**ABSTRACT:** Conversational Narratives pose a challenge to genre theories whose concept of genre is too narrowly based on an interest in classifying ideals of pre-patterned discourse. It is our aim to present and discuss different approaches to oral genres and to highlight the importance of looking at conversational narratives as complex speech events directly related to the topic structure of any oral interaction. We argue that the different conventions of discourse through which speakers tell narratives and listeners understand them can be called genres. These genres provide a “horizon of expectation” to a knowledgeable audience that cannot be derived from the semantic content of a discourse alone.