

The 2nd Colloquium of Ecological future making of childrearing

【Date】

19th May 2023 (Friday) 16:45-19:00



【Venue】

#Large-sized meeting room, Inamori Memorial Foundation Building (third floor),
Kyoto University

【Hosted by】

The JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S)
“Ecological future making of childrearing in contact zones between hunter-gatherers
and agro-pastoralists in Africa” (Primary Investigator: Akira Takada).

【Schedule】

16:45-17:00

Introduction

Akira Takada (Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS), Kyoto University)

17:00-18:00

The Magic Word? Oh, Please.

The Interactional Functions of “Please” in Requests

Tanya Stivers (Professor of Sociology, UCLA)

In most American and other Western countries, every young child knows how to politely ask for something. That requests should properly be made with Please is drilled into the heads of children from a young age, and children as young as two can spontaneously add the "magic" word as an increment to requests that fail to receive a response (Wootton 2007). In English-speaking cultures, parents routinely encourage this behavior through explicit instruction. Yet, despite the received wisdom, we find that only a small minority of everyday requests are produced with Please?fewer than 10% in a collection of nearly 500 requests. Since Please is far from ubiquitous, what contextual features contribute to its presence?

We argue that in request sequences, speakers using Please are oriented to their request as something that they are issuing despite the fact that they should not pose the request, at least not this particular interactional moment, but are doing so nonetheless. We document two main underlying contexts: first, consistent with Wootton's (1984) finding, Please is used with a requestee has already shown unwillingness to comply with the request. Second, Please is used in interactional contexts where the requestor is intruding into an ongoing sequence or course of action and thus competing with it. Taken together, these cases help us to unpack the concept of politeness to understand it as a concept that has many different facets. What please taps into is but one of these. Beyond examining adult-adult interaction, in this talk we will also explore the way children use (and parents instruct them to use) Please, drawing on a subset of the data.

18:00-18:10

Short Break

18:10-19:00

Discussion

【Notes】

- * The talk is given in English, and no translation will be provided.
- * No reservation is required for participating in the Colloquium.
- * Admission-free.
- * The Colloquium of Ecological future making of childrearing is a serial seminar that was set up in Academic Year 2022, as part of the JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S) “Ecological future making of childrearing in contact zones between hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists in Africa” (Primary Investigator: Akira Takada).
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