

当代外国语言学与应用语言学博士论丛

会话信息过量 现象的语用研究

陈新仁 著

The present enterprise is a study of the provision of propositional non-natural information (i.e. interactional overinformativeness) in conversational exchanges, seeking to explain the adaptability of the conversational phenomenon. Within our conceptual framework, there are three major components: communicative needs, interactional properties, and contextual correlates. The generative mechanism of interactional overinformativeness is derivable from the interplay of these components. Where the initiator's communicative needs coincide with those of the responder, interactional harmony pervades; where their needs are at odds, interactional conflict dominates. In both cases, there is the likelihood of the occurrence of interactional overinformativeness, though the purposes of the interlocutors involved are different. In the former case, overinformativeness is exploited to reinforce the immediate interactional harmony and consolidate the long-term interpersonal solidarity.

In the latter case, overinformativeness serves to resolve the existing conflict by virtue of mitigating face threat or grounding imposition or impediment so as to enhance the chances of interactional success. In contexts where the interactional harmony or interactional conflict is not a matter of importance, the communicative need of efficiency is a primary cause for overinformativeness, which can avoid the possibility

of necessity of re-runs or repairs. Interactional overinformativeness is variable along a few dimensions, including propositional content (subjective or objective orientation and the appeal to emotion or the resort to reason), discourse property (explicit or implicit, literal or non-literal) and information

quantity (mono-propositional or multi-propositional). In all cases, any single instance of interactional overinformativeness represents an integrated choice of the contents, forms and further complications. Interactional overinformativeness is negotiable for its flexible and

logic operative mechanism. The form-function mapping is realized neither according to rigid rules nor at random

陕西师范大学出版社

当代外国语言学与应用语言学博

会话信息过量 现象的语用研究

The Pragmatics Of Interactional
Overinformativeness

陈新仁 著

陕西师范大学出版社

图书代号:SK4N0839

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

会话信息过量现象的语用研究/陈新仁著. —西安:陕西师范大学出版社,
2004.8

(当代外国语言学与应用语言学博士论丛)

ISBN 7-5613-1179-6

I. 会… II. 陈… III. 语用学—研究 IV. H0

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 086723 号

责任编辑 任 平 王 慧

装帧设计 王静婧

出版发行 陕西师范大学出版社

社 址 西安市陕西师大 120[#] (邮政编码:710062)

网 址 <http://www.snuph.com>

经 销 新华书店

印 刷 南京新洲印刷有限公司

开 本 880×1230 1/32

印 张 6.125

版 次 2004 年 10 月第 1 版

印 次 2004 年 10 月第 1 次印刷

定 价 90.00 元(共 5 册,本册 18.00 元)

开户行:光大银行西安南郊支行 账号:0303070—00330004695

读者购书、书店添货或发现印装问题,请与本社营销中心联系、调换。

电 话:(029)85307864 85233753 85251046(传真)

E-mail:if-centre@snuph.com

Preface

Dr. Chen Xinren was admitted into the Ph. D. Program in Pragmatics under my supervision at the National Research Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, in 1996. He studied hard for three years, with broad interest in the field of linguistic pragmatics and conversation analysis, and finally chose the topic of interactional overinformativeness as the subject matter of his Ph. D. dissertation.

Overinformativeness here was meant to provide additional information to the proposition in exchanges, with a purpose to adapt to the need of the conversation. Dr. Chen's dissertation was well written and it gave insights to the perception of interactional overinformativeness. He developed in his thesis a framework for the analysis of this phenomena in conversation on the basis of Jef Verschueren's theory of linguistic adaptation and brought out its general patterns and socio-psychological significances. His viewpoints as well as their verification won unanimous approval and appreciation from the Examination Committee.

As the Examination Committee pointed out, the logic of the arguments in the thesis was clear, the sequence of sections was well organized, and the review of literature was adequate. The Committee claimed that Chen Xinren's work deserved more merit in that he had employed the research methods of collecting first-hand data and made analysis of the Chinese subjects' use of interactional overinformativeness in the real life settings.

Dr. Chen Xinren was one of my best students in the University. He published broadly during the years as a candidate for the Doctoral Degree. He has been interested in language research, especially in the field of language use and speech communication. His knowledge of the current theories on linguistic pragmatics, as well as of their approaches and viewpoints, has shown his comprehensive understanding of the issues in

the field. Dr. Chen has a good command of the most updated worldwide research literature. What has impressed me most in his publications is that he has made an encouraging point of integrating theory with practice, which is always important in academic research.

