

# Cognitive Pragmatics

The Mental Processes of Communication

**Bruno G. Bara**

translated by John Douthwaite

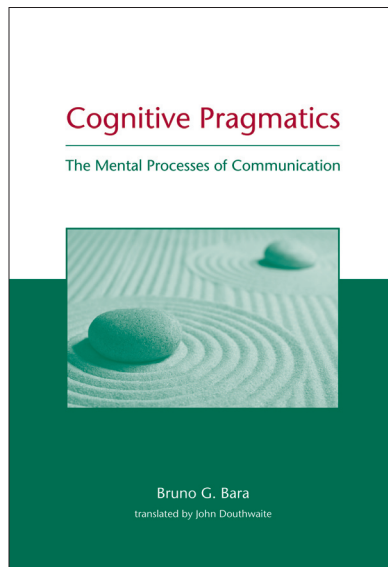
In *Cognitive Pragmatics*, Bruno Bara offers a theory of human communication that is both formalized through logic and empirically validated through experimental data and clinical studies. Bara argues that communication is a cooperative activity in which two or more

agents together consciously and intentionally construct the meaning of their interaction. In true communication (which Bara distinguishes from the mere transmission of information), all the actors must share a set of mental states.

Bara takes a cognitive perspective, investigating communication not from the viewpoint of an external observer (as is the practice in linguistics and the philosophy of language) but from within the mind of the individual. Bara examines communicative interaction through the notion of behavior and dialogue games, which structure both the generation and the comprehension of the communication act (either language or gesture). He describes both standard communication and nonstandard communication (which includes deception, irony, and “as-if” statements). Failures are analyzed in detail, with possible solutions explained. Bara investigates communicative competence in

both evolutionary and developmental terms, tracing its emergence from hominids to Homo sapiens and defining the stages of its development in humans from birth to adulthood. He correlates his theory with the neurosciences, and explains the decay of communication that occurs both with different types of brain injury and with Alzheimer’s disease. Throughout, Bara offers supporting data from the literature and his own research. The innovative theoretical framework outlined by Bara will be of interest not only to cognitive scientists and neuroscientists but also to anthropologists, linguists, and developmental psychologists.

**Bruno G. Bara** is Director of the Center for Cognitive Sciences at the University and Polytechnic of Turin, Italy.



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