When do people not use language to make requests?*

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In everyday joint activities (e.g. playing cards, preparing potatoes, collecting empty plates), participants often request others to pass, move or otherwise deploy objects. In order to get these objects to or from the requestee, requesters need to manipulate them, for example by holding them out, reaching for them, or placing them somewhere. As they perform these manual actions, requesters may or may not accompany them with language (e.g. *Take this potato and cut it* or *Pass me your plate*). This study shows that adding or omitting language in the design of a request is influenced in the first place by a criterion of recognition. When the requested action is *projectable* from the advancement of an activity, presenting a relevant object to the requestee is enough for them to understand what to do; when, on the other hand, the requested action is *occasioned* by a contingent development of the activity, requesters use language to specify what the requestee should do. This criterion operates alongside a perceptual criterion, to do with the affordances of the visual and auditory modalities. When the requested action is projectable but the requestee is not visually attending to the requester's manual behaviour, the requester can use just enough language to attract the requestee's attention and secure immediate recipiency. This study contributes to a line of research concerned with the organisation of verbal and nonverbal resources for requesting. Focussing on situations in which language is not – or only minimally – used, it demonstrates the role played by visible bodily behaviour and by the structure of everyday activities in the formation and understanding of requests.

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1. Introduction

A wealth of research has examined how different forms of language are used for requesting. But language is not always necessary to make a request. Interaction rests for a good part on resources other than language. One of them is visible bodily conduct, with which language is constantly combined (de Jorio 1832; Goffman 1963; Clark 1996; C. Goodwin 2000; McNeill 2000; Kendon 2004; Enfield 2009, among many others). If we take a corpus of face-to-face interaction among speakers of Italian, the majority of requests (about 85%) are made using language.[1] Yet there are many that don't involve language at all. This is what this study is about.

My focus is on requests for immediate, practical actions, that is, requests that deal with the concrete business of everyday activities in co-present interaction, including the circulation and deployment of tools and other manipulations of the material environment. Many of these request sequences involve passing an object, either from requestee to requester or from requester to requestee (for the requestee to do something with it). This means that making the request often requires the requester to manoeuvre an object. For example, if I have just peeled a potato and want you to cut it, I need to get the potato to you by, say, holding it out towards you, or by placing it on a cutting board next to you. Also, if I'm sitting at the dining table and want to collect other people's empty plates, I will have to reach out to have them handed over to me. The question then is: when do people accompany these movements with an utterance (e.g. *Take this potato and cut it* or *Pass me your plate*) and when do they not? What is it that allows or invites requesters to rely exclusively on their visible bodily action? And what is it that instead motivates them to add speech to it?

To answer these questions, I concentrate on requests made as part of joint activities, that is, on requests that are functional to the accomplishment of a shared undertaking, such as playing a game or managing the progress of a family meal. Here, the selection between a nonverbal and a verbal form of requesting seems to be influenced by two kinds of criteria.

The first has to do with the relative projectability of action in the activity of which the request is part. There are cases in which a requested action (e.g. passing a plate) is projectable from the ordinary development of an activity (e.g. collecting empty plates between two courses of a meal, in cultures where this is customary) and can therefore be anticipated. Here, all that is needed to get the requestee to act is to configure the body in such a way as to make the requested action possible (e.g. reach out to receive the plate). On the other hand, there are cases in which a requested action (e.g. laying

1. This is based on a sample consisting of 15-minute segments from 20 recordings (5 hours), yielding a total of 339 requests. The criteria used to identify requests are explained in Section 3.

a new combination of cards in a game) is occasioned by a contingent, non-projectable development in the activity (e.g. the combination just played turns out to be illegal), which makes it less possible for the requestee to anticipate. Here, the indexical meaning of the requester's nonverbal behaviour (e.g. pointing to the cards) may not be sufficient for the requestee to understand. For this reason, it needs to be accompanied by a verbal utterance (e.g. *Put down another combination*), which has the ability of specifying the action propositionally, that is through semantic description.

The second criterion relates to the perceptual affordances of the auditory and visual modalities, and to the consequences that they have for recipiency. These become most evident when requests are made in the absence of visual attention by the requestee. Here, no matter how projectable the action requested is, a nonverbal form will fail to be immediately perceived, unless attention is obtained by nonvisual means. Adding language can therefore be a way of securing immediate recipiency.

In what follows, I first situate this study in the context of the existing literature on requesting and introduce the main analytic concepts that underlie my argument, including form selection, projectability, anticipation, and activity (§ 2). Then, after a brief illustration of the data and method used (§ 3), I begin by describing the main nonverbal forms of requesting found in my corpus (§ 4). In the two central sections, I analyse the environments in which nonverbal requests occur, focussing on how the action requested integrates into the larger activity (§ 5), and then make a comparison with verbal requests occurring in similar contexts, focussing on a contrast between projectable and contingent actions (§ 6). I add to this analysis by examining a group of verbal cases that only apparently depart from the pattern observed, motivated by the management of recipiency (§ 7). Finally, I interpret the findings in light of broader interactional principles that shape communicative behaviour (§ 8).

2. Background

2.1 Requests

It has long been noticed that people use a range of different forms to make requests depending on context. This has been the topic of a large body of research within various disciplines and methodological traditions, from cross-cultural pragmatics, based on written elicitation (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989; Márquez-Reiter 2000; Rue & Zhang 2008; Ogiermann 2009; Flores Salgado 2011; among others), to conversation analysis, based on recordings of naturally-occurring interaction. In this latter field, research has focused for the most part on either verbal request forms used on the phone (Taleghani-Nikazm 2006; Lee 2006; Curl & Drew 2008; among others) or, when video recordings of face-to-face interaction are used, on the verbal component of multimodal forms (Wootton 1981; Wootton 1997; Vinkhuyzen & Szymanski 2005;

Heinemann 2006; Galeano & Fasulo 2009; Craven & Potter 2010; Kent 2011; Rossi 2012; Zinken & Ogiermann 2013; Parry 2013; Couper-Kuhlen and Etelämäki, this volume; among others).