I am glad to see Dr. Chen having this English-written dissertation published. This is a real work, indeed, for I know that, in addition to his quick mind, logical reasoning and critical thinking, Dr. Chen is fluent both in spoken and written English, capable of capturing the subtleties of usage in this non-native language.

Ziran He

Professor of Linguistics

National Research Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Guangzhou

E-mail: zrhe@gdufs.edu.cn

Website: <http://www.pragmaticschina.com>

译 序

1996年,陈新仁博士考入广东外语外贸大学外国语言学与应用语言研究中心攻读语用学博士学位。在校期间,他刻苦学习,对语言语用学和会话分析产生了浓厚的兴趣,并选择了日常会话中经常出现的应对信息过量现象作为其博士论文的题目。

“信息过量”是指说话人在交往过程中除了提供特定行为所需的命题信息外还额外增添其他某种表面看来不相关而实际上具有交际价值的信息,这一会话行为的目的在于顺应当前会话的需要。陈新仁博士的论文依据维索尔伦的语言顺应理论构建了用来分析和解释这一现象的理论框架,采用定性与定量相结合的方法,对该现象进行了多层次的分析,揭示了这一现象的一般模式和社会心理影响,深化了我们关于应对信息过量这一会话现象的认识。他的观点以及对这些观点的论证获得答辩委员会的一致肯定和欣赏。委员会指出,该文的论证思路清晰,逻辑性强,章节之间层次分明,文献引证充分有力,而其能够利用第一手语料,考察中国真实生活环境下信息过量现象的利用情况更是值得赞许。

在我指导的所有学生中,陈新仁博士是最优秀的学生之一。在攻读博士学位期间,他取得了丰硕成果。他对语言研究特别是语言使用和言语交际的研究有着十分浓厚的兴趣,并对当代语用学的理论以及研究方法有着比较全面和准确的把握。他所发表的文章给我印象最深的一点就是能够将理论与实际很好地结合起来,而这在学术研究中始终是一个十分重要的方面。

我非常高兴地看到陈新仁博士用英语撰写的博士论文即将以专著形式出版,可以说他的博士论文的确是一项真正的研究成果。陈博士思维敏锐,说理严谨,具有很强的思辨能力。此外,他的英语无论是口头还是笔头方面都非常流利,即使是在用非本族语的英语时也能够捕捉语言运用的微妙之处。

广东外语外贸大学 何自然教授

Acknowledgements

The completion of a research project of some duration and magnitude like the present study could not have been possible without the assistance of many others.

Above all, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. He Ziran, from the Faculty of English Language and Culture, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, for his well-informed guidance and unfailing attention to this research project in the past years. He scrutinized every draft of every chapter of the thesis on which the present book is based, provided unbiased comments on the ideas of the author and added to the readability of the book. Moreover, the courses he offered (including *General Pragmatics*, *Cognitive Pragmatics*, *Language and Logic*, and *Philosophy of Language*) and the academic experience he imparted will benefit me for the rest of my life.

I also feel much indebted to Dr. Verschueren, general secretary of the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA), who offered timely help by sending me a copy of his new book (*Understanding Pragmatics*) representing the updated and well elaborated version of his theory of linguistic adaptation which shapes the present research. I am equally grateful to Prof. Wu Tieping, a well-known professor from Beijing Normal University, upon whose reference I came to study under Prof. He and from whom I also learn to become a man and scholar.

I wish to thank Prof. Gui Shichun, Prof. Ning Chunyan, Prof. Chen Jianping, Prof. Wang Chuming, Prof. Wu Xudong and some others who provided invaluable suggestions on my prospectus and whose lectures on varied subjects helped shape the present study.

My thanks go to an American colleague of mine, Mary Jo Hulon,

who took pains proofreading the manuscripts of the original dissertation. The English used would be much less idiomatic without profiting from the intuition of this native speaker. Also worthy of mention are the insights and joys that I obtained from my doctoral classmates: Wu Gang, Wang Wenxin, Zhang Xinhong, Zhang Wenzhong, Yang Ping, Zeng Yantao, Ran Yongying, to name just a few.

