

Tiina Keisanen
Mirka Rauniomaa
University of Oulu, Finland

Two multimodal formats for responding to requests

The paper discusses action sequences that concern the transfer of an object or service, namely requests and responses to them. We focus specifically on responses, describing how interactants construct them with linguistic resources, embodiment and the use of material objects. The paper thus relies on the observation that human actions are situated in complex social-interactive and material settings (e.g. Goodwin 2000). Previous research within conversation analysis has mainly focused on the design of first pair parts in request and directive sequences (e.g. Craven & Potter 2010, Curl & Drew 2008); the current study complements these findings and contributes to ongoing research on the employment of various semiotic resources in respective second pair parts.

The data, a total of 16 hours, are drawn from video recordings of casual face-to-face and in-car conversations in English. It is characteristic to the requests in the data that they deal with concrete objects and events in the immediate semiotic environment and with present activities. The majority of the requests are granted and/or complied with. We will discuss how granting and compliance are achieved, by examining two social action formats for responding to requests, and showing how language and embodied practices are variously employed in the two.

References

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