsume the analysis of pre – fabricated dialogues and monologue discourse types.

As a monologue discourse type, narrative is, in essence, a miscellaneous structure in which other discourse types are realized. It is quite possible to meet expository discourse within narratives often represented by setting elements, behavioural discourse as manifested in the narrator's comments and evaluations, or procedural discourse when a process or an operation is carried out over a number of steps encoded in coordinate sentences. Though dialogue is not an obligatory component of the narrative, yet most narratives include long stretches of speech. Moreover, the progress of the story is often signalled by the occurrence of certain thematically significant turns of character's speech. It is worth stating that speech is