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Conclusion

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CONCLUSION

This monograph deals with the semantic and pragmatic analysis of authentic English conversation, both in the private and public domain. In particular, the author develops the concept of **semantic indeterminacy** as an inherent constituent of English conversation. The basic criterion in the evaluation of conversational language is its ultimate **context-dependence**. The author has researched the nature of everyday spoken language, paying special attention to some fundamental aspects of semantic and pragmatic meaning.

Semantic indeterminacy in the form of indirectness, impersonality, attenuation and accentuation, accompanied by vagueness, is studied from the semantic and pragmatic point of view with regard to their realization in current English usage. The contribution of this book to the development of conversational analysis can be summarized in the following points:

- (1) Study of the **interrelation between indirectness, impersonality, attenuation, accentuation and vagueness** in authentic English conversation as expressions of illocutionary opacity, i.e. obscurity of meaning.
- (2) Evaluation of the predilection for **indirectness** as an elicitation which is **ethnographically appropriate** since it enhances the need for confirmation: **confirmation**, on the other hand, is ethnographically appropriate, because it develops "rapport" as part of the cultural norm and sharing goals.
- (3) Identification of **different degrees of indirectness** attached to different conversation genres: informal face-to-face conversation is more indirect compared with telephone conversation, interviews tend to vary according to their degree of formality (an informal interview is more indirect than the formal one).
- (4) Evaluation of **indirectness** as an expression of **intimacy and informality** (the term **chattiness** comprises intimacy and informality).
- (5) Introduction of the notion of **informal politeness** expressed by means of vagueness, reinforcing the openness of interaction.
- (6) Evaluation of **impersonality** based on detachment as a notion linked with **formality and matter-of-factness**.
- (7) Identification of **attenuation** (weakening of the illocutionary force) and **accentuation** (reinforcement of the illocutionary force) as typical features of authentic conversation coexisting in discourse and frequently appearing in clusters.

(8) Interpretation of the **oscillation of meaning** as a characteristic feature of pragmatic markers which are double-edged, being capable of serving the purpose of attenuation or accentuation.

(9) Identification of **fuzziness** and **clustering** as common attributes of indeterminacy phenomena.

(10) Further justification of the **contextual approach** towards language study: semantic indeterminacy phenomena are heavily **context-bound**, they appear in **clusters** and **clines** which are frequently indiscrete and indiscernible; the context and the intonation provide the hearer with clues for the final disambiguation.