

## **OP 09: The analysis of conversational features between the individuals with dementia and their communication partners in natural conversation**

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**Introduction:** A successful conversation should have a continuation without communication breakdowns between the speaker and the Communication Partner (CP).

**Objective:** The study was conducted to identify the conversational features between the Individuals with Dementia (ID) and their CPs during natural conversation.

**Methods:** Mixed method exploratory design, including descriptive and inferential statistics analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software and qualitative thematic analysis was used.

**Results:** Absence of topic maintenance, inability to engage in extended discourse and absence of repairing skills in IDs were more frequently observed Discourse Impairing Conversational Features (DICF) in IDs. The most frequently observed and helpful Discourse Building Conversational Feature (DBCF) used by partner was trying to figure out the meaning. A Mann-Whitney U test showed significant differences in the use of DICFs (Mann-Whitney  $U=30.500$ ,  $Z=-3.449$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) and DBCFs (Mann-Whitney  $U=35.500$ ,  $Z=-3.213$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) between the two groups. Perspectives of CP on the communication difficulties faced with ID were analyzed based on five primary themes; knowledge of dementia, difficulties faced by partners when communicating with ID, strategies used by partners to overcome communication difficulties, successful communication strategies used by partners and ID to overcome difficulties in communication.

**Conclusions:** The findings provide a preliminary understanding of the communication difficulties and challenges experienced by ID and partner with particular reference to the local clinical scenario. Importantly it identifies strategies and features that are successful in maintaining natural conversations with ID and provides useful information to speech and language therapists to support ID to maintain their QoL within resource limited clinical settings.

**Keywords:** Conversation, dementia, communication, speech