The request system in Italian interaction

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For my mother, Maria

Contents

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Transcription conventions

Data are represented in three-line transcripts. The first line represents the original utterance in Italian; the second line gives a word-by-word or morpheme-by-morpheme gloss of the utterance (see the list of abbreviations); the third line gives an English translation.

Temporal aspects

[	A left bracket indicates the onset of overlapping talk.
]	A right bracket indicates the end of overlapping talk.
=	Equal signs ordinarily come in pairs — one at the end of a line and another at the start of the next line, or of one shortly thereafter. They are used to indicate two things: 1) if the lines connected by two equal signs are by the same speaker, then there was a single, continuous utterance with no break or pause, which was broken up in order to accommodate overlapping talk in the transcript; 2) if the lines connected by two equal signs are by different speakers, then the second was "latched" to the first.
(0.0)	Numbers in parentheses indicate silence represented in seconds.
(.)	A dot in parenthesis indicates a "micropause" of less than 0.2 seconds.

Aspects of speech delivery

:::	Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound.
-	A hyphen indicates a cut-off.
hh	The letter "h" indicates audible outbreath. The number of "h"s represents the length of the outbreath.
.hh	The letter "h" or a series of "h"s preceded by a dot indicates audible inbreath. The number of "h"s represents the length of the inbreath.

(hh)	The letter “h” enclosed in parentheses indicates laughter or breathing inside the boundaries of a word or at the end of it.
£	The British pound sign indicates “smile voice”.
words	Underlining indicates emphasis.
WORDS	Upper case indicates that a word or utterance is markedly loud.
°words°	A word or utterance enclosed by two degree signs is markedly quiet or soft.
↑ ↓	Upward and downward arrows indicate a marked rise or fall in pitch.

Other aspects

( )	Empty parentheses indicate inaudible word(s).
(words)	Words in parentheses are likely possibilities of what was said.
{words}	Words in curly brackets were not uttered in the original Italian but are supplied to make the English translation more understandable or idiomatic.
((comment))	Double parentheses contain contextual information.

Abbreviations used in glossing

1	first person	INF	Infinitive
2	second person	IPF	Past Imperfect
3	third person	ITJ	interjection
A	accusative	M	masculine
AUG	augmentative	N	nominative
CMP	complementiser	NAME	proper name
CN	connective	NPST	Non-Past
CND	Conditional	P	plural
D	dative	PCL	particle
DIM	diminutive	PRT	partitive
EX	existential	PST	Past
F	feminine	PSTP	Past Participle
FUT	Future	REL	relativiser
FRM	formal	RFL	reflexive
GER	Gerund	S	singular
IM	impersonal	SBJ	Subjunctive
IMP	Imperative	SCL	subject clitic

In absence of other tense/aspect/mood glosses (CND, FUT, GER, IMP, INF, IPF, NPST, PSTP, SBJ), the unmarked verb inflection is Present Indicative (simple present).

1 Introduction

People across the world make requests every day. We don't just do everything ourselves, but constantly rely on others to get by in the small and big practicalities of everyday life, be it getting the salt, moving a sofa, or cooking a meal. It has long been noticed that when we recruit the help of others we don't do it always in the same way, but employ a wide range of forms, drawing on various resources afforded by our language and body. But why should this be so? What do different forms of requesting give us?

The short answer is that they allow us to manage different social relations. But what kind of relations? While prior research has mostly emphasised the role of long-term asymmetries like people's social distance and relative power, this thesis puts at centre stage social relations and dimensions emerging in the moment-by-moment flow of everyday interaction. These include how easy or hard the action requested is to anticipate for the requestee, whether the action requested contributes to a joint project or serves an individual one, whether the requestee may be unwilling to do it, and how obvious or equivocal it is that a certain person or another should be involved in the action.

This thesis aims to contribute to our understanding of both language and social interaction by showing that forms of requesting constitute a system, organised by a set of recurrent social-interactional concerns, which the different forms are used to manage.

This chapter begins by situating the thesis in the context of prior and current work on human sociality, language, and requesting. It then states the aim and scope of the present study, introduces the data and methodology employed, and finally overviews the following chapters.

1.1 Human cooperation and requesting

So why study requests? One reason is that they are a primordial and pervasive component of social interaction. Our propensity to appeal to others for things we cannot do alone — or do better together — is constitutive of human sociality, as is the need to monitor, coordinate and direct each other in our daily collaborative activities.

Requesting is considered a basic social act or motive (Austin 1962; Searle 1969; Tomasello 2008) that appears very early in ontogeny, spurring some of the earliest forms of communication between infants and their caregivers (Bates, Camaioni, and Volterra 1975; Bruner 1983; Blake, O'Rourke, and Borzellino 1994; Wootton 1997; Carpenter et al. 1998; Cameron-Faulkner 2014). Requesting occurs also among our closest animal relatives. Great apes such as chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans understand that they can induce others to do things that will help them achieve their goals. To do this, they are able use gestures intentionally and flexibly (Tomasello 2008; Rossano 2013b; Rossano and Liebal 2014). However, there are fundamental differences in the way in which requesting works in humans and in nonhuman primates (Tomasello et al. 2005; Tomasello 2008; Grosse, Moll, and Tomasello 2010; van der Goot, Tomasello, and Liszkowski 2014). These differences boil down to the fact that human requesting — and social behaviour more generally — rests on a mutual assumption of cooperation and proclivity to help (Grice 1957, 1975; Henrich et al. 2004; Boyd and Richerson 2006; Warneken and Tomasello 2007), while nonhuman requesting doesn't. Cooperation is intimately connected to a uniquely human ability to share goals and intentionality (Gilbert 1989; Searle 1990; Bratman 1992; Tomasello et al. 2005). This is what enables collaborative activity, at all levels, and the distribution of agency more generally (Kockelman 2007; Enfield 2013b).

Requesting is deeply enmeshed in the management of social cohesion and solidarity. For one thing, it exposes people's need for assistance and mutual dependence in many aspects of their daily affairs. At the same time, it nurtures a web of commitments and obligations that constrain people's behaviour (Brown and Levinson 1987; Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014b). Given the richness and complexity of human sociality, people find themselves requesting in different circumstances and environments, where different social-interactional concerns and pressures are at play. This motivates the development of strategies to address those concerns. And one of the most powerful tools people have to do this is language.

1.2 Language and social action

One of the goals of this thesis is to contribute to our understanding of language. Language is a very complex phenomenon, with unique properties that set it above any other form of

animal communication. Some of these properties are structural, and include: double articulation, which links a stream of elements that are individually meaningless (phonemes) to combinations of these elements that are meaningful (morphemes and words); hierarchical organisation of the meaningful elements into constituents; generative capacity arising from the combinatorial possibilities at various levels of the hierarchy; and facility to encode symbolic meaning, based on arbitrary-conventional relations (Hockett 1960; Martinet 1965). Our understanding of language cannot overlook its structural properties and internal organisation. But it must also involve an account of its ecology. Linguistic structures and the meanings they convey haven't evolved for their own sake, but to serve as means for social interaction.

This functional perspective on language goes back a long way to philosophers like Wittgenstein (1953) and Austin (1962), and has been developed as both a theoretical and a methodological bedrock by many others since, not only in philosophy and linguistics, but also concomitantly in sociology and some areas of social psychology (among others, Vygotsky 1962; Searle 1969; Sacks 1992a; Schegloff 1996a; Clark 1996; Tomasello 2008; Levinson 2013). From this standpoint, language is a toolkit, a technology to accomplish various interactional tasks — from sharing attention and establishing communication, to producing and projecting turns at conversation, to delivering recognisable actions, such as questions, answers, agreements, disagreements, complaints, offers, and of course requests. Actions are considered by many as a central level of social organisation, the one which all lower-level processes are geared towards as well as the building block of higher-level structures like sequences of actions and activities (see Searle 1969; Goffman 1981; Sacks 1992a; Schegloff 1996a, 2007b; Clark 1996; Enfield 2009; Levinson 2013, among others).

Another goal of this thesis, then, is to contribute to our understanding of the relation between language and social action. At the core of this relation lies the process of "action formation and ascription" (Levinson 2013), that is, how people use the resources of language, body and context to construct actions that are, in turn, understood as such by others (Schegloff 2007b:xiv). Formation and ascription of action are two sides of the same coin, though the analysis normally tends to focus on one or the other aspect. In this thesis, I take mostly the perspective of formation, focussing particularly on the selection of alternative ways of constructing the same action. This implies a fundamental distinction between the *action* being performed (e.g. a request) and the *forms* or *practices* that can be used to implement it (e.g. an imperative utterance), that is the bits of language and other conduct

which have as an outcome the production of that action (Schegloff 1996a:168–74, 1997:505; Sidnell 2010:61; Enfield 2013b:94–100). The question then is, given the possibility of multiple forms to implement the same action, what is it that motivates the selection of one or the other?

This approach to language and action is comparable to one of the methods of lexical semantics: onomasiology, which starts with a concept or situation and asks which words can be used to designate it (Geeraerts 2010:23–4; Enfield 2013b:99). The other method, semasiology, starts instead with a word and asks which concepts or situations it can be applied to. This is comparable to starting from a form or practice and asking what actions it is used to implement. The two approaches, both in lexical semantics and in the study of action, are complementary (see Schegloff 1996a:172–3; Hakulinen and Selting 2005:10–1; Fox et al. 2013:736–8). This thesis primarily adopts the former approach (*action → forms*). But it also resorts to the latter (*form → actions*) in Chapter 6, where the selection of a certain form is closely connected to the range of actions the form can potentially accomplish.

1.3 Italian grammar and interaction

This thesis investigates the realisation of requests in everyday interaction among speakers of Italian. The reason for focussing on this language is twofold. For one thing, studies of requesting — and especially of requesting in naturally occurring interaction — have predominantly focussed on English. This study therefore joins recent efforts to expand the investigation to other languages. At the same time, Italian is the author's native language, which has certain analytic advantages, including special access to the communities studied, member knowledge, and linguistic expertise.

Italian is spoken by over 60 million people in Italy, Southern Switzerland, and by migrant communities in several other countries including the United States, France, and Canada (Lewis, Simons, and Fennig 2014). Descriptions of the language can be found in many reference and pedagogical grammars (e.g. Lepschy and Lepschy 1988; Aust and Zollo 2006; Maiden and Robustelli 2007).[1] For a usage-based account centred around conversational functions, see also Proudfoot and Cardo (1996). While it is reasonable to treat

[1] Among the most comprehensive grammars written in Italian are Serianni (1989), Dardano and Trifone (1995), and Renzi, Salvi and Cardinaletti (1991). Also, the contributions in Sobrero (1993) cover all the main levels of linguistic description, including phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and prosody.

Italian as one language, most speakers use regional and local varieties that are significantly influenced by the substrate Romance languages which have always coexisted with the national language (see Tosi 2001). The basic word order in all varieties of Italian is SVO, with subject pronouns often dropped. Verbal morphology distinguishes person, number, tense and mood. And also nouns, pronouns, adjectives and articles inflect for gender and number. While Italian has both morphological and syntactic means to distinguish imperatives from other sentence types (see Chapter 3), these are generally not available to distinguish polar interrogative from declarative sentences. This lack, however, is compensated for by a systematic use of distinct intonation contours, as explained in Section 1.6.4 below.

A fair amount of research has been done on social interaction in Italian, including studies on family interaction and socialisation (e.g. Sterponi 2003; Fatigante 2007; Galeano and Fasulo 2009; Arcidiacono and Pontecorvo 2010), storytelling (Monzoni and Drew 2009), medical interaction (e.g. Pino and Mortari 2012; Mortari and Pino 2014), and basic domains of social organisation such as gaze behaviour (Rossano 2012), the mobilisation of response (Stivers and Rossano 2010), and the question-response system (Rossano 2010). However, little of this work has focussed on requesting, one notable exception being a study by Galeano and Fasulo (2009), which explores several aspects of requests between parents and children, including the use of address terms, preliminary questions, forms of requesting that are more or less coercive, as well as the role of normative reasoning, and the structure of sequences of "concatenated" requests.

This thesis adds to this work by building a comprehensive analysis of the forms of requesting found in a large corpus of everyday informal interaction among adult speakers. Although focussed on a particular language, the findings have potentially broader scope, and several of the phenomena examined are likely to be common to other languages.

1.4 Research on requesting

Over the past four decades, requesting has attracted a great deal of attention, in several disciplines and fields of research. In what follows, I give a general, necessarily limited overview (see also Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014a). Further literature that is relevant to particular topics is reviewed in the individual chapters.

1.4.1 Making and understanding requests

Some of the earliest treatments of requesting as an action performed through language are to be found in philosophy, and particularly within the development of speech act theory. Searle (1969, 1975) defined speech acts as utterances produced under certain conditions, generally referred to as "felicity conditions" or "conditions of satisfaction" (cf. Austin 1962). For a request to be successfully performed, the conditions are the following (Searle 1969:66): the utterance must refer to a future act of the recipient (propositional content condition); the speaker must genuinely want the recipient to do the requested act (sincerity condition); the speaker must also believe that the recipient is able to do the requested act, and that he would otherwise not do it of his own accord (preparatory conditions); finally, the utterance must be intended and taken as an attempt to get the recipient to do what is requested (essential condition). These conditions, which mostly refer to idealised psychological states of the speaker and recipient, are jointly constitutive of an act of requesting (see Levinson 1983:238).

Gordon and Lakoff (1971) elaborated on these aspects of the theory, noting that utterances which are regularly used for requesting make reference to the felicity conditions for the act. To get someone to pass the salt, for example, people may state a sincerity condition (*I'd like the salt*) or enquire about a preparatory condition (*can you pass the salt?*). These ideas were quickly taken up in linguistics, paving the way for a long line of studies concerned with the ontology of linguistic actions (see Levinson 1983: ch. 5 for a review), with requests remaining a privileged object of enquiry. Among others, Labov and Fanshel (1977) applied and reworked speech act analysis in the light of psychotherapeutic discourse, including the rules and conditions for making a request (p. 77-86). At around the same time, Ervin-Tripp contributed to the study of how requests are made and understood by showing, among other things, the importance of social roles (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1976, 1981). In a famous example, she reported on a Turkish student saying to her elderly landlady *could we put the dust bin over there?* — intending to make a polite request for help. The utterance however was interpreted as a request for permission (*why, Ayhan, I didn't know you had a roommate!*), showing that a *could we x* form can function as a request only if directed to a lower-rank, subordinate person (Ervin-Tripp 1976:47–8; see Sinclair and Coulthard 1975:33). Ervin-Tripp and colleagues (1987) went on to stress more generally the importance of contextual, top-down factors for interpretation, proposing a model based on people's understanding of

the situation, which creates expectations of certain activity trajectories, with language processed only enough to identify referents and check incongruity with the anticipated actions.[2] This was in line with ethnographic and discourse analytic studies (e.g. Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) looking at the structure of activities and event types, which constrain the possible moves of participants and thus guide the interpretation of certain utterances as requests (see Levinson 1979).

Already by the late 1970s, however, the study of the production and comprehension of requests had begun to be led by psychologists who, engaging with the ideas of philosophers like Grice and Searle, set out to test them with experimental methods. One of the threads running through this research was a debate on whether the comprehension of requests necessarily involves the literal meaning of utterances or rather relies on direct access to their intended meaning. Within the framework of conversational implicature and speech act theory, the starting point for understanding an utterance like *can you pass the salt?* is the literal meaning of what is said, which, along with context, is then used to infer that a request is being made. Experiments by Clark and colleagues showed that the literal meaning of such utterances is indeed computed by and available to interpreters, though it may not be necessarily considered and responded to (Clark and Lucy 1975; Clark 1979; Clark and Schunk 1980). In the opposing camp, Gibbs (1979, 1983, 1986a) objected that interpreters don't necessarily compute the literal meaning, but can directly access the intended meaning, much like in the process of understanding idioms (cf. Sadock 1974; see also Holtgraves 1994).

Research into the comprehension of requests continued with the development of new experimental methods, along with an increasing interest in the role of co-speech gesture, until the most recent neuroscientific studies employing brain imaging. These studies have shown, among other things, that pointing gestures facilitate the recognition of utterances like *I'm getting cold* as indirect requests (Kelly et al. 1999), that the processing of such utterances as indirect requests has consequences for both their semantic and imagistic representation (Coulson and Lovett 2010), and that it engages the same neural motor system used to perceive and interact with the physical world (van Ackeren et al. 2012).

[2] Ervin-Tripp and colleagues contributed also to the study of children's requests (e.g. Gordon and Ervin-Tripp 1984; Ervin-Tripp and Gordon 1986), which were concomitantly studied in developmental pragmatics (Bruner 1975, 1983; Garvey 1975; Wootton 1981, 1997; Schieffelin 1990).

1.4.2 A face-threatening and putatively dispreferred act

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness has greatly influenced most approaches to requesting that see it as a socially delicate act. The development of the theory was initially prompted by the observation of a strong parallelism in the construction of utterances in three unrelated languages and cultures (Tamil, Tzeltal and English). This suggested the existence of common universal pressures affecting people's linguistic behaviour, at the core of which is the maintenance of "face" — people's public self-image (Goffman 1967). Face consists of two related aspects: "negative" face — the desire to be free from imposition and to be unimpeded in one's own actions — and "positive" face — the desire to be approved of and appreciated by others. In the vagaries of social life, face can be threatened, particularly by certain kinds of acts, which can run against the personal wants that constitute an individual's face. Requests are a prime example of a face-threatening act, especially for the perceived "negative" wants of the requestee, in that they interfere with his or her freedom of action. For this reason, people use politeness strategies to reduce the threat and preserve face (see § 1.4.3.2 below).

The status of requesting as a face-threatening act can also be considered in light of its status as a "dispreferred" action in conversation analysis. The notion of "preference" refers to an asymmetrical valuing of certain types of actions — based not in personal proclivities but in generalised norms — which is reflected in the construction of those actions and in the structure of the sequences in which they occur (Heritage 1984:265–80; Schegloff 2007b: ch. 5; Pomerantz and Heritage 2013). The dispreferred nature of requests was first suggested by Sacks (1992b:207), echoed by Schegloff (1979a:49), elaborated by Levinson (1983:343–64) and Lerner (1996:314–6), and finally restated by Schegloff (2007b:83–4). This position is based on a series of claims: requests tend to occur late in (telephone) interactions; requests are designed with features associated with dispreferred responses (accounts, mitigations, etc.); requests are withheld until they can be made as reciprocal actions; requests are masked as other actions — often as offers. In addition, other phenomena have been taken as indications that offers are preferred to requests as a way of getting transactions accomplished. One is the use of pre-requests (e.g. *do you have pecan Danish today?*), which creates an opportunity for the recipient to make an offer (e.g. *yes we do, would you like one of those?*), thus obviating the need to make the request. Another is the fact that, when a request is in the making, an offer can be made to pre-empt it.

Kendrick and Drew (2014) have recently revisited some of these arguments and tested them against both qualitative and quantitative evidence. This has led them to refute the claim that requests are dispreferred relative to offers, showing among other things that: most requests occur near the beginning of telephone calls; requests need not be accompanied by accounts; requests aren't the only actions to be disguised as other actions; an offer in the making doesn't necessarily inhibit a request; the debts and obligations potentially created by offers make them as delicate actions as requests.

Kendrick and Drew's renewed perspective on requests, which relieves some of the social burden traditionally placed on them, resonates well with the approach taken in this thesis, where requests are considered an essential ingredient of everyday life.

1.4.3 Approaches to request form selection

Formal variation in people's requesting behaviour has been a focus of attention since early work in sociolinguistics. Ervin-Tripp (1964, 1976) was among the first to offer a classification of request forms and to explore the variables affecting their selection. Using mostly field notes and transcripts of tape-recorded conversations collected by her students, Ervin-Tripp was able to examine forms of requesting in a wide range of settings, and to note their association with both sociological variables, such as familiarity and rank, and situational factors, such as the difficulty of the task, the duties of people in a particular setting, and the likelihood of non-compliance. In subsequent work on children's requests (Gordon and Ervin-Tripp 1984), she expanded the analysis of situational factors to include temporary usage rights over a requested object, the extent to which a requested action interrupts or disrupts the requestee's ongoing activity, and whether an action is requested within a shared or routine activity.

Since Ervin-Tripp's early work, a wealth of research in different fields has gone into classifying the different forms taken by requests and into searching for the principles behind people's choices. Here, I restrict the review of this research to four main approaches to form selection: i) the "greatest potential obstacle" model developed in psychology, ii) Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, iii) the cross-cultural pragmatic approach based on sociological variables, and iv) the conversation-analytic approach, with special reference to Curl and Drew's (2008) account in terms of entitlement and contingencies.

1.4.3.1 *Greatest potential obstacle*

One of the most concise accounts of request form selection has been put forward in psychology by Clark, Gibbs, and their colleagues (Gibbs 1985; Francik and Clark 1985; Gibbs 1986b; Gibbs and Müller 1988; Clark 1996:309–12). Based on written and spoken elicitation methods,[3] along with rating questionnaires, the model they propose hinges on a single general principle: when making requests, speakers first assess what reasons there may be for the recipient not complying, and then formulate an utterance to deal with the "greatest potential obstacle" they can anticipate. This model was proposed for both requests for practical action and requests for information, but was developed mainly through cases of the latter. To request the time of a person who is not wearing a watch, for example, a speaker will likely ask *do you know the time?* (Francik and Clark 1985:563), which makes compliance conditional on the absence or overcoming of the anticipated obstacle (the requestee's lack of access to a timepiece). The obstacle mentioned may be generic, such as the requestee's inability to do what is requested (e.g. *can you tell me what time it is?*), or more specific, such as the availability of a relevant object (e.g. *do you happen to have a watch?*).[4] People will generally try to be as specific as they can, except in cases where the mention of a specific obstacle constitutes a threat to the requestee's face. When no apparent obstacle can be anticipated, the request is made unconditionally (e.g. *tell me what time it is*).

One of the virtues of this model is that it explains the "conventionality" or appropriateness of a given formulation not by an absolute value attributed to it (e.g. how indirect or generally polite it is), but by how well it meets the contingencies of the situation (Gibbs 1986b:186; Clark 1996:312). This is why asking *do you have the time?* is a conventional way of requesting the time of a passerby on the street, whereas *do you know what time you close?* is inappropriate to request a store owner to tell what time the store closes.

[3] For another approach to request production based on role play experiments, see Herrmann (1983).

[4] This is closely connected to the notion of precondition, as discussed by Searle (1969) and by Gordon and Lakoff (1971). See also Goffman's notion of "virtual offence" in the management of socially delicate behaviour (1971:108ff).

1.4.3.2 *Politeness strategies*

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness has already been introduced above for its influence in defining the social status of requesting acts. What we are interested in here is how the theory explains formal variation in their implementation.

Because requesting is a face-threatening act, people use politeness strategies to reduce the threat and preserve face. Brown and Levinson describe four macro-strategies people can choose from. One is positive politeness, which involves relying on and foregrounding one's closeness, affinity, or common ground with the requestee, for example by using in-group identity markers (e.g. *lend us two quid, wouldja mate?*), or by assuming compliance (e.g. *I'm sure you won't mind if I borrow your pencil*). Another strategy is to use negative politeness, which involves recognising the requestee's freedom of action by not assuming compliance, avoiding coercion, and giving options to not do what is requested (e.g. *you couldn't by any chance pass the salt, could you?*). People can also choose to make the request off record, that is, to use utterances with potentially more than one communicative intention, thus leaving it to the requestee whether or not to interpret them as requests (e.g. *it's hot in here*). Finally, people can choose to make the request bald on record, without using any face-redressive strategy. This may happen in cases of urgency (e.g. *watch out!*), or when the interaction is task-oriented (e.g. *give me the nails*), and more generally when the requester decides to maximise efficiency, or else when the requester's power allows her to neglect the requestee's face without losing her own. The use of one or the other strategy is influenced by how serious the face-threat is, as determined by three variables: social distance, relative power, and size of the imposition.

It is important to note that the model's goal is not to propose norms or rules guiding people's behaviour, but rather to identify procedures rationally used by individuals. This doesn't mean that choices are necessarily conscious, nor that they have no normative or conventional overlay. What Brown and Levinson want to stress are the rational bases for conventions and patterns of behaviour. "Politeness strategies", then, are meant to cover both "innovative plans of action" and "routines" (p. 85). The advantage to this is that it captures the "flexible and indefinitely productive" use of language for requesting. The downside, however, is that the model doesn't allow us to make specific predictions about people's choices in different contexts.

Brown and Levinson's biggest contribution is to have identified and formalised mechanisms that lie deep at the heart of human sociality, and which are likely to permeate people's behaviour across contexts and languages. What we need to find out, then, is how face considerations are manifested in interaction (Lerner 1996; Clayman and Heritage 2014b), and particularly what aspects of face regularly influence the construction of requests in specific contexts.

1.4.3.3 *Sociological variables*

The field of cross-cultural pragmatics has seen a major effort to study the realisation of requests across a large number of languages, including Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Russian and Spanish (House and Kasper 1981; Blum-Kulka 1987; Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989; Lee-Wong 1994; Sifianou 1992; Fukushima 1996; Van Mulken 1996; Flores Salgado 2011; Márquez-Reiter 2000; Tsuzuki et al. 2005; Rue and Zhang 2008; Nodoushan 2008; Félix-Brasdefer 2009; Ogiermann 2009; Peterson 2010). Building on the insights of speech act and politeness theory, this work has been motivated, on the one hand, by a search for similarities and differences in the use of language across cultures, and on the other hand, by an interest in the acquisition and development of pragmatic competence (see Woodfield 2008 for a review). An important unifying element of this work is the adoption of a standardised methodology: a written elicitation method known as "discourse completion test" (DCT) (Levenston 1975; Levenston and Blum 1978; Blum-Kulka 1982), where participants are presented with scripted dialogues with a missing speech act to be filled in, each preceded by a short description of the situation, specifying the setting and relevant social parameters.

