

Analysing the unsaid in social interaction

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It has long been noted that much of what (we are taken to) mean remains unsaid. However, analysing the unsaid in social interaction can pose significant challenges for researchers. In this presentation I suggest that although CA has not traditionally treated the analysis of the unsaid in social interaction as a part of its core business, it nevertheless is well placed to provide solid foundations for empirical analysis of the unsaid. After briefly introducing the distinction between primary actions and secondary actions or the less ‘official business’ of turns (Levinson 2013), I outline the ways in which not only CA methods (Drew 2018), but also extant research on turn design, preference organisation and repair organisation can be leveraged by researchers to warrant their analyses of the unsaid in social interaction. I illustrate these claims through an analysis of two distinct pragmatic phenomena where co-participants are arguably orienting to something as “unsaid though not undone” (Pomerantz 1980: 195): ostensible social actions and unwanted inferences. I conclude by considering the implications of this for a pragmatics that is more deeply informed by research and methods in CA.

Biodata

Michael Haugh is Professor of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. His research interests lie primarily in the field of pragmatics, with a particular focus on studying the role of language in social interaction. He has published more than 120 papers and books, including *Sociopragmatics of Japanese* (2022, Routledge, with Yasuko Obana), *Im/Politeness Implicatures* (2015, Mouton de Gruyter), *Pragmatics and the English Language* (2014, Palgrave Macmillan, with Jonathan Culpeper), and *Understanding Politeness* (2013, Cambridge University Press, with Dániel Z. Kádár).