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978-0-521-58705-1 - Speakers, Listeners and Communication: Explorations in Discourse Analysis

Gillian Brown

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In this study Gillian Brown draws on a wide range of examples of discourse analysis to explore the ways in which speakers and listeners use language collaboratively to talk about what they can see in front of them and about a series of events. She examines the conditions under which communication is successful, and the conditions under which it sometimes fails. The focus of her attention is upon the listener's role, as the listener tries to make sense of what the speaker says in a highly constrained context; and her cognitive/pragmatic approach to discourse analysis both complements and challenges the sociological/anthropological perspectives on the subject which currently predominate.

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Explorations in discourse analysis

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Transcription conventions

The initials of members of the pairs of subjects who produced the dialogue from which each extract has been taken are indicated at the top of each dialogue taken from the Map task data. Similarly the number of the relevant quartet or of the undergraduate (ug) pair is indicated at the top of extracts from the Stolen letter task.

The transcription conventions have been kept to a minimum.

The following conventions are used:

- a very brief pause
- + a pause of about half a second
- ++ a pause of about a second
- ? high rising intonation
- (...) indecipherable speech
- ... some portion of the text is omitted
- [overlap between speakers
- (*laughs*) italicised comments in brackets indicate relevant non-verbal behaviour by the speaker