In the largest study in this tradition (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), the requests produced by participants are grouped in three main categories of directness: direct strategies or impositives (e.g. imperatives and want statements), conventionally indirect strategies (e.g. queries about ability or willingness), and non-conventionally indirect strategies or hints. This classification is used to establish selection patterns under different social constraints, mostly to do with social distance (or familiarity) and relative power (or dominance). These parameters are manipulated in various requesting scenarios, such as that of a student asking another to lend her some lecture notes, or that of a policeman asking a driver to move his car.

An example of the findings of this study is that "the use of impositives follows a similar trend across the different situations in all languages": it increases with relative power and decreases with social distance. At the same time, "the proportion of impositives used within each situation varies with language" (pp. 126-7).

The many studies following in this tradition have provided valuable insights into culture-specific features of politeness and directness, and produced rich inventories of request realisation patterns, exploring various constructional aspects of requests, including the type of main clause used (or "head act"), attention-getters, supporting accounts, and internal modifiers such as "downgraders" and "upgraders" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989:17–9). The results of this work, however, need to be interpreted in light of the methodology adopted: written elicitation yields mostly idealised responses that represent the prescriptive attitudes of people, rather than what people would do in real interactions (Holmes 1991; see also Wicker 1969; Ladegaard 2000).

1.4.3.4 *Entitlement and contingencies*

With the exception of pioneering work by Wootton (1981), conversation analysis has come to the study of request form selection only recently, spurred by a renewed interest in the linguistic construction of social actions, and in action formation more generally (see § 1.2 above). In conversation analysis, requesting behaviour is investigated on the basis of recordings of naturally occurring interaction. Rather than correlations with sociological variables, this work focusses on the micro-analysis of request sequences, in search for differences in the interactional conditions and configurations under which requests are made, as displayed by people's own understanding of the situation (Goodwin 1990; Wootton 1997, 2005; Lindström 2005; Vinkhuyzen and Szymanski 2005; Heinemann 2006; Lee 2006; Taleghani-Nikazm 2006; Curl and Drew 2008; Galeano and Fasulo 2009; Craven and Potter 2010; Kent 2011; Zinken and Ogiermann 2011, 2013; Antaki and Kent 2012; Parry 2013; Mondada 2014a; Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014b, among others). Many of these studies are relevant to particular topics addressed in the following chapters and will be reviewed in due course. Here, I limit the discussion to the work of Curl and Drew, which has influenced most current approaches to requesting in the conversation analytic tradition (Curl and Drew 2008; Drew and Walker 2010).

Curl and Drew's account of request form selection stems from an initial study of two forms for requesting: modal interrogatives like *could you x* and declaratives prefaced by *I wonder if* — the most frequent forms in a corpus of telephone calls made in the UK. Based on the selection patterns of these forms, Curl and Drew propose an account that hinges on two social-interactional dimensions: entitlement and contingency. *Entitlement* is the right to have something done by someone. While it may be influenced by the institutional identities of people, entitlement is not necessarily grounded in long-term social relations, but is a more general dimension of rights and obligations that crosscuts formal and informal interaction (cf. Lindström 2005; Heinemann 2006). *Contingencies* are obstacles that someone could encounter in doing what is requested. While connected to Brown and Levinson's notion of imposition, this dimension doesn't refer so much to how generally onerous an action is, but rather to situationally-determined difficulties and conditions for accomplishing it. The relevance of these two dimensions is not restricted to *could you x* and *I wonder if* forms, but serves to explain a "continuum or cline of request forms" (Drew and Walker 2010:100).

In line with other conversation analytic work — notably Wootton's — Curl and Drew demonstrate the payoff of a contrastive analysis of alternative forms of requesting, and show that selection cannot be explained solely by reference to sociological variables such as distance and power; what is brought to the fore are instead local and situational factors that cannot be appreciated until they are considered within the sequential development of interaction. As will emerge in this thesis, however, their two-dimensional approach needs to be elaborated and expanded if we are to provide a comprehensive account of form selection in its full complexity.

1.5 Aim and scope of this study

The approaches reviewed in the previous sections have all made important contributions to our understanding of request form selection. Among other things, they have shown that forms are selected to meet specific contingencies of a requesting event, that formal and functional classifications should be put in a cross-linguistic perspective, that requesting behaviour is underlain by basic concerns of both personhood and sociality, and that explanations for form selection are to be found in the sequential development of interaction.

At the same time, however, these approaches tend to show one or more of the following limitations:

- they are based on data obtained through written or spoken elicitation, which limits the ecological validity of the patterns observed;
- they correlate variation to pre-defined parameters (e.g. social distance and relative power) without grounding them in the interactional reality of requesting events;
- they propose selection criteria that are too broad to capture the full range of formal diversification and the distinct interactional processes that underlie it.

Cognizant of the insights as well as of the limitations of prior work, the present study addresses anew the question: how do we explain people's selection of alternative forms of requesting? In doing so, it does not presume any ranking of politeness or directness of forms, nor any *a priori* parameters affecting their selection, but rather begins with a classification of forms and seeks to uncover selection factors inductively. The aim is to build a comprehensive account capturing the complex of relations among the most frequent forms of requesting in Italian informal interaction.

The focus on informal interaction is motivated by two main reasons. The first is primariness: everyday interaction among intimates is the primordial site of social life (see, e.g., Schegloff 1996c, 2006), from both an ontogenetic and a phylogenetic perspective, and the baseline upon which formal and institutional interaction are built. The second is comparability. While the rituals and procedures that constrain formal and institutional interaction vary greatly across cultures, the infrastructure of informal interaction is mostly shared (Enfield and Levinson 2006; Stivers et al. 2009; Enfield and Sidnell 2013), and therefore constitutes a key locus for cross-linguistic comparison (Dingemanse and Floyd 2014).

The central theme of this thesis is the space of options at the disposal of Italian speakers for making requests. But studying the properties of these options also forces us to delve into other fundamental structures of social interaction, with payoffs for more general questions, including the relation between single actions and the structure of a larger activity (Chapter 2), the distribution of agency in joint and individual courses of action (Chapter 3), the management of social disharmony (Chapter 4), preference and sequence organisation (Chapter 5), and action ascription (Chapter 6). The findings of this investigation are brought

together in a unified account of request formation (Chapter 7), where the web of functional relations among alternative forms of requesting is presented as a system.

1.6 Data, methodology, and conceptual distinctions for analysis

1.6.1 Data

The work presented in this thesis is based on video recordings of naturally occurring interaction among speakers of Italian, made between 2009 and 2013 in several locations within the province of Trento and the urban area of Bologna (Northern Italy). The corpus includes 60 recordings for a total of about 50 hours, covering a broad range of settings and featuring more than 180 different adult speakers, of ages ranging from 13 to 92, with only occasional interactions involving young children.

Participants were not responding to any instruction, nor were they given a task — they were simply aware that the researcher was collecting recordings of language usage in everyday life. The interactions were not staged for the recording, but involved activities that would have occurred independently. The interactions were all informal, among people who knew each other well (family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances), in highly familiar environments (homes, recreational places, communal work areas).

1.6.2 Sampling

From this 50-hour corpus, I extracted a core 5-hour sample, made of 15-minute segments from 20 different recordings, aiming for a broad and representative range of settings and speakers. Since the rate and type of requests can vary greatly depending on the mode of interaction, the segments were distributed as follows: 7 were taken from task-focussed interactions (e.g. playing a game, preparing food, doing other household chores), 7 were taken from small talk conversations, and 6 from interactions mixing small talk with intermittent practical tasks (e.g. mealtimes, after-work gatherings, conversations in a sledding area). Of the 20 interactions sampled, 5 were dyadic and 15 were multiparty, involving between 3 and 8 people (see Table 1.1). The sample was so constructed as to be representative of various slices of everyday life, thus making possible reliable frequency

statements. For each segment, I identified all requests (see § 1.6.3) and classified their form (see § 1.6.4).

SEGMENT	RECORDING	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	MODE OF INTERACTION	DYADIC OR MULTIPARTY
# 1	CampUniPictionary01	49	task-focussed	multiparty
# 2	MasoShanghai	42	mixed	multiparty
# 3	Capodanno01	38	task-focussed	multiparty
# 4	Circolo01	33	task-focussed	multiparty
# 5	Camillo	29	task-focussed	multiparty
# 6	CampGioPlatea	19	mixed	multiparty
# 7	MaraniPranzo	17	mixed	multiparty
# 8	Reparto02	15	mixed	multiparty
# 9	BiscottiPome01	14	mixed	multiparty
# 10	AlbertoniPrep	13	task-focussed	dyadic
# 11	DopoProve10	12	small talk	multiparty
# 12	Diego&Anna	10	small talk	dyadic
# 13	Tinta	9	mixed	multiparty
# 14	CampFamPrep	9	task-focussed	multiparty
# 15	BiscottiMattina01	9	task-focussed	dyadic
# 16	CampFamTavolo	6	small talk	multiparty
# 17	Letto-Ed	5	small talk	multiparty
# 18	Aldo&Bino	5	small talk	dyadic
# 19	Fratelli01	3	small talk	dyadic
# 20	CampGioTrecuochi	2	small talk	multiparty

Table 1.1 Segments of recordings constituting the core sample, and their characteristics.

Besides this core sample, I collected a supplemental sample, including segments of various length, taken from the same 20 recordings of the core sample as well as from 25 other recordings, for a total of 20 hours. This supplemental sample served to enlarge the number of cases for some lower-frequency request forms, as shown in Table 1.2 below.

1.6.3 Identification of requests

The interactional phenomenon analysed in this thesis is partly broader and partly narrower than what is usually understood in the literature by "requesting" (cf. Searle 1976; Ervin-Tripp, Guo, and Lampert 1990; Craven and Potter 2010; Couper-Kuhlen 2014). It is broader because it includes any communicative behaviour that causes or "recruits" someone to do something (Enfield 2014a; Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014a), 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 practical action to be performed here and now. Requests for future actions are therefore excluded. One of the analytic advantages of this is that it gives us access to request sequences in their entirety, from initiation to completion.[5]

So the main object of analysis are sequences of two actions in which one person's behaviour instigates another to act. For the most part, the identification of such a sequence doesn't turn on the form of the instigating behaviour, but on the nature of the behaviour instigated: an immediate *practical* action, where practical is intended in the sense of *physical*, and in contrast to *informational*. Practical actions include behaviours such as fetching or circulating objects, performing other kinds of manual tasks (e.g. opening a window), and stopping or changing an ongoing bodily movement. This approach avoids the problems of traditional definitions of request based on the speaker's intention (e.g. Searle 1969). What defines a request sequence in the present study is a causal relation between one person saying or doing something that another can perceive, and this other person engaging in a practical action that is fitted to what has been said or done, to be carried out alone or in coordination with others. This encompasses both cases in which the practical action is made *conditionally relevant* by what has been said or done (Schegloff 1968; Schegloff and Sacks 1973) and others in which it is *occasioned* by it. In the former, the practical action is normatively expected, which means that the absence of a response dealing with its relevance — in the form of either compliance or refusal — is accountable and sanctionable. In the latter cases, on the other hand, the practical action is a relevant but optional response to what has been said or done. This distinction was crucial for identifying cases in which a request doesn't receive a

[5] The interactional phenomenon so defined is similar to what is elsewhere referred to as *recruitment* (Enfield 2014a; Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014a). This term originates from collaborative work within the Interactional Foundations of Language project at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen (Floyd et al. 2014; Floyd, Rossi, and Enfield in preparation). In this thesis, I prefer to use the more familiar term *request* for continuity with prior literature.

response (for example because it is ignored). Cases like this were collected only when the form of the instigating behaviour made a response conditionally relevant (e.g. *open the window!*). Forms of requesting for which a response is optional (e.g. *it's hot in here*) were collected only if they actually occasioned a response.

These criteria aim, as far as possible, to define a natural domain of social action: the recruitment of others to deal with the immediate practicalities of everyday life.

1.6.4 Forms and frequencies

Following the sampling and identification procedures described above, I identified a total of 567 request sequences and classified the form of the instigating behaviour, as given in Table 1.2. This was the starting point of the analysis reported in the following chapters.

FORMAL TYPE	CORE SAMPLE (5 hrs)	SUPPLEMENTAL SAMPLE (20 hrs)	COMBINED SAMPLES (25 hrs)
imperative	124 (36.6%)		
nonverbal	52 (15.3%)	79	131
simple interrogative ('will you x')	21 (6.2%)	58	79
impersonal deontic declarative (e.g. *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x')	17 (5.0%)	51	68
description (e.g. *manca sale* 'there isn't enough salt')	17 (5.0%)		
interjection (e.g. *no* 'no')	17 (5.0%)		
naming (e.g. *coltello* 'knife')	16 (4.7%)		
hai x 'do you have x'	12 (3.5%)	24	36
personal modal declarative (e.g. *devi x* 'you have to x')	11 (3.2%)		
facciamo x 'shall we x'	9 (2.7%)		
puoi x 'can you x'	5 (1.5%)	14	19
other	38 (11.2%)		
TOTAL	339	227	567

Table 1.2 Forms of requests in the data set, ranked by frequency.

Each formal type listed occurs at least 5 times in the core sample. Types occurring with lower frequency are grouped under "other". In what follows, I give a brief description of the different types. Further details are given in the individual chapters.

Requests classified as nonverbal are made without language, by relying exclusively on visible bodily action, and in particular on manual actions such as holding out an object, reaching for an object, placing an object in a meaningful location, and pointing (see Chapter 2). Similar kinds of manual actions, as well as other nonverbal behaviours, may also co-occur with language, thus constituting a "composite utterance" (Engle 1998; Clark 1996; Enfield 2009). In this case, the form is referred to by its linguistic component.

Verbal and composite forms include the three main sentence types identified by linguists cross-linguistically: imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives (Lyons 1977a; Sadock and Zwicky 1985; König and Siemund 2007), as well as utterances without a predicate (e.g. *coltello* 'knife').

In Italian, imperative sentences are distinguished from interrogatives and declaratives by morphology or syntax (see Chapter 3). Imperatives comprise second person forms (*n*=104/124), first person plural forms (*n*=7/124), and cases of *to'* (*n*=13/124), a minimal imperative form that is a truncated version of an old second person singular form *togli* 'take'. The form can also be described as an imperative interjection and is translatable as 'take/here you are'.

Italian has generally no morphosyntactic means to distinguish polar interrogatives from declaratives.[6] This lack, however, is compensated for by a systematic use of intonation. In the variety of Italian represented in this corpus — mostly Trentino Italian — questions are normally produced with either a *low rising* or a *rising-falling* contour, both of which are distinct from the *falling* contours used for statements. A more detailed presentation of these contours can be found in Rossi (2015). These contours fulfil a criterion of formal distinguishability between sentence types in that they "form a system of alternative choices that are mutually exclusive" (König and Siemund 2007:278). On this account, I refer to utterances systematically produced with contours for questions as interrogatives.

[6] Some Romance languages that coexist with Italian, however, do have these means (Lusini 2013). In the Trentino language, for example, which is occasionally spoken in the present corpus, polar interrogatives and declaratives are distinguished by the position of subject pronominal elements: pre-verbal (*te gai* 'you have') versus post-verbal (*ga-t* 'do you have'). Before Italian was introduced as the national language, Trentino was the predominant language in the north-eastern province of the same name. Similarly to other Romance languages such as Lombard, Neapolitan, Sicilian and Venetian, it is nowadays in a diglossic — or rather "dilalic" (Berruto 1987) — relation with the national language, while still constituting the substrate that influences its local variety (Trentino Italian).

The most frequent interrogative form of requesting — and second-most frequent verbal form after the imperative — is a construction I refer to as the simple interrogative, rendered in English with 'will you do x'. The construction contains no modal verb; it consists simply of a second-person predication and, in most of cases, a turn-initial dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me', indicating that the action requested is directed to the speaker (see Chapter 3).

Besides simple interrogatives, there are two other interrogative forms inflected for second person: *hai x* 'do you have x', a construction asking if the recipient is in possession of an object (see Chapter 5), and *puoi x* 'can you x', a modal construction enquiring about the ability of the recipient to do something (see Chapter 4). The fourth and last interrogative form, *facciamo x* 'shall we x', is a non-modal construction with a verb inflected for first person plural in the indicative (simple present) mood (*-amo*).[7]

The data set contains also three main types of declaratives. One type is constituted by impersonal deontic constructions like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x', which express the obligation or need to do something without specifying who the obligation refers to or who should fulfil it (see Chapter 6). Another type is constituted by modal declaratives marked for person. Nearly half of these (*n*=5/11) are cases of *devi x* 'you have to x', a construction encoding obligation marked for second person. The third type, which I refer to as descriptions, refers to non-modal declaratives that report a state of affairs or event in the near environment without specifying any target action (e.g. *manca sale* 'there isn't enough salt').

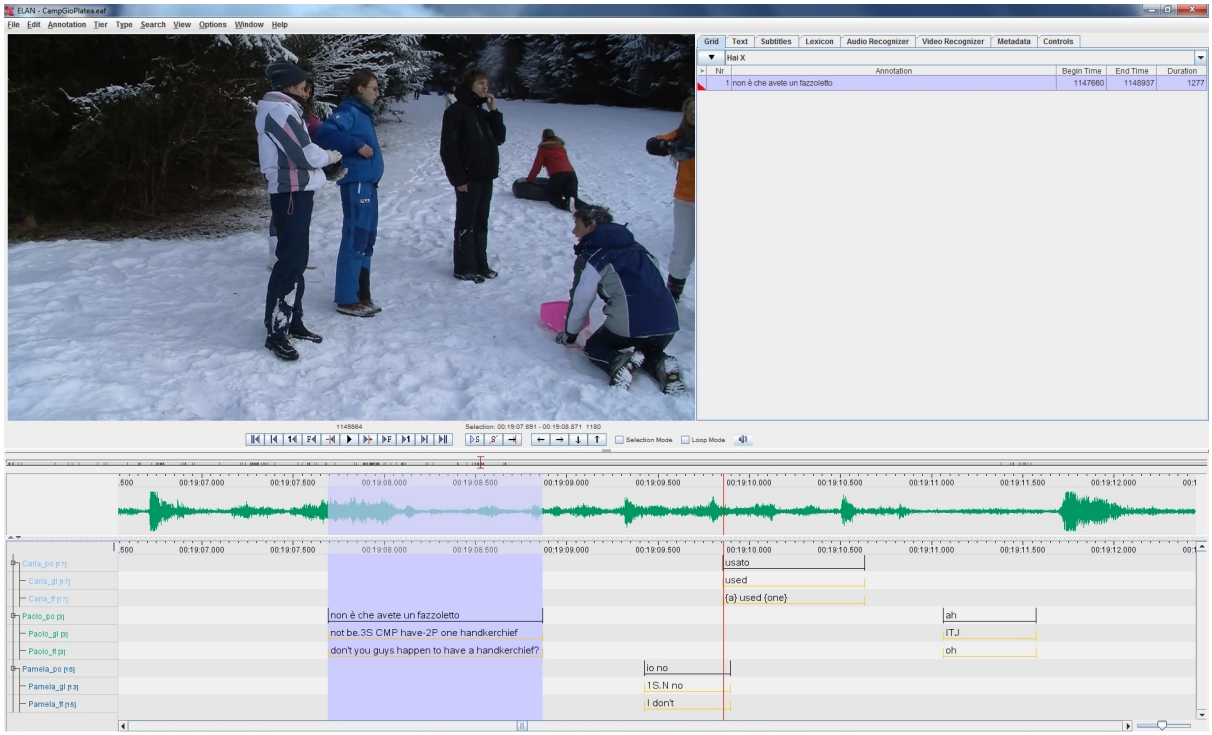
Finally, requests can be implemented through forms that don't contain a predicate: namings, that is, references to the object in question (e.g. *coltello* 'knife'), or to its quantity (e.g. *una* 'one'), location (e.g. *quell'altro* 'the other one'), or destination (see Chapter 2); and interjections, which include non-lexical items (e.g. *olé*, *shhh*, *uuh*), lexical items that aren't nouns (e.g. *no* 'no'), and nouns that aren't used referentially (e.g. *occhio* 'watch out', lit. 'eye').

1.6.5 Methods of analysis

This study is based on the observation of requesting behaviour in video recordings of naturally occurring interaction. The analysis of this data is primarily qualitative, based on a close examination of the audio and video streams, synchronised and annotated using the software ELAN (Wittenburg et al. 2006, see Figure 1.1), and supported by transcriptions in

[7] In the label *facciamo x*, the verb *facciamo* 'we do' is a placeholder for any verb inflected for first person plural.

conversation analytic style (see Jefferson 2004, Transcription conventions, and Abbreviations used in glossing, above).



1 (2.3)

2 Paolo non è che avete un fazzoletto
not be.3S CMP have-2P one handkerchief
don't you guys happen to have a handkerchief?

3 (0.6)

4 Pamela io no
1S.N no
I don't

5 Carla usat(hh)o
used
{a} u(hh)sed {one}

6 (0.5)

7 Paolo a::h
ITJ
o::h

Figure 1.1 Audio and video streams of a recording synchronised and annotated with ELAN, followed by a transcription in conversation analytic style.

1.6.5.1 *Conversation analysis*

Conversation analysis is also drawn on as a main method of enquiry (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Atkinson and Drew 1979; Levinson 1983: ch. 6; Heritage 1984: ch. 8; Drew 2005; Schegloff 2007b; Sidnell 2010; Sidnell and Stivers 2013). This method puts at centre stage the sequential development of interaction, using as a fundamental anchor point the responsive, interpretative behaviour of people, which serves to make inferences about their own understanding of the situation (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974:728–9).

The empirical findings of conversation analytic research have led to identifying certain basic domains of social organisation and to establishing a set of analytic concepts that are regularly used in approaching new data. A first level of organisation that is relevant in virtually every instance of interaction is *turn-taking* (Sacks et al. 1974). People take turns at speaking and, normally, one person talks at a time. Although overlaps between two or more people speaking occur, they are brief and tend to be resolved quickly. The alternation of people's contributions to a conversation is regulated by a system that allocates opportunities to speak on the basis of certain rules. One of the components of this system is *turn-construction*, which refers to the incremental formation of turns out of sentences, clauses, phrases or single words, packaged as self-contained units with the help of prosody (Ford and Thompson 1996). The core feature of turn-constructional units (TCUs) is their projectable structure, which allows recipients to anticipate the end of a current speaker's contribution and time the start of their own contribution relative to it. Projectability and anticipation pertain not only to turns-at-talk, but also to other forms of conduct with an "ordinary progressive realisation" (Lerner and Raymond ms), including manual actions, sequences of action, and activities (see Chapter 2).

If the turn-taking system explains *when* contributions to an interaction can or should be made, it is also crucial to understand *what* these contributions contain. Turns can be seen as the "'host space' in which language deposits are accommodated" (Schegloff 1996c:54). The morphosyntactic and semantic make-up of these "deposits" gives them a certain meaning. But above and beyond *meaning*, the language contained in turns serves to deliver *action* (see Section 1.2 above). Another basic domain of social organisation is therefore the formation and ascription of action (Schegloff 2007b:xiv; Levinson 2013). One way in which conversation analysis stands out from other approaches to action is the central role it gives to responsive conduct, which is used as a key into the nature of the preceding action.

The relation between initiating and responding actions is also at the core of *sequence organisation* (Schegloff 2007b), which concerns how actions cohere to form larger structures. One such structure is the *adjacency pair* (Schegloff 1968; Schegloff and Sacks 1973) — a sequence of two actions, the first of which creates a normative obligation for the second to be produced (e.g. greeting-greeting, question-answer).

Most first pair parts of adjacency pairs, such as questions, assessments and requests make relevant at least two alternative responses, one of which aligns with the action of the first pair part (answer, fulfilment, agreement) and another which doesn't (non-answer, rejection, disagreement). These alternatives have been shown to be asymmetrical (Schegloff and Sacks 1973:314), one being preferred over the other (see also Section 1.4.2 above). *Preference* is another domain of social organisation dealing with the principles that regiment people's choices among nonequivalent alternative conducts and forms of conduct (Heritage 1984:265–80; Schegloff 2007b: ch. 5; Pomerantz and Heritage 2013).

Finally, social interaction necessitates a system for dealing with "problems in speaking, hearing and understanding" (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977), which involves both procedures for signalling problems and others for solving them. *Repair* in interaction is not only a domain of organisation of its own, but can also serve as a diagnostics for other interactional phenomena, including the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a certain request form in a given context.

In this thesis, I draw on the analytic and conceptual apparatus of conversation analysis to investigate the formation of requests. For each request form, such an approach involves certain basic steps. The first is an examination of *single cases* that pays close attention to the details of talk and other conduct surrounding the request, including aspects of the interaction that aren't necessarily related to the request. Imperative requests, for example, occur in a variety of contexts including food preparations, mealtimes, card games, and other moments of joint work. Each of these contexts involves different goals, modes of participation and spatial arrangements; and within these, each request is made at a certain moment, between certain individuals, dealing with particular contingencies at a certain juncture of the interaction. Before making generalisations on the use of a request form, it is important to understand each request sequence in its own right, situated in a rich social context and enmeshed in a flux of other events.

Building on this first step, the second is to identify a pattern in the use of the request form, on the basis of its recurrence in certain interactional *environments* or *configurations*,

which are defined by regularities in the events leading up to the moment of requesting. Taking again imperative requests as an example, the analysis shows that they typically solicit actions that contribute to the progress of a joint project. This means that the action requested (e.g. passing a plate) furthers a line of action that is already on the table (e.g. distributing food at the start of a meal), and that has been committed to by both requester and requestee before the request is made. This is reflected both in the structural status of the action requested — a relevant step for the successful completion of the joint project — and in the details of people's talk and other conduct surrounding the request, such as elements pointing to the "togetherness" of what is being done and to the shared benefit brought by the action requested (see Chapter 3).

Once a pattern has been identified, the process continues by considering *variant* cases, which may lead to refining the analysis. Although the majority of imperative requests are made in contribution to a joint project, some of them don't fully conform to this use, one difference being that they serve an individual rather than a shared outcome. These cases, however, can still be related to the principles underlying the main pattern — this is what makes them *variant* and not *deviant*. Imperative requests that serve an individual outcome maintain a relation of compatibility with what the requestee is doing, either because the action requested "piggybacks" on it or because the requestee is momentarily doing nothing (see Chapter 3).

