ABSTRACT

Repetition is a common phenomenon in everyday conversation. Speakers routinely repeat their own words and phrases at the level of the turn or within speech events. In addition, they echo the wording, rhythm and prior utterances of their interlocutors. This frequent occurrence of repetition suggests that it is a phenomenon that deserves careful research.

I will study the phenomenon in two approaches. The first approach examines the conversational implicature of repetition, which is based on the theory of conversational implicature by Grice (1975). The second investigates the indirect speech act performed by repetition drawing upon the speech act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1979).

The research is based on audio recording of real-life conversations without the speakers’ prior knowledge. There are approximately two hours of transcribed corpus of speech between seventeen young Chinese Singaporeans from which cases of self and allo-repetition are cited to illustrate our discussions.

The data for the research shows that there are conversational implicatures of repetition, which fulfils three areas, namely production, comprehension and interaction. This thesis also argues that the conversational implicature of repetition is a form of indirect speech act. Speakers make use of repetition in order to perform certain illocutionary acts, identified as conversational implicature, as well as to produce perlocutionary effects on their hearers.