In particular, I must thank Yangzhou University and its Foreign Languages Faculty for the financial assistance they provided. Among others, Prof. Zhai Ansong, Prof. Fang Wenli and Prof. Cao Shunrong are especially remembered for their concern and considerateness. In addition, all the teachers and students from the university who participated in the empirical part of this study have my gratitude. Their cooperation made my data collection a much easier task than it otherwise would have been.

Most of all, I am grateful to my wife, Chen Jing, for her unfailing support and encouragement during these years; to her parents and mine for their active roles in minimizing the repercussions of my academic research on a normal family life.

Despite the assistance of others, I remain solely responsible for all the misconceptions and misinterpretations in this book.

导 读

本书是关于会话应对中信息过量现象 (Interactive Overinformativeness, 简称 IO) 的语用研究。所谓信息过量, 是指交际者在会话应对中提供了表面上看来是多余的信息。试看:

(1) a. Shut the window, Tom.

b. Shut the window, Tom. It's cold in here.

(2) A: When did you come back last night?

B1: Ten to eleven.

B2: Ten to eleven. The film was too long.

在(1)中, a 和 b 可以用来实施相同的施为目的, 即让 Tom 关上窗户。值得关注的是 b 的划线部分其目的并不是对自然环境的简单描述。类似的分析也适用于(2)。B2 对 A 所提问题的回答不仅仅包括预期的回答, 即关于回来的时间, 还包括进一步的信息, 这一信息用以解释说话人迟归的原因, 而非与回来时间无关的叙述。上述两例实际上代表了交际会话中一种常见的应对现象, 即应对性信息过量。

信息过量现象之所以引发我们的研究兴趣, 是因为依据经济原则(从整体上制约着语言的使用和人的行为的原则)(Zipf 1939, Horn 1984), 会话应对中出现过量信息似乎是不合理的。此外, 促使我们研究这一现象的原因还包括:

第一, 应对性信息过量是日常对话中非常普遍的现象, 研究其产生、运作机制以及交际价值有助于深化我们对言语交际的理解。

第二, 应对性信息过量的研究或许有更深的理论意义, 因为它可能对言语行为理论的发展具有启示。正如人们评论的那样(如 Ferrara 1980a, 1980b), 传统的言语行为分析局限于单一、孤立的言语行为。然而, 在日常对话中, 言语行为序列更为常见。如果言语行为理论要扩展至会话领域中, 那么出现在言语行为序列中的信息过量现象就是研究中不可缺少的环节。

本书共由九章组成。第一章为导论, 介绍本研究对象、依据、目的、意

义等。第二章介绍本研究的背景,指出相关研究存在的问题。第三章对信息过量现象进行定义,在此基础上,采纳 Verschueren(1999)的顺应理论框架,提出关于会话中信息过量现象的产生、运作机制的假设。第四、五、六章根据顺应理论中对顺应性的分析框架分别探讨信息过量的功能性、变异性和商讨性。第七章通过个案调查进一步验证应对信息过量现象的顺应特性。第八章从语言顺应的基本原理出发对信息过量现象作进一步的抽象,指出该现象的本质属性。最后一章为全书的总结。

文献回顾

与经典言语行为理论家(如 Austin 1962, Searle 1975)提供的模式不同, Ferrara(1980a, 1980b)指出说话者在会话的一个话轮中可以产生不止一个言语行为,连续扩展的谈话形成了统一体,构成紧密联系的言语行为序列。从属言语行为的功能性至少说明了以下两点:(1)从属言语行为并不是随意发生的;(2)不能对它们进行字面上的解释,而需要考虑它们与主要行为的功能关系。按照 Ferrara(1980b),从属言语行为的功能是为主要行为增加成功的机会。然而,从我们收集到的语料看,提供过量信息的从属言语行为的功能远不限于此。此外,从属言语行为为什么能起到增加成功机会的作用还有待作出语用解释。

传递额外信息的辅助话步(supportive moves)(Edmonson 1981)尽管在术语上与从属言语行为不同,但在用法上却非常相似。根据 Edmonson, 辅助话步的功能有三类,即支持(grounding)、扩展(extending)和解除戒备(disarming)。按照 Edmonson(1981:122),辅助话步产生于预期策略(anticipatory strategy),即对对方的潜在反应做出必要的考虑,然而,他没有解释这些预期策略本身产生的动机。此外,他只观察到发话人对额外信息的使用,而对听话人回应中出现的过量信息未有触及。无独有偶, Clark(Clark 1991:202)也发现预期的应答常常“意外地夹杂”着额外信息。他用“添加话步”(added move)描述这类信息。然而,他也没有探讨这种并不“意外”的添加话步的产生理据和交际功能。