Besides variant cases, the analysis must come to terms with cases that go against the patterns identified, where the use of the request form violates the criteria underlying the rest of the cases. This may lead to either revising the analysis or else to uncovering people's orientation to the patterns identified as normative (see Schegloff 1968:1079–87; Heritage 1984:248ff; Sidnell 2013:79–82). The latter happens when selecting the request form in the "wrong" environment has particular consequences. One is that the request so formatted comes off as special or unusual. For example, a requester may flout the criteria for selecting an imperative form with the purpose of making the request haughty or derogatory. Another consequence is that the request so formatted ends up being negatively sanctioned by other people, such as when an unwarranted imperative is denounced as rude or presumptuous. These *deviant* cases complement the distributional analysis by showing the normativity of the patterns identified.

1.6.5.2 *Linguistics*

In this thesis, I combine the conversation analytic method just described with methods from general and descriptive linguistics. The analysis of the structures of social interaction here goes hand in hand with a technical analysis of the language used to implement them, including its morphosyntax, semantics, information structure and prosody (see Dixon 2010a, 2010b, 2012 for a presentation of basic linguistic theory and methods). For example, the formal distinction between interrogative and declarative sentences mentioned in Section 1.6.4 is based on an auditory and acoustic analysis of intonation contours, carried out with the software Praat (Boersma and Weenink 2009). Also, information-structural notions are central to the analysis of reference in requests, the main options being full noun phrases (e.g. *pass the plate*), pronouns (e.g. *pass it*) and ellipsis (e.g. *pass*); verbal argument structure is relevant for distinguishing argumental and ethical uses of datives (e.g. *pass me the plate* vs. *open me the door*); and modal semantics is required to define impersonal deontic declaratives (e.g. *the door is to be kept shut*). This approach is in line with work in interactional linguistics, where the analysis of social interaction serves and is served by the comprehension of linguistic structure (e.g. Ochs, Schegloff, and Thompson 1996; Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 1996; Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Ford, Fox, and Thompson 2002b, 2003; Hakulinen and Selting 2005; Fox et al. 2013).

In looking at the selection of different request forms, I also draw on insights from structural linguistics. One of the basic notions here is that the elements of a language are held together by two kinds of relations: *syntagmatic*, which refers to how elements are linearly organised and combined in larger structures, and *paradigmatic*, which refers to how elements are associated in classes or sets of items that can appear in the same syntagmatic position but with different meanings, as in an inflectional or phonological paradigm (Saussure 1959 [1916]). The latter dimension applies not only to morphemes and phonemes but also to words and phrases in a sentence. In this thesis, I want to extend the relevance of this dimension beyond the constitution of linguistic structures to encompass the use of these structures in interaction. Given a function like requesting, the alternative forms that can be used to fulfil it constitute a set of meaningful oppositions, much like a paradigm of inflectional or phonological forms. The goal then is to map out the paradigmatic relations among these alternatives, the totality of which is what I want to refer to as a *system*.

1.6.5.3 *Multimodal analysis*

An important difference between traditional linguistic systems and the request system investigated here is that the latter includes nonverbal forms (Chapter 2). The inclusion of these forms is part of a more general effort in this thesis to accompany the analysis of language with that of nonverbal conduct. The study of nonverbal conduct, and especially of manual gesture, has a well-established tradition (see de Jorio 1832; Goffman 1963; Clark 1996; Goodwin 2000; McNeill 2000; Kendon 2004; Enfield 2009, among many others). One strand of this literature focusses mostly on cognitive questions, such as how thought processes are reflected in gesture, or how speech and gesture production are integrated (e.g. McNeill 1992; Kita and Özyürek 2003; Goldin-Meadow 2003). Another strand is concerned with visible bodily conduct as a resource for interaction (e.g. Goodwin 1981, 2000; Kendon 1990; Mondada 2007, 2009; Streeck 2009; Streeck, Goodwin, and LeBaron 2011). Besides fully nonverbal forms of requesting (Chapter 2), this thesis considers various elements of visible bodily conduct occurring in request sequences, including object manipulations, other hand gestures, body posture and gaze. The analysis of these behaviours not only contributes to the characterisation of different interactional environments or configurations for requesting, but becomes crucial also in explaining the functioning of certain forms of language as requests (Chapter 6).

1.6.5.4 *Quantification*

The qualitative analysis of sequences of action, language, and nonverbal conduct described in the previous sections is strengthened by two forms of quantitative support. One is quantitative transparency, that is, the effort to report, wherever possible, the frequency of the phenomena being described. The other is the use of inferential statistics to test the robustness and generalisability of the patterns observed.

Schegloff (1993) has problematised the use of quantification in the study of interaction by pointing out a number of issues in defining the categories to be quantified. His critique, however, is not intended to dismiss quantitative analysis, but rather to urge caution in its application, which should abide by certain methodological requirements. These requirements can be met only when quantitative analysis is *preceded by* a qualitative analysis of (multiple) single cases. To use Schegloff's words "quantitative analysis is […] not an

alternative to single case analysis, but rather built on its back" (p. 102, original emphasis). Even for a statistic as simple as a proportion, the first requirement is an adequate definition of the *denominator*, that is, of the "environments of possible occurrence" of an interactional event or feature of conduct, the presence or absence of which must be relevant for participants (p. 103). This goes hand in hand with an adequate definition of the *numerator*, that is, of what counts as an occurrence of that event or feature of conduct, in its different forms. Put another way, a proportion presupposes the definition of both an interactional *slot* and of a meaningful set of *fillers* (p. 109), as well as of the *domain* or *universe* in which the slot and its fillers occur (p. 110-1).

When supported by a strong qualitative basis, quantification becomes an important form of evidence (e.g. Heritage 1999) and can be successfully applied to the analysis of various interactional phenomena (see Ford and Thompson 1996; Mangione-Smith et al. 2003; Clayman et al. 2007; Heritage et al. 2007; Stivers and Majid 2007; Heritage et al. 2010; Rossano 2012, among others). Moreover, when studying practices of action like alternative forms of requesting, quantification is not just possible but highly recommended, if not required (Robinson 2007; see also Heritage and Maynard 2006:8).

In this thesis, I pursue quantitative transparency by i) reporting the frequencies of different request forms and of other linguistic and interactional features associated with them, and ii) by providing information about my data set and sampling procedures, which are designed to yield a representative sample of everyday informal interaction among adults (see above). In addition, I use inferential statistics to test the reliability of the patterns observed, including the association between linguistic and behavioural features (especially in Chapter 3), and the impact of these features on the occurrence of alternative interactional outcomes (Chapter 6).[8]

1.7 Overview of the thesis

This thesis investigates requesting behaviour in everyday informal interaction among speakers of Italian, aiming to provide a comprehensive account of the use of alternative request forms in different social-interactional environments.

[8] All the analyses were conducted using the open source statistical environment R (R Core Team 2014), version 3.1.2, and the package *lme4* (Bates et al. 2014). Graphs were produced with the package *ggplot2* (Wickham 2009).

Chapter 2 begins the investigation by looking at cases of requests made without language. Nonverbal forms of requesting are analysed in close comparison with verbal forms appearing in similar environments — imperatives and namings — showing that the selection of a nonverbal form turns on the projectability or anticipatability of the requested action within the ongoing activity. This dimension is further explored by considering cases of fully projectable actions in which the request is nonetheless verbalised. This is explained by the need to secure immediate recipiency when the requestee isn't visually attending to the requester.

Similarly to Chapter 2, Chapter 3 builds a contrastive analysis of two forms of requesting: imperatives and simple interrogatives ('will you x'). It shows that whereas imperatives are normally used to request actions that contribute to an already established joint project, simple interrogatives are used to launch new, self-contained projects serving an individual outcome. The chapter considers also secondary uses of these forms, delving deeper into the two social-interactional criteria that motivate their selection: a relation of continuity or discontinuity between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing, and the distribution of the benefit brought by the action.

Chapter 4 expands the analysis of interrogative forms of requesting by looking at the use of *puoi x* 'can you x'. Much like in simple interrogative sequences, actions requested through *puoi x* normally constitute a departure from what the requestee is currently doing. What motivates the use of *puoi x*, however, is the anticipation of the requestee's unwillingness to comply, which is absent from simple interrogative sequences.

Chapter 5 examines yet another interrogative form: *hai x* 'do you have x', which is selected when the availability of a target object is uncertain. Unlike other interrogative forms, *hai x* is understood as enquiring about a relevant precondition for a request, thus functioning as a *pre*-request, with particular consequences for preference and sequence organisation. The chapter shows that negative responses to *hai x* are not built as dispreferreds, and that go-ahead responses — confirming the availability of the target object — lead to sequence expansion.

Chapter 6 focusses on impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x'. This form is pragmatically ambiguous, in that it doesn't specify who the stated obligation refers to or who should fulfil it. This ambiguity is central to the way in which the form is used. The chapter considers cases in which the form functions as a request together with others in which it functions as an account of the speaker's behaviour. The first part of

the analysis explains how people respond to impersonal deontic declaratives in one or the other way on the basis of context and, when context doesn't help, on the basis of the speaker's nonverbal behaviour. The second part shows that, while context and nonverbal conduct systematically influence their function, impersonal deontic declaratives have the potential to generate more complex interactions that cannot be straightforwardly defined as either requests or accounts. This potential derives from their useful pragmatic ambiguity, which affords an open response space.

Chapter 7 begins with a discussion of the findings reported in the previous chapters, offering a comprehensive picture of request formation in Italian informal interaction. It argues that the organisation of request forms relative to their selection factors can be described as a *system*: a set of forms in paradigmatic relation to one another, functionally distributed according to their affordances. It then discusses the evidence for such an organisation and surveys four additional forms of requesting that aren't dealt with in this study. The chapter concludes the thesis by reflecting on its contribution to a number of areas in the study of language and social interaction. In doing this, it also discusses its limitations and suggests directions for future work.

2 When do people not use language to make requests?[9]

2.1 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; Goodwin 2000; McNeill 2000; Kendon 2004; Enfield 2009, among many others). In the core sample of face-to-face interactions used for this thesis, the majority of requests (about 85%) are made using language (see Table 1.2). Yet there are many that don't involve language at all. This is what this chapter is about.

The focus of this thesis is 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 criteria.

[9] A version of this chapter has been published as Rossi, Giovanni. 2014. "When Do People Not Use Language to Make Requests?" Pp. 303–34 in *Requesting in Social Interaction*, edited by Paul Drew and Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

The first has to do with the relative projectability or anticipatability 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 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 prior literature and introduce the main analytic concepts that underlie my argument, including form selection, projectability, anticipation, and activity (§ 2.2). Then, I begin by describing the main nonverbal forms of requesting found in my corpus (§ 2.3). 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 (§ 2.4), and then make a comparison with verbal requests occurring in similar contexts, focussing on a contrast between projectable and contingent actions (§ 2.5). I then expand the analysis by discussing partial projectability (§ 2.6) and by examining a group of verbal cases that only apparently depart from the pattern observed, motivated by the management of recipiency (§ 2.7). Finally, I interpret the findings in light of broader interactional principles that shape communicative behaviour (§ 2.8).

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Request forms and modality

It has long been noticed that people use a range of different forms to make requests depending on context. As reviewed in Chapter 1, this has been the topic of a large body of research within various disciplines and methodological traditions, from psychology and cross-cultural pragmatics, based mostly on written elicitation, to sociolinguistics and conversation analysis, based mostly 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 and Drew 2008; among others) or, when video recordings of face-to-face interaction are used, on the verbal component of multimodal forms (Wootton 1981, 1997; Vinkhuyzen and Szymanski 2005; Lindström 2005; Heinemann 2006; Galeano and Fasulo 2009; Craven and Potter 2010; Kent 2011; Zinken and Ogiermann 2011, 2013; Antaki and Kent 2012; Parry 2013; Drew and Couper-Kuhlen 2014b, 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 (Goodwin 2006; Cekaite 2010; Tulbert and Goodwin 2011; Keisanen and Rauniomaa 2012; Mondada 2014a; Sorjonen and Raevaara 2014; see also Heeschen, Schiefenhövel, and Eibl-Ebesfeldt 1980; Wilkinson and Rembold 1980 for early contributions to the topic). However, no research has explicitly focused on fully nonverbal forms of requesting as an alternative to verbal or composite forms (but see Mondada 2014a).[10]

In the present study, the choice of a nonverbal form is situated in a wider repertoire of strategies that are functionally overlapping but not equivalent. 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 (see Chapter 3). 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

[10] Fully nonverbal forms of requesting have been studied in other primate species that lack language (Rossano 2013b; Rossano and Liebal 2014).

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.

2.2.2 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.

Different research traditions have contributed to our understanding of human activities. Traditional cognitive science and artificial intelligence emphasise the role of people's mental representations in the structuring of activities. These representations typically refer to stereotypical sequences of events in a particular context. A classic example is the procedure for "going to the restaurant", which involves entering, finding a seat, ordering, eating, and exiting (Schank and Abelson 1977). The representation of such steps in the mind, which guides people's actions in context, has been variably referred to as a *schema* (Bartlett 1932:201), *plan* (Miller, Galanter, and Pribram 1960:16), *frame* (Minsky 1974), or *script* (Schank and Abelson 1977).

In reaction to this traditional emphasis on the pre-specification of activity structure in the mind, some researchers of human-machine interaction have instead taken a *situated* approach (Suchman 1987; Lave 1988), which gives prominence to the emergent properties of activities and to the improvisatory responses of people to contingency and changing conditions (one-time solutions to one-time problems).

Yet other approaches such as *activity theory* (Leont′ev 1981; Nardi 1995) and *distributed cognition* (Hutchins 1995a, 1995b) recognise the role of people's plans and goals in the structuring of activities as well as the mutually shaping relation between people and the environment, including instruments and other artifacts. While acknowledging the situatedness of action, these approaches maintain the importance of stable structures that span across particular situations, be they properties of artifacts, established practices or cultural values (Nardi 1995:83–6).

Finally, recent work in cognitive neuroscience investigates the neural processes that underlie people's prediction of each other's motor actions, which is critical for coordination in joint activities (see Sebanz and Knoblich 2009 for a review).

None of these approaches is particularly concerned with the relation between activities and language. This is the hallmark of research in other areas of the human sciences such as conversation analysis, which is also similarly addressed to the understanding of social action in context. Here, the terms used are not *prediction* but *projection*, and the emphasis is not on the representation of activity structure in the mind, but on people's access to its progressive realisation. Still, the central idea resonates well with research in cognitive science: 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 and Jordan 2009).

A turn-at-talk is inspected by recipients for how it progresses towards points of possible completion (Sacks et al. 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 and Raymond ms).

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 1968; Schegloff and Sacks 1973). 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 2007b: ch. 10). 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. Besides reciprocal sequences, there are at least two more kinds of multi-sequence structures (Schegloff 2007b:207ff): *action-type sequence series*, which consist in a succession of pairs of the same type (e.g. question-answer, or offer-

acceptance/rejection), and sequence series that implement *successive parts of a course of action*, where the outcome of a first sequence triggers the initiation of another sequence as the next step towards the accomplishment of a certain goal (e.g. a request for permission to borrow an object is followed by a request to bring the object to the requester). Both of these types feature the same people as initiator and responder in each successive action pair.

In this chapter, we are interested in a still higher level of structural organisation that has been referred to as *activity* (Levinson 1979; Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Robinson 2013, among others). An activity is a structure that involves multiple sequences of action above and beyond an exchange of reciprocal action pairs or 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 (Goodwin 1981), 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 and Drew 1979; Dausendschön-Gay and Krafft 2009; Heritage and 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 and Sacks 1973). This has also been termed the *overall structural organisation* of a telephone conversation (Sacks 1992b:157; Schegloff and 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 and Drew 1979; Heritage and Clayman 2010). In primary-care visits, for example, a question like *how are you?* is understood differently by patients depending on its position within the opening section (Robinson 2013:264). When physicians ask *how are you?* before the visit's preparatory tasks have been accomplished (greeting, securing patient identity, reviewing patient records, embodying readiness), the question is understood "socially", that is as being about the patient's general state of being. When the same question is asked after the preparatory tasks, it is usually understood "medically".

The structure of an activity is sometimes provided by a material source. A written questionnaire, for example, dictates the development of a series of questions and answers (Heritage and 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, as long recognised in cognitive science (see above), 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 and Krafft 2009). 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, 2014a, 2014b).

Social action is organised at various levels of granularity, including single actions such as a turn-at-talk or a hand movement, sequences of actions, sequences of sequences, and 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. I focus particularly on joint activities, that is, activities that have been committed to by more than one person.

2.3 Nonverbal forms of requesting

The data used for this chapter are 131 nonverbal requests occurring across 45 recordings (25 hours) — combining core and supplemental samples, as illustrated in Table 1.2 — as well as 124 imperative requests and 16 naming requests occurring in the core sample (20 recordings, 5 hours).

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.[11]

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 the object. Also, placing differs from all the other types because it exploits a pre-existing connection between the placed object and the location of placement (Clark 2003:249–50). 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 2.1). 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*=13/131); 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.

[11] This classification focusses on the requester's manual action as this is the most prominent component of the request in the majority of cases.

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

Table 2.1 Nonverbal request forms in the core and supplemental samples combined (25 hrs, 45 interactions).

2.4 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 is that nonverbal forms are normally used to request projectable actions within a joint activity. This is based 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 action requested 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 and Chapter 3). 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 Extract 2.1, 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.

Extract 2.1 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 2.1), she produces a request for her to take the card and lay it down in a combination. Silvia can be expected to comply with such a request in that it furthers the progress of their team's game.

Figure 2.1 Frame from line 8, Extract 2.1. Clara holds out a card across the table for Silvia to take and lay down in a combination.

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 Extract 2.2, participants are having lunch. The extract begins when everybody has finished their first course and the soup plates need to be gathered.

Extract 2.2 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))

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 2.2). He then picks up his plate and hands it over to Mum.

Figure 2.2 Frame from line 4, Extract 2.2. Mum reaches out across the table for Giulio to hand over his plate to her.

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.[12]

In Extract 2.3, 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.

[12] 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 asking if Mum wants his plate too ('do you want mine too?', lines 9-10). The reason for checking is that Luca's soup plate is clean, because he hasn't had the first course.

Extract 2.3 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=be.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 2.3), and then he begins cutting it.

Figure 2.3 Frame from line 4, Extract 2.3. Sofia places a potato on Paolo's cutting board for him to cut.

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 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 Extract 2.1. 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.

Extract 2.4 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. Once again, Silvia can be expected to comply with such a request in that it is made in contribution to an activity she is currently participating in (see Chapter 3).

2.5 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 will be elaborated in the following chapters. For purposes of comparison, here I concentrate mostly on cases in which the utterance is formatted as an imperative (hereafter, for brevity, *imperative requests*). As I will show in detail in Chapter 3, imperative requests are typically made in contribution to 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 advancement 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. They are, in other words,

occasioned by the development of the activity. Actions requested through imperatives are normally not projectable and thus harder to anticipate for the requestee. This is why they need to be specified verbally.

A first example of such an action comes from the same family lunch as Extract 2.2. 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).

Extract 2.5 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 over pot
old-F 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 2.4 Frame from line 13, Extract 2.5. Rosa says 'pass me the old lady's plate' to Mum, while Mum nonverbally requests that Grandma pass her plate.

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 2.4). 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, which makes it harder for her to anticipate. So it needs to be verbally specified.

Extract 2.6 shows another imperative case, from the same card game as Extracts 2.1 and 2.4. 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).

Extract 2.6 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 to cards))
            put-NPST-2S down one other double
            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. Put another way, the action needs to be “authored” (Goffman 1981: ch. 3) or “composed” (Kockelman 2007) by the requester through semantic description.

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.

Extract 2.7 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 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.

Extracts 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 illustrate requested actions that are occasioned by the development of an activity, but not projected by it. The actions of passing Grandma's plate to Rosa in 2.5, putting down another double in 2.6 and holding the dye bottle in 2.7 become relevant contingently, to deal with a halt in the activity or to steer its course in an

unanticipated direction. But even though these actions are "slotted into" an activity, they are nonetheless part of it, in the sense that they contribute to its advancement. So they are to be distinguished from actions that are unrelated to the activity (see Chapter 3).

The last extract of this section differs from all those examined so far in that it gives us a case 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.

Extract 2.8 StubePrep_889779

1	Giulia	qua ci sono gli altri tre ((referring to pile of signed forms)) here EX be.3P the other three **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 firmare e la data PCL also 2S.N must-2S write-INF the your name 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. Extract 2.3). 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') — a clear example of "authoring" or "composing" action (Goffman 1981: ch. 3; Kockelman 2007) — and in so doing makes up for her "under-telling" (Schegloff 2007a:140; Enfield 2009:103–5).[13]

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 and 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 that nonverbal and imperative forms

[13] See also Levinson (2007:54–5) on how repair of person reference in Yélî Dnye suggests a ranking of reference forms on a scale of informational specificity.

of requesting are sensitive to 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.

2.6 Naming requests rely on the partial projectability of action

The analysis developed in the previous sections can be expanded by considering another verbal form of requesting used within joint activities: *namings* — that is, utterances that contain no predicate, but only a nominal reference to the object to be passed or manipulated (e.g. *coltello* 'knife'), or to its quantity (e.g. *una* 'one'), location (e.g. *quell'altro* 'the other one'), or destination (see § 1.6.4). As a form consisting of a noun phrase without a predicate, a naming specifies less of the target action than a clausal form like the imperative. At the same time, it carries more information than a nonverbal form.

In a study of surgical operations, Mondada (2011) looks at requests made by the surgeon of his assistant while operating with a coagulating hook. As tissues are being dissected, the assistant's tasks are well specified, but it is up to the surgeon to determine which of them he should perform at any given point (cf. Wittgenstein 2009 [1953]:6e). Whenever the surgeon needs to cauterise a tissue, he utters the word *coagulation*, or its abbreviated form *coag*. This naming is enough for the assisant to understand that he is being requested to activate the cautery (see also Mondada 2014a; and see Sorjonen and Raevaara 2014 on the use of comparable request forms in service encounters). In the present data, namings are similarly selected in environments in which the action requested is projectable to some degree, but some element of it isn't. So the requester specifies the non-projectable element by naming it.

In Extract 2.9, the card players we have encountered in various examples above are starting a new game. In line 1, Bianca begins dealing the cards, giving out two at a time.

Extract 2.9 Circolo01_1948857

```
1 Bianca    ((begins dealing cards two at a time))

2 Flavia    [una
             one

3 Bianca    [((places two cards before Silvia))

4 Flavia    una
            one

5 Bianca    ((moves one of the two cards to her side of the table))
```

As the players themselves have previously discussed, dealing two cards at a time is not ideal, as it increases the chances that cards will cluster in combinations from the prior game. When the extract begins, Bianca has apparently forgotten about this. So Flavia requests that she alter the way she is dealing the cards by saying *una* 'one'. The first version of Flavia's naming is simultaneous with Bianca's dealing another couple of cards to Silvia. This motivates Flavia to repeat it a second time, at which point Bianca complies by moving one of the two cards she has just dealt from Silvia's side of the table to her own.

In this environment, most elements of the request are projectable: the target object (cards) and the action to be done with it (dealing). What is not projectable — since Bianca has got it wrong — is the object's quantity, which is what gets named.

Consider another case, which gives us a comparison between two requests with different degrees of projectability. Nino and Giulio are making coffee in Giulio's kitchen. After loading the coffee machine, Nino places it on one of the burners of the stove (line 1). This move is endorsed by Giulio, who confirms that that particular burner is in working order (line 2). Nino then proceeds to light the burner by turning the gas on. However, he happens to turn the wrong knob, which belongs to one of the malfunctioning burners.

Extract 2.10 Fratelli01_932288

```
1 Nino      ((places coffee machine on burner))

2 Giulio    quello funzia sì
            that function-3s yes
            that one works yes

3 Nino      ((turns wrong knob))
```

4 Giulio	no quell'altro	
	no that=other	
	no the other one	

5 Nino	((turns right knob))	

6 Giulio	che' altro dio ca'	
	that=other god dog	
	the other one goddamn	

7	(0.6)	

8 Giulio	a::có	

9	(0.6)/((Nino lights burner))	

10	a::có	

11	(1.0)/((Nino moves away from stove))	

13 Giulio	tralo al minimo [sito mato	
	put-IMP.2S=3S.A at-the minimum be.2S=SCL crazy	
	turn it to the minimum, are you nuts?	

14 Nino	[ma c'ha la-	
	but EX=have-3S the	
	does it have a-	

15	((turns burner down))	

16	ma c'ha la termovalvola questo	
	but EX=have-3S the thermovalve this	
	does this have a thermovalve?	

The first action requested in this sequence (line 4) is largely projectable from the development of Nino's course of action. Given his ongoing attempt to light the burner, he can understand Giulio's 'no' to refer to something he is doing wrong. In this environment, Nino can easily anticipate that he is being requested to operate a gas knob; all Giulio needs to specify is which one ('the other one').

Giulio's second request, on the other hand, occurs in a different environment. After Nino turns the right gas knob (line 5), Giulio repeats the initial request in a bantering tone (*che 'altro dio ca'* 'the other one goddamn'), putting on an accent from another variety of Italian, followed by a noise of uncertain meaning (*a::có*). Meanwhile, Nino lights the burner with a lighter (line 9) and moves away from the stove (line 11), thus bringing the course of action to completion. At this point, Giulio notices that Nino has turned the gas exceedingly high, and so makes another request for him to turn it to the minimum (line 13). This second

request is produced as Nino is moving away from the stove. Although it is related to what Nino has just finished doing, it comes at a point at which he is no longer engaged with the gas knobs, and on his way to initiate a new course of action (line 14). This motivates using a clausal form to fully specify the requested action.