A mounting interest in multimodality has recently produced studies on the visible bodily aspects of requesting, and in particular on their interplay with talk (M. H. Goodwin 2006; Cekaite 2010; Tulbert & Goodwin 2011; Keisanen & Rauniomaa 2012; Mondada 2014; Sorjonen and Raevaara, this volume). However, no research has explicitly focused on fully nonverbal forms of requesting as an alternative to verbal or composite forms (but see Mondada 2014).[2]

In the present study, the choice of a nonverbal form is situated in a wider repertoire of strategies, which I refer to as *request system*. A system is a set of alternative practices for carrying out a function or action. It can also be defined as a *paradigm* of functionally overlapping but not equivalent forms (cf. Enfield 2009, 35; Sidnell 2009, 19).[3] Forms of requesting have different interactional properties. For instance, a verbal imperative like *Pass me the salt* carries an expectation that the requestee will comply. An interrogative like *Will you pass me the salt?*, on the other hand, gives the requestee the opportunity to accept or refuse (Craven & Potter 2010; Rossi 2012). A nonverbal form differs from both imperatives and interrogatives in that it neither tells nor asks the recipient to do something, but leaves it largely to the recipient to infer what is requested of them. Also, a nonverbal form differs from a verbal one in that, in order to be perceived and responded to promptly, it requires the recipient's visual attention. These affordances make nonverbals appropriate in some situations and not in others.

2.2 Projectability and anticipation in activities

In this chapter, the selection between alternative forms of requesting is tied to the projectability and anticipation of a requested action in the development of an activity. I now unpack these analytic notions by reference to some of the relevant literature. The central idea is that the structural organisation of action makes subsequent units projectable from the occurrence of certain priors. This allows people to anticipate the advancement of action at different levels, from the components of a turn-at-talk, to the actions within a sequence, to those within an activity (Streeck & Jordan 2009).

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2. Fully nonverbal forms of requesting have been studied in other primate species that lack language (Rossano 2013; Rossano and Liebal, this volume).

3. Systems of formal alternatives have been described, among other things, for other-initiation of repair (e.g. Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977; Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell 2013; Benjamin 2013), overlap management (Schegloff 2000), responses to polar questions (Raymond 2003), and person reference (Enfield & Stivers 2007).

Social action unfolds temporally and progressively. A turn-at-talk, for example, is inspected by recipients for how it progresses towards points of possible completion (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). The projectability of "turn-constructional units" is one of the cornerstones of the turn-taking system. Among other things, it allows recipients to anticipate the end of a current speaker's contribution and time the start of their own contribution relative to it.

Another projectable form of behaviour is manual action. A grasping movement, for example, comprises a preparatory stage of reaching out, a contact period in which the grip is adjusted to the object, and a retraction stage (Streeck 2009, 47; cf. Kita, Gijn, and Hulst 1998). The "ordinary progressive realisation" of hand movements is, among other things, a resource for the coordination of object transfers and of other everyday manual tasks (Lerner & Raymond 2008).

Projectability operates also at a higher structural level, where units of behaviour by different individuals are organised into sequences. An adjacency pair is a structure of two actions, the first of which normatively obliges the production of the second (Schegloff 2007a). So the occurrence of a question allows people to expect the subsequent production of an answer. Moreover, particular kinds of adjacency pair are regularly "reciprocated" with another pair of the same type by the same people with reversed roles. When a how-are-you sequence is initiated by A at the beginning of a conversation, one can expect it to be followed by a how-are-you sequence initiated by B. In this case, we can talk about a "sequence of sequences" (Schegloff 2007a, Chapter 10).[4] This is a form of "supra-sequential coherence" (Robinson 2013, 258) that holds across the boundaries of a single adjacency pair and its possible expansions.

But in this chapter we are interested in a still higher level of structural organisation, which has been referred to as "activity" (Levinson 1979; Heritage & Sorjonen 1994; Robinson 2013, among others). An activity is a structure that involves multiple sequences of action above and beyond a series of same-action pairs. The notion of activity is broader than that of "sequence of sequences" in that it encompasses a wider range of internal organisations, participation frameworks, goals, etc.

Activities differ in the extent to which the actions that compose them and the order in which they are taken is normatively specified (Levinson 1979; Atkinson & Drew 1979; Dausendschön & Krafft 2009; Heritage & Clayman 2010). But most activities have recurrent and identifiable components. An informal telephone conversation, for example, normally comprises an opening section (summons-answer, identification/recognition, greetings, how-are-yous), a topical structure (first topic, followed by others), and a closing section (pre-closing, possible unmentioned topics, terminal exchange) (Schegloff 1968; Schegloff & Sacks 1973). This has also been

4. Other kinds of "sequences of sequences" are discussed in Schegloff (2007a, 207ff).

called the "overall structural organisation" of a telephone conversation (Sacks 1992, 2:157; Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Robinson 2013).

Activities are relevant to this study in so far as their structure is a source of projection and anticipation. The structure of an activity constrains what contributions can be made to it at any given time, and sets up expectations about the function of people's behaviour within it (Levinson 1979; Atkinson & Drew 1979; Heritage & Clayman 2010; Robinson 2013). The structure is sometimes provided by a material source. A written questionnaire, for example, dictates the development of a series of questions and answers (Heritage & Sorjonen 1994). Other activities are less predetermined and organised mainly by reference to an outcome (e.g. solving a mathematical problem). In this case, we can talk about "completable projects" (Lerner 1995), where the recognisability of completion informs people's understanding of what it takes to bring off the task, and allows them to assess the progress made towards it. Finally, the structure of activities is also provided by cultural and practical routines that define procedures for recurrent events, such as distributing food at the start of a meal, collecting empty plates, doing the washing-up, or buying goods at a butcher's stall (Dausendschön-Gay & Krafft 2009; cf. psychological literature on 'scripts': Schank & Abelson 1977; Suchman 1987; Kellermann et al. 1989). People draw on these procedures to anticipate upcoming events and coordinate action with others. As an example, consider the anticipation demonstrated by scrub nurses in assembling and handling objects during surgical operations (Svensson, Heath, and Luff 2007). Scrub nurses normally arrange and rearrange surgical instruments according to their temporal relevance, placing the one anticipated to be used next nearest to the surgeon and removing others that are no longer needed (p. 50). Besides making the instrument immediately available for the surgeon to take, this allows the scrub nurse to pass an instrument in a timely way if requested to do so (see also Mondada 2011; Mondada 2014; Mondada, this volume).