根据 Grice(1975),会话者正常情况下应该遵守合作原则,具体表现为对质准则、量准则、相关准则和方式准则的遵守。其中,量准则有两条次则:

(1)提供的信息不少于(交谈的当前目的)所要求的信息量;(2)提供的信息不多于所要求的信息量。通过查看语用学研究文献,我们发现讨论量准则问题的研究大量存在,但几乎所有这些研究都是针对第一次则(Grice 1975, Levinson 1983, 1987, Horn 1984, 等等)。相比之下,学术界对第二次则的关注还远远不够。这种情况的产生可能是因为难以对第二次则下准确定义(Grice 1975)。

上述研究使我们在一定程度上认识了话语交际中的信息过量现象,例如,传达过量信息的言语行为从属于某一主要行为,其作用在于增加该主要行为的成功机会,这就是为什么说话人在发出要求、命令、建议等行为时经常会使用过量信息。然而,从语用学角度看,许多问题有待解决,主要包括:对信息过量功能的描述远未完成,对信息过量产生的动因的研究还不深入,对听话人回应话语中的过量信息关注不够,等等。从研究方法上看,现有讨论没有基于充足的自然发生的语料。更糟的是,还存在一些误解,例如,Green(1989:99)认为提供过量信息是“炫耀知识”或“粗鲁”的表示。本研究拟借鉴 Verschueren 的语言顺应理论,在语用学的框架内对会话应对中经常出现的过量信息现象做进一步的探讨。

研究框架

作为研究的出发点,我们首先对信息过量进行了初步的定义,进而将它与信息冗余、话题转换、离题等会话现象区别开来。接着,我们依次阐述了充当本研究理论依据的几个理论,分别是 Ferrara 的扩展式言语行为理论、Brown & Levinson 的面子理论以及 Verschueren 的语言顺应理论。其中,语言顺应理论作为一种宏观理论,是我们建立本研究概念框架和理论假设的基石。

根据顺应理论(Verschueren 1999),言语交际是一个选择的过程,选择发生在语言的各个层次,人们不仅选择语言形式,而且选择话语策略。语言选择的实质是顺应,交际者需要顺应语境因素,从若干可能的话语方式中作出合理选择,以实现交际目的。据此,结合语料的分析,我们提出假设:会话应对中信息过量现象的产生和运作本质上体现了交际者的语言顺应。具体说来,进入交际的会话者往往带有各种需求,我们可以将它们统称为交际需

求,又可进一步区分为语境需求、涉及面子或利益的基本需求(按照顺应理论,这种需求为交际语境构成要素——心理世界的一个组成部分)、力求简洁、生动等的表达需求,等等。说话人的特定语境需求(如说话人请求听话人开门)产生后,一旦表达出来,就会与自身的基本需求(面子或利益)尤其是听话人的语境需求(如果对方正在或正准备做某事)和基本需求发生关系。交际发生的具体语境会确定说话人的语境需求是否会与其自身的基本需求和听话人的语境需求及基本需求形成冲突,从而确定当前会话的应对属性。说话人与听话人需求一致则产生应对和谐,反之则发生应对冲突。在前一种情况下,交际者理论上讲无须使用过量信息来解释顺从对方的原因,但可以利用过量信息增进和谐,维护人际关系的长期稳定;在后一种情况下,交际者通过淡化强加色彩,缓解面子威胁,消除应对冲突。冲突的解决直接关系到说话人的语境需求能否得到实现,因而,在出现应对冲突时交际者一般会需要使用过量信息加以解释或说明。

信息过量的功能性

一、解决会话中的冲突

在实际生活会话中,会话应对中充满了各种潜在的冲突。因此,要取得交际的成功,说话者需要付出额外的努力来解决冲突。在交际中运用信息过量实施面子策略就是这样的一种努力。