Examples such as these show that the projectability of action is not an all-or-nothing dimension. In the previous sections, a contrast has been established between actions that are *projected* by the development of a joint activity and actions that are contingently *occasioned* by it. However, between fully projectable actions and non-projectable ones, there are *partially* projectable actions, some element of which cannot be anticipated. The form of requesting that is fitted to requesting these actions is one that allows the requester to verbally specify only what is necessary, leaving out what it isn't (see also Mondada 2014a).

People not only decide when to use language for requesting, but also calibrate the form of language they use according to which elements of the requested action are projectable. The properties of language, however, are not limited to semantic specificity. They also include perceptual affordances related to the auditory modality. This is what the next section is about.

2.7 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 fully 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 examples below are part of a 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 and 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 and 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, requesters have two options for carrying out the request. The first is to hold their nonverbal behaviour in position until the requestee's attention falls on them. The second is to actively get the requestee's attention by nonvisual means. I now illustrate these two options in order.

Extract 2.11 takes place a few moments before Extract 2.5. The food has just been brought to the dining table and Mum is commenting to Luca on a particularly bony piece of meat. While they talk, Grandma produces a nonverbal request by holding out her plate towards Mum, who is in charge of distributing the meat.

Extract 2.11 PranzoAlbertoni01_1037560

1 Mum cè è tutta ca- vedi ((to Luca))
PCL be.3S all meat see-2S
I mean it's all me- you see?

2 è quello che t'ha [dato il tuo amico questo eh
be.3S that REL 2S.D=have-3S give-PSTP the your friend this PCL
it's {like} the one your friend gave you, huh?

3 Grandma [((picks up plate and holds it out towards Mum, for her to put meat on it))

4 Luca era ancora più grande e e sen[za nea]nche=
be-IPF-3S still more big and and without not.even
it was even bigger and and without even

5 Mum [eh]
ITJ
right

6 Luca =un po' [di ciccina
one bit of meat-DIM
a bit of meat

7 Rosa [mamma c'è tua mamma famelica
mum EX=be.3S your mum ravenous
Mum, there's your mum {there} who's ravenous

8 vuoi la carne o ((to Grandma))
want-2S the meat or
do you want the meat or?

```
9 Luca      dagli l'osso a le(hh)i
            give-IMP.2S=3S.D the=bone at 3S.F
            give her the bo(hh)ne

            ((15 seconds omitted))

10 Mum      ((serves Grandma))
```

Throughout lines 3-6, Mum looks neither at Grandma nor at her held-out plate, but alternates gaze between Luca and the meat pan. At the same time, Grandma continues to hold up the plate towards Mum, waiting for her to attend to it. In line 7, Rosa notices Grandma's ongoing request and draws Mum's attention to it ('Mum, there's your mum there who's ravenous'). Moments later, Mum undertakes to serve Grandma (see Extract 2.5 for the subsequent interaction).

This case shows one method to overcome a momentary lack of visual attention by the requestee: hold a nonverbal request form in position until the requestee's attention is eventually drawn to it. Another method is to actively get the requestee's attention by nonvisual means. In what follows, I show this to be another function of the verbal component of requests. Securing immediate recipiency can motivate using speech even though the action requested is fully projectable.

Consider Extract 2.12, 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.

Extract 2.12 Circolo_508664

```
1 Silvia    adeso vinzem Clara e dopo ghe dago 'l cambio al Danilo
            now win-1P NAME and after 3S.D give-1S the 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 down the hall))
look-IMP.2S CMP EX=3S tranquillity
you can see it's all very q-

9 Flavia [alza ((sets cards in front of Clara))
lift-IMP.2S
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=be.3S 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 2.5). 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 2.5 Frame from line 8, Extract 2.12. Flavia says 'cut', placing the shuffled cards in front of Clara, while Clara is looking away from the table, making an assessment about what she is seeing.

A similar case is taken from the same interaction as Extract 2.3, 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 *to'* 'take/here you are'.

Extract 2.13 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 2.6 Frame from line 5, Extract 2.13. Lidia says *to'* 'take/here you are', holding out a peeled potato towards Paolo for him to take and cut, while Paolo is leaning across the table towards Stella.

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 2.6). 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 2.13, 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 Extract 2.3. 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 and Keisanen 2012:602).

To summarise, in the cases analysed here and in the prior sections, the verbal component of requests has two independent functions. The first is to specify the requested action. This is necessary when the action as a whole is not projected by the ongoing activity but contingently occasioned by it, or when there is a particular element of the action that cannot be anticipated by 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.

2.8 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 modalities. 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.[14]

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 and Raymond ms) allows participants to project upcoming steps, and thereby to anticipate the relevance of contributions that may be requested of them (see also Mondada 2014a, 2014b). 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 in effect 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.[15] They are therefore minimal forms of requesting that heavily rely on people' common ground — that is, in our case, on the projectability of the action requested in the ongoing activity.

[14] The findings of this study 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 and Kitzinger 2007; Mondada 2011, 2014a, among others). This or other additional functions of nonverbal forms, however, will still be subjected to the recognitional, informational and perceptual principles presented here.

[15] 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).

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 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 1996b; 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 2013a:444–5). An example of such a case is given below.

Extract 2.14 is taken from the same interaction as Extracts 2.3 and 2.13, where people are preparing potatoes. Before the extract begins, Elisa has been fervently involved in the talk accompanying the potato preparation, which has apparently slowed down the pace of her peeling. In line 1, Paolo addresses her and then begins teasing her for not being able to simultaneously talk and peel efficiently.

Extract 2.14 CampUniPictionary01_1771907

1	Paolo	Elisa Girgenti NAME SURNAME **Elisa Girgenti**
2		(0.6)/((Elisa stops talking and looks at Paolo))

```
3 Paolo     ehm h- h- la patata non s- non sente
                      the potato not       not hear-3s
            uhm h- h- the potato cannot hear {you}

4           (1.2)/((other people look at Paolo))

5 Paolo     £quindi se la peli [mentre pa(hh)rli£
            therefore if 3s.A peel-2s while talk-2s
            £so if you {would} peel it while ta(hh)lking£

6                              [((everyone chuckles, Elisa smiles))

7 Sofia     £dai taia e tasi ((places potato on Paolo's cutting board))
            PCL cut-IMP.2S and keep.silent-NPST-2S
            £come on, cut and shut up

8           ((Paolo begins cutting potato while still chuckling))
```

The action requested of Paolo here is the very same as in the previous two cases from the same interaction. Cutting is the next relevant action that Paolo can project whenever a peeled potato is placed on his cutting board (or held out towards him). Sofia's verbalisation of the request here is therefore a case of "over-telling" (e.g. Schegloff 2007a:133; Enfield 2010:8), which ends up doing more than just requesting. By telling Paolo to 'cut', Sofia breaks off Paolo's ongoing mocking and retaliates against it by getting him back to work. This function is reflected in the two other components of the request utterance: the second imperative 'shut up' and the turn-initial particle *dai* 'come on', working as an exhortation. Finally, Sofia's smile voice characterises this as a jovial castigation of Paolo's behaviour. So over-specifying a requested action potentially elicits an enriched interpretation of the request and compromises its status of business as usual (Grice 1975; Levinson 2000). This general pragmatic principle has already been shown to be operative in other functional domains such as person reference (Schegloff 1996b; 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.[16] How then, in these cases, does the attention-getting function of language interact with the principles of minimisation discussed above? I argue that these

[16] This finding resonates with an observation made by Kärkkäinen and Keisanen (2012) on the multimodal design of offers: "if there is no mutual gaze during the establishment of the [offered] referent, the offer tends to be verbalized" (p. 602).

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 Extracts 2.12 and 2.13, whose function is to get the requestee's attention, with the ones examined in Section 2.4, whose function is (also) to articulate the target action. Whereas in cases such as 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 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 Extracts 2.12 and 2.13 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.[17] So it allows the requester to satisfy multiple interactional pressures.

[17] One might ask: why then not use an attention-getting device like 'hey'? This strategy seems less suitable for two reasons. One is that it puts on record the failure of the current participation framework, exposing the requestee's lack of attention. Another is that it risks being taken as an attempt to establish a new frame of participation. An interjection like 'hey' normally functions as a *summons*, which is appropriately responded to with an *answer* (e.g. 'what'), giving rise to an adjacency pair (see Schegloff 2007b:48–53). The interpolation of such a sequence before the request can result in a disruption of progressivity (Stivers and Robinson 2006; Heritage 2007). So using a minimal verb or interjection encoding the action to be performed preserves also an assumption of mutual engagement, and avoids decoupling the request sequence from the flow of the interaction (see Enfield 2013a: fn. 11 for a similar argument involving forms for person reference).

3 Bilateral and unilateral requests: the use of imperatives and simple interrogatives[18]

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has analysed the use of verbal forms of requesting relative to nonverbal forms. Here, I begin the comparison of verbal forms, focussing on the two most frequent in the corpus: the imperative (e.g. *passami il piatto* 'pass me the plate') and the simple interrogative (e.g. *mi passi il piatto?* 'will you pass me the plate?'). These two verbal forms can be used for requesting similar kinds of actions in what may appear, at first glance, similar circumstances. Extracts 3.1 and 3.2 are taken from the same family meal, during which an imperative and a simple interrogative are both used to request that Aldo pass a plate.

Extract 3.1 MaraniPranzo_1000470

1 Mum	Aldo passami il piatto
	Aldo pass-IMP.2S=1S.D the plate
	Aldo pass me the plate
2 Aldo	((passes plate))

Extract 3.2 MaraniPranzo_1620740

1 Aldo	io sono andato da loro l'altra sera ((to Bino))
	1S.N be.1S go-PSTP by 3P the=other evening
	I visited them last night
2 Dad	mi p(hh)assi un [pia(hh)ttino ( ) ((entering the room))
	1S.D pass-2S one plate-DIM
	{will} you p(hh)ass me a pla(hh)te ( )
3 Bino	[e:h .hhh no:: io::: ((to Aldo))
	PCL no 1S.N
	we:ll .hhh no:: I:::
4 Aldo	((turns to get plate from cupboard))

[18] This chapter builds on and develops earlier work published in Rossi, Giovanni. 2012. "Bilateral and Unilateral Requests: The Use of Imperatives and Mi X? Interrogatives in Italian." *Discourse Processes* 49(5):426–58.

Although both passings of the plate are equally immediate and effortless, and although the social relations between requester and requestee are equivalent in the two cases, sequences like the two above differ in important interactional aspects. The aim of this chapter is to show that this is reflected in the way in which the requests are verbally formatted.

Two factors are identified as relevant to a speaker's selection between the two forms:

- the relation of the action requested to what the requestee is doing at the moment at which the request is made;
- who stands to benefit from the action requested.

The core finding is the following. The imperative form is typically selected to implement *bilateral* requests, that is, to request actions that contribute to an already established joint project between requester and requestee (such as a game, or the distribution of food at the start of a meal, see Extract 3.1). On the other hand, the simple interrogative form is a vehicle for *unilateral* requests, which means that it used to request actions that are unrelated to what the requestee is currently doing, and that are typically in the interest of the speaker as an individual.

The two factors that define bilateral and unilateral requests — the relation of the request to the requestee's line of action and the distribution of the benefit brought by the request — are usually matched in the way just described. But they can also combine differently. This happens in a minority of imperative requests that are consistent with what the requestee is doing but serve an individual outcome, and in a minority of simple interrogative requests that make the requestee depart from what they are doing but serve a collective outcome. These *secondary* uses of the two forms are marked in the design of the request.

After a review of the background literature (§ 3.2), I begin by illustrating what is similar to the actions requested through imperatives and simple interrogatives (§ 3.3). I then support the distinction between bilateral and unilateral requests with an analysis of the sequences in which they occur and of the constructional properties of the request utterances (§ 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6). The analysis then turns to *secondary* uses of imperatives and simple interrogatives, showing, among other things, how these are marked in the design of the request (§ 3.7). A further section is dedicated to the analysis of cases that bring to the surface the normativity of the selection patterns observed (§ 3.8). Finally, I discuss how imperatives

and simple interrogatives, with their core meanings, fit with the environments in which they are adopted, making different kinds of responses relevant (§ 3.9 and 3.10).

3.2 Background

People's selection between imperative and interrogative forms of requesting has for the most part been explained in terms of their relative directness and politeness (see Searle 1975; Brown and Levinson 1987; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, among many others). The starting point in these approaches is that an imperative utterance is the most explicit and direct way of getting somebody to do something, while an interrogative utterance conveys a requestive force in a less explicit and more indirect way. Across cultures, the use of more or less direct forms has been argued to depend on estimations of social distance and relative power (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, see § 1.4.3.2 and 1.4.3.3). Also, since indirectness allows greater freedom for the requestee not to comply, it is typically taken to correlate with politeness (e.g. Searle 1975: 64-9, Leech 1983: 108). This makes interrogative forms of requesting generally more polite than imperatives, though people's perception of particular levels of directness as more or less polite is influenced by culture (Blum-Kulka 1987, Ogiermann 2009). This has led to a distinction between cultures that use more indirect forms, favouring personal autonomy and self-determination, and others that use more direct forms, privileging clarity and informality (Wierzbicka 1985, 2003).

More recent approaches have moved away from measures of directness and politeness and focussed instead on other selection factors emerging from the use of imperatives and interrogatives in naturally occurring interaction (see § 1.4.3.4). Some studies in this area suggest that the two formal types display different degrees of entitlement (i.e. right) to have something done by another person, and greater or lesser recognition of the contingencies (i.e. potential obstacles) that the other may encounter in fulfilling the request (Curl and Drew 2008; Drew and Walker 2010; Craven and Potter 2010; Antaki and Kent 2012; cf. Heinemann 2006). In these studies, people's entitlement to make a request is grounded in a range of social-interactional elements. In calls to a doctor's office, for example, it may be the seriousness of a medical problem (Curl and Drew 2008:140); in parent-child interaction it seems to be the educational responsibility of the parent to rectify a child's inappropriate behaviour (Craven and Potter 2010); and in interactions between adults with intellectual

impairments and care workers it seems to be the latter's institutional authority to instruct and socialise people who don't have the full range of cognitive competencies of the typical adult (Antaki and Kent 2012).

Another approach in this area focusses on the sequential relation of the action requested to the trajectory of the ongoing interaction (Wootton 1997, 2005). In his study of request forms used by a young child, Wootton describes the selection of an imperative as warranted by the sequential placement of the request after prior alignment has been reached between child and parent on the desirability or grantability of the action requested. Already at the age of 3, the child seems to be able to discern such an environment from others in which she is requesting the parent to do things "out of the blue" (Wootton 1997:144) or that are "discrepant with […] the currently projectable shape of the sequence" (Wootton 2005:202), in which case she shows a preference for an interrogative *can you x* form.

Wootton's finding bears a significant relation to the patterns of selection identified here in Italian adult interaction. One of the factors influencing the choice between an imperative and interrogative request form in my corpus is a relation of continuity or discontinuity between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing — in other words, whether the request extends a line of action already pursued by the requestee or instead makes them depart from what they are doing to engage in a new trajectory. This sequential dimension can be better understood in light of the organisation of single actions in larger *courses of action* or interactional *projects*.

Schegloff (2007b) uses the term *project* to refer to an interactional leitmotiv or "theme" (p. 244) that transcends the boundaries of sequences and is pursued over the continuing course of an interaction — for example, "teasing" (p. 246) or "getting together" (p. 144). At the same time, Schegloff (2007b) applies the term also to the description of smaller components of an interaction — for example, as referring to the trajectory or directionality of a pre-sequence (pp. 60, 87, 90, 193). More important, he makes it clear that a certain project may be implemented through alternative sequence types. The transfer of an object, service or information, for instance, may be accomplished either through an offer or request sequence (p. 81-2). This last point is also part of the notion of *project* recently laid out by Levinson (2013), who advocates a distinction between "projects as courses of action" and "the sequences that may embody them". Levinson emphasises a sense of the term *project* that captures the individual agenda lying behind a participant's actions.

The common idea here is that projects — or courses of action — are forms of social organisation that cut across the actions performed by single turns or moves, often going beyond a single sequence of actions. In the previous chapter, we have talked about several forms of *supra-sequential coherence* (Robinson 2013:258), ranging from sequences of sequences (Schegloff 2007b: ch. 10) to activities (Levinson 1979; Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Robinson 2013; see also Leont′ev 1981). The notions of *project* and *course of action* are part of this family of structures, with the difference that they are flexibly applied both to relatively small structures like a single adjacency pair (with its possible expansions) and to larger structures like activities (e.g. Clark 1996; Rossano 2012: ch. 4). What is captured by *project* or *course of action* is the coherent articulation of a series of actions or moves to achieve an interactional outcome (see also Lerner 1995:128–9). For example, filling a glass with water involves getting hold of the water container, letting the water flow into the glass until filled, and stopping the flow of water. In this simple instance of a project, the actions that compose it are taken one after the other, without breaks. But other cases involve actions that aren't necessarily all contiguous. What matters is the organisation of multiple actions in relation to a commitment (Clark 1996, 2006) or, put another way, the directionality of a stream of moves as means to an end.

In this chapter, interactional projects are relevant to understand one of the two factors that influence the selection between imperatives and simple interrogatives: the sequential relation between the action requested and what is currently being done by the requestee — a relation of either continuity or discontinuity.

A second factor is the distribution of the *benefit* brought by the action requested. The relevance of benefit for requesting behaviour has long been noted in the literature (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1976:31–2; Brown and Levinson 1987:127; Schieffelin 1990:184), but has rarely become a focus of analysis, one exception being Wootton (1997).[19] In the same study mentioned above, benefit is identified as one of the elements distinguishing the environments in which the English imperative and *can you x* request forms occur. While imperatives are used to request actions that are desirable to both parties, the *can you x* form is associated with "self-interested" actions where "the beneficiary is clearly going to be [only] the child" (p. 147).

[19] The relevance of benefit for action has been addressed more substantially in studies focussing on the distinction between action types, particularly requests, offers, proposals and suggestions (Vine 2004; Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Clayman and Heritage 2014a; see also Pufahl Bax 1986:675; Ervin-Tripp, Guo, and Lampert 1990:30). This level of analysis is different from the one pursued here, which focusses on alternative ways of constructing the same type of action.

Once again, Wootton's findings bear a significant relation to the patterns observed in the present study. Alternative forms of requesting used by Italian adult speakers are typically associated with different benefit distributions, simple interrogative requests being typically made for the benefit of the requester alone, and imperative requests being typically made for the benefit of requester and requestee together. In sum, the benefit of the action requested along with its sequential relation to the requestee's line of action define interactional environments that make appropriate the use of an imperative or a simple interrogative form.

In analysing the selection of these forms, I also want to show that the choice of one or the other in certain environments is motivated by their *core meaning*. Core meaning is akin both to the linguistic notion of *semantic invariant* (Wierzbicka 1996:239ff; Enfield 2014b:1–6) and to the conversation analytic notion of *context-free meaning* of a practice (Heritage 2010). By "core" I intend a meaning that is present across all uses of a certain action form, regardless of modulations (e.g. conditional mood) and additions (e.g. *please*) to its main constituent (e.g. an imperative or interrogative predication). The meaning of an action form cannot be reduced to a value on a politeness scale (Ervin-Tripp 1976:59ff). Politeness scales have been used to explain the relation between linguistic forms along a single and often predefined dimension (more or less polite). Instead, the meaning of an action form has to be seen in the relation between its grammatical construction and the alternatives present in the larger system, the social variables that are stable across its unmarked uses, and the consequences that its selection has for the progress of the interaction (cf. Enfield 2007; Stivers 2007 on forms for person reference). The core meanings of request forms are therefore reflected in the kinds of responses they make relevant.

In a study of directives used by parents with their children, Craven and Potter (2010) discuss a contrast between *asking* and *telling* others to do things, and the impact that this has on the kind of behaviour that is due next. Craven and Potter argue that, whereas "requests are built as contingent to varying degrees on the recipient's willingness or ability to comply, directives embody no orientation to the recipient's ability or desire to perform the relevant activity" (p. 419). As a consequence, unlike "requests", a "directive does not make acceptance relevant as a next action", but only compliance (p. 426) (Wootton 1997; Goodwin 2006). This distinction is supported in the present study, which makes the construction of the requests central to the issue: whereas an imperative form makes only one type of response relevant next — the fulfilment of the request — an interrogative form makes compliance contingent on the requestee's response, and is thus legitimately responded to with acceptance

or refusal. Here, *asking* versus *telling* is a distinction pertaining to the linguistic form used to get another to do something.

3.3 Similar actions in similar circumstances

The data used for this chapter are 124 imperative requests occurring across the 20 recordings (5 hours) that form the core sample, and 79 simple interrogative requests occurring across 45 recordings (25 hours), which combine core and supplemental samples (see Table 1.2).

The first observation to be made on the distribution of imperatives and simple interrogatives is that they are used for requesting similar kinds of actions in what may appear, at first glance, similar circumstances. This has already been illustrated with Extracts 3.1 and 3.2, where the very same action is requested of Aldo during the same family meal, by speakers with similar relationships to him. In everyday informal interaction, both imperative and simple interrogative requests are generally for low-cost services that are relevant to a here-and-now purpose or need (e.g. passing, taking, putting, holding). These services are unproblematic, in the sense that requester has normally no reason to anticipate that the requestee will be unwilling to comply (cf. Chapter 4), and they involve objects that are readily available (cf. Chapter 5).

Having recognised these commonalities, the aim of this chapter is to show that imperatives and simple interrogatives are not interchangeable, but functionally distinct. The following sections are dedicated to the analysis of each request type, preceded by a description of its grammatical properties.

3.4 Imperatives

3.4.1 Grammatical description

Italian has both morphological and syntactic means to distinguish imperatives from interrogative and declarative sentence types (see § 1.6.4). Dedicated imperative marking exists for the second person singular of verbs in the first conjugation ending in *-are* (e.g. *parl-a* ‘speak!’ vs. *parl-i* ‘you speak’, from *parlare*) and for some irregular verbs. As for negative

forms, the second person singular is always distinguishable from its interrogative or declarative counterpart (constructed with *non* 'not' + infinitive, e.g. *non parlare* 'don't speak!'), whereas the plural is morphologically ambiguous. Another reliable cue is the position of pronominal elements in the clause.

Example 3.3

mi leggi un libro
1S.D read-NPST-2S a book
'you read a book for me'

Example 3.4

leggimi un libro
read-NPST-2S=1S.D a book
'read me a book'

In interrogative and declarative sentences, pronouns like *mi* 'to/for me' stand as an autonomous phonological word before the verb (Example 3.3). In imperatives, on the other hand, pronouns are positioned after the verb and are enclitic on it — that is, they "lean on" the verb, their host word (Example 3.4). The same syntactic principle applies also to negative forms.

3.4.2 Imperative requests contribute to the progress of a joint project

An initial survey of the distribution of imperatives leads to a first empirical observation. Imperative requests occur frequently when participants are engaged in a shared activity, such as preparing a meal, or playing cards (see also Ervin-Tripp 1976:35; Brown and Levinson 1987:97). This fact may already grossly characterise their distribution with respect to that of simple interrogative requests, a number of which are conversely found in contexts where participants are not closely engaged in any particular task just before the request is made, or when they have not been interacting at all.

This initial consideration, however, is not sufficient. Take, for example, Extracts 3.1 and 3.2. Both passings of the plate are requested in the context of the same family meal. To capture the interactional criteria underlying the selection of an imperative form we need a finer level of analytic detail. In what follows, I show that the imperative form is selected to

implement requests that contribute to a joint project between requester and requestee. A first argument is that an imperative formatting is licenced by a relation of continuity of the action requested to a larger course of action. A second argument focusses on the action's benefit. Actions requested through imperatives are normally consistent with, or necessary to, projects that have been undertaken by requester and requestee together, and thus benefit both. These arguments are tied to the consideration of earlier interactional events in which agreement or convergence is reached by participants on a common goal.

Two first extracts, 3.5 and 3.6, are now examined together. In Extract 3.5, Olga and Tina, two elderly grandmothers, have just sat down at the dining table with other family members. As Olga pours water in her own glass, she offers to pour some also for Tina (line 1).

Extract 3.5 AlbertoniPranzo01_2555535

1	Olga	vuoi acqua want-2s water **do you want water?**
2		(0.4)/((Tina gazes at her glass))
3	Tina	sì ma:: ho paura: che: ((grabs glass)) yes but have.1s fear CMP **yes bu::t I fea:r tha:t**
4		((brings glass towards Olga and holds it out))
5	Olga	metti giù put-NPST-2s down **put {it} down**
6	Tina	((sets glass down on the table))
7	Olga	((pours water in Tina's glass))
8	Tina	grazie **thanks**

In line 3, Tina accepts Olga's offer while simultaneously grabbing her glass and also verbally anticipating some trouble that might hinder the unfolding course of action, hinting at her unsteady grip on the glass (which, by that point, she is holding up). By requesting that she set down the glass, Olga remedies the possible trouble that may compromise a safe pouring of the water.

A similar sequence is contained in the following extract, where Greta is having her hair dyed by her friend Sergio. A third friend, Dino, is also present in the room. As the dyeing proceeds, Dino notices that Sergio has a runny nose (line 1), which he cannot easily wipe because his hands are occupied in the dyeing process. The sequence develops as Dino volunteers to do 'this terrible thing' (lines 3-4), that is to help Sergio blow his nose.

Extract 3.6 Tinta_470087

1 Dino ti sta pende(hh)ndo una goccia di- hhh
2S.D stay-3S hang-GER one drop of
you've got a drop hanging do(hh)wn from- hhh

2 Sergio ((sniffs)) lo so adesso me la tolgo
3S.A know-1S now 1S.D 3S.A remove-1S
I know now I'm going to remove it

3 Dino ((leans forward to get some kitchen paper from the table))

4 Dino madò mi tocca fare questa cosa tremenda
Madonna 1S.D touch-3S do-INF this thing terrible
my god the fate fell to me to do this terrible thing

5 Dino ((raises paper to Sergio's nose))

6 Sergio ((brings free hand to nose))

7 Sergio ((positions dye bottle in a way suitable for Dino to grab it))

8 Sergio tieni questo
hold-NPST-2S this
hold this

9 Dino ((grabs the bottle))

10 Sergio ((blows nose))

After having remarked on Sergio's runny nose, Dino sees that Sergio is not in a position to take immediate action on it, because his hands are busy with Greta's hair. Dino decides then to help him (lines 3-4). As Sergio joins the course of action initiated by Dino, it becomes clear that he cannot clean his own nose with just one hand, which makes it necessary to hand the bottle to Dino (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Frame from line 8, Extract 3.6. Sergio says 'hold this' to Dino, holding out the dye bottle for him to take.

In both examples above, an imperative request occurs in a particular kind of interactional environment, in which a joint project has developed prior to the request being made.

- ***Initiation*** of a joint project by one of the participants: Olga's offer in line 1 (Extract 3.5) and Dino's volunteering his assistance in lines 3-5 (Extract 3.6).
- ***Commitment*** to joint project by the co-participant. Tina's acceptance token *sì* 'yes' verbally confirms her commitment to the ensuing pouring of the water (Extract 3.5), while Sergio demonstrates his commitment by taking grip of the napkin raised by Dino to his nose (Extract 3.6).
- ***Request*** sequence, where the action requested is part of the already-committed-to joint project. Both *metti giù* 'put it down' and *tieni questo* 'hold this' refer to actions that contribute to the progress of the larger course of action in which they are embedded.

- ***Completion*** of the joint project. In lines 7-8 of Extract 3.5, Olga's pouring of the water is followed by Tina's *grazie* 'thanks', which sanctions the closure of the offer sequence. In line 10 of Extract 3.6, Sergio is finally able to blow his nose.

Both requests arise out of the progression of a goal-directed project. The action requested emerges as one of the relevant steps to be taken, integral to a successful completion of the course of action (Wootton 1997:62; see also Galeano and Fasulo 2009:272).[20] The second important point is that the course of action within which the request emerges has been committed to by both parties. Requester and requestee jointly constitute the social unit that establishes the trajectory of the course of action and that is invested in its outcome. In both cases, an action on the part of the requestee is mobilised by the requester not as a self-directed action, but as a contribution to a shared goal. It is true that both setting down the glass and holding the dye bottle are, in a most immediate sense, good for the speaker — pouring water is easier for Olga if Tina's glass is set on the table rather than in midair, and having the dye bottle grabbed by Dino allows Sergio to blow his nose with two hands rather than one. At the same time, however, the actions requested are also in the interest of both participants, as they are functional to the completion of a course of action that has been jointly undertaken.

Offer and help sequences such as the previous two cases are not the only types of environments where imperative requests are found. The next three cases exemplify imperative requests made within a joint project in the form of a game — in this case, playing cards. When Extract 3.7 begins, Clara is coming to the end of her turn (lines 1-2). As she takes another look at her cards (line 3), Flavia prompts her to perform the last part of her turn, which is to discard a card.

Extract 3.7 Circolo01_81603

