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Nicolas Ruytenbeek
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Indirect Speech Acts

To achieve successful communication, it is crucial to say clearly what we mean, but, at the same time, we need to pay attention to the form of our utterances, to avoid misunderstandings and the risk of offending our interlocutors. To avoid these pitfalls, we use a special category of utterances called 'indirect speech acts' (ISAs) that enable an optimal balance between clarity and politeness. But how do interpreters identify the meaning of these ISAs? And how does the social context influence the use of ISAs? This book attempts to answer these questions. It deals with the main theoretical and empirical questions surrounding the meaning and usage of ISAs, drawing on the latest research and neuroimaging data. Adopting a truly interdisciplinary perspective, it will appeal to students and scholars from diverse backgrounds, and anyone interested in exploring this phenomenon, which is so pervasive in our daily lives.

NICOLAS RUYTENBEEK specializes in experimental approaches to speech acts and politeness, using a combination of corpus data and psychophysiological methods. He is a postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Department of Translation, Interpreting and Communication, Ghent University.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108483179
DOI: 10.1017/9781108673112

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First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Ruytenbeek, Nicolas, 1985– author.
Title: Indirect speech acts / Nicolas Ruytenbeek.
Description: Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: Key topics in semantics and pragmatics | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021003161 (print) | LCCN 2021003162 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108483179 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108716482 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108673112 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Indirect speech acts (Linguistics) | Semantics (Philosophy) | BISAC: LANGUAGE ARTS & DISCIPLINES / Linguistics / Semantics
Classification: LCC P95.56.I53 R89 2021 (print) | LCC P95.56.I53 (ebook) | DDC 121/.68–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021003161
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021003162

ISBN 978-1-108-48317-9 Hardback

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Acknowledgements

This book is the output of a successful collaboration with Helen Barton as editor and Izzie Collins as editorial assistant, whom I thank for their availability and responsiveness. It goes without saying that writing it would not have been possible without the help of the universities and, more specifically, the research labs where I have been working the last few years. I have also a sense of indebtedness to all the students who agreed to participate in my experiments in Brussels, Lille and Ghent. I thank my PhD supervisor, Mikhail Kissine, for giving me a taste for linguistic research, and my colleagues at the time, in particular, Gregory Bochner, Philippe de Brabanter, Philippe Kreutz, Philippine Geelhand de Merxem, Ekaterina Ostashchenko and Bob van Tiel, whom I worked with at the research centre in linguistics (LaDisco) of the Université libre de Bruxelles, for their helpful comments and suggestions. I am particularly grateful to the F.R.S.–FNRS for funding my PhD research for four years. I thank the Wiener Anspach Foundation for granting me a graduate visiting fellowship at the University of Cambridge, and Napoleon Katsos, who kindly agreed to supervise my work during my fellowship in 2013–14. This research has also benefitted from the coaching in experimental linguistics and advice offered by Benjamin Spector and Emmanuel Chemla during my Cogmaster program at the ENS in Paris in 2012–13, and by Steven Verheyen afterwards. These two international experiences determined to a strong extent the experimental orientation of my own work, which I pursued in 2018 as a visiting researcher at the LUCL in Leiden, stimulated by Marina Terkourafi's insightful ideas about speech acts and politeness research. I thank my current employer, Ghent University, for enabling me to complete the writing of this monograph in optimal conditions. I owe a special debt to

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Herbert Clark, Sofie Decock, Ilse Depraetere, Thomas Holtgraves, Mathieu Lafourcade and Magali Norré, who provided constructive feedback on this manuscript. Last but not least, I thank my wife for her permanent support and her sharp, insightful remarks that helped me a lot when I had to clarify the content of this book.

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Abbreviations

A	Addressee
AI	Artificial intelligence
AOI	Area of interest
BNC	British National Corpus
CCSARP	Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English
DCT	Discourse completion task
DRT	Discourse representation theory
DSA	Direct speech act
ERP	Event-related potential
FTA	Face-threatening act
GSH	Graded salience hypothesis
HRI	Human–robot interaction
ICM	Idealized cognitive model
IFID	Illocutionary force indicating device
IR	Indirect request
IS	Inquisitive semantics
ISA	Indirect speech act
LPC	Late positive component
NLP	Natural language processing
NP	Noun phrase
RT	Relevance theory
S	Speaker
SA	Speech act
SAT	Speech act theory
SDRT	Segmented discourse representation theory
VP	Verb phrase

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