Social action is organised at various levels, from single actions such as a turn-at-talk or a hand movement, to sequences of actions, to sequences of sequences, to activities. The structural projectability of action at all these levels allows people to anticipate aspects of its development. In this chapter, I appeal to anticipation at the *activity* level as both a resource for interpreting others' actions and a criterion for designing one's own.

3. Data and method

The research reported in this chapter is based on a video corpus of naturally-occurring interaction among speakers of Italian living in Northern regions of Italy. The data come from informal encounters and activities among family members and friends.

The range of interactional objects I call *requests* is partly broader and partly narrower than is usually understood in the literature. It is broader because it includes any communicative behaviour that causes or "recruits" (Enfield, this volume) someone to do something, from the most direct utterance (*Open the window!*), to the most indirect one (*It's hot in here*), to no utterance at all (pointing to the window). At the same time, it is narrower because I only consider cases in which what is requested is a physical, practical action to be performed here-and-now, such as fetching an object, performing other kinds of manual tasks (e.g. opening a window), stopping or changing an ongoing bodily movement. Using these criteria, I identified a total of 131 nonverbal requests across 45 recordings (25 hours) featuring about 140 different participants.[5]

I draw on methods from conversation analysis (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Heritage 1984, Chapter 8; Drew 2005; Schegloff 2007a; Sidnell 2010; Sidnell & Stivers 2013) and linguistics to examine the sequences of interaction in which requests occur and the language used within them. This analysis is accompanied by a close consideration of people's nonverbal conduct, such as object manipulations, other hand gestures, body posture and gaze. The classification of nonverbal request forms given in the following section focusses on the requester's manual action, as this is the focal and most prominent component of the request in the majority of cases.

4. Nonverbal forms of requesting

Nearly all nonverbal forms of requesting involve some kind of manual action, many of them involving an object being manipulated or reached for. We can identify four main types. The first consists in holding out an object (e.g. a card) for someone to take and carry out a specific task with (e.g. join it to a combination of cards). The second consists in reaching out towards an object controlled by someone (e.g. an empty plate) for them to hand over. Another form consists in placing an object (e.g. a potato) in a specific location controlled by someone (e.g. a cutting board) for them to carry out a task with the object (e.g. cut the potato). Finally, a last major form is pointing, whereby requesters indicate an object to be transferred to them or the location for a task to be performed.

The four types of manual action just described establish indexical relations between objects and participants in different ways. In holding and placing, for instance, an object is physically brought into someone's field of attention, whereas in reaching and pointing it is the directionality of arm and hand that creates a deictic link with

5. This sample is larger than the one used to calculate the relative frequency of nonverbal requests compared to verbal ones (see Footnote 1).

the object. Also, placing differs from all the other types because it presupposes a pre-existing connection between the placed object and the location of placement (Clark 2003). But besides these differences, in order to function as request forms, all four types require the ability of the recipient to interpret the relevance of a target object at that particular point of the interaction.

Taken together, forms of holding, reaching, placing and pointing make up 87.8% (n = 115/131) of the nonverbal requests collected (see Table 1). The remaining cases include a few iconic gestures depicting the shape of the requested object or action (2.3%, n = 3/131), such as waggling the conjoined thumb and index fingers to represent 'writing' (to get someone to sign a form), and other behaviours that are too heterogeneous to be classified (9.9%, n = 16/131); these miscellaneous forms include behaviours as diverse as tapping on somebody's back in order to be let through a narrow passage, shaking somebody's arm and making a face.

Table 1. Nonverbal request forms in 45 everyday interactions (25 hrs)

Type	Frequency
holding out	33.6% (n = 44)
placing	32.8% (n = 43)
reaching out	14.5% (n = 19)
pointing	6.9% (n = 9)
iconic gesture	2.3% (n = 3)
other	9.9% (n = 13)
TOTAL	n = 131

5. Nonverbal requests rely on the projectability of action within a joint activity

When is a request made nonverbally? What are the conditions that allow or invite someone not to add speech to their request? The answer I propose hinges on two empirical findings. The first is that in 87.0% of the cases collected (n = 114/131) nonverbal requests serve the accomplishment of a joint activity or a shared goal. That is, the requested action contributes to a larger undertaking to which both requester and requestee have committed. One consequence of this is that the requester can assume the requestee to be compliant with the request (Wootton 1997; Rossi 2012). The second finding is that actions requested nonverbally constitute a projectable step in the

activity in progress, which makes them easy to anticipate for the requestee. All the requester needs to do to solicit these actions is make known or available the necessary objects by holding them out, reaching for them, placing them, or pointing to them. In what follows, I substantiate this argument with examples, which are representative of the four main forms of nonverbal requesting described in the previous section.

In Example (1), four friends are playing a card game, a type of joint activity. The request is about a card that is passed from Clara to Silvia, who are in the same team, opposing Bianca and Flavia.

(1)

Circolo01_1314331

1	Bianca	giù un quattro ((discards a card))
		down one four
		I'll discard a four
2		(1.0)
3	Flavia	giù 'l re dai ((lays down a card))
		down the king PCL
		let's use this as king
4		(1.0)
5	Clara	((draws a card from the drawing deck))
6		((rests just-drawn card on table))
7		((picks another card from her hand))
8		((holds out the card across the table towards Silvia, for her to take it and join it to a card combination))
9	Silvia	((takes card from Clara's hand))
10		((joins the card to one of their team's combinations))
11	Bianca	varda ((to Flavia))
		look-IMP.2S
		look

After Bianca discards a card (line 1), it is Clara's turn. She first draws a card (line 5), and then picks another card from her hand to play it (line 7). In this game, cards are played by joining them to existing combinations of cards on the table. The combinations built up by Clara's team are located next to her teammate Silvia, slightly out of Clara's reach. This gives Clara two alternatives for playing a card: to stretch her arm out all the way over the table and place the card herself, or to pass the card to Silvia

and have her place it for her. In this case, Clara opts for the second: by holding out the card across the table towards Silvia (Figure 1), she produces a request for her to take the card and lay it down in one of their team's combinations.

Figure 1. (Example 1, line 8)

Clara presents Silvia with a card during her turn, when she is expected to play one. Her holding the card out signals that she has selected the card to play, but also that she is not going to deliver it to the appropriate location herself. The structure of the game allows Silvia to anticipate the relevant next action, and therefore aids her in recognising Clara's gesture as a request for help in playing the card.