```
1 Silvia    ((takes card from Clara and joins it to a combination))

2 Clara     ecco to'
            PCL ITJ
            there, there you are

3           (1.0)/((Clara looks at her cards))
```

[20] Extracts 3.5 and 3.6 are particularly clear instances of joint projects, where all the four steps listed above (initiation, commitment, request, completion) are explicit and adjacent. In other cases, one or more of these steps may be implicit or distal.

4 Flavia	e adeso scarta	
	and now discard-IMP.2S	
	and now discard {a card}	
5	(0.4)	
6 Clara	en sete ((discards a seven))	
	a seven	

In another case, Bianca's turn has just begun (line 3). Her teammate Flavia directs her move by requesting that she play a card from her hand, which will allow them to complete a combination.

Extract 3.8 Circolo01_3027563

1 Silvia	((discards a card))	
2	[vara che resto con una ((to Clara))	
	look-IMP.2S CMP remain-1S with one	
	be aware that I'm left with one	
3 Bianca	[((draws a card))	
4	(0.3)	
5 Clara	sì sì ((to Silvia))	
	yes yes	
6 Flavia	dame che sero questa ((reaches out towards Bianca))	
	give-IMP.2S=1S.D CN close-1S this	
	give {it to} me so that I complete this one	
7 Bianca	((passes card to Flavia))	

In yet another case, Flavia's hand has been hovering back and forth between the drawing deck and the discard pile, as she mulls over which one she should draw a card from. Her teammate Bianca then prompts Flavia to take the card that has just been discarded by Silvia ('take it back again'). Flavia's response manifests the reason for her hesitance: she is not sure whether acquiring that card by playing a two is a good move or not ('with a two?'). Bianca then reassures her that it is indeed a good move and reissues the request in reduced form ('ye::s, take it'), after which Flavia begins fulfilling it.

Extract 3.9 Circolo01_296878

1 ((Flavia taps fingers next to discard pile))

2 Bianca totelo de volta
take-IMP.2S=2S.D=3S.A of round
take it back again

3 Flavia con en do
with a two?

4 Bianca sì:: tolo
yes take-IMP.2S=3S.A
ye::s, take it

5 (0.6)/((Flavia searches for card to play))

6 Bianca con en do val la pena
with one two be.worth-3S the sorrow
with a two it's worthwhile

7 Flavia ((takes card from discard pile and joins it to other cards))

All the three requests just seen are for actions that contribute to the progress of the game. Drawing, discarding and passing cards to a teammate are all integral to moving the game forward. Besides this structural aspect, the *bilateral* nature of the requests is reflected in certain features of the utterances used to implement them. In Extract 3.7, the turn-initial conjunction *e* 'and' indicates that the action requested is part of a larger course of action (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994). In Extract 3.8, the account appended to the request ('so that I complete this one') shows it to be functional to a shared goal. Finally, in Extract 3.9, the first version of Bianca's imperative (*to-te-lo*) contains the dative clitic *te* 'for yourself', which directly encodes an other-than-self beneficiary of the request.

People's joint commitments to structured bits of everyday interaction apply not only to games, but also to other routinised moments of social life, such as the start of a meal. Let us go back to Extract 3.2, reported here in extended form as 3.10. When the extract begins, Aldo has momentarily gone to the kitchen to bring back some crockery from the dining room. Mum has started putting meat on the plate of one of the diners, which is held up by Agata.

Extract 3.10 MaraniPranzo_996283

1 Mum incomincio con un primo giro
begin-1S with one first round
I'll begin with a first round

2 (1.3)/((puts meat on plate))

3 Mum o:h ((to Agata))
ITJ
hey

4 Agata ((passes plate on))

5 Mum [incomincio con un primo giro
begin-1S with one first round
I'll begin with a first round

6 [((Aldo walks back into dining room))

7 Agata ((holds up her plate while Mum puts meat on it))

8 Mum dopo ve ne do un altro (giro)
after 2P.D PRT give-1S one other (round)
then I'll give you another (round)

((10 seconds omitted during which Aldo takes seat and lays his table napkin on his lap))

9 Mum Aldo passami il piatto
Aldo pass-IMP.2S=1S.D the plate
Aldo pass me the plate

10 Aldo ((passes plate))

((16 seconds omitted))

11 Mum ((passes plate back to Aldo))

12 Aldo grazie
thanks

In line 1, Mum publicly announces her role as the distributor of the food. A few seconds later (line 5), she calls attention again to the ongoing portioning, while Aldo is walking back into the room. Notice that a 'first round' projects that all diners are about to get a portion. Given that both Agata and her neighbour (a guest) have received theirs (lines 4-7), and excluding Mum and Dad (who is still in the kitchen), Aldo can be expected to be the next in line to be served. By the time Mum utters line 9, Aldo has taken his seat and has laid his table napkin on his lap. Immediately prior to the request, this bit of Aldo's behaviour is a basis for Mum to assume his compliance, as it renews the valence of Aldo's commitment to start-of-meal

procedures and publicly displays that he is attuned to the progress of the activity. Finally, note that, although the request benefits Mum by saving her the trouble of getting Aldo's plate herself, it is done as part of her serving him. This is publicly acknowledged by Aldo's subsequent 'thanks' (line 12), which is analogous to Tina's 'thanks' in Extract 3.5.

A dimension of shared benefit emerges also in the last case of this section, where a group of people is doing the washing-up in the kitchen of a holiday camp. Plinio and Rocco are in charge of drying the dishes that others are washing. As they wait for the next round of dishes to come out of the dishwasher, Plino picks up a dishwasher tray from the worktop and asks if it is going to be used again (line 1). After Agnese responds 'no', Plinio puts the tray away (line 4). Moments later, Rocco makes a request that Plinio put away another tray as well, which is lying on the floor in the area where they are working.

Extract 3.11 CampFamLava_591294

1	Plino	questo servirà ancora ((holds up white tray)) this serve-FUT-3S again/still **is this going to be used again?**
2		(2.1)
3	Agnese	no **no**
4		(5.0)/((Plinio puts tray away))
5		(9.5)/((Plinio wanders between sink and dishwasher))
6	Rocco	metti via anche quello lì giallo put-NPST-2S away also that there yellow **put away that yellow one too**
7		che se no gli pestiam sopra CN if no 3S.D step-1P above **otherwise we're going to step on it**
8	Plinio	((picks up yellow tray and puts it away))

Rocco's request is connected to a project pursued by Plinio a few seconds earlier — clearing the work area from unnecessary objects — as reflected in the use of the conjunction *anche* 'too'. Moreover, the account appended to the request, constructed with first person plural, indicates that both requester and requestee stand to gain from the action being solicited, as this contributes to the safe continuation of their task.

In this section, I have discussed the bearing of two interactional dimensions on the selection of imperative forms of requesting. The first concerns the continuity between what is requested and the larger course of action in which the requestee is involved with the requester. Imperative requests may be embedded in offer or helping sequences (Extracts 3.5 and 3.6), advance the progress of a game (Extracts 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9), contribute to daily routines (Extract 3.10), or manage problems arising in domestic work (Extract 3.11). The second dimension concerns the benefit of the action requested, which is shared between requester and requestee. This emerges in details of the talk pointing to the "togetherness" of what is being done and to the fact that what is requested is not good solely for the requester. These include the requestee's 'thank you' at the end of the request sequence (Extracts 3.5 and 3.10), second person benefactive markers (Extract 3.9), and accounts that make explicit the contribution of the action requested to a shared outcome (Extracts 3.8 and 3.11).

The convergence of these two dimensions characterises the request being made as *bilateral*, which I argue to be the *primary* use of imperatives in everyday informal interaction among adults. This is for two reasons. First, this use is the most frequent, covering 73.4% (*n*=91/124) of the imperative cases at hand. Second, imperatives used for bilateral requests are typically bare and unmitigated. This contrasts with *secondary* uses of imperatives which, besides being less frequent, often involve additional marking (see § 3.7.2).

3.5 Simple interrogatives

3.5.1 Grammatical description

Much work on interrogative requests has focussed on polar (yes/no) forms constructed with modal verbs, such as *can/could* or *will/would* (e.g. Searle 1975; Wootton 1997, 2005; Vinkhuyzen and Szymanski 2005; Heinemann 2006; Curl and Drew 2008; Craven and Potter 2010). These constructions literally enquire about the ability or willingness of the recipient to do something, and can be used for requesting in Italian, too (see Chapter 4). The interrogative construction that is in focus here, however, is of a different kind. A simple interrogative utterance does not contain any modal verb, but simply asks if the recipient will do a certain act. In addition, it typically contains a turn-initial pronoun *mi* 'to/for me' expressing that the act in question is directed to, or for the benefit of, the speaker.

Example 3.12

mi leggi un libro
1S.D read-NPST-2S a book
'{will} you read me a book?'

The first person pronoun *mi* can function as the indirect or (less often) direct object of the verb. At other times, it is inserted as an extra-argumental pronoun, in which case it can be described as an ethical dative or benefactive marker, encoding reference to the person who stands to gain from, or who is most directly concerned with, the action in question. The verb always comes after *mi* and is inflected for second person (singular or plural), either in the indicative (simple present) mood (e.g. *mi leggi un libro* '{will} you read me a book?') or in the conditional (e.g. *mi leggeresti un libro* '{would} you read me a book?'). The interrogative nature of the construction is formally marked by the intonation contours with which it is normally uttered (see § 1.6.4).

3.5.2 Simple interrogative requests launch a new individual project

As discussed earlier (§ 3.3), the kinds of actions requested through simple interrogatives are similar to those requested through imperatives: low-cost services such as passing, taking, putting, holding, which are unproblematic for the requestee and involve objects that are readily available. Within the context of this commonality, however, the environments in which simple interrogatives are used differ in important ways from those of imperatives.

Although a number of simple interrogative requests appear where participants have been disengaged from each other, others occur in situations where requester and requestee are effectively already doing something together. As evidenced by Extract 3.2, which is taken from the same context as Extract 3.1, the way in which equally immediate and effortless actions relate to the current business of the participants needs to be assessed carefully. Being engaged in a common activity is not in itself a basis for expecting that a request will be formatted imperatively. The crucial factor is how the request relates to what is being done. A simple interrogative conveys that what is requested is not part of an undertaking that is already shared with the requestee, but rather is part of a project independently initiated by the requester. This means that when this form is used in a context where participants are both involved in doing something (e.g. chatting) the action requested (e.g. passing some chewing gum) is not integral to what is ongoing, but launches a new, unconnected trajectory.

In Extract 3.13, Anna and Diego are talking about recent get-togethers with friends at a pub.

Extract 3.13 Diego&Anna_3080110

```
1 Diego     no il venerdì
            no the Friday
            no {it was} Friday

2           (0.4)

3 Anna      [eh
             PCL
             right

4 Diego     [c'è il mercoledì e venerdì se[rata mi sembra
             EX=be.3S the Wednesday and Friday evening 1S.D seem-3S
             it should be Wednesday and Friday evening

5 Anna                                    [eh allora il venerdì
                                           PCL then the Friday
                                           right then on Friday
6           (1.4)

7 Anna      era il venerdì e:::
            be-IPF-3S the Friday and
            it was Friday and:::

8           mi dai mi passi una Vigorsol
            1S.D give-2S 1S.D pass-2S one Vigorsol
            {will} you give {will} you pass me a Vigorsol?[21]

9 Diego     ((turns to get pack of chewing gum))
```

A few minutes before the beginning of the extract, Anna has started telling Diego about a mutual friend. During the telling some disagreement arises between Anna and Diego on the matter of which day of the week they used to meet this friend at the pub. By line 5, the issue is settled, and in line 7 Anna resumes the telling. At this point, a turn is inserted that is sequentially disjunctive with what comes before (Schegloff 2007b:98). Anna's request to pass a piece of chewing gum is not connected to what the two participants are currently dealing with. This is evident from its emergence in the midst of her ongoing telling, which gets interrupted.

[21] A brand of chewing gum.

In another case, people are joking about extramarital relationships. As the discussion proceeds, Plinio addresses Loretta (line 2) while she is visibly absorbed in the ongoing talk. Loretta doesn't respond to Plinio's summons and instead initiates repair on another person's talk (line 6) — in overlap with a second summons by Plinio (line 5). At this point, Plinio tries nevertheless to make his request.

Extract 3.14 CampFamTavolo_1803413

1 Romeo no no mi varda [Mirko
no no 1S.N look-IMP.2S NAME
no no look Mirko, I

2 Plinio [Loretta
NAME
Loretta

3 Emilia [no ma pensa pensa
no but think-IMP.2S think-IMP.2S
well now think think what

4 ((Emilia and Mirko laugh))

5 Plinio [Loretta
NAME
Loretta

6 Loretta [come dici scusa ((to Emilia))
how say-2S excuse-IMP.2S
sorry what did you say?

7 (0.2)

8 Plinio [mi passeresti un bicchier d'acqua
1S.D pass-CND-2S one glass of=water
{would} you pass me a glass of water?

9 Emilia [sta registrando pe- ((to Loretta))
stay-3S record-GER
he's recording th-

10 Romeo puttasca no me 'l ricordo pu
puttasca not RFL 3S.A remember-1S more
shit, I forgot about it

11 (2.0)/((everyone laughs))

12 Loretta dimmi scusa ((to Plinio))
say-IMP.2S=1S.D excuse-IMP.2S
tell me, sorry

```
13          (0.9)/((Plinio makes room for Romeo to sit on banquette))

14 Plinio   mi passeresti un bicchier d'acqua normale
            1S.D pass-CND-2S one glass of=water normal
            {would} you pass me a glass of normal water?

15 Loretta  ((nods and walks to sink to get water))
```

The first version of Plinio's interrogative request is not taken up by Loretta, who is attending to Emilia's talk (responding to her earlier repair initiation in line 6). A moment later, everyone laughs at Romeo suddenly recollecting that the conversation is being recorded (lines 10-11). After this, Loretta finally responds to Plinio with a turn that answers his previous summonses and at the same time initiates repair on his request (line 12). Plinio then remakes his request, which Loretta accepts with a nod, followed by her walking to the sink.

Plinio's effort to obtain Loretta's attention demonstrates the disconnect between the request sequence and what the requestee is currently doing. This interactional dimension is oriented to by the requester from the beginning of the sequence, which is launched with a summons (see Schegloff 2007b:48–53), showing the requester's attempt to establish a new frame of interaction that is detached from the current one (cf. Goodwin 2006; Goodwin and Cekaite 2014).

The next case gives us a direct comparison with an imperative request in the previous section. In Extract 3.6, we encountered Sergio, Dino and Greta chatting in a room while Sergio is dyeing Greta's hair. Extract 3.15 is taken from earlier in the same interaction, before the dyeing process begins. Here, Sergio uses a simple interrogative to ask Dino to take over the shaking of the dye bottle.

Extract 3.15 Tinta_167097

```
1 Sergio    e per quanto devo:: shakerare
            and for how.much must-1S shake-INF
            and for how long should I:: keep shaking?

2 Greta:    ma non c'è scritto finché non è:: be::n::      (0.5) e::hm::
            but not EX=be.3S written until not be.3S well
            well it isn't specified until it is:: properly::      u::hm::

3           (0.4) ma capito no?=
                  but understood no
                  well, you understood, right?
```

4	Sergio	=Dino mi dai il cambio? NAME 2S.D give-2S the change **Dino {will} you take over for me?**
5		(0.3)/((Dino raises gaze to Sergio))
6	Dino	sì ((nods)) **yes**

Figure 3.2 Frame from line 3, Extract 3.15. Just before Sergio's request, Dino's body posture evidences his lack of involvement in the dyeing operations.

Whereas at later stages of the same interaction Dino gets actively engaged in the operations surrounding the dyeing task, this extract is taken from the very first stages when Dino has not yet become involved. From the moment they arrived in the room, the three participants have been chatting and gossiping, while Greta and Sergio have been preparing the tools for the dyeing. Shortly before Extract 3.15, the talk becomes dyadic between Greta and Sergio, focussing on the dye bottle that Sergio is shaking. In line 2, Greta responds to Sergio's enquiry by suggesting that he shake until the content of the dye bottle is well mixed. During their consultation, the lack of Dino's involvement in the dyeing operations is evidenced by

his body posture. He is sitting with the upper part of his body sprawled on the table, with one hand holding his head, gazing down (Figure 3.2). Dino's non-involvement is further indicated by the use of a vocative at the beginning of the request turn, which implies that the availability of the recipient is not already established (Lerner 2003:183). Dino raises his gaze only after the request. Given his complete disengagement with the dyeing process so far, what Sergio requests of him is not integral to a joint course of action. The request is for him to take over doing something that Sergio has been individually engaged in for several minutes (see line 1: 'and for how long should I:: keep shaking?').

Besides launching new trajectories of action that are unconnected to what the requestee is currently doing, simple interrogative requests are normally made in the interest of the requester as an individual. The requests in Extracts 3.13 and 3.14 are for goods to be consumed by the requester alone. And in Extract 3.15 the requestee is asked to relieve the requester of what has been, until then, his job. The self-directed nature of these requests is first of all signalled by the regular inclusion of a turn-initial dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me'. In addition, simple interrogative sequences often contain further elements indicating that they serve an individual outcome. To illustrate this, we return to Extract 3.2, which is reported here in extended version as 3.16. Dad's request is produced as he walks into the dining room and realises that there is no saucer for the fruit left for him on the table.

Extract 3.16 MaraniPranzo_1620740

1 Aldo io sono andato da loro l'altra sera ((to Bino))
1S.N be.1S go-PSTP by 3P the=other evening
I visited them last night

2 Dad mi p(hh)assi un [pia(hh)ttino ( ) ((entering the room))
1S.D pass-2S one plate-DIM
{will} you p(hh)ass me a pla(hh)te ( )

3 Bino [e:h .hhh no:: io::: ((to Aldo))
PCL no 1S.N
we:ll .hhh no:: I:::

4 Aldo [((turns to get plate from cupboard))

5 Bino [è da da lunedì che studio giorno e notte
be.3S from from Monday CMP study-1S day and night
it's since, I've been studying day and night since Monday

6 Dad [((chuckles)) £Cenerino è rimasto senza£
NAME be.3S remain-PSTP without
£there's none left for Cenerino£

In line 2, Dad interjects into an ongoing conversation between Aldo and his friend Bino, initiating a sequence which has nothing to do with what Aldo is currently doing. The self-directed nature of the request crops up in the jovial account Dad provides in line 6. *Cenerino* is a nickname used by Dad to refer to himself, as the "Cinderella" of the household.[22] After having shouldered the burden of distributing the saucers for the fruit to all diners (before Extract 3.16 begins), Dad now finds himself without a saucer for himself. The gist of his witty remark is to emphasise this fact. More important, because the lack of plates is registered as affecting only *Cenerino* (i.e. Dad himself), such an account singles him out as the individual promoter and recipient of the transaction.

Consider a last example, where Furio, Michele and Sofia are chatting in the kitchen while eating up leftovers. When the extract begins, there is a lull in the talk between Furio and Michele.

Extract 3.17 BiscottiPome01_1518023

1		(4.4)
2	Furio	mm hhh ((while chewing))
3		(0.8)/((Furio continues chewing))
4	Furio	Sofia (.) mi porti u- ((while chewing)) NAME 1S.D bring-2S **Sofia {will} you bring me a-**
5		(0.5)/((Furio continues chewing))
6	Sofia	sì dimmi yes say-IMP.2S=1S.D **yes tell me**
7		(0.9)/((Furio finishes chewing and swallows))
8	Furio	un'altra forchetta one=other fork **another fork?**
9	Sofia	sì ((nods)) **yes**
10		(0.6)

[22] *Cenerino* refers parodically to the fairytale character Cinderella: a person bound to work for others without receiving any appreciation for it.

```
11 Sofia    non ti piace quella lì ((referring to fork in Furio's hand))
            not 2S.D please-3S that there
            you don't like that one?