二、巩固会话中的和谐

尽管在应对和谐的交际中,说话者一般无须使用过量信息,然而出现过量信息的情况并不少见。这一“反常”现象背后至少有两个动机:一是提升对方的积极面子;二是主动消除对方对自己的消极面子的威胁。两种情况都可以增强交际的和谐,巩固长期的团结,而说到底都是一种为了实现当前或今后的交际目的而做出的语言顺应。我们发现在寒暄性交际或闲聊中经常会出现多余信息,之所以这样,我们认为这是因为起寒暄作用的过量信息有助于促进双方交际的和谐。Edmonson(1981:125)甚至将这一现象概括为一条社交规则,即“在自由会话中,当对方需要你提供信息时,应该尽量多提供信息”,并认为不遵守此规则的人是难于交际的。由此,我们从反面感受

到过量信息的使用在营造交际和谐中的作用。

三、提高会话中的效率

在所有的言语或非言语交际中人们总会追求效率。由于使用过量信息可以解决应对冲突,因此,这一表面上看来不经济的话语方式其实是一种可以提高会话行为效率的手段。

此外,信息过量还执行两种次要功能,分别是强化表达态度和加强人际团结。

信息过量的变异性

信息过量的使用具有较强的变异性。变异涉及命题内容、话语特性以及信息量多少。命题内容的选择既有对主观因素的诉诸,也有对客观存在的把握;既有对情感的依靠,也有对理智的诉求。从话语特性看,过量信息与主要行为信息之间的关系既可能很明确,也可能很含蓄;过量信息的表达方式既可能很直白,也可能带有修辞色彩。此外,信息过量从数量上讲有多有少;从性质上看,多余部分的信息之间也可能存在不同的逻辑关系。总之,信息过量的变异性为交际者实现其交际需求提供了可能。

信息过量的商讨性

就运行特点而言,信息现象具有可协商性,具体又表现为使用上的灵活性、可选择性、语境适应性和策略性。说话人在决定过量信息的内容时可能会直接调用语境资源,也可能参照语境情况调整自己的话语选择。使用过量信息可以实施消极礼貌策略,也可以实施积极礼貌策略。实施信息过量策略乃是基于一种松散的、或然的会话逻辑。就意义而言,信息过量的使用可以传达各类“社会心理效应”,如情感效应、促成效应、醒示效应等。作为一种语用资源,交际者可以策略地加以利用来实现特定的交际需求。信息过量对于会话发展可能会产生推进、延缓、阻碍等影响。

个案研究

为了检验信息过量的顺应性假设,我们开展了一次个案调查。在调查

中,我们选择了请求一回应类会话应对作为我们的考察对象。为了考察影响信息过量现象的因素,我们从若干可能影响因子中引入两个与面子威胁直接相关的调节变量(Goffman 1976, Brown & Levinson 1978),分别是“相对社会地位”和“强加幅度”。调查由两个子调查组成。在第一个子调查中,交际双方在社会地位上存在差距;在第二个子调查中,交际双方在社会地位上是平等的。

调查结果验证了我们的基本假设,即:当会话出现应对冲突时人们会诉诸过量信息解释原因、交代理由等,通过维护对方面子来解决当前的冲突;会话处于和谐时,过量信息的使用则一般是不必要的。在第一种情况下,强加幅度越大,面子威胁也越大,使用过量信息的概率相应地也就越高。人们面对同级或上级时在使用过量信息消除应对冲突方面不存在明显差别。无论是在第一种情况下,还是在第二种情况下,过量信息的使用及其内容选择都体现了交际者的语言顺应本质。

理论抽象

我们依据 Grice (1975)对自然意义和非自然意义的划分区分了自然信息与非自然信息,认为信息过量现象中涉及的过量信息实质上是一种体现社会文化、心理情感、客观环境等影响的非自然信息。非自然信息既有命题性的,也有非命题性的,本研究关注命题性过量信息在会话应对中的使用情况。然而,无论是命题性的非自然信息还是非命题性的非自然信息,都是语言使用者在不断社会化的生存空间里赖以生存和发展的重要资源,儿童语言习得的过程是语言社会化的过程,表现为对表征非自然信息的语言形式的获得和使用。从非自然信息的假设出发,我们可以获得关于诸如语用标记语、间接言语行为等来源的启示。

结论

会话在社会学家看来是社会生活赖以发生和运作的媒介(Goffman 1967, Turnbull & Saxton 1997)。从顺应理论(Verschueren 1999)看,人们在会话中,并通过会话,为日常生活和社会生存而努力实现交际需求。为达到这一目标,他们需要作出各种语言顺应以解决会话应对中的冲突,加强

