# Interaction between careworkers and people with intellectual impairments in residential care

How are directives designed?

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### Introduction

People with intellectual impairments often need some type of support in their everyday life. Many adults with intellectual impairments get residential care. This means that they live in an institutional setting where they get professional help in their daily tasks. Previous research [1] outlines that the careworkers face an institutional dilemma of getting the action done by the resident and, at the same time, doing it so that the adult resident's independence is respected. The study on a British residential home shows that the staff designed their requests as to emphasize the action to be done at the expense, for example, of taking into account the resident's potential trouble and inability in doing the action. Requests were designed in most cases in bald imperative form, which shows high entitlement and pays little attention to possible contingencies. [see 2: entitlement and contingency].

In this study, the aim is to explore how careworkers direct adult residents to take care of the daily tasks in Finnish residential homes. The research questions are: How are the directives designed? How does the design of the directive vary across contexts? The term directive covers a wide range of actions, e.g. requests, suggestions, orders and advices, which are seen as an attempt to get a recipient to perform (or not to perform) some action. [e.g. 3]. Analysis here is based on the previous studies on directives: The design of the directive utterance reflects the social organization [4], such as epistemic and deontic orders [5], between participants.

#### Data and Method

- Data is collected from two residential homes, altogether 4 careworkers and 13 residents.
- The residential homes have existed about 30 years with almost same residents.
- The careworkers live with the residents: institution and personal life side by side.
- Video and audio recordings (about 30 h), ethnographic notes.
- Corpus: 175 verbal directives presented by the careworkers.
- Research method: Conversation analysis

## Preliminary results

Imperatives n= 51/175, 29%

maistappas vähä sitä. (0.8) kaipaako se jotaki maustetta. taste it a bit. (0.8) if it needs some spice.

- directing an on-going project n=50/51 [6] with an explanation n=20/51
- in a second position n=21/51 - instruction or permission to do a next action [7]

Modal verb declaratives n=44/175, 25%

nyt sä voit puristaa ton

sitruunan?

now you can squeeze that lemon? request to do a new action in the ongoing-

- project [8] Modal verbs
- *voida* (can) n=24/44 saada (can/may) n=15/
- pitää/täytyä (have to/ must) n=5/44
  - **Declaratives total n=75/175** direct an on-going project n=73/75
  - with a particle *sitten*(then)/*ny*t(now)/ sen jälkeen (after that) n=44/75

sitten Tuija vielä. (.) sit laitat jauhoja ensin alle, maitoa? then (you) put flours first then Tuija only. (.) milk? under,

Phrasal formats

n=24/175, 14%

directing an on-going

in a second position

project n=20/24

n=10/24

request to do a next step in an action in which recipient is

Bare declaratives

n=31/175, 18%

already engaged [8]

with an explantion n=13/75

Instructions, permissions and requests to do a part of an on-going project. Careworker's high epistemic and deontic status.

Interrogatives n=25/175, 14%

voisiks sää Salme vähän ottaa roskia tuolta eteisestä ylös. could you Salme do some cleaning up in the hallway. (1.0)

haluaisiks sää. would you like to.

- direct to start a new, single task n=20/25
  - with a verb haluta (like/ want) n=4, jaksaal viitsiä (can/feel up to) n=4, voida/pystyä (can/ be able to) n=2
- followed by a third position turn n=6/25
- Compliment/evaluation

Request to do a single task. Epistemic and deontic statuses more equal.

## Conclusion

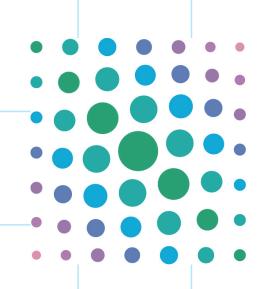
In this study, the imperative formatted directive is the most general form. The result is similar with the study on British residential home [1]. Imperative [6][7], declarative [8] and phrasal formatted directives are in most cases used to direct an on-going project, in this data particularly cooking. Cooking in this environment is an established practice, in which social roles, especially careworkers authority, are more or less obvious. Participants have a shared commitment to the project and directed actions are parts of the bigger task, and need to be done here and now. By these directives careworkers manage the whole project and especially the timing of the part-actions [8]. These straightforward, task-oriented forms display careworkers' epistemic and deontic authority, and high entitlement.

However, in this data there is a differing format, interrogative, that in most cases is used to start a new, single task. In these single task contexts, the epistemic and deontic authority of the careworker, and the social organization between participants, is not that obvious that it is in cooking context. Here interrogative form displays lower entitlement and takes into account the possible contingencies (use of verbs e.g like/feel up to/be able to). By these interrogative forms careworkers show more orientation to the residents' independence than to the task itself.

In this institutional setting, the careworker has responsibility and authority over the resident and it's important to ask, whether requests made by authority leave open any real possibilities to decline to doing/or trying to do the requested action. Still, these preliminary results point out the sensitivity of the careworker to orient differently to the epistemic and deontic statuses of the participants in different contexts, respect the independence of the adult recipient, and also recognize a potential trouble or inability in doing the action.

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