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Author Chris Hsieh
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Abstract
This project is designed to discover the communication manner of the native speaker in first conversations: at the phase of getting to know each other, how do they get acquainted and how do the information exchange? This project had recruited 10 subjects; one of them was retired and mature-age student, two were in early 30s, and the rest were in early 20s, almost all undergraduates in third or fourth grade in an Australian University. They were distributed into pairs to have a 10-minute conversation. Each pair was unacquainted before the conversation carried on. All the communication process was tape recorded and afterwards transcribed. The content was sorted out and analyzed. The study would mainly focus on 2 points: (1) the Information Eliciting Utterances (IEU) and Information Giving Utterances (IGU), as well as (2) the politeness strategies and face-threatening acts (FTA) to illustrate the information flow in first conversations and the politeness coping of unacquainted individuals. The result shows that people always try their best to keep a polite manner in first conversations, and the exchange of general information, such as study, career, and common ground, came before personal information, such as family and intimate relationship. It also shows that context reference and relational reference are commonly applied to unacquainted individuals in first conversation. The result of the study would also provide some implication to the English conversation teachers and especially for English learners. Through the realization of native speakers' way of communication in first conversations, some English learners' fear and embarrassing feeling of talking to foreigners could be reduced and, instead, have a more pleasurable talking experience.
Advisory Committee Da-Fu Huang - advisor

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