

# 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**

**References:** [1] Antaki, C. & Kent, A. 2012. Telling people what to do (and sometimes, why): Contingency, entitlement and explanation in staff request to adults with intellectual impairments. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44:876-889. [2] Curl, T.S. & Drew, P. 2008. Contingency and action: a comparison of two forms of requesting. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 41:129-153. [3] Searle, J. R. 1979. *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [4] Goodwin, M.H. 2006. Participation, affect, and trajectory in family directive/response sequences. *Text & Talk* 26(4/5):513-541. [5] Stevanovic, M. & Svennevig, J. 2015. Introduction: Epistemics and deontics in conversational directives. *Journal of Pragmatics* 78:1-6. [6] Rossi, G. 2012. Bilateral and Unilateral Requests: The Use of Imperatives and Mi X? Interrogatives in Italian. *Discourse Process* 49(5): 426-458. [7] Lauranto, Y. 2014. Imperatiivi, käsky, direktiivi. *Arkikeskustelun vaihtokauppakielioppia*. SKS, Helsinki. [8] Raevaara, L. 2015. Adjusting the design of directives to the ongoing activity – imperatives in cooking club interaction. Conference presentation. Linköping 14.1.2015.

### Preliminary results

| Imperatives<br>n= 51/175, 29%  | Modal verb declaratives<br>n=44/175, 25%  | Bare declaratives<br>n=31/175, 18%  | Phrasal formats<br>n=24/175, 14%  | Interrogatives<br>n=25/175, 14%   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| maistappas vähä sitä. (0.8) kaipaako se jotaki maustetta.<br><b>taste it a bit. (0.8) if it needs some spice.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>directing an on-going project n=50/51 [6]</li><li>with an explanation n=20/51</li><li>in a second position n=21/51 - instruction or permission to do a next action [7]</li></ul> | nyt sä voit puristaa ton sitruunan?<br><b>now you can squeeze that lemon?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>request to do a new action in the ongoing-project [8]</li></ul> Modal verbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>voida (can) n=24/44</li><li>saada (can/may) n=15/44</li><li>pitää/täytyä (have to/must) n=5/44</li></ul> Declaratives total n=75/175 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>direct an on-going project n=73/75</li><li>with an explanation n=13/75</li><li>with a particle <i>sitten</i>(then)/<i>nyt</i>(now)/<i>sen jälkeen</i> (after that) n=44/75</li></ul> | sit laitat jauhoja ensin alle, <b>then (you) put flours first under,</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>request to do a next step in an action in which recipient is already engaged [8]</li></ul> | sitten Tuija vielä. (.) maitoa?<br><b>then Tuija only. (.) milk?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>directing an on-going project n=20/24</li><li>in a second position n=10/24</li></ul> | voisiks sää Salme vähän ottaa roskia tuolta eteisestä ylös.<br><b>could you Salme do some cleaning up in the hallway.</b> (1.0) haluaisiks sää. <b>would you like to.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>direct to start a new, single task n=20/25<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>with a verb <i>haluta</i> (like/want) n=4, <i>jaksaa/viitsiä</i> (can/feel up to) n=4, <i>voida/pystyä</i> (can/be able to) n=2</li></ul></li><li>followed by a third position turn n=6/25<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Compliment/evaluation</li></ul></li></ul> 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.