In Example (2), participants are having lunch. The extract begins when everybody has finished their first course and the soup plates need to be gathered.

(2)

PranzoAlbertoni01_972625

1	Mum	((takes Rosa's empty plate and spoon))
2	Rosa	allora quando abbiamo ristrutturato in parrocchia ((to Giulio))
		so when have-1P renovate-PSTP in parish
		so when we renovated the parish centre
3		perché veniva don [Mario io e la Lidia
		because come-IPF-3S Father NAME 1S.N and the NAME
		because Father Mario was coming, Lidia and I
4	Mum	[((stretches out arm with hand palm-up towards Giulio, for him to pass his plate))

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5            (1.0)/((Rosa swallows))
6   Rosa     abbiamo [prima  raccolto    i   soldi=
             have-1P  before collect-PSTP the moneys
             collected the money first
7   Giulio           [((passes plate to Mum))
8   Rosa     =ma  soprattutto ci    siamo occupate   n[oi
              but above.all   1P.RFL be.1P occupy-PSTP 1P.N
             but more importantly we took care of
9   Luca                                [vuoi-   vuoi    ((to Mum))
                                         want-2S want-2S
                                         do you wan- do you want
10           anche il   mio
             also  the  mine
             mine too?
```

In line 1, Mum begins gathering the soup plates by taking Rosa's plate. By the beginning of line 3, Mum has laid Rosa's plate on top of her own. At this point, it is time for Giulio's plate to be collected, which is out of Mum's reach. She therefore produces the target request by reaching out across the table towards Giulio (Figure 2). He then picks up his plate and hands it over to Mum.

Figure 2. (Example 2, line 4)

Collecting used plates is a joint activity that allows diners to move on to the next course of their meal. The activity unfolds in a predictable way, plate by plate, until all have been collected. The action requested by Mum is an integral part of this activity that can be projected from its outset in line 1. When Mum takes Rosa's plate and places it on top of her own, she recognisably starts the gathering. Since

Giulio is sitting beside Rosa, he can anticipate that his plate is the next in line to be collected.[6]

In Example (3), a group of friends is chatting around a table while simultaneously peeling and cutting potatoes in preparation for lunch. Sofia is among the participants responsible for peeling the potatoes, whereas Paolo is among those responsible for cutting them.

(3)

CampUniPictionary01_2210552

1	Lidia	potremmo mandarla a Focus Uno lì [cos'è che era can-CND-1P send-INF=3S.A to NAME there what=3S REL be-IPF-3S **we could send her to that Focus One, what was it?**
2	Viola	[perché **why?**
3		(0.9)/((Sofia finishes peeling potato))
4	Sofia	[((places potato on Paolo's cutting board, for him to take it and cut it))
5	Lidia	[quello dell'atl- cos'era [l'atleta che puzzava di più that of-the athlete what=be-IPF-3S the=athlete REL stink-IPF-3S of more **the one with the ath- what was it, the one with the athlete that stinks the most?**
6	Paolo	[((begins cutting potato))

Throughout lines 1–3, Paolo stands next to the table, momentarily idle, holding the knife on his cutting board. As Sofia finishes peeling a potato (line 3), she places it on Paolo's cutting board (line 4, Figure 3), and then he begins cutting it.

Preparing potatoes is a joint activity made of ordered moves, much like a game. The potatoes are to be peeled first, then cut, and finally gathered in a container. The participants understand this procedure and their respective roles within it. When the peeling of a potato is complete, the projectable next action is cutting, which is to be performed by one of the participants assigned to it, as displayed by the cutting boards in front of them. In placing a peeled potato on Paolo's cutting board, Sofia relies on Paolo's understanding of the relation between the placed object and the location of

6. The progression of the activity is inspected also by Luca, whose plate is the next in line after Giulio's. While Giulio hands over his plate, Luca anticipates his turn by making an offer to Mum ('do you want mine too?', lines 9–10).

Figure 3. (Example 3, line 4)

placement, as well as of his role as 'cutter'. This understanding allows him to interpret Sofia's nonverbal action as a request for him to cut the potato.

In a last example, the card players we have already seen in Example (1) have just finished a game. In line 1, Flavia announces the points that have to be "paid" by her team, that is subtracted from the team's previous score. Bianca's request is about the notepad on which the scores are kept.

(4)

Circolo01_402024

1	Flavia	e ades te pago zinquantazin[que
		and now 2s.D pay-1s fifty-five
		and now I'll pay you fifty-five
2	Bianca	[sì
		yes
3		(0.6)
4	Flavia	[cinquantacinque ((sets cards on the table))
		fifty-five
5	Bianca	[((puts last cards on top of drawing deck))
6		((turns, extends arm towards notepad and points to it))
7	Silvia	((takes notepad and passes it to Bianca))

Shortly after approving Flavia's count (line 2), Bianca turns to the other side of the table, where Silvia is sitting, and gazes in the direction of the notepad, which is visibly out of Bianca's reach. She extends her arm towards the notepad and points to it. Silvia then picks up the notepad and passes it to Bianca.

The action requested is embedded in the ordinary development of the activity. At the end of each game, the points for each team are counted and the scores updated in the game's record. The last of these steps has been carried out for all previous games by Bianca, who knows the game's rules best. So when in line 6 Flavia marks the end of the points count by setting her cards on the table, the projectable next action is Bianca's writing down the scores. This is an environment in which Bianca's pointing to the notepad is all that is needed for Silvia to understand that she is being requested to pass it.

6. The verbal component of requests serves the recognition of non-projectable actions

I now complement the analysis made in the previous section by comparing the use of nonverbal forms of requesting with that of verbal forms, or better, of *composite* ones (Clark 1996; Engle 1998; Enfield 2009), that is forms in which nonverbal conduct (akin to the ones seen above) is accompanied by an utterance. I show that requests are verbalised when the activity structure does not afford the projection required to recognise the request only from its nonverbal component. Another way to view this is that utterances provide more information about the target action when nonverbal behaviour alone may not be enough for the requestee to understand what to do.