人际和谐。

在社会交往情境下发生的会话是交际者沟通交际需求的空间,不同需求之间的相互作用决定双方的应对属性。在面对应对冲突时,说话人使用过量信息代表了说话人为达到特定交际目的而额外做出的一种语言顺应,这种顺应能有助于解决双方潜在的冲突。在和谐应对中,说话人很少使用过量信息,偶尔用之有助于提升交际双方的关系,可为今后的交往添加润滑剂。从表面上看,使用过量信息是一种不经济的话语方式,而实质上是提高会话效率的一种手段。语境因素决定过量信息的使用及功能。调查结果支持这些判断。

本研究对方兴未艾的会话分析具有重要意义,不仅有助于从事会话结构的静态分析,而且有利于动态地透析会话的发生机制。同样,本研究也可以看作是对言语行为理论的一种发展,因为它既打破了传统言语行为理论囿于孤立言语行为的做法,又丰富了扩充的言语行为理论的内涵。不仅如此,本研究对于我们理解其他一些语用现象也具有启发意义。譬如,我们认为,语用标记语是命题性信息过量现象词汇化的结果;在语言交际的各个层次上往往都存在不同形式的信息过量现象。本研究还有助于我们解释特定会话方式和结构(如间接言语行为)的形成原因。需求进一步探索的问题包括:与交际者相关的各种差异(如个性、性别、文化背景等)对信息过量的使用有无系统性影响?成人与儿童在这一问题上是否存在差异?儿童如何习得这种能够反映语用能力的信息过量策略?如何确定过量信息的关联性?等等。

Abstract

The present enterprise is a study of the provision of propositional non-natural information (i. e. interactional overinformativeness) in conversational exchanges, seeking to explain the adaptability of the conversational phenomenon. Within our conceptual framework, there are three major components: communicative needs, interactional properties, and contextual correlates. The generative mechanism of interactional overinformativeness is derivable from the interplay of these components. Where the initiator's communicative needs coincide with those of the responder, interactional harmony pervades; where their needs are at odds, interactional conflict dominates. In both cases, there is the likelihood of the occurrence of interactional overinformativeness, though the purposes of the interlocutors involved are different. In the former case, overinformativeness is exploited to reinforce the immediate interactional harmony and consolidate the long-term interpersonal solidarity. In the latter case, overinformativeness serves to resolve the existing conflict by virtue of mitigating face threat or grounding imposition or impediment so as to enhance the chances of interactional success. In contexts where the interactional harmony or interactional conflict is not a matter of importance, the communicative need of efficiency is a primary cause for overinformativeness, which can avoid the possibility or necessity of re-runs or repairs. Interactional overinformativeness is variable along a few dimensions, including propositional content (subjective or objective orientation and the appeal to emotion or the resort to reason), discourse property (explicit or implicit, literal or non-literal) and information quantity (mono-propositional or multi-propositional). In all cases, any single instance of interactional overinformativeness represents an

integrated choice of the contents, forms and further complications. Interactional overinformativeness is negotiable for its flexible and strategic operative mechanism. The form-function mapping is realized neither according to rigid rules nor at random. Rather, interactional overinformativeness is characterized by its constant dependence on the context (exploitation of contextual resources and adjustment to contextual correlates) and strategic orientation. Most positive or negative politeness strategies commonly found at work in other kinds of conversational exchanges are also involved in the cases of interactional overinformativeness. The negotiability of interactional overinformativeness gives rise to its optionality and implicitness. Interactional overinformativeness is optional, for the interlocutors have the freedom to choose to supply or not supply additional information; when they decide to be overinformative, they can choose which information to provide and decide how to provide it. All these choices are subject to the loose constraints of conversational principles and strategies. Of course, the kind of optionality also resides with the intended responders, who have the freedom to choose between seriously processing the added information or just ignoring it and the freedom to process it in different ways. From the relevance-theoretic point of view, most cases of interactional overinformativeness represent a weak form of communication. The meaning it conveys covers various types of weak implicatures or what we term socio-psychological effects (further categorized into affective effects, causative effects and reminder). Beneath the negotiability-featured operative mechanism of interactional overinformativeness runs the non-conventional non-standard logic, which is loose and probabilistic. All the features discussed above point to the adaptability of interactional overinformativeness. The conversational phenomenon can thus be defined as a mode of linguistic adaptation, occurring at the level of conversation and characterized by its functionality, variability and negotiability, which enables the communi-