



Directness and Indirectness Across Cultures

Karen Grainger, Sara Mills

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Directness may often be considered rude in English, but in other languages it signals closeness and honesty. Equally, indirectness can be judged to be polite in English, whereas in other languages it can be regarded as cold and distancing. This book analyses why this is and provides the reader with a set of tools to investigate directness and indirectness in interaction. The authors examine the way that these differences in evaluation may lead to misunderstanding in conversations, focussing on the difficulty in clearly defining and isolating directness and indirectness. Situated within a discursive theoretical perspective, the book shows, through the analysis of role plays, naturally occurring data and interviews, how it is possible to analyse interactants' evaluations and assessments of directness and indirectness.

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