The exact form a request utterance takes is influenced by a number of factors that need not concern us here. For purposes of comparison, I concentrate mostly on cases in which the utterance is formatted as an imperative (hereafter, for brevity, *imperative requests*). Imperative requests have been shown to be functional to the advancement of larger undertakings to which both requester and requestee have committed (Wootton 1997; Rossi 2012). This means that nonverbal and imperative forms of requesting have a certain degree of functional overlap. As we have seen, nonverbal forms too are used to request actions that serve the furthering of a joint activity, or that otherwise feed into sequences of actions with a shared goal. However, the interactional conditions for using the two forms are not the same. The argument developed so far is that nonverbal requests are about a predictable step in the activity in progress, an action that is usually projectable from the outset of the activity and that can be anticipated at the point at which the request is made. In what follows, I argue that imperative requests, on the other hand, advance an activity by dealing with a contingency that arises in its course. Actions requested through imperatives are normally not projectable from the development of the activity, and are therefore harder to anticipate for the recipient. This is why they need to be specified verbally.

A first example of such an action comes from the same family lunch as Example (2). The extract features both an imperative and a nonverbal request. Mum and Rosa are

now distributing the second course, consisting in a main dish of meat to be accompanied by mashed potatoes. In line 1, Mum indicates a piece of meat she has selected for Grandma, who is the first in line to be served. While Mum makes a jovial comment on the meat, Rosa begins scooping up a ladleful of mashed potatoes from the mash pot (line 4).

(5)

PranzoAlbertoni01_1040172

1	Mum	questo ((indicating piece of meat for Grandma))
		this
		this one
2		(1.0)
3	Mum	[questo qui è la:::
		this here be.3S the
		this one is the:::
4	Rosa	[((begins scooping up a ladleful of mashed potatoes))
5		(.)
6	Mum	[mucca pazza
		cow mad
		mad cow
7	Rosa	[ah come piacerebbe a mio marito
		oh how please-CND-3S to my husband
		oh my husband would so much love this
8		(0.5)
9	Mum	[vero ((cuts out Grandma's portion of meat))
		true
10	Rosa	[((finishes scooping up ladleful of mashed potatoes and holds it up))
11	Mum	((leans ladle on pan's rim))
12		((stretches out arm with palm-up hand towards Grandma))
13	Rosa	passami il [piatto della vecia ((to Mum))
		pass-IMP.2S=1S.D the plate of-the old-F
		pass me the old lady's plate
14	Grandma	[((passes plate to Mum))
15	Mum	vecia ((to Grandma, while bringing Grandma's plate
		old-F over pot and holding it up for Rosa))
		old lady

16 (0.4)
17 Mum [vuoi purè
want-2s mashed.potatoes
do you want mashed potatoes?
18 Rosa [((puts mashed potatoes on Grandma's plate))

Figure 4. (Example 5, line 13)

In line 9, Mum finishes cutting out the piece of meat selected for Grandma. At this point, she leans the ladle on the pan's rim (line 11), turns to Grandma, and produces a nonverbal request by reaching out towards her plate. Grandma then picks up the plate and hands it to Mum. The transfer of the plate from Grandma to Mum is a predictable step of the ongoing activity, the expectation for which is confirmed by Mum in line 1.

Consider now the way in which the target imperative request emerges in the same sequence. From the beginning of the extract, Mum's actions project the upcoming transfer of meat onto Grandma's plate, a process which culminates with Mum's leaning the ladle full of meat on the pan's rim (line 11). Up to line 13, nothing seems to project that some other action may be interpolated into this sequence. Although Rosa can be seen to be scooping together mashed potatoes (lines 4–8), she does not signal that their transfer onto Grandma's plate should be given precedence over the meat's. The relevance of Grandma's plate being passed first to Rosa arises contingently in the course of participants' actions. By the time Mum requests the plate from Grandma, Rosa is already holding up the ladleful of mashed potatoes, while the ladleful of meat is still in the pan (see Figure 4). Since Rosa is sitting next to Mum, it becomes convenient for her to get Grandma's plate from Mum and drop the mashed potatoes on it before Mum adds the meat. Rosa's request, however, has to be "slotted into" the projected trajectory of Mum's actions. So it needs to be verbally specified.

Example (6) shows another imperative case, from the same card game as Examples (1) and (4). Flavia has just drawn a card that allows her to lay down a first combination (lines 1–2). Upon inspecting the cards played by Flavia, Bianca indicates a problem (line 4). She leans across the table and counts the cards while pointing at them (line 6) and then, after a brief pause, requests that Flavia 'put down another double', which is needed to complete the combination. Moments later, Flavia fulfils the request by laying down two sevens (line 11).

(6)

Circolo01_677062

1	Flavia	[una due tre quatro (che) te l'ho pescada (.) to' one two three four (CN) 2S.D 3S.A=have-1S draw-PSTP ITJ **one two three four, I finally drew it here we go**
2		[((lays down cards in a new combination))
3	Clara	ah [per- oh because **oh bec-**
4	Bianca	[no: ((leans forward across the table)) **no:**
5	Silvia	por[ca miseria piggy misery **holy cow!**
6	Bianca	[due quarto::((points to and counts cards)) **two, four::**
7		(1.2)
8	Bianca	meti zo 'n altro ambo ((keeps pointing put-NPST-2S down one other double to cards)) **put down another double**
9		(2.5)/((Flavia looks at cards in her hand))
10	Flavia	de sete 'l g'ho of seven 3S.A EX=have-1S **I have one of sevens**
((10 seconds omitted))		
11	Flavia	((lays down a double of sevens))

Bianca makes her imperative request after Flavia has laid down an illegal combination of cards. The request is aimed at solving a problem that has arisen during the game, but that was not projected by its structure. After Bianca first raises the problem ('no:', line 4), Flavia's silence indicates her uncertainty as to how to proceed. Also,

the fact that Bianca needs to count the cards before she can instruct Flavia (line 6) shows that the next relevant action is hard to anticipate. Here Bianca's pointing to the incriminated cards would not be enough for Flavia to understand what to do next. The requested action needs to be fully articulated.

In a last imperative example, Greta, Sergio and Dino are chatting, while Sergio is dyeing Greta's hair. As the dyeing proceeds, Dino notices that Sergio has a runny nose (line 1). Since Sergio's hands are busy with Greta's hair, Dino then volunteers to do 'this terrible thing' (line 4) – that is, to help Sergio wipe his nose.

(7)

Tinta 469934

1	Dino	ti sta pende(hh)ndo una goccia di- 2S.D stay-3S hang.down-GER one drop of **you've got a drop hanging do(hh)wn from-**
2	Sergio	((sniffs)) lo so adesso me la tolgo 3S.A know-1S now 1S.D 3S.A remove-1S **I know now I'll to take it off**
3	Dino	((gets some kitchen paper from the table))
4		madò mi tocca fare questa cosa tremenda Madonna 1S.D touch-3S do-INF this thing tremendous **my god the fate fell to me to do this terrible thing**
5		((raises paper to Sergio's nose))
6	Sergio	((turns head to meet Dino's hand))
7	Dino	((begins to rub Sergio's nose))
8	Sergio	[((brings free hand to nose))
9		[((positions dye bottle in a way suitable for Dino to grab it))
10		tieni questo ((holds out the dye bottle)) hold-NPST-2S this **hold this**
11	Dino	((grabs the bottle))
12	Sergio	((wipes nose))