12 Furio    no ne voglio due
            no PRT want-1S two
            no I want two

13 Sofia    ((chuckles))
```

In line 4, Furio begins a simple interrogative turn while chewing his mozzarella, which is left incomplete as he continues chewing (line 5). After Sofia's uptake in line 6, he adds the second part of his unfinished request, which receives an immediate 'yes' in line 9. Before carrying out the requested action, however, Sofia takes the chance to comment on the fact that Furio already has a fork in his hand ('you don't like that one?'), which prompts an account by him: 'no I want two' (line 12). Again, the requester's account brings to the surface the self-interested nature of the request. We can further appreciate this by comparing this account and the one given by Dad in the previous case with those given in imperative sequences: 'so that I complete this one' (Extract 3.8) and 'otherwise we're going to step on it' (Extract 3.11). Here, in contrast to an individual reason such as the requester's lack of, or desire for, something, the accounts refer to outcomes that benefit both requester and requestee.

This section has shown that simple interrogatives are normally used to a launch a new, individual course of action, unconnected to what the requestee is doing and benefitting the requester alone. These two social-interactional dimensions — discontinuity and individual benefit — co-occur in 83.5% (*n*=66/79) of simple interrogative sequences, characterising the request being made as *unilateral*. Such features stand in opposition to those of *bilateral* requests — continuity and shared benefit — which co-occur in 73.4% (*n*=91/124) of imperative sequences.

3.6 Quantitative analysis

The distinction between *bilateral* and *unilateral* requests is supported by some quantitative findings. These are based on the coding of certain linguistic features for all imperatives and

simple interrogatives that belong to the bilateral (*n*=91/124) and unilateral groups (*n*=66/79).[23]

The first finding relates to the projectability of action. In the previous chapter, we saw that the low projectability of a requested action motivates the selection of a verbal form of requesting. We also saw that the projectability of action is not an all-or-nothing dimension, so requests that are largely but *not entirely* projectable can be implemented through a noun phrase, whereas others that are *less* projectable require the use of an imperative utterance — a full clausal form. That said, the environments in which simple interrogatives are used are characterised by *minimal* projectability.

The unconnectedness of the request to what is already being done significantly limits the requestee's ability to anticipate any aspect of the new course of action being initiated. Unlike imperative sequences, in which an already established joint engagement allows the requester to rely on common ground to some extent, in simple interrogative sequences the requester often needs to provide the requestee with all the new information required to understand what the goal is. This minimal projectability of the action requested is reflected in the fact that, in simple interrogative utterances, the arguments of the verb are more likely to be constructed with full noun phrases (see Extracts 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17), whereas in a large number of imperatives arguments are pronominalised or ellipsed (see Extracts 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.9) (Figure 3.3).

The statistical significance of this association can be tested with mixed effects logistic regression, which here assesses the ability of a binary independent variable (the use of an imperative or a simple interrogative) to predict a binary dependent variable (the use of full noun phrases or pronominalisation/ellipsis), while controlling for possible confounding effects, namely the particular recording from which each case is taken. The statistic shows that unilateral interrogative requests are more likely to include full noun phrases than bilateral imperative requests (odds ratio 5.18, standard error 0.41, $p < .001$). The odds that the

[23] Note that this analysis is built on the back of the previous qualitative analysis, which has established criteria for assigning cases to the bilateral and unilateral groups — the "denominators", to use Schegloff's (1993) words. As for the "numerators", these are constituted by well-defined linguistic features that the qualitative analysis has shown to be relevant for the management of the request sequences. The statistics may exclude cases where the presence or absence of the target linguistic feature couldn't be determined due to noise in the recording.

requester will construct arguments with full noun phrases increase by 5.18 times when the form used is a simple interrogative compared to when it is an imperative.[24]

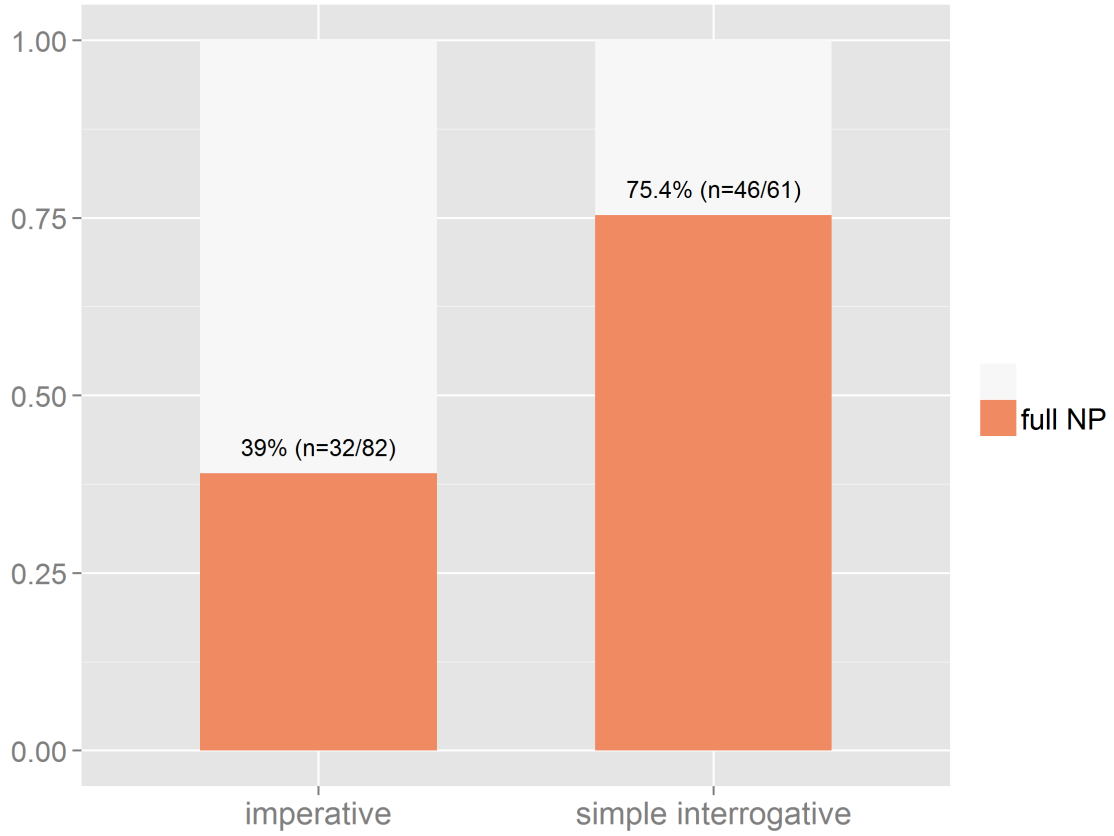


Figure 3.3 In simple interrogative requests the arguments of the verb are more likely to be constructed with full noun phrases, showing that the action requested is less projectable than in imperative requests.

Another signal of the disconnect between the request and what is being done by participants is the use of vocatives (Figure 3.4), either in the form of a summons (Extract 3.14) or of a pre-positioned address term built into the request (Extracts 3.15, 3.17), indicating that the availability of the recipient is not already established. Another mixed effects logistic regression shows that unilateral simple interrogative requests are statistically more likely to be preceded or prefaced by a vocative than bilateral imperative requests (odds ratio 3.38, standard error 0.38, $p < .01$). The odds that the requester will include a vocative increase by 3.38 times when the form used is a simple interrogative compared to when it is an imperative.

[24] This analysis is restricted to verbs that can take a direct or indirect object. Most intransitives are therefore excluded.

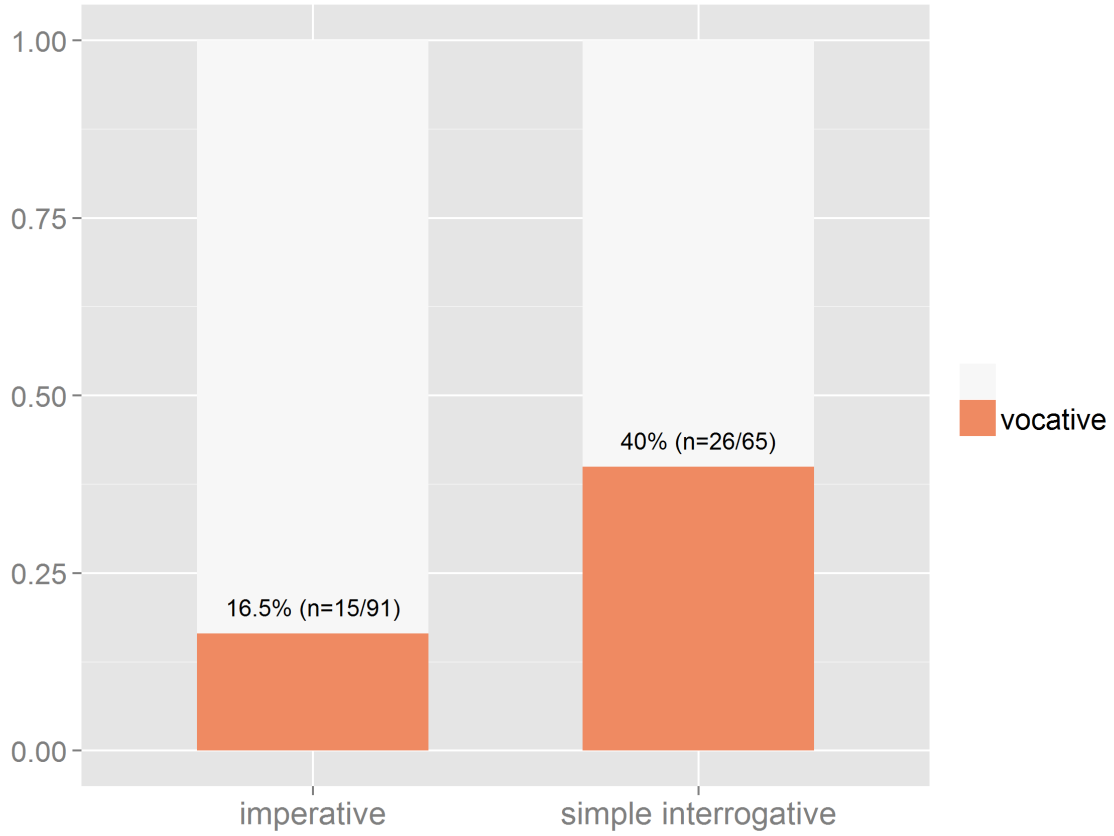


Figure 3.4 Simple interrogative sequences are more likely to include a vocative, indicating lesser availability of the requestee than in imperative sequences.

Finally, the trajectories of action launched by interrogative requests normally serve an individual outcome. This is indicated by the regular presence of the first person dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me', which marks the request as self-directed (Figure 3.5). In 30.2% of the cases in which it is included (*n*=19/63), *mi* is not required as an argument of the verb, and is specifically inserted as an ethical dative, encoding the speaker as the beneficiary of the requested action (e.g. *mi apri la porta?* 'will you open the door for me?').

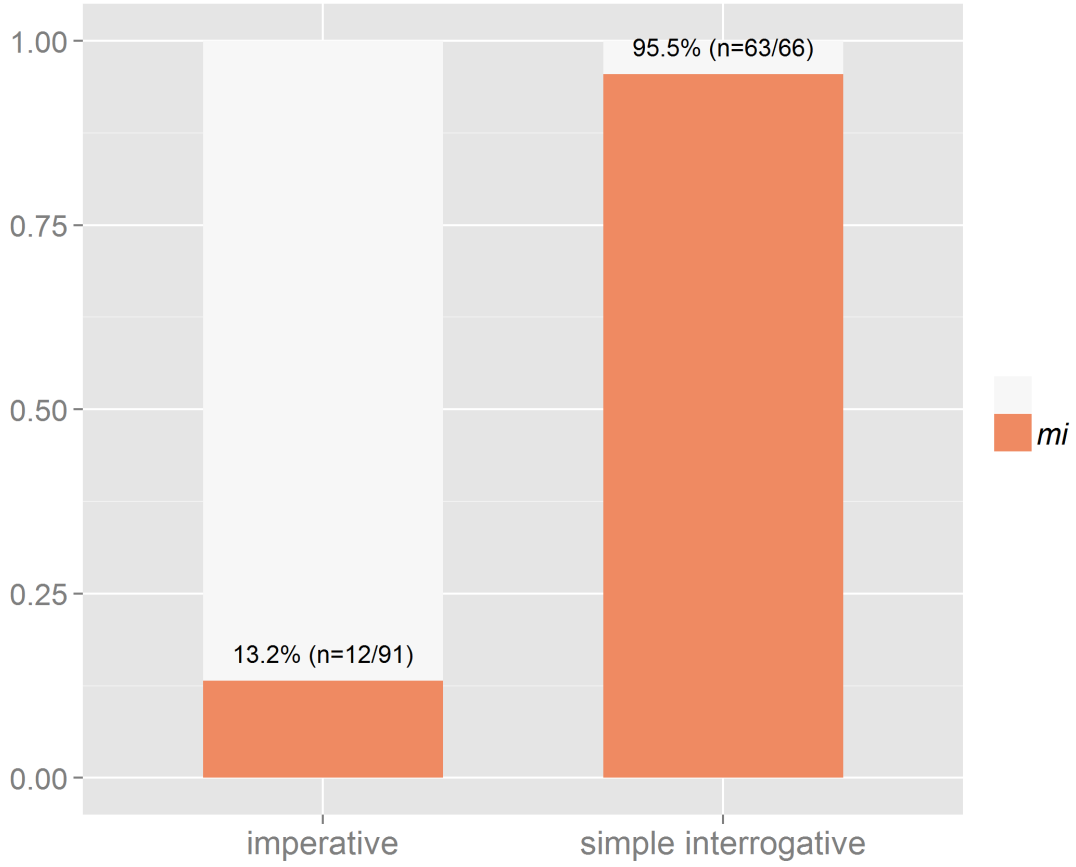


Figure 3.5 Simple interrogative requests contain vastly more first person dative pronouns *mi* 'to/for me' than imperative requests, showing that they normally serve an individual outcome.

This section has shown that the distinction between bilateral and unilateral requests is reflected in certain design features of the imperative and simple interrogative utterances used to implement them. The findings can be summarised as follows.

- While bilateral requests are connected to what the requestee is doing, unilateral requests are disconnected to it. This has two consequences.
  - One is that the action requested is minimally projectable. For this reason, the request is more likely to be constructed with a full noun phrase, which provides the requestee with the new information required to understand what the goal is.
  - Another is that a new frame of interaction needs to be established. For this reason, the request is more likely to be preceded or prefaced by a vocative.
- While bilateral requests serve a shared outcome, unilateral requests serve an individual one. This is regularly marked by the dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me', which is mostly absent from bilateral requests.

3.7 Secondary uses of imperatives and simple interrogatives

The previous sections have described what I refer to as the *primary* uses of imperatives and simple interrogatives in informal adult interaction. These are to be distinguished from *secondary* uses of the same forms that don't fully conform to the predominant pattern, varying in one of the two dimensions that constitute *primary* environments: the continuity or discontinuity between the action requested and what requestee is doing, and the action's individual or shared benefit. These uses are *secondary* on two accounts: i) they occur less frequently and ii) they are formally distinguished from *primary* uses in particular ways. In the case of imperatives, the utterances include significantly more first person dative pronouns *mi* 'to/for me' and mitigators (e.g. *un attimo* 'one second'), and can be preceded by an explanation of the special circumstances motivating the request. In the case of simple interrogatives, the main indicator of secondary use is the absence of the turn-initial *mi* 'to/for me'.

3.7.1 Simple interrogative requests that serve a collective outcome

The 16.5% (*n*=13/79) of simple interrogatives that don't fully conform to the predominant pattern constitute a homogeneous group of requests which, while still disconnected to the requestee's line of action, don't serve an individual outcome, but are in the interest of a larger social unit, including both requester and requestee.

Extract 3.18 is taken from the preparation of the family lunch seen in Extracts 3.10 and 3.16. Mum and Dad are in the kitchen making food, while Aldo is in the living room with the researcher.

Extract 3.18 MaraniPrep_60350

1		(13.0)
2	Mum	Aldo NAME **Aldo**
3	Aldo	eh ITJ **huh?**

```
4 Mum       prepari tu la tavola per [piacere]
            prepare-2S 2S.N the table for favour
            {will} you lay the table please

5 Aldo                                [  sì   ]
                                        yes

6 Mum       perché qua son scomparsi tutti
            because here be.3P disappear-PSTP all
            because everyone has disappeared here

7           (4.0)
```

Mum's request shares a number of features with the simple interrogative requests examined in the last section. What she asks of Aldo is not part of an already established project, and is disconnected to what he is doing (hanging out in the living room with the researcher). This is reflected in the initiation of the sequence with a summons (Schegloff 2007b:48–9), answered in line 3, and in the use of full noun phrases to specify the target action. What distinguishes this case from the primary use of simple interrogatives is that the action requested is not in the interest of the requester alone, but of all people in the house who will soon sit at the lunch table. This is linguistically manifested in the absence of a first person dative pronoun, which leaves the beneficiary of the request unmarked, and so potentially open.

In another case, Ada is working with other people in the kitchen. Just before the extract begins, she has recruited the help of another person to begin laying the table outside. In the meantime, Remo (Ada's husband) — who is not involved in the dinner preparation — has arrived in the kitchen to throw out a paper plate.

Extract 3.19 Capodanno01_1793550

```
1 Ada       e:: adesso io prendo le brocche di acqua
            and now 1S.N take-1S the jugs of water
            a::nd now I'll get the water jugs

2           (1.0)/((Ada walks towards cupboard but finds Remo in the way))

3           (1.7)/((Ada taps on Remo's back while
                    he throws out paper plate))

4 Remo      cara Ada (.) come stai
            dear NAME       how stay-2S
            dear Ada     how are you?

5           (0.5)/((Ada walks through to cupboard))
```

6 Ada abbastanza tu
enough 2S.N
I'm okay, and you?

7 (0.4)/((Ada reaches cupboard))

8 Remo io bene
1S.N well
I'm fine

9 Ada beh porteresti fuori delle brocche
PCL bring-CND-2S out some jugs
well {would} you bring out some

10 di acqua Remo per [favore
of water NAME for favour
water jugs Remo please

11 Remo [certo mia cara
sure my dear

12 Ada bisogna riempirle di acqua bella fresca ((holds out jug))
necessitate-3S fill-INF=3P.A of water beautiful fresh
it is necessary to fill them with nicely cool water

13 Remo hai avuto un bell'incontro ((takes jug))
have-2S have-PSTP one beautiful meeting
did you have a nice meeting?

14 (0.8)

15 Ada sì
yes

Like in the primary use of simple interrogatives, the request is disjunctive with the requestee's line of action. Remo isn't involved in the dinner preparation and has just arrived in the kitchen. Also, immediately before the request, he and Ada have begun a different course of action — asking each other how they are doing (lines 4-8). The request is inserted while this course of action is potentially still ongoing. This is indicated by the turn-initial particle *beh* 'well', which marks a departure from the current business, similarly to a "misplacement marker" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973:319–20), and also by the fact that, as soon as the request sequence comes to completion, Remo resumes catching up with Ada on the latest events of the day (line 13).

Like in the previous case, what distinguishes this request from the ones seen in Section 3.5.2 is that it serves a collective outcome: preparing the table for all the diners. This is again reflected in the absence of a first person dative pronoun. Across all secondary uses of

the simple interrogative (*n*=13), only one includes *mi* 'to/for me'. This contrasts with primary uses of the form, the vast majority of which do include *mi* (Figure 3.5).[25]

3.7.2 Imperative requests that do *not* contribute to the progress of a joint project

As we saw in Section 3.4.2, the majority of imperatives (73.4%, *n*=91/124) are used to implement bilateral request, which contribute to the progress of a joint project. But there are also a number of them that don't (fully) conform to this use. Unlike the simple interrogatives seen the previous section, these variant cases do not constitute a homogeneous group. In some of them, the action requested serves a collective outcome, but is unrelated to what the requestee is currently doing. What seems to motivate the use of an imperative in these cases is the urgent need for an action which, although not related to a project committed to by the requestee, is nevertheless going to benefit them, as part of a larger social unit. In other cases, the request is clearly made to the benefit of the requester alone, but the target action does not curtail what the requestee is currently doing. While serving an individual outcome, the action requested is "compatible" with the current situation of the requestee. Yet other cases are *deviant*, in the sense that the selection of the imperative is not oriented to any of the interactional criteria that normally warrant it, with particular consequences for the interaction. The latter will be discussed in the next section.

Here, I offer an analysis of the second group of variant imperatives, where the request is in the service of an individual outcome, but its placement is such that what is requested does not disrupt the requestee's line of action. One environment for this is when the action requested "piggybacks" on a trajectory of action in which the requestee is already engaged.[26] This is illustrated by the next three examples.

Extract 3.20 is taken from the same card game as cases 3.7-3.9 above. When the extract begins, teammates Bianca and Flavia are consulting on their next move, while Clara and Silvia are visibly inactive, waiting for their turn to come. In line 3, Silvia takes a piece of

[25] The inclusion of *per favore/piacere* 'please' in the two cases presented in this section shouldn't be taken as a pattern. The 8 instances of 'please' found in simple interrogatives are evenly distributed between primary (*n*=4) and secondary uses (*n*=4).

[26] The term "piggybacking" has been used by Goodwin and Goodwin (1990) to refer to a different interactional phenomenon, where a non-addressed participant uses the resources provided by the just-prior talk — typically a first pair part (e.g. *all right who's on your team Huey?*) — to produce another utterance closely tied to it (e.g. *pick four people!*). This subsequent action is not made relevant by the preceding one and does not respond to it, but rather reiterates or seconds it in some way.

cake from a plate that has been previously brought to the table for all the players. This occasions Clara's request.

Extract 3.20 Circolo01_1270484

1 Bianca se te ghe n'hai doi
if SCL EX PRT=have-2S two
if you have two

2 Flavia no no ghe n'ho doi no
no not EX PRT=have-1S two no
no I don't have two

3 (1.9)/((Silvia takes a piece of cake))

4 Clara dame quel migolin lì valà per piazer ((points to cake))
give-IMP.2S=1S.D that crumble there PCL for favour
give me that tiny piece there please *valà* (≈ will you)

5 Silvia ((passes cake to Clara))

6 Clara grazie
thanks

Unlike the imperative requests made in Extracts 3.7-3.9, this one does not contribute to the progress of the card game. Also, it is a request for a good to be consumed by the requester alone, much like the simple interrogative requests in Extracts 3.13 and 3.14. What distinguishes this request from unilateral ones, however, is that the action requested is connected to what the requestee is currently doing. Clara makes the request just as Silvia is taking a piece of cake for herself. What is requested here is easily added on top of the requestee's ongoing project, constituting an extension of her actions. This is reflected in the deictic forms of the request utterance ('that tiny piece there'), which presuppose an already established field of attention including the target referent.

This use of the imperative is marked by two mitigators that aren't normally found in bilateral requests: *per piazer* 'please' and *valà*, a Northern Italian particle that in this context can be rendered with the English tag 'will you' — an appeal to the requestee's benevolent understanding. The presence of these mitigators marks the imperative request as requiring some kind of redress (Brown and Levinson 1987).

In another case, Silvio has just arrived at a barbeque party. When the extract begins he is standing on the threshold that separates the living room from the backyard. In lines 1-2, he

closes a sequence of talk initiated soon after arriving in the backyard and turns to the living room to get in. At this point, Aldo makes an imperative request.

Extract 3.21 StubePrep_2055630

1 Silvio comunque l'olio di temolo secondo me
anyway the=oil of grayling following 1S.A
anyway I think the grayling oil

2 è per la c- per l'o[tite ((turns to the living room))
be.3S for the for the=otitis
is {good for} the c- for ear infections

3 Aldo [Silvio mentre entri
NAME while enter-2S
Silvio as you go inside

4 porta dentro un po' di birre dai=
bring-IMP.2S inside one bit of beers PCL
bring in a few beers *dai* (≈ will you)

5 Sandro =andiamo a pescar temoli e facciam l'olio
go.1P to fish-INF graylings and make-1P the=oil
we go fishing graylings and make oil

6 (2.3)

7 Silvio no vara uh non mi ricordo però c'è l'olio di fegato di merluzzo
no look-IMP.2S uh not 1S.D remember-1S but EX=be.3S the=oil of liver of cod
no look uh I don't remember {well} but there's cod-liver oil

8 che non mi ricordo per cos'è che era
REL not RFL remember-1S for what=be.3S REL be-IPF-3S
which I can't remember for what it was

((7 seconds omitted))

6 Silvio ((walks into living room carrying beers))

Silvio hasn't been involved in the preparations that are going on in the backyard. He has just arrived at the scene and hasn't yet taken off his jacket or his backpack, which is what he proceeds to do when he walks into the living room. Helping to take beers in the living room therefore isn't part of a project he has already committed to. The way in which Aldo formulates the request, however, shows an orientation to the "compatibility" of what is requested with what Silvio is doing: since he is in the process of getting in, he can also bring

a few beers along. The imperative form is warranted by the fact that the requested action "piggybacks" on Silvio's current trajectory of action, therefore maintaining a relation of continuity with it. Here too, however, the imperative is mitigated, this time with the particle *dai*, which in turn-final position has a similar "appealing" function to *valà*, roughly translatable with the tag 'will you' (see above).

In a last case, the requester's orientation to the continuity between the action requested and the requestee's line of action is demonstrated by a change of request form. Extract 3.22 takes place in a kitchen, where people are occupied with various tasks. Eva has been in charge of distributing hot chocolate. As Fabri asks Mirko for a cup of chocolate (line 1), Eva steps in to fulfil the request in Mirko's stead (line 3), committing to give the chocolate to Fabri after she has found a towel to clean the cup. She then turns to Ada, who is standing beside her, and asks her for a towel, using a simple interrogative (line 7).

Extract 3.22 Natale02_3211092

1	Fabri	caro Mirko io potrei avere per piacere una tazza
		dear NAME 1S.N can-CND-1S have-INF for favour one cup
		dear Mirko, could I please have a cup ((of chocholate))?
2		(0.3)
3	Eva	sì (.) io adesso cerco una pezza per pulire (qui)
		yes 1S.N now search-1S one rag for clean-INF (here)
		yes now I will look for a towel to clean (here)
4		e ti do questa
		and 2S.D give-1S this
		and give you this one
5		(0.5)
6		[((Gildo approaches sink))
7	Eva	[me dat 'na pa- 'na pezza::: ((to Ada))
		1S.D give-2S=SCL one one rag
		{will} you give me a p- a towel:::?
8	Ada	ma poca poca ((to Mirko))
		but little little
		but just a little
9		[((Gildo puts down dirty plate in the sink))
10		[((Eva looks to Gildo))

```
11 Eva      tu [che metti giù la pezza Gildo
               2S.N RFL put-2S down the rag NAME
               you, who's putting down the towel, Gildo

12 Ada         [dov'è che è quella pezza rosa avevo
                where=be.3S REL be.3S that rag pink have-IPF-1S
                where's that pink towel, I gave

13          l'avevo data uh-
            3S.A=have-IPF-1S give-PSTP uh
            I gave it uh-

14          (.)

15 Eva      Gildo dammi una pezza lì
            NAME give-IMP.2S=1S.D one rag there
            Gildo give me a towel {from} there,

16          che devo pulire [sto::
            CN must-1S clean-INF this
            cause I have to clean this::

17 Gildo                    [è una pezza ((picks up towel))
                             be.3S one rag
                             is this a towel?

