

The boundary of recruitment: a response

Kobin Kendrick and Paul Drew

(Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen; and Loughborough University)

We appreciate very much these commentaries by Zinken and Rossi (hereafter Z&R), and Heritage. They help to situate our account of ‘recruitment’ in the broader context of the tradition of work on requesting and offering. Heritage highlights how radically we are departing from a speech act tradition, (foreshadowed and explicated in Drew & Couper-Kuhlen 2014), correctly attributing this departure to our focus on face-to-face interaction. Not only does this require us to investigate the embodied character of interaction, through a consideration of the multi-modality of communication, it also directs us towards the here-and-now nature of requests that inhabit face-to-face interactions. Requests for future assistance, or deferred action requests, are, Heritage reminds us, overwhelmingly verbal and thereby more amenable to a speech act approach. Heritage has helpfully clarified some of the parameters of our proposal to draw together requesting and offering, including volunteering assistance, into a social interactional process of recruitment.

Z&R likewise consider the parameters of our conception of recruitment, but regard our account as having omitted “an important part of the management of cooperation, which is the solicitation of contributions to joint courses of action”, particularly those deriving from an “already established commitment to a wider and shared course of actions” (p.9/10 and elsewhere). It is difficult to see that or how their examples substantiate this putative omission; their first three examples, at least, are paradigmatic examples of recruitments managed, as we propose, through a combination of trouble alerts and embodied displays of trouble. The mother (Aga) may have primary responsibility for looking after the child; nevertheless she recruits Piotr’s assistance, in Z&R’s ex.1, and is recruited by Piotr in ex.2, through exactly the process we outline. So too is Tamara’s assistance in ex.3 recruited through Pauline’s formulation of a problem (line 22) (which Z&R acknowledge). That Piotr’s offer *Give him here* (ex.1 line 5) comes in imperative form is orthogonal to our analysis, which concerns recruitment as an organization of action, not of grammar. The methods of recruitment at work in their examples are no different than those we describe in our article.

However Z&R do raise some important issues in their discussion of their final example, in which “preparing potatoes here is a joint activity made of ordered moves” hence the “high projectability of the recruited action” (Z&R p.11). Z&R make the case for treating a participant putting a potato on Paolo’s board as ‘enabling’ him to cut the potato, according to the pre-ordained sequence of actions involved – where we treat such cases as soliciting (Paolo’s) assistance. Surgery most likely involves a pre-established course of actions; in her account of requests in surgical procedures, Mondada (2014) shows that stages in such procedures can be anticipated or projected by medical staff assisting a procedure, such that quite brief request forms will suffice (directives and the like) at moments when assistants know ‘what’s next’. Hence we refer to *projectability* in unfolding courses of action. Again, Z&R’s examples 1-3 do not involve commitments to projectable courses of actions. Nevertheless Z&R are

guiding us towards properties of sequences like the one in ex.4 (properties such as whether and how ‘need’ arises, the temporality of ‘nexts’ in a projectable sequence, whether and how ‘requests’ are made) that will need further specifying and refining, as we develop how recruitment works to secure others’ assistance; ‘enabling’ Paolo to chop a potato may indeed lie at or outside the boundary of recruitment.

Mondada,L. (2014) Requesting immediate action in the surgical operating room. In Drew,P. & Couper-Kuhlen,E. (Eds.) *Requesting in Social Interaction*. Amsterdam, Benjamins:269-302.