

ABSTRACT

Analysis of the medical interview among Sudanese doctor-patients shows that both doctors and patients address their co-participant by address terms. However, there are differences in both choice of address terms and in the positioning of address terms within the interview. Patients tend to use post-positioned address terms when addressing doctors either by their institutional role (e.g. Doctor) or by title plus last name (e.g. Dr. Fathi). Doctors, on the other hand, more likely address patients by first name (e.g. Ali) and have more flexibility in terms of where they position the address term. In addition, whereas patients tend to use address terms as a technique for amore requests about their illness, agreement, disagreement and acknowledgment. Doctors tend to use address terms as a resource for taking the turn, for resolving overlapping talk, or achieving solidarity. The aim of this research is, using conversation analysis, to show the multiple interactional uses of address terms within the context of the Sudanese medical interview. This research will argue that the interpretation of ‘address term’ is closely tied to its sequential placement. When post-positioned, ‘address term’ occurs in openings and closings of conversations or following, agreements, acknowledgements and appreciations, presenting an attitude of open friendliness towards the other person. This is no more evident than when ‘address term’ plays a mitigating role following requests, advice giving or even disagreements.