18 Eva      sì
            yes

19 Gildo    [((passes towel to Eva))

20 Eva      [è sporca ma
             be.3S dirty but
             it's dirty but
```

Eva's interrogative request (line 7) is not immediately taken up by Ada, who is momentarily coordinating another task with Mirko (line 8). Meanwhile, another person, Gildo, has arrived in the kitchen, approached the sink (line 6), and is now putting down his dirty plate in it (line 9). Eva sees what Gildo is doing (line 10) and addresses him (line 11) (Figure 3.6), making him the new recipient of the request. A moment later, she goes on to produce the same request she previously made of Ada, this time using an imperative form (lines 15-16). The motivation for this form shift seems to be that the request is made at a particular juncture in Gildo's line of action, which makes it easy to add another action on top of it. Since he is putting down the plate in the sink, he is also in a position to grab one of the towels that are sitting there. The relevance of this contingency is made explicit by Eva when she first addresses Gildo ('you, who's putting down the towel, Gildo'). Note that the word 'towel'

here is probably a slip of the tongue, as Eva is actually referring to the plate Gildo is putting down.

Figure 3.6 Frame from line 11, Extract 3.22. Eva addresses Gildo ('you, who's putting down the towel, Gildo') as he puts down his dirty plate in the sink.

In this case, the lack of immediate uptake from a first requestee (Ada) creates the opportunity for the requester to turn to someone else. This change in requestee corresponds to a change in the interactional configuration for the request. Unlike with Ada, who is busy with another task, Gildo's ongoing actions create a favourable environment for Eva to make her request without disrupting their trajectory, but only requiring a little extension of it.

Another environment for a related secondary use of the imperative is when, at the time of the request, the requestee is visibly doing nothing. Extract 3.23 takes place on the side of a sledding slope. A group of people including Carla and Pina are watching their friends sledding. When the extract begins, Pina is commenting on the white-brown pattern created by the snow on Paolo's hair (lines 1 and 3). While this happens, Clara takes off her snow gloves in order to gather up her hair (line 2). In lines 6-9, she briefly walks to Paolo to help him shake the snow off his hood and then steps back to her spot, beside Pina. At this point, she produces the target request.

Extract 3.23 CampGioPlatea_1133190

1 Pina [adesso hai una parte totalmente bianca= ((to Paolo))
now have-2S one part totally white
now you've got one part completely white

2 [((Carla takes off gloves))

3 Pina =e l'altra marrone
and the=other brown
and the other brown

4 (0.5)/((Carla walks to Paolo))

5 Adelina uhm

6 Carla qua
here

7 (3.1)/((Carla and Adelina remove snow from Paolo's hood))

8 Carla un po' tanta
one bit much
{there's} quite a lot

9 (1.0)/((Carla steps back to her spot))

10 Carla tienimi questi 'n attimo ((holds gloves up))
hold-2S=1S.D these one instant
hold these for me one second

11 Pina ((takes gloves))

12 (4.3)/((Carla gathers up her hair))

13 Paolo non è che avete un fazzoletto
not be.3S CMP have-2P one handkerchief
don't you guys happen to have a handkerchief?

The action requested is not part of any shared undertaking and serves an individual purpose of the requester: freeing her hands to fix her hair more easily. The self-interested nature of the request is indicated by the dative *mi* 'to/for me', which is here added as an extra-argumental pronoun. This is uncommon in bilateral imperatives (see Figure 3.5), as is the inclusion of the phrasal minimiser *un attimo* 'one second' — another form of mitigation. The presence of these two design features here can be contrasted with their absence in an analogous request made within a joint project in Extract 3.6 (*tieni questo* 'hold this'). With these qualifications, an imperative form here seems to be licenced by the fact that, at the time at which the request

is made, the requestee is momentarily idle, doing nothing but watching down on the sledding slope (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 Frame from line 10, Extract 3.23. Carla says 'hold these for me one second' to Pina, who is watching down on the sledding slope.

While the action requested is not connected to what the requestee is doing, it also doesn't make her depart from any ongoing course of action, as is instead the case in environments where simple interrogatives are selected. To put it another way, we could say that here the requestee doesn't have a reason not to do what is being requested.

This interactional configuration becomes explicitly oriented to in another similar case. Extract 3.24 is taken from the same interaction as Extract 3.18, and again involves one of Aldo's parents making a request of him from the kitchen. When the extract begins, Dad is boasting about his cooking skills, which he claims to be superior to those of the renowned chef Ferran Adrià (lines 1-2). In line 3, Aldo and others can be heard laughing in the living room, adjacent to the kitchen. A few seconds later, while continuing the lunch preparation, Dad begins singing softly (line 5). Shortly after this, Aldo's voice is again hearable from the

living room (line 6). This apparently occasions Dad to stop singing and, three seconds later, to make the target request.

Extract 3.24 MaraniPrep_310020

1	Dad	probabilmente se vedono questo filmato probably if see-3P this film **it's likely that if they see this video**
2		dello chef Adrià ha chiuso la sua carriera of-the chef NAME have-3S close-PSTP the his career **of the chef, Adrià's career is over**
3		((Aldo and others laugh in adjacent room))
4		(6.5)
5	Dad	((begins singing softly))
6	Aldo	( )
7	Dad	((stops singing))
8		(3.0)
9	Dad	se non c'hai niente da fare dammi un'occhiata agli sci if not EX=have-2S nothing to do-INF give-IMP.2S=1S.D one=look at-the skis **if you have nothing to do, check over my skis**
10		(2.4)
11	Aldo	quali **which ones?**
12		(1.6)
13	Dad	ma i Salomon:: but the NAME **well, the Salomon::**
14		(1.7)
15	Dad	non quelli con gli attacchi grigi quegli altri not those with the bindings grey those others **not those with the grey bindings, the other ones**
16		(1.7)
17	Aldo	(bom) (ITJ) **(alright)**

Whatever Aldo says in line 6, the sudden halt in Dad's singing indicates it to be a spur for his subsequent request. The conditional clause that precedes Dad's imperative makes explicit the circumstance motivating the request: Aldo can be understood as having 'nothing to do', which makes him available for carrying out a service for Dad. Note that, unlike the accounts seen in Extracts 3.8 and 3.11, this account is pre-posed to the request, and accomplishes different interactional work. Rather than articulating the shared outcome of the action requested, it justifies the recruitment of the requestee, at this particular time, for an individual goal of the requester, marked by the dative *mi* 'for me' (*dammi un'occhiata agli sci*, literally 'take a look for me at the skis'). What motivates the selection of an imperative is, again, the momentary idleness of the requestee. In this environment, the relation of the action requested to what the requestee is doing is not one of continuity, but neither of discontinuity.

This section has illustrated two uses of the imperative form outside joint projects. Rather than contributing to a shared undertaking, these requests typically benefit the requester alone. At the same time, the selection of the imperative is still sensitive to the way in which the action requested fits with what the requestee is currently doing. More specifically, it is warranted either by the fact that the action requested "piggybacks" on a course of action already pursued by the requestee, or by the fact that the requestee is doing nothing. In both these environments, the action requested doesn't curtail the requestee's line of action, as is instead the case when the simple interrogative form is selected. In Curl and Drew's (2008) terms, we might say that in these environments contingency is low — or better, that the request is placed so as to exploit a specific contingency.

These uses of the imperative are *secondary*, for two reasons. First, they are less frequent compared to bilateral requests: 21.7% (*n*=27/124) versus 73.4% (*n*=91/124) of all cases.[27] Second, they often involve additional features that set them apart from straightforward imperatives. One is the mitigation of the request by means of particles (*dai*, *valà*, roughly 'will you'), phrasal minimisers (*un attimo* 'a moment'), and other devices like *per favore* 'please' (see Extracts 3.20, 3.21, 3.23). Although these are sometimes included also in imperatives that contribute to the progress of a joint project, a mixed effects logistic regression (see § 3.6) shows that they are statistically more likely to appear in imperatives that don't (odds ratio 2.71, standard error 0.49, $p < .05$) (Figure 3.8).[28]

[27] Another 4.8% (*n*=6/124) is constituted by deviant cases where the selection of an imperative has a special effect, as illustrated in the next section.

[28] One case of secondary use was excluded because the last part of the imperative is inaudible.

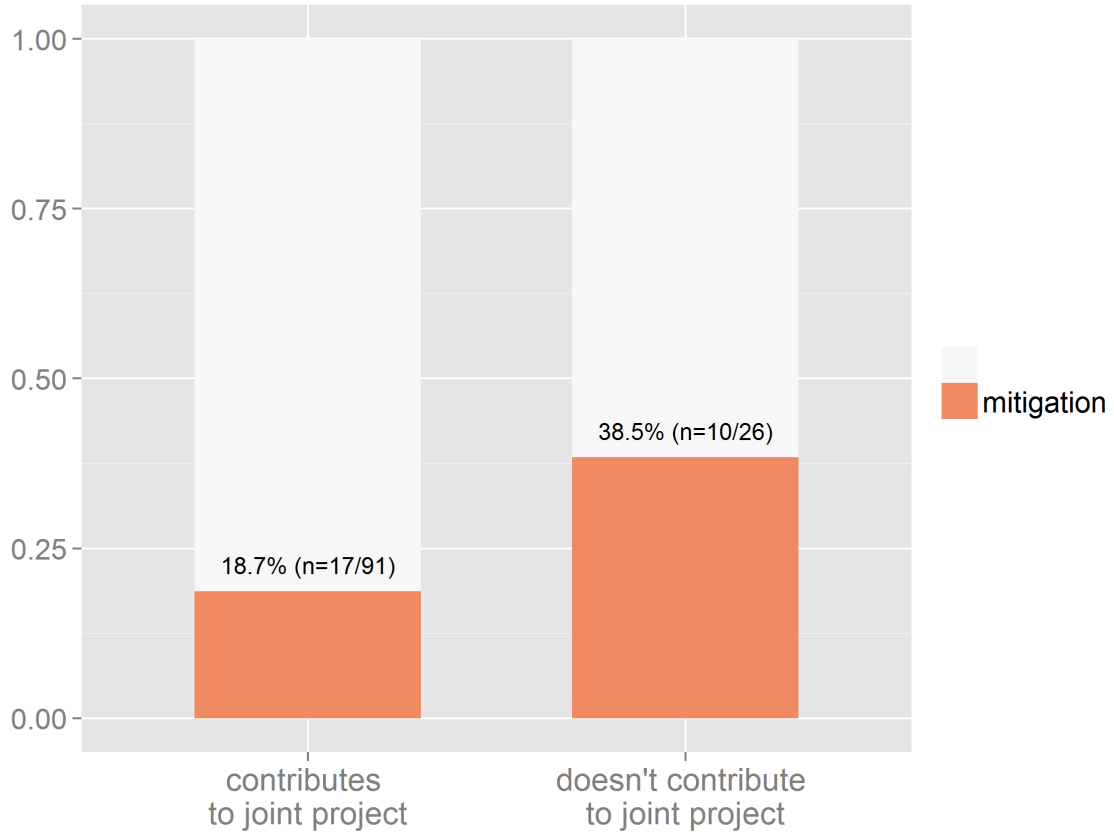


Figure 3.8 Secondary uses of the imperative are more likely to be mitigated than primary ones.

Another feature that is absent from bilateral imperatives are accounts or mentions that the requestee's line of action is not being disrupted (e.g. *mentre entri* 'as you go inside' in Extract 3.21, *se non hai niente da fare* 'if you have nothing to do' in Extract 3.24), which is another way for requesters to justify their use of the imperative form outside of a joint project. Finally, secondary uses are distinguished from primary ones by a statistically higher proportion of first person dative pronouns (see Extracts 3.22, 3.23, 3.24), reflecting the frequent self-directedness of the request (odds ratio 6.11, standard error 0.49, $p < .001$) (Figure 3.9).

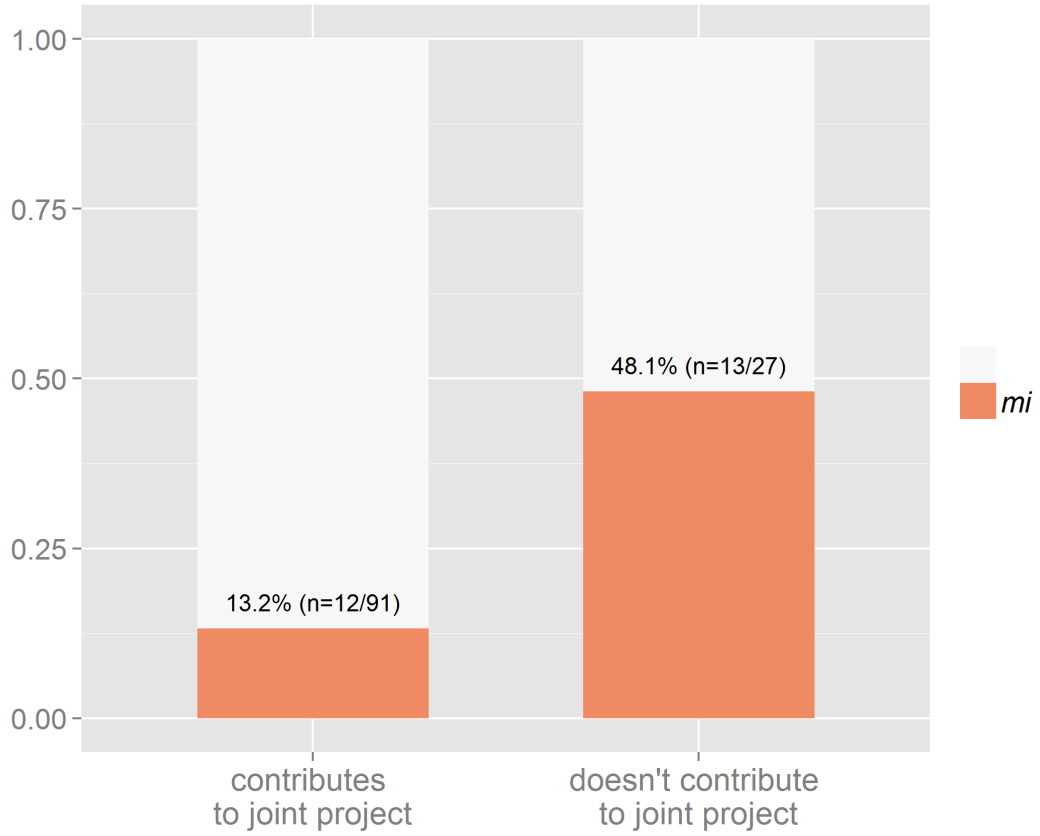


Figure 3.9 Secondary uses of the imperative are more likely to contain the first person dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me' than primary ones, showing that they tend to be self-directed.

3.8 The normativity of form selection

The first, fundamental source of evidence for a functional distinction between alternative forms of requesting comes from their distribution in different environments. In the case of imperatives and simple interrogatives, this is based, for one thing, on an analysis of how the request comes about in the ongoing interaction, and particularly of whether the action requested is or is not connected to what the requestee is currently doing. This goes hand-in-hand with an analysis of the request's outcome, and particularly of whether the service or good requested is only for the requester or for a larger social unit. These dimensions are reflected in the details of the talk that constitutes and surrounds the request, including constructional features like vocatives, full noun phrases, the pronoun *mi* 'to/for me', mitigators, accounts and explanations of various kinds. Through this analysis, social norms

are inferred from patterns of behaviour and supported by the fact that many people, in different settings, conform to these patterns.

A different, complementary source of evidence comes from cases in which people's orientation to a norm becomes explicit. We have already come across instances of this in the previous section, in cases where the requester indicates the grounds for making a certain request at a certain point to a certain requestee (e.g. Extracts 3.21, 3.22 and 3.24). In addition, there are at least two other types of cases in which the norms that underlie form selection come to the surface. One is the occurrence of self-repair from one request form to another (Drew, Walker, and Ogden 2013:87–92); the other are deviant cases where the use of a certain form in the "wrong" environment accomplishes more than just requesting, attracting special attention. In what follows, I illustrate both of these scenarios.

In Extract 3.25, Orfeo and Furio are working in the kitchen with other people. Orfeo has been slicing cabbage at one end of the worktop, while Furio is stirring the soup on the stove at the other end. In lines 1-8, Orfeo proposes to put on some music, but Furio dissuades him due to the ongoing recording. While this happens, Orfeo gathers the cabbage leaves to throw them away. By the end of the proposal sequence, he has all of the leaves in his hands (line 9). He then turns around in the direction of other people and produces a long *u:::::::h*, signalling that he is pondering or hesitating over what to do next. His gaze scans a number of people to his left, most of whom have their back to him. So Orfeo turns back and to his right in the direction of Furio, making a request that he bring the rubbish bin — which is at the back of the kitchen — close to him.

Extract 3.25 CampGioPrep_1138712

1 Orfeo (si potrebbe) mettere un po' di musica però (eh)
(RFL can-CND-3S) put-INF one bit of music though (PCL)
(we could) put on a bit of music though (huh?)

2 (0.6)

3 Furio eh ma ci son di là le casse
PCL but EX be.3P of there the loudspeakers
well the loudspeakers are over there

4 eh ma però mi sa che:: ((glances to camera))
PCL but though 1S.D know-3S CMP
well but I'm afraid that::

5 (0.4)

6 Orfeo a:h
ITJ
o:h

7 (2.0)

8 Furio non credo
not believe-1S
I don't think so

9 (2.1)/((Orfeo turns around to his left))

10 Orfeo u:::::::::h ((looks to people on his left))

11 (0.2)/((Orfeo turns back and to his right))

12 Orfeo oh pa- mi passi lo d- ((tosses head to indicate rubbish bin))
oh pass- 1S.D pass-2S the
hey, pass- {will} you pass me the d-

13 (0.8)

14 Furio eh
PCL
well

15 (0.4)

16 Furio vai là
go-NPST-2S there
go there {yourself}

17 (0.4)

18 Orfeo (mi cade) mezza roba per str[ada
(1S.D fall-3S) half stuff for road
half of the stuff (will fall off) on the way

19 Furio [no::
no
no:: {it won't}

20 Orfeo ((walks over to rubbish bin))

Orfeo's request is motivated by the fact that he has a bunch of cabbage leaves in both his hands, which risk falling off on the way to the rubbish bin (see line 18). The request, however, is turned down by Furio on the grounds that Orfeo's worry is unfounded.

What interests us here is the form shift in Orfeo's request turn, which begins as an imperative (*pa-* 'pass-') but is quickly turned into a simple interrogative (*mi passi lo d-* '{will} you pass me the d-'). This shows Orfeo's orientation to the first request form as

inadequate in this environment (Drew et al. 2013:87–92).[29] But why exactly should an imperative be replaced with a simple interrogative here?

On the one hand, requester and requestee are both involved in the same overall activity — preparing lunch — and the action requested is part of managing work in the kitchen. This aspect of the interaction could support an imperative form, and possibly motivates its selection in the first instance. At the same time, however, requester and requestee are currently busy with two separate tasks, at a distance from one another. Going to get the rubbish bin would cause Furio to interrupt attending to the soup to engage in something quite unrelated to it. The intrusiveness of the request is also indirectly revealed by Orfeo's first turning to other people for help (line 10-11), in spite of the fact that he has been talking to Furio until a couple of seconds earlier. Such an interactional configuration, then, supports a unilateral request better than a bilateral one.

The next two extracts illustrate another kind of case in which the normativity of a functional distribution comes to the surface. They are part of a small group of deviant imperative cases — 4.8% (*n*=6/124) — that depart from the selection patterns described. Unlike the variant uses described in Section 3.7.2, these are cases in which an imperative is selected in violation of the conditions that normally support it. This selection is associated with special actions that go beyond requesting, with particular consequences for the interaction (cf. discussion in § 2.8 and references therein).

In the previous chapter, we saw a case in which the use of an imperative utterance where a nonverbal request form would be sufficient serves to break off the requestee's talk and retaliate against his ongoing mocking (Extract 2.14). In Extract 3.26, the unwarranted selection of an imperative has a comparable effect of aggravation.

People are having coffee and pastries after lunch. Before the extract begins, Rosa has teased Gigi for attempting to cover up a geographical blunder made by her uncle Luca, revealing his lack of knowledge of the region where Gigi is from. When the extract begins, Gigi is urging Rosa to stop stirring up embarrassment for him and Luca (lines 1 and 4). His admonishments are backed up by Luca and Mum, who express their (jovial) disapproval of Rosa's behaviour (lines 5-10). As the reproaches mount, Mum makes a request that Rosa pass the milk for the coffee.

[29] Note that, although the subsequent simple interrogative form is missing the second part of the noun phrase ('rubbish bin'), this is supplied by a head point to the referent, which makes the request complete.

Extract 3.26 PranzoAlbertoni02_1294310

1 Gigi non sobillare ((to Rosa))
not instigate-INF
don't stir up {trouble}

2 (0.3)

3 Rosa neu(hh)tr[omed
NAME
Neu(hh)tromed

4 Gigi [stai facendo delle illazioni::
stay-3S do-GER some insinuations
you're making insinuations::

5 Luca eh [(vera-) veramente guarda
PCL truly look-IMP.2S
oh (real-) shame on her

6 Mum [è solo per [è cattiveria la sua
be.3S only for be.3S meanness the hers
it's just out of- it's meanness

7 Gigi [((chuckles))

8 Luca sta [cercando di metter] ziz:::
stay-3S search-GER of put-INF discord
she's trying to sow disc:::

9 Mum [vendetta]
revenge

10 Gigi [zizzania
discord

11 Mum [E PASSA IL LATTE ALMENO
and pass-IMP.2S the milk at.least
AND PASS THE MILK AT LEAST

12 (0.3)

13 Mum ZIZZANIA
discord
DISCORD SOWER!

14 (0.3)

15 Mum [ZANZARA
mosquito
PEST!

16 Rosa [((passes milk to Mum))

The request pops up in the midst of Mum's growing condemnation of Rosa's behaviour, which continues to be upgraded after the request (lines 13-15). The action requested is not part of an already established joint project. Some time before the extract, Mum has asked about the milk (*il latte?* 'the milk?') and Rosa has invited her to get it herself (*è lì, ve lo prendete* 'it's there, you can get it yourselves'). The selection of an imperative form is therefore not supported by any earlier commitment. Also, the action requested is unconnected to the ongoing course of action in which Rosa is involved (putting up with a collective deprecation of her behaviour). All this makes an imperative form inappropriate and rather motivates the selection of a simple interrogative.

Mum's deviant choice seems to be made deliberately in service of her condemnation of Rosa's behaviour. This is indicated by the turn-initial conjunction *e* 'and', which links the request to the ongoing talk, and by the phrase 'at least', which characterises the action requested as a reparation for bad conduct. A clear signal of the special function of the request is also the noticeable increase in loudness, which contributes to its condemnatory quality, and is maintained in the following disdainful exclamations ('DISCORD SOWER!', 'PEST!'). Note that these features could have conceivably been applied to a simple interrogative utterance as well. The choice of an imperative, however, better serves Mum's condemnatory purpose by virtue of the non-optionality it conveys (more on this below), which is what makes it the typical form of orders and commands.

In a last case, the unwarranted selection of an imperative serves a somewhat different interactional purpose. Baldo and other people are working in the kitchen. Shortly before this extract, Silvio has asked Baldo to take over grating the Parmesan for a while. When the extract begins, Baldo returns the task to Silvio (line 1) and then moves to the centre of kitchen to make the target request.

Extract 3.27 CampGioPrep_15663

```
1 Baldo     to' Silvio (  )
            ITJ NAME
            here, Silvio (  )