Dino offers Sergio his help by getting some kitchen paper (line 3) and raising it to his nose (line 5). His comment on the course of action he is launching ('the fate fell to me to do this terrible thing', line 6) projects his wiping Sergio's nose, which is facilitated by Sergio's reorienting his head to him (line 6). In line 8, however, Sergio brings a hand to his nose and takes hold of the napkin. This move steers

the course of action in another direction than initially projected in that Sergio is thereby effectively taking over the wiping of his own nose. As he initiates this transition, other actions become relevant that will make it easier for Sergio to clean his nose himself, most importantly freeing his second hand. Transferring the dye bottle to Dino for him to hold is therefore contingent upon this transition. This makes Sergio's request harder to anticipate, and motivates adding an utterance ('hold this') that makes explicit what Dino should do with the bottle being held out to him.

The last example in this section is one in which the interaction runs into difficulties. I show that the source of trouble is the use of a nonverbal form of requesting in a context that does not afford projection of the action requested.

Flora and her friends are hanging out in the living room. Most people have filled out the consent forms for being video recorded, but two are still left to do this: Flora and her young brother Lucio, who has only just joined the gathering. In line 1, Giulia tells Flora that the signed forms have been stacked on the table. A few moments later, after having signed her own form, Flora adds it to the pile (line 6). The target sequence begins right after this, when Flora places a blank form on the table next to Lucio, for him to fill out.

(8)

StubePrep_889779

1	Giulia	qua ci sono gli altri tre ((referring to pile here EX be.3P the other three of signed forms)) **the other three are here**
2	Flora	ah ITJ **oh**
3		(1.3)
4	Silvio	non c'ho neanche tanta fame not EX=have-1S neither much hunger **I'm not even that hungry**
5		(4.7)
6	Flora	((adds her signed form to the pile))
7		((places blank form and pen on table next to Lucio))
8		(1.0)
9	Lucio	cosa devo fare what must-1S do-INF **what should I do?**

10	Flora	eh anche tu devi scrivere il tuo nome PCL also 2S.N must-2S write-INF the your name firmare e la data sign-INF and the date **well you too must write your name, sign, and {put} the date**
11		((pushes form closer to Lucio))
12	Lucio	((grabs form and pen))
13	Flora	questo cos'è ((picks up bottle of wine)) this what=be.3S **what's this?**

The nonverbal form used here is another instance of placing (cf. Example 3). Flora puts a blank consent form in a specific location on the table, i.e. next to Lucio, for him to do something with, i.e. fill it out. This request form presupposes that the recipient is able to infer the target action from the relation of the focal object to the location where it has been placed, and from the recipient's own relation to both object and location. However, Lucio's repair initiation ('what should I do?') shows that this is not enough for him to proceed. A plausible explanation for this lack of understanding is that Lucio has joined the interaction much later than the other participants, when the researcher has already left the scene. He has been told about the recording and has seen others signing the forms. But nobody has yet explained the consent procedure to him. So he doesn't have access to the activity structure that would allow him to recognise the actions made relevant by the form being presented to him. To put it another way, Lucio doesn't have sufficient information to understand what is required of him. This is reflected in the way Flora responds to Lucio's repair initiation: she fills him in on the consent procedure by spelling out the components of the action requested ('well you too must write your name, sign, and {put} the date'), thereby making up for her "under-telling" (Schegloff 2007b, 140; Enfield 2009, 103–105). This example demonstrates the importance of projectability as a condition for the recognition of a nonverbal request. The requestee's access to the underlying activity structure is a criterion for the requester's informational calibration in producing the request. A nonverbal form in the wrong environment can cause the requestee to seek clarification, which in turn obliges the requester to supply it, resulting in a disruption of progressivity (Stivers & Robinson 2006; Heritage 2007).

In sum, I have argued that different contributions to a joint activity can have different statuses within its structure that make them easier or harder to anticipate, and that this impacts the way in which they are requested. I propose a distinction between actions that are *projected* by the development of an activity and actions that are contingently *occasioned* by it. Actions of the former kind are easy to anticipate on the basis

of a common understanding of the activity structure. For this reason, presenting the requestee with the objects necessary for these actions is enough for getting them to act. On the other hand, actions that become relevant contingently – to deal with a halt in the activity or to steer its course in an unanticipated direction – are harder to anticipate. Soliciting these actions therefore requires specifying them verbally. Not doing so can result in a failure to achieve understanding.

7. A competing motivation for verbalising projectable requests: Securing immediate recipiency

In my corpus, I have encountered a few cases in which requesters add a verbal component to their request even though the target action is a projectable step of the activity in progress that can be easily anticipated by the requestee. These cases require an account because they depart from the pattern proposed in the previous sections. In what follows, I show that such a deviation is not inconsistent with what has been shown so far, but motivated by a concurrent functional pressure: securing immediate recipiency. This pressure interacts with the criteria seen above in shaping the multimodal design of requests.

The two examples below are part of a larger group of cases in which the requestee does not have visual access to the requester's behaviour at the time at which the request is made, as displayed by their body posture and gaze direction. Visual attention is fundamental to human perception (Gibson 1979; Marr 1982; Liversedge, Gilchrist, and Everling 2011) and a key element in establishing joint attention with others (Butterworth & Cochran 1980; Tomasello et al. 2005). In request sequences, visual attention is important for coordinating each other's physical actions, particularly when the transfer of an object is involved. For this reason, requesters monitor other people's movements in the environment and use various practices to establish joint attention *before* producing a request (Keisanen & Rauniomaa 2012). But there are also situations in which requesters produce a request when the requestee's attention is not yet secured. In these situations, one way to carry out the request is to actively get the requestee's attention by nonvisual means.[7] This is another function of the verbal component of requests. Securing immediate recipiency can motivate using speech even though the action requested is fully projectable.

7. Another way to overcome a momentary lack of visual attention is to hold the nonverbal behaviour in position until the requestee's attention eventually falls on it.

