Research into spoken language has been a preoccupation of many renowned linguists in recent decades. Despite the intensive development of new linguistic disciplines, such as discourse analysis and conversational analysis, it seems to be a never-ending task to pursue the study of natural language data in the most common everyday situations, with regard to the multiplicity of potential and current meanings. I believe the language used by speakers in such situations most adequately represents language use: “Everyday language is the best data” (Coupland 2001.4). The study of the existing rituals and routines governing our conversational behaviour is part of contemporary mainstream linguistics. Conversation is a versatile, multifunctional and multifaceted means of communication in all areas of human activity.

Partial results of my study of spoken English have been published, mainly in the series Brno Studies in English (see the works cited). This book includes some of the topics already presented, mingled together with some more recent considerations in a more systematic arrangement.

I hope the book will be of interest to those who find the study of spoken English a thought-provoking, challenging and rewarding pursuit.

Brno, March 2002