

# Glossary of Speech Feature Terminology

3 part exchange	3 utterances linked in an obvious or clear way, usually rallied between 2 speakers e.g.: 'A' asks question, 'B' answers, 'A' provides comment/feedback.
Adjacency pair	2 utterances linked in an obvious or clear way, always said by different speakers e.g.: question/answer; greeting/returned greeting; apology/acceptance.
Assimilation	2 words made into one; a non-standard form using no apostrophe e.g.: gonna, wanna, woulda, kinda.
Backchannel	Feedback offered by one or more listener to main speaker, taking form of minimal responses and non-verbal communication such as nods, laughter.
Closed question	Question with few possible answers, or with narrow field for response (e.g. "did you like the film?" rather than the more open "tell me about the film?")
Colloquialism	Word/phrase common in spoken but not written Standard English e.g. ain't.
Contraction/ contracted form	2 words reduced into 1 using an apostrophe e.g.: can't, wouldn't.
Deixis	Reference to something within the context of the interaction. e.g.: that ("can you pass me that?") or him ("did you speak to him yet?") or can be a time reference such as yesterday/next week – because we don't know the date of the interaction, we don't know when they refer to.
Discourse marker	Word indicating change of (or return to) topic e.g.: anyway, well, as I was saying.
Elision	Missing out a sound within a word e.g.: intrest, goin' May or may not be marked with an apostrophe.
Ellipsis	Missing out a word, often a noun or pronoun e.g.: "better get on with it" (could be I'd, s/he'd, we'd or you'd).
False start	Changing tack a short way into a sentence.
Filler	Word with no/little meaning. Speakers often have preferred fillers; they form part of our idiolect. e.g.: like, basically, I mean, innit.
Head	Repetition of the subject at the start of a sentence but in a different form eg: Clare, she's really nice OR that girl, I really like her. Can be single word or longer phrase.
Hedge	"Padding" added to bald statements, often intentionally to soften a request or statement eg: kind of, probably, could be.

Idiolect	An individual way of talking, often characterised by dialect terms, favoured fillers, discourse markers and any use of language that distinguishes them from the majority.
Ingroup lexis	Vocabulary shared by a group, often a form of slang or catchphrase/buzzword. Used to show membership/belonging.
Latch	Utterances by different speakers which follow directly on (no pauses) are said to “latch”. Can show enthusiasm/shared purpose/agreement.
Micropause	Usually represented as (.) A very brief pause, acting as punctuation or possibly hesitation/thinking time in spontaneous speech.
Minimal response	Brief responses such as “yeah” “mmm”. Can be part of backchannel support or can show lack of interest in topic.
Non-standard grammar	Preferred term (not incorrect, bad or poor grammar). Common in speech even of the educated.
Non-verbal filler	Filler which is not technically a word e.g.: umm, erm.
Open question	Question with many possible responses; allows speaker choice of topic/direction.
Overlap	Participants speaking at same time, on same topic. More positive than interruption; usually shows enthusiasm or high degree of interaction.
Phatic utterance	Utterance having little meaning but a social purpose e.g. hello, how are you?
Recycling	Repetition of a word or phrase, often due to thinking time or hesitation. If done deliberately for impact is repetition, not recycling.
Self-repair	Correcting oneself – sometimes an utterance could be described as self-repair or false start.
Slang	Informal spoken language which is usually group-specific.
Taboo language	Low-register language which is inappropriate in many social settings.
Tag	Clause “tagged on” at the end of an utterance, e.g.: “She’s really happy today, Sarah is”. May be a tag question: “She’s really happy today, isn’t she?” Tag questions can be rhetorical or invite comment. Tags must include a verb.
Tail	Similar to a tag, but doesn’t include a verb. Also similar to a head, but at the end of an utterance, e.g.: “I really love chips, me.”
Terms of address	The way people refer to each other. Formal terms of address are usually titles eg Dr/Rev/Mrs so-and-so. Informally, we tend to use first names, or terms of endearment such as “love” or “hon”.

Timed pause	Always timed in seconds, usually represented as (1); (0.5) etc. etc. Often don't mean anything except that speech is spontaneous; may punctuate longer utterances; can show uncertainty or an unwillingness/hesitation to voice the utterance that follows.
Vague language	Anything that is imprecise or woolly. More specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ expressions such as “and that” “or whatever” at the ends of statements (often used like hedges)</li><li>▪ non-specific nouns like “whatsit” and “thingummy”</li><li>▪ hedges, including the addition of –ish or –y, e.g.: it's a cakey sort of thing”</li></ul>
Voice-filled pause	Same as non-verbal filler.