Consider Example (9), taken from the same card game we have already consulted multiple times. When the extract begins, Flavia is shuffling the cards for the next match.

(9)

Circolo_508664

1	Silvia	adeso vinzem Clara e dopo ghe dago 'l now win-1P NAME and after 3S.D give-1S the cambio al Danilo change to-the NAME **now we win Clara and then I'll take over for Danilo**
2		(1.0)/((Silvia turns on her chair to see where Danilo is))
3	Silvia	[va bem che me par che l'è:: go.3S well CMP 1S.D seem-3S CMP SCL=be.3S **well, it looks like he's::**
4		[((all participants look down the hall))
5	Clara	ma l'è là via che 'l [che 'l( )] che zuga but SCL=be.3S there away REL SCL REL SCL REL play-3S **he's over there p- p- ( ) playing**
6	Flavia	[che 'l zuga] REL SCL play-3S **playing**
7		(.)
8	Clara	vara che gh'è [tra- ((still looking look-IMP.2S CMP EX=3S tranquillity down the hall)) **you can see it's all very q-**
9	Flavia	[alza ((sets cards in front lift-IMP.2S of Clara)) **cut**
10	Clara	.hh[hhh= ((looks down at cards))
11	Silvia	[l'è za nà a zugar SCL=be.3S already go-PSTP to play-INF **he's already there playing**
12	Clara	=[gh'è tranquilità EX=be3S tranquillity **it's all very quiet**
13		[((cuts cards))

As required by the rules, at the beginning of each game the cards have to be shuffled by the dealer (here, Flavia) and cut by the player on the dealer's right (here, Clara). The action requested of Clara ('cut') is part of this procedure and can be easily recognised from the placing of the shuffled cards in front of her. Verbally specifying the action requested is therefore unnecessary in this context. Why then does Flavia design her request with an utterance? In line 4, while Flavia is still shuffling the cards, all participants turn their attention to Danilo. In lines 5–8, Clara describes what Danilo is doing while looking down the hall. And when Flavia finishes shuffling and turns to Clara, Clara is still looking away from the table, making an assessment about what she's seeing (line 8, see Figure 5). So by the time the request is produced, the requestee is not visually oriented to the requester's nonverbal behaviour. Flavia's imperative utterance ('cut') works to get Clara's attention back to the table and to the cards that are being set in front of her (line 10).

Figure 5. (Example 9, line 8)

A similar case is taken from the same interaction as Example (3), where a group of friends is chatting around a table while at the same time peeling and cutting potatoes in preparation for lunch. The target request is produced by Lidia by holding out a peeled potato towards Paolo (for him to take and cut) while uttering the imperative interjection *to*' 'take/here you are'.

(10)

CampUniPictionary01_1525517

1	Sofia	((places potato$_1$ on Paolo's cutting board))
2		(0.5)
3	Sofia	(dai) fal- fa' nar quele mam ((to Paolo))
		(PCL) make-IMP.2S- make-IMP.2S go-INF those hands
		(come on) us- use those hands

4	Paolo	[no guarda là ((leans across table and places potato$_1$ no look-IMP.2S there on Stella's cutting board)) **no look there**
5	Lidia	[((holds out potato$_2$ towards Paolo)) to' ITJ **take/here you are**
6	Paolo	((leans back, takes potato$_2$ from Lidia's hand))
7		[vedi qua dai andiamo se mi fai perdere tempo ( ) ((to Sofia)) see-2S here PCL go-1P if 1S.D make-2S lose-INF time **see here? come on let's get a move on, {but} if you waste my time ( )**
8		[((sets potato$_2$ down near his cutting board))

Figure 6. (Example 10, line 5)

Before the extract begins, Paolo has teased Sofia for working too slowly. In line 1, Sofia retaliates on Paolo's tease by placing a peeled potato$_1$ on his cutting board, in spite of the fact he is already busy cutting one. In response to this, Paolo points out that Stella, a momentarily idle "cutter", is in a better position than him to cut the potato$_1$ ('no look there', line 4). So he leans across the table to place the potato$_1$ on Stella's cutting board. It is at this point that Lidia launches the target request by extending a hand with another potato$_2$ towards Paolo. As she begins extending her hand, Paolo continues leaning across the table towards Stella, thereby reducing his visual access to Lidia's gesture (Figure 6). Lidia utters the verbal component of her request at the same time Paolo drops the first potato$_1$ on Stella's cutting board. The verbal form *to'* is a truncated version of an old imperative form *togli* 'take' and can be described as an imperative

interjection. In cases like (10), its use implies that the passing of an object is underway, and its meaning can be glossed as 'take' or 'here you are'. As Lidia produces this minimal imperative, Paolo (still leaning across the table) turns his head and gazes at the potato$_2$. He then leans back and takes the potato$_2$ from Lidia's hand (line 6).

The action requested in this example is akin to the one seen in Example (3). Cutting is the next relevant action that Paolo can expect to undertake whenever a peeled potato is presented to him (be it through a placement or a holding-out gesture). What is different between the two examples is the requestee's visual orientation relative to the requester at the point at which the request is produced, which has consequences for the design of the request. To be acted upon immediately, a nonverbal gesture needs to be seen. An utterance, on the other hand, can be perceived by the requestee even without visual attention. A request's verbal component therefore helps the requester secure immediate recipiency from the requestee (cf. Kärkkäinen & Keisanen 2012, 602).

To summarise, in the cases analysed here and in the prior section, the verbal component of requests has two independent functions. The first is to specify the requested action. This is necessary when the action is not projected by the ongoing activity but contingently occasioned by it, which makes it harder to anticipate for the requestee. The second function is to secure immediate recipiency when the requestee does not have visual access to the nonverbal component of the request. In cases where a verbal specification of the requested action is not required to achieve understanding, a minimal utterance may still be produced to get the requestee's attention.

8. Discussion

In everyday joint activities, participants often request others to pass, move or otherwise deploy objects. In order to get these objects to or from the requestee, requesters need to manipulate them, for example by holding them out, reaching for them, or placing them somewhere. As they perform these manual actions, requesters may or may not accompany them with a spoken utterance. This study shows that the choice between these two alternatives – adding or omitting language – is influenced in the first place by a criterion of recognition. When the action requested is *projectable* from the advancement of an activity, presenting a relevant object to the requestee is enough for them to understand what to do; when, on the other hand, the action requested is *occasioned* by a contingent development of the activity, requesters use language to specify what the requestee should do. This study also shows that this criterion operates alongside a perceptual criterion, to do with the affordances of the visual and auditory modality. When the action requested is projectable but the requestee is not visually attending to the requester's manual behaviour, the requester

