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978-1-107-03102-9 - Grammar in Everyday Talk: Building Responsive Actions

Sandra A. Thompson, Barbara A. Fox and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen

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Grammar in Everyday Talk

Drawing on everyday telephone and video interactions, this book surveys how English speakers use grammar to formulate responses in ordinary conversation. The authors show that speakers build their responses in a variety of ways: the responses can be longer or shorter, repetitive or not, and can be uttered with different intonational contours. Focusing on four sequence types: responses to questions (“What time are we leaving?” – “Seven”), responses to informings (“The May Company are sure having a big sale” – “Are they?”), responses to assessments (“Track walking is so boring. Even with headphones” – “It is”), and responses to requests (“Please don’t tell Adeline” – “Oh no I won’t say anything”), they argue that an interactional approach holds the key to explaining why some types of utterances in English conversation seem to have something ‘missing’ and others seem overly wordy.

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Accompanying sound files for both video- and audio-recorded extracts marked with an audio icon (🔊) can be found at www.cambridge.org/ResponsiveActions

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