

COMM 562 Spring 10
Observation #2 – Talk in a Service Encounter

Your observation should be approximately 2 double-spaced pages. At the top left hand corner, please write your name and class section. This assignment is due in class Monday, April 12th.

Instructions:

Observe yourself or others engaged in a specific service encounter and write about it in terms of the concepts we have discussed in terms of institutional talk. A service encounter is any interaction within any institutional or commercial setting where a service is being provided. You may be the recipient of a service, the provider of a service or simply an observer of someone else's service encounter. In your observation, be as specific and quote as much of the talk as accurately as possible (don't simply "narrate" what was said). While the context of the interaction is important, your observation should focus primarily on the talk of the interaction itself, not in describing the context. Answer as many of the following questions as possible and make sure to be clear and explicit in explaining why the language described fits the category you present it as an example of. For each item you describe be clear about how or why it fits the goals of the institutional task at hand or the institutional roles of the participants.

1. What person references were used? How were these person references relevant to achieving the tasks in the interaction? If no specific person references were used, reflect briefly on why this may be?
2. Describe some instances of lexical choice that seemed particular to the institutional nature of the interaction.
3. Describe how grammatical constructions were used that seemed to index the institutional context, participant's perspectives, or institutional roles in any specific way.
4. Describe the interaction in terms of any constraints that seemed to impact the turn taking system. What institutional aspects if the interaction may have impacted the length, constructions or types of turns used?
5. Describe any institution specific inferences that were perhaps not stated explicitly but were clearly oriented to by participants in the talk. Be specific as to what the inference was.
6. What else, if anything, did you notice about this interaction that made it specifically institutional in nature? Explain.

While I don't want to see excessively formal language used, please check for spelling and grammar errors and make sure your observation is written in an analytic and not a "conversational" tone.

I encourage you to see me or e-mail me with any questions regarding this observation.