can use just enough language to attract the requestee's attention and secure immediate recipiency.[8]

The projectability of a requested action is grounded in the activity of which it is part. Activities like playing cards, distributing food at the start of a meal, collecting empty plates, preparing potatoes, are forms of social organisation in which the actions of different individuals are sequentially structured to achieve a set of outcomes. Their "ordinary progressive realisation" (Lerner & Raymond 2008) allows participants to project upcoming steps, and thereby to anticipate the relevance of contributions that may be requested of them (see also Mondada 2014; Mondada, this volume). The structure of an activity is in other words a form of common ground (Clark 1996, 93), a resource for interpreting others' actions as well as a criterion for designing one's own (Levinson 1979; Robinson 2013).

An assessment of the relative projectability of a requested action is an estimation of how easy or hard the action is to anticipate for the requestee. This has consequences for how much information the requestee needs to understand the request. By simply holding out an object, reaching for one, placing, or pointing, requesters provide the requestee with only a minimal amount of information. None of these behaviours has a propositional content of its own; none of them represents the action requested symbolically (as language does) or depicts it iconically (as a drawing or an iconic gesture would). They are instead all indexical signs that draw attention to an object on the basis of spatial contiguity and/or through a directional vector (Clark 2003; Kendon 2004; Enfield 2009), without specifying what should be done with the object.[9] They are therefore minimal forms of requesting that heavily rely on participants' common ground – that is, in our case, on the projectability of the requested action in the ongoing activity.

The question now is: why should requesters minimise the form of a request? Why not always provide the same amount of information? I want to suggest three reasons for this that apply more generally to human communicative behaviour. The first is a principle of least effort (Zipf 1949). If a nonverbal form is enough to achieve

8. These findings do not exhaust the functional properties of requests produced with no or little language. One aspect that hasn't been discussed, for instance, is the potential of a nonverbal request to be made without interrupting simultaneous talk. Not using language can allow requesters to launch a request sequence while at the same "deferring to" a parallel concurrent course of action (Raymond and Lerner ms; cf. Goffman 1963; Ekman 1976; Kendon 1985; Toerien & Kitzinger 2007; Mondada 2011; Mondada 2014, among others). This or other additional functions of nonverbal forms, however, will still be subjected to the recognitional, informational and perceptual principles presented here.

9. Reaching out is more meaningful in this respect, as the configuration of the hand in a grasping shape signals one's readiness to get hold of an object (Streeck 2009, 47).

understanding, the requester should not add extra cost by accompanying it with unnecessary language. Adding another semiotic layer implies more effort both for the requester to produce and for the requestee to process. Minimising a request form is therefore in keeping with minimising joint effort (Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs 1986). But minimisation has social reasons as well. The less I specify what I'm requesting you to do, the more I rely on you to make the correct inference. This is possible, as we have seen, in contexts of close collaboration where immediacy of interpretation feeds on mutual access to the progressive development of a joint activity, which is a form of shared knowledge. Trusting in another's ability to understand is therefore a signal of closeness that fosters interpersonal affiliation (Enfield 2008; cf. also Ford, Thompson, and Drake 2012, 209). Finally, a third reason for not adding unnecessary information is to prevent one's request from doing "more than requesting" (cf. Schegloff 1996; Stivers 2007). One default assumption in communication is that people will make their contribution as informative as required, no more, no less (Grice 1975; Levinson 2000). This doesn't mean that a speaker cannot add more, but that adding more is a special thing to do. If requesting by simply holding out an object is already enough for you to understand what to do, then supplying extra information verbally (e.g. *Take this and put it over there*) will attract special attention (see also Enfield 2013, 444–445). Over-specifying a requested action potentially elicits an enriched interpretation of the request and compromises its status of business as usual. This general pragmatic principle has already been shown to be operative in other functional domains such as person reference (Schegloff 1996; Stivers 2007).

But we have also seen that the selection between a nonverbal and a verbal form of requesting is sometimes concurrently influenced by a perceptual criterion. There are cases in which specifying the target action verbally is unnecessary from an informational point of view, yet in which the requester uses language to attract the requestee's attention and secure immediate recipiency. How then, in these cases, does the attention-getting function of language interact with the principles of minimisation discussed above? I argue that these principles continue to be oriented to by producing only a minimal utterance. We can find support for this by comparing the verbal forms used in Examples (9) and (10), whose function is to get the requestee's attention, with the ones examined in Section 5, whose function is (also) to articulate the target action. Whereas in cases such as (5), (6) and (7) the utterance includes both a predicate and an object argument ('pass me the old lady's plate', 'put down another double', 'hold this'), often encoded as a full noun phrase, in Examples (9) and (10) the utterance only consists of either a predicate without arguments (*alza* 'cut') or an imperative interjection (*to*' 'take/here you are'). The informational load in the latter cases is therefore much reduced. Using just enough language to attract attention preserves the assumption that the requestee can already know what to do. So it allows the requester to satisfy multiple interactional pressures.

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Key to interlinear glosses

1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, A = accusative, CMP = complementiser, CN = connective, CND = Conditional, D = dative, EX = existential, F = feminine, GER = Gerund, IMP = Imperative, INF = Infinitive, IPF = Past Imperfect, ITJ = interjection, M = masculine, N = nominative, NAME = proper name, NPST = Non-Past, P = plural, PCL = particle, PRT = partitive, PSTP = Past Participle, REL = relativiser, RFL = reflexive, S = singular, SCL = subject clitic.

In absence of other tense/aspect/mood glosses (GER, IMP, INF, IPF, NPST, PSTP), the unmarked verb inflection is present indicative (i.e. simple present).