2 Silvio    che palle ((takes up grating the Parmesan again))
            what balls
            what a drag!

3           (0.6)/((Baldo walks to the centre of the kitchen))
```

4 Silvio mi ero abituato [all'idea di non farlo
RFL be-IPF-1S habituate-PSTP at-the=idea of not do-INF=3S.A
I had got used to the idea of not doing it

5 Baldo [OH DEVO TAGLIARE IL PANE
oh must-1S cut-INF the bread
HEY I HAVE TO CUT THE BREAD,

6 DATEMI IL PANE IL COLTELLO E- ((looks to others))
give-NPST-2P=1S.D the bread the knife and
GIVE ME BREAD, KNIFE AND-

7 (0.9)/((others keep doing their own tasks))

8 Baldo e tagliato fu
and cut be-PST-3S
and it was cut

9 Michele Baldo mi sembra [un po' come] dire ((entering the kitchen))
NAME 1S.D seem-3S one bit how say-INF
Baldo, it seems to me a bit, how to put it,

10 Baldo [coltello] ((claps hands once))
knife

11 (.)

12 Michele troppo quello che chiedi
too.much that REL ask-2S
too much what you ask:

13 "devo tagliare il pane datemi il pane e il coltello"
must-1S cut-INF the bread give-NPST-2P=1S.D the bread and the knife
"I have to cut the bread: give me bread and knife",

14 "devo mangiare datemi [la pasta la forchetta=
must-1S eat-INF give-NPST-2P=1S.D the pasta the fork
"I have to eat: give me pasta, a fork

15 Baldo [((giggles))

16 Michele =e imboccatemi" cazzo
and spoonfeed-NPST-2P=1S.A dick
and spoon-feed me", what the fuck

When Baldo makes his request, everyone else in the kitchen is busy with other tasks. Nobody responds or even looks at him. Possibly contingent on this lack of uptake, Baldo interrupts

the utterance ('GIVE ME BREAD, KNIFE AND-', line 6), and completes it after a short pause, with lower voice ('and it was cut').[30]

If the analysis presented in Sections 3.4.2 and 3.7.2 is correct, then the selection of an imperative form here is deviant. Giving Baldo bread and knife isn't part of any ongoing or already established project with any of the participants, as suggested by the fact that the request is addressed to a plurality of people. Also, the request is primarily self-directed. Although the bread is to be cut for everyone, this is a task that Baldo is especially in charge of ('I HAVE TO CUT THE BREAD'). Moreover, Baldo's pre-posed account makes no attempt to fit the action requested with what his recipients are doing (cf. Extract 3.24). Instead, the loudness with which the request is delivered gives it a similar derogatory tone to Mum's request in Extract 3.26. All these elements concur to characterise the request as out of the ordinary, designed so as to sound imperious and haughty.

What makes this case especially interesting is that the design of Baldo's request is negatively sanctioned by one of his co-participants, Michele, who enters the kitchen just after Baldo completes the request utterance (line 9). After characterising what Baldo is requesting as 'too much', Michele re-enacts the request so as show its inappropriateness. The sense of Michele's caricature might be taken, at first glance, to be targeting the making of the request itself, suggesting that Baldo should get bread and knife himself. However, this seems implausible since requests to circulate utensils and foodstuffs are customary and pervasive throughout this and other similar interactions. What attracts the sanction is arguably the design of Baldo's request. This is indicated by the fact that Michele's caricature picks up on its imperative form, along with its pre-posed account. After re-enacting Baldo's request verbatim, Michele ridicules it with a mock version: 'I have to eat: give me pasta, a fork and spoon-feed me'. By mirroring the same structure (account + request), Michele points to the inappropriateness of an imperative form in relation to the self-interested service being solicited, depicting it as a childish demand.

Deviant cases such as the last two strengthen the distributional analysis built in the previous sections by demonstrating the consequences of an inapposite request form. Together with cases of self-repair (Extract 3.25), and others in which requesters make explicit the interactional configuration upon which the request is based (Extracts 3.21, 3.22, 3.24), these cases bring to the surface the normativity of request form selection.

[30] The second part of the request echoes parodically a passage from the Genesis: *then God said: "Let there be light"; and there was light.*

At the end of the previous chapter, we saw a case (Extract 2.14) in which the requester uses language when this is unnecessary to understand the request, violating — or better, flouting — the principles of minimisation. This results in the request doing something special. Extract 3.26 above works in a similar way. Mum flouts the conditions for using an imperative form, adding aggravation to the request, in line with the condemnatory talk that surrounds it. These cases show the *doubly constitutive* nature of the norms that regulate request form selection and social behaviour more generally (Heritage 1984:107–8). People maintain these norms not only by acting in accordance to them on most occasions, but also by interpreting and exploiting departures from these norms. Flouting norms for a non-standard or out-of-ordinary purpose, however, can also have potentially unwanted effects, such as attracting negative sanction. This is what happens to Baldo in Extract 3.27, where his haughty request ends up being strongly deprecated.

3.9 Form-function fit

I now discuss in more detail the results of this study in terms of the relation between interaction and grammar. Once the functions of imperatives and of simple interrogatives has been analysed, an account remains to be given for *why* these specific verbal forms, and not others, should be used in the environments described. This relates to the notion of *fit* between a certain *action* and the particular *practice* used to implement it (Schegloff 1996a:199–203), with the difference that here we are talking about alternative ways of formatting the same type of action in different circumstances.

In the majority of cases, the selection of an imperative form of requesting rests on the existence of a joint project that the requestee has already committed to. This licences the requester to assume compliance. By "signing up" to a joint project, a participant "signs up" to all congruent behaviours that are implied by it (see Enfield 2013b:86) and can, therefore, be expected to comply with an action that is consistent with or necessary to its accomplishment. In a minority of cases, although the action requested does not contribute to a joint project, it still maintains a relation of continuity with what the requestee is doing, or of neither continuity nor discontinuity in that the requestee is momentarily doing nothing. These circumstances, too, seem to warrant an assumption of compliance based on the fact that the requestee's line of action is not being disrupted.

An imperative predication is fitted to both these environments in that it anticipates neither refusal nor acceptance, but simply that the request be complied with, without any verbal response. And this is indeed what happens. Imperative requests are mostly fulfilled nonverbally (see Extracts 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.20, 3.21, 3.23), and are statistically more likely to be so than simple interrogative requests (odds ratio 2.84, standard error 0.38, $p < .01$), as shown in Figure 3.10.[31]

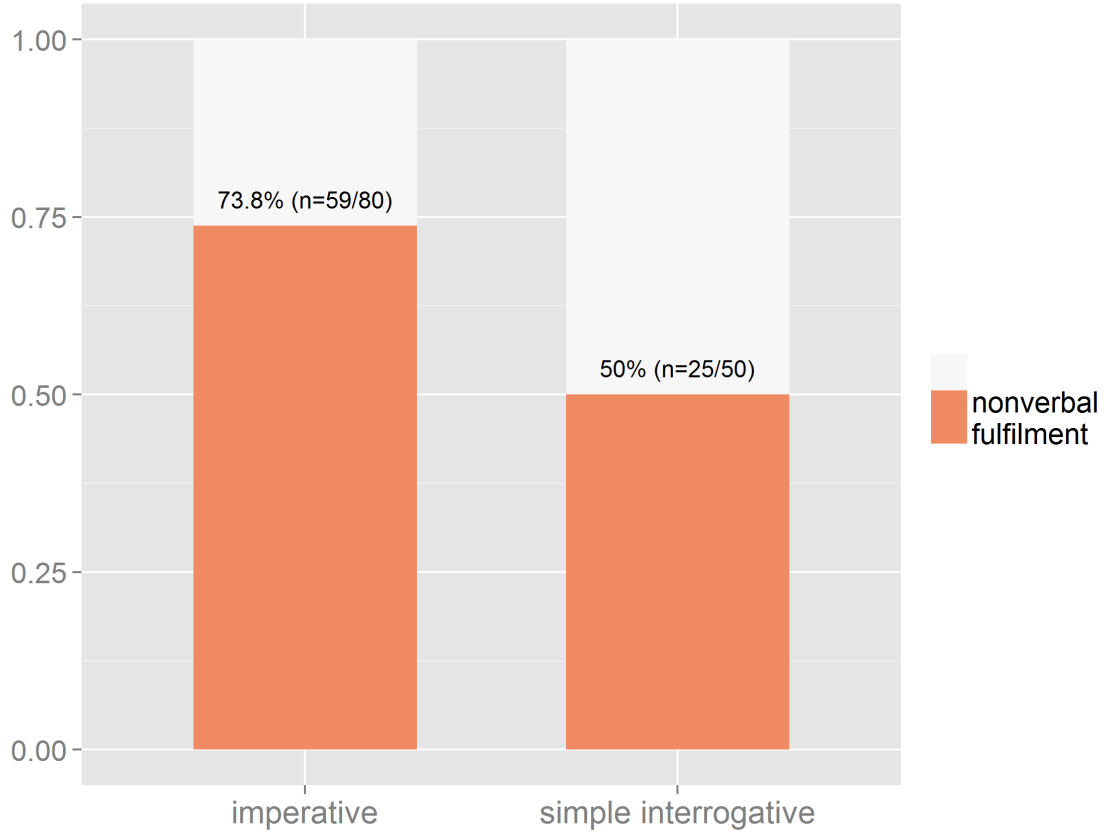


Figure 3.10 Imperative requests are mostly fulfilled nonverbally, indicating that they anticipate only compliance, unlike simple interrogative requests.

In simple interrogative sequences, on the other hand, people are enlisted to help in projects which they have not already subscribed to, and which therefore they cannot be assumed to be compliant with. More generally, the actions requested in these environments cause the requestee to depart from what they are currently doing. This introduces greater imposition in the launching of the action and is reason to give the requestee the option to grant or refuse

[31] This measure excludes cases in which the request is not fulfilled, as well as cases in which the presence or absence of a verbal response couldn't be determined due to noise in the recording.

doing it. This is what is accomplished by a polar interrogative form, which, unlike the imperative, conveys a lack of certainty as to whether the requestee will comply, making it contingent on the requestee's response (see also Craven and Potter 2010). To put it another way, an interrogative form gives the requestee a choice (Searle 1975:74–5; Ervin-Tripp 1976:60; Brown and Levinson 1987:172; Wootton 1997:148, among others).

This is reflected in the form of complying responses to simple interrogatives, 37.3% of which (*n*=19/51) include a positive polar element (see Extracts 3.14, 3.15, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19). By positive polar elements I intend words and gestures that confirm a proposition, including *sì* 'yes', *certo* 'sure' and head nodding (but excluding *okey* 'okay'). Their use shows that requestees orient to their right to accept the request — a choice made against the legitimate possibility of refusal. This response affordance is also statistically supported: simple interrogative requests are much more likely to be responded to with a positive polar element before fulfilment than imperative requests are (odds ratio 9.02, standard error 0.54, $p < .001$).

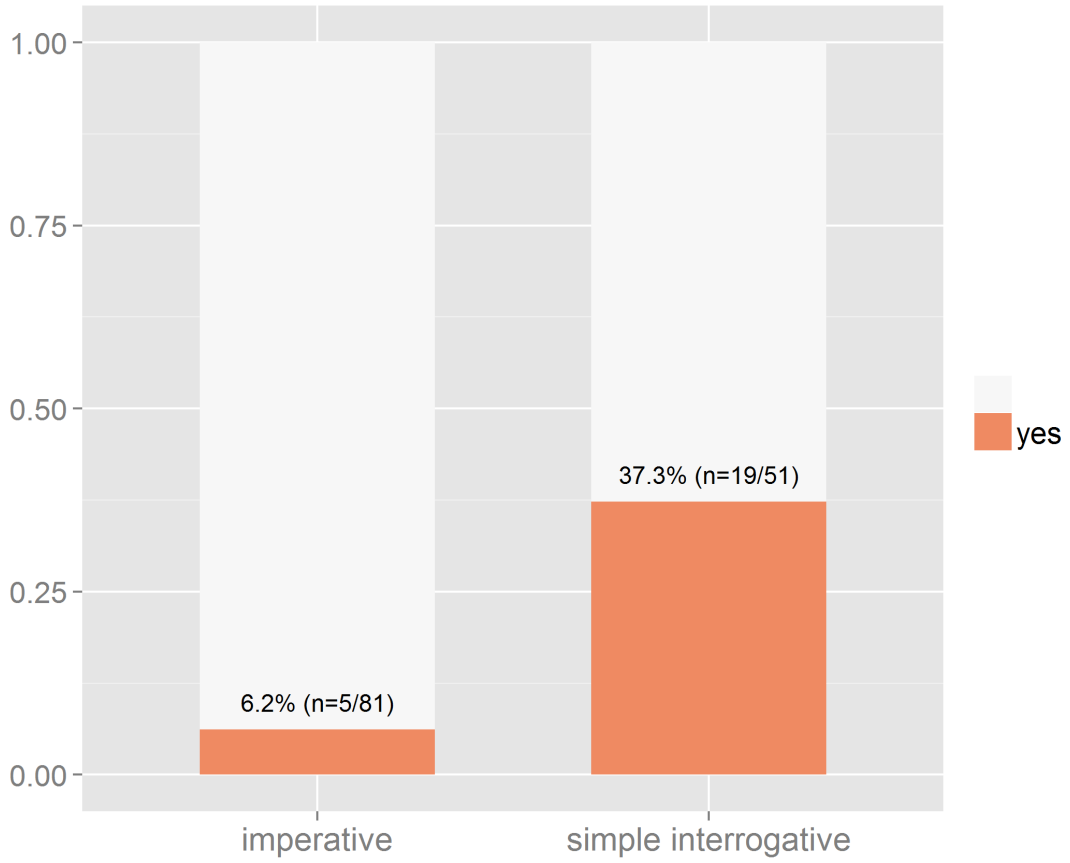


Figure 3.11 Complying responses to simple interrogative requests are much more likely to include a positive polar element (e.g. *sì* 'yes'), showing that requestees orient to their right to accept the request.

3.10 Discussion

This chapter has examined the two most frequent verbal forms of requesting in Italian informal interaction: imperatives and simple interrogatives. In previous literature, the difference between imperative and interrogative forms of requesting has been cast mostly in terms of relative directness and politeness, and the selection between them mainly explained by estimations of social distance and relative power (Brown and Levinson 1987; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, among many others). In the informal settings represented in my corpus, however, both forms are used among the same people and kin members, and across different ages. So their selection seems mostly independent of permanent social asymmetries. Instead, this chapter has shown it to be regulated by social-interactional dimensions emerging in the moment-by-moment flow of everyday interaction. The analysis points to two central factors:

- the relation of the action requested to what the requestee is doing at the moment at which the request is made;
- who stands to benefit from the action requested.

In previous literature, the use of imperatives has already been related to situations where an activity is ongoing (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1976:35; Gordon and Ervin-Tripp 1984:315; Brown and Levinson 1987:97). For the most part, however, this has been superficially motivated by the general "activity-oriented" or "task-focussed" nature of the interaction. As shown on multiple occasions (see particularly Extracts 3.6 versus 3.15, 3.10 versus 3.16, and Extract 3.25), a collaborative context is not in itself a basis for expecting that requests will be formatted imperatively. Rather, the crucial variable is the specific relation of continuity or discontinuity between the action requested and the trajectory of action in which the requestee is engaged at the moment the request is made. This variable interacts with a second variable, which relates to whether the action requested serves an individual or a shared outcome — that is, whether it is an action requested *only for me* or *for me and you* together.

Pioneering work by Wootton (1997) showed that such distinctions are relevant to requesting already from an early age (cf. also Hamann et al. 2011; Hamann, Warneken, and Tomasello 2012). Since the first report of similar findings for adult informal interaction in Italian (Rossi 2012), on which this chapter is based, comparable selection factors have been found in other languages (Zinken 2013; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). At the same time,

research on collaborative work in institutional settings lends further support to the role of imperatives in furthering joint projects (Parry 2013; Mondada 2014a, 2014b; De Stefani and Gazin 2014).

In the present data, a relation of continuity between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing usually correlates with the action's shared benefit, whereas a relation of discontinuity usually correlates with individual benefit.[32] This predominant pattern defines the *primary* use of imperatives and simple interrogatives as *bilateral* and *unilateral* requests.

This pattern can also be captured as a distinction between *collectively owned* versus *individually owned* courses of action (Rossi 2012:430–1), which relates to the distribution of social agency (Kockelman 2007; Enfield 2013b: ch. 9). When people come to be involved together in courses of action, they can carry them out either as individuals or "as one", that is as different individuals inhabiting a single social unit.[33] When a social union is operative in its fullest sense, two individuals commit to the same course of behaviour as their own. As a result, they will share in the outcome of the behaviour and bear responsibility for it (for example, two friends baking a cake together will normally share the praise or blame for how good or bad it turns out). By contrast, an individual can enlist the contribution of another in the accomplishment of an outcome that is "consumable" only by the first individual alone (for example, a friend asks another to pass some chewing gum). A project can be defined as individual when its launching is imputable to a single person, and where other people participate only as work force, or "animators" (Goffman 1981: ch. 3). The "owner" of a course of action can therefore be defined as the social entity that establishes its trajectory, that is invested in its outcome, and that is accountable for it (in positive and negative senses). This distinction helps explain why imperatives should be used for soliciting contributions to joint projects, whereas simple interrogatives are suitable for launching individual projects. If I give you the option to grant or refuse your participation in a project that is exclusively mine, I treat you as having a say on your own acts. On the other hand, assuming your compliance with an action required by our project is a way to convey my trust that you are going to do your part (cf. Clark 2006).

[32] These correlations follow naturally from the dynamics of human action: individual goals are set without coordinating with others, whereas joint activities produce coherence across people's actions.

[33] These notions have important connections with philosophical and psychological work on shared intentions (Searle 1990) and joint activity (Gilbert 1989; Bratman 1992; Tomasello et al. 2005; Clark 2006).

This study also shows that, in a minority of cases, the two dimensions that usually converge in defining bilateral and unilateral environments for requesting may also diverge. The imperative form can be used for requests that benefit the requester alone, but that still maintain a relation of continuity, or non-discontinuity, with the requestee's line of action (see § 3.7.2). On the other hand, the simple interrogative form can be used for requests that serve a collective outcome, but that still make the requestee depart from what they are doing (see § 3.7.1). These secondary uses are not only less frequent but also formally distinct from primary ones, showing that the linguistic design of requests is finely tuned to the interactional environment in which they are made.

So what emerges from this study are two basic interactional dimensions that combine in different ways to create distinct requesting environments (Figure 3.12).

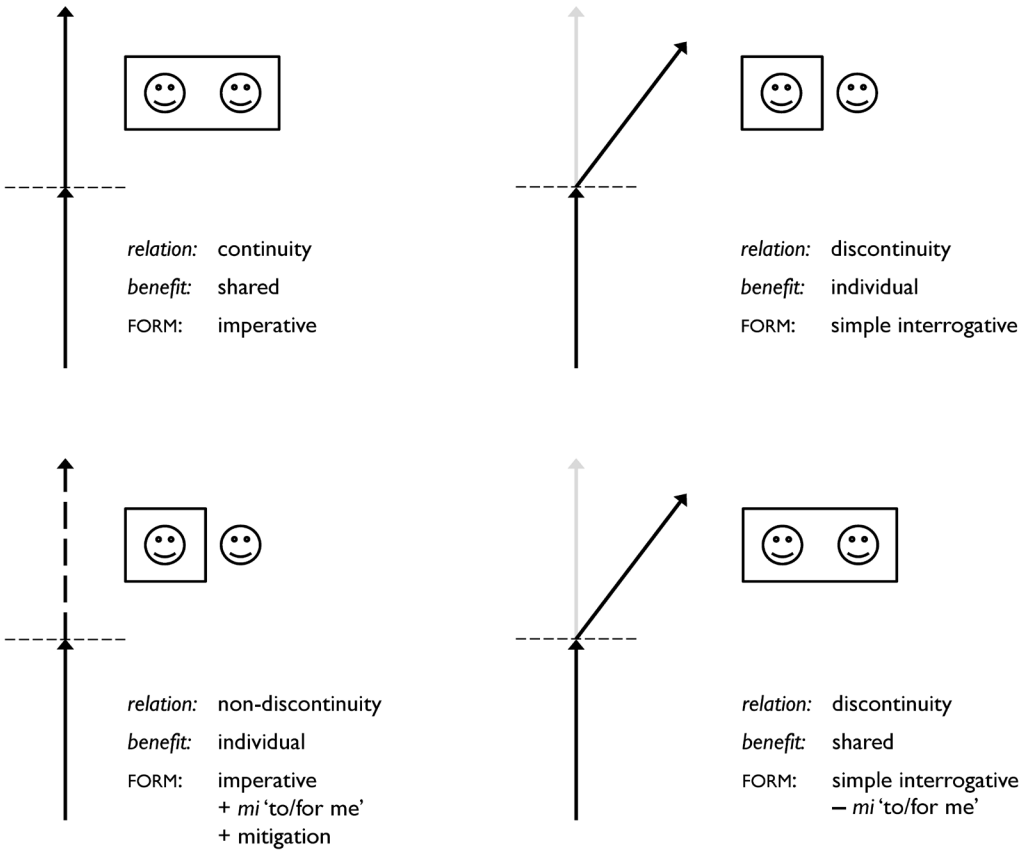


Figure 3.12 The relation of the action requested to what the requestee is currently doing and the distribution of the action's benefit combine in four ways, creating four requesting environments.

These two dimensions, however, do not affect the formal realisation of requests equally. Whereas the distribution of benefit mainly influences the use of benefactives and mitigation, it is sequential relation that impacts the choice of sentence type.

What underlies the use of imperatives is the non-discordance or compatibility with the requestee's line of action (cf. Wootton 1997:59–60). In everyday informal interaction among adult speakers, this is the main criterion for drawing on another person's cooperation as an already available resource (Zinken and Ogiermann 2013), and therefore for selecting a form the core meaning of which is that the speaker expects compliance. On the other hand, the discordance or discontinuity of the action requested with the current business of the requestee involves greater imposition in launching it — in Curl and Drew's (2008) terms, it introduces the contingencies of halting or altering what one is doing to engage in something else. This motivates the requester to give the requestee the possibility to accept or refuse by selecting an interrogative form, the core meaning of which conveys the speaker's uncertainty and therefore nonassumption of compliance.

This account doesn't exhaust the range of applications of imperative and interrogative request forms in social interaction as a whole. A form which conveys an expectation of compliance may fit with other interactional conditions, for example a situation of urgency, where there is an overwhelming reason for immediate action (Brown and Levinson 1987:95–6), or one in which the speaker has the right to impose an action on the requestee by virtue of their institutional authority (see, e.g., Craven and Potter 2010; Antaki and Kent 2012). On the other hand, the optionality conveyed by an interrogative form may serve to show deference to the requestee (see Brown and Levinson 1987, among many others). In everyday informal interaction, however, authority and deference don't seem to play any major role. What is crucial are instead situational factors locally grounded in the sequential development of the interaction.

4 Overcoming unwillingness: the use of *puoi x* 'can you x' interrogatives

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the use of another verbal form of requesting, an interrogative construction with a modal verb of ability which I refer to as *puoi x* 'can you x'. Compared to imperatives and simple interrogatives, *puoi x* is a lower-frequency form, covering only 1.5% (*n*=5/339) of all request cases in the core sample.[34] This form, however, has a well-defined function in the Italian request system. Similarly to simple interrogatives, *puoi x* 'can you x' interrogatives are normally used to request actions that are discontinuous with what the requestee is currently doing (see Chapter 3). Unlike simple interrogative requests, however, the granting of these requests is potentially not straightforward. More specifically, the *puoi x* form is typically selected when the requester has grounds to anticipate the requestee's unwillingness to comply. In the present data, this can be for three main reasons: i) the requestee has displayed overt resistance to do the action or to cooperate in the matter at hand before the request is made, ii) the requester's entitlement to make the request is low, or iii) the action requested is costly for the requestee. By using a *puoi x* interrogative, the requester recognises the problematic nature of the request and attempts to overcome the requestee's unwillingness, appealing to their cooperation. This function forms the basis for a less frequent use of the form in environments where there are no apparent grounds for anticipating unwillingness. Here, by invoking the delicate conditions normally associated with *puoi x*, the requester makes the request especially polite.

After a review of the background literature (§ 4.2), I give a grammatical description of the *puoi x* form (§ 4.3). I then analyse the use of *puoi x* in three types of environments mentioned above where requesters have grounds to anticipate unwillingness (§ 4.4). This analysis helps us understand the effect of *puoi x* in a handful of cases where the requestee's unwillingness is postulated rather than actual (§ 4.5). Finally, I discuss the function of *puoi x*

[34] In addition to these cases, the data used for this chapter include 14 more *puoi x* requests drawn from the supplemental sample, for a total of 19 cases occurring across 45 recordings (25 hours) (see Table 1.2).

in relation to its form, and to the alternatives available to requesters for pursuing compliance (§ 4.6).

4.2 Background

People's potential unwillingness to comply with requests and the strategies adopted to overcome it have been a prominent topic in the literature on requesting. At a general level, the possibility of rejection — typically on the grounds of high imposition — is one of the factors motivating the use of indirectness and politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987). The issue here is how much of a burden the requester is placing on the requestee, and how this is redressed by deferring to the requestee's face wants (see § 1.4.3.2). This can be connected to the conversation analytic treatment of similar issues offered by Curl and Drew (2008), who put at centre stage the contingencies, or potential obstacles, that the requestee may encounter in doing a certain action (see § 1.4.3.4). This is another way of looking at people's recognition and management of the costs implicated by requests.[35]

The possibility of rejection underlies also the use of *pre-requests* (Sacks 1992a:685; Schegloff 1980:114; Levinson 1983:356), a central function of which is to check whether a precondition obtains for a request to be made successfully (Levinson 1983:346–7). This allows the requester to avoid rejection by withholding the request if the precondition isn't met (Levinson 1983:357; Schegloff 2007b:31).

Relatively less research has dealt with the possibility of rejection in relation to the requestee's overt resistance to a request. Work in this area has focussed mainly on parent-child interaction. Craven and Potter (2010) have recently looked at sequences of multiple directives from parents to children, showing that, in the face of resistance, forms are upgraded from modal interrogatives (e.g. *can you x*) to imperatives, and sometimes to the use of physical force, in a way that increasingly restricts the optionality of the child's compliance. From the perspective of children, Ervin-Tripp (1988) has looked at "retries" after being ignored or refused by the parent. Strategies used to pursue compliance differ across age groups (two to six years), older children being more likely to alter the form of subsequent requests, to mitigate it, or to add explanations.

[35] Curl and Drew present the dimension of contingency as more encompassing than cost and imposition, covering a wider spectrum of situationally-determined difficulties and conditions for accomplishing a certain action.

The research most closely related to that reported in this chapter comes, once again, from the work of Anthony Wootton. In one of his earliest studies of children's requests to their parents, Wootton (1981) analyses the use of *can I x* and *I want x* forms in two sequential environments: after "non-grantings" — that is, when the parent explicitly rejects or equivocates on an initial request — and after a parent's directive, formatted as an imperative. In these two environments, *can I x* and *I want x* are shown to embody two alternative stances on the part of the child, seeking to alter the requestee's position in two ways: *can I x* attempts to get on the good side of the parent by negotiating the request in such a way as to make it acceptable; *I want x*, on the other hand, baldly objects and refutes the requestee's adverse position.

In a subsequent study, Wootton (1984) analyses children's use of *please* after the parent has displayed unwillingness to grant a request. Similarly to the *can I x* form, *please* is a way to ask the requestee to reconsider their position, and is associated with turns designed as pleading or begging the parent to change their mind. This contrasts with alternative strategies of pursuing compliance that challenge the parent's resistance, such as *I want x* (p. 148-50). In addition to these pursuit cases, *please* can also be used in first attempts at requesting, indexing the child's anticipation that what they are asking for is something that the parent could have a basis for not granting (p. 152).

The interactional dynamics under analysis in this chapter are very similar to those described by Wootton. The analysis in Section 4.4 begins from cases in which the *puoi x* 'can you x' form is used after a previous attempt at getting someone to cooperate has failed, and then moves on to cases in which the selection of *puoi x* orients to potential unwillingness before any other request is made.

4.3 Grammatical description

Puoi x 'can you x' refers to a modal construction with a verb encoding ability. The modal verb is inflected for second person (singular or plural), either in the indicative (simple present) mood (Example 4.1) or in the conditional (Example 4.2). Besides the general mitigating function of the conditional, the data at hand don't show a clear distinction in the use of the two variants.

Example 4.1

puoi passarmi il sale
can-2S pass-INF=2S.D the salt
'can you pass me the salt'

Example 4.2

potresti passarmi il sale
can-CND-2S pass-INF=2S.D the salt
'could you pass me the salt'

In the *puoi x* construction, pronouns like *mi* 'to/for me' are usually positioned after the verb and are enclitic on it (Example 4.2). But they may also, less frequently, stand as an autonomous phonological word before the verb, like in a simple interrogative construction (Example 4.3).

Example 4.3

mi puoi passare il sale
2S.D can-2S pass-INF the salt
'can you pass me the salt'

The interrogative nature of the construction is formally marked by the intonation contours with which it is normally uttered (see § 1.6.4).

4.4 *Puoi x* requests attempt to overcome unwillingness

The anticipation of someone's unwillingness can be grounded in different social-interactional facts. In what follows, I illustrate three kinds of grounds emerging from the present data: i) the requestee has displayed overt resistance to cooperate in the matter at hand before the request is made, ii) the requester's entitlement to make the request is low, and iii) the action requested is costly for the requestee. In analysing each of these scenarios, special attention is given to the elements of the interaction that support the requester's anticipation of unwillingness, as well as to the particular standpoint adopted by the requester with the selection of a *puoi x* interrogative.

4.4.1 Overt resistance

A first illustration of the function of the *puoi x* form in the Italian request system comes from cases in which the requestee overtly displays resistance to do something immediately before the *puoi x* request is made. This section examines two such cases.

Extract 4.4 is taken from a family dinner. In line 1, Luca picks up a piece of the dessert before everyone has finished the main course. Olga, who is sitting across the table from him, notices this and makes a first attempt to rectify his behaviour ('by the way, the dessert shouldn't really be eaten now', line 3). Instead of complying, Luca brings the pastry to his mouth, and then makes explicit his opposition to the request with a *purse hand* gesture (Kendon 1995), with all the fingers extended and drawn together so as to be in contact with one another at the tips (Figure 4.1). At this point, Olga pursues the request with a *puoi x* interrogative.

Extract 4.4 PranzoAlbertoni01_1837927

1	Luca	((picks up a pastry and begins unwrapping it))
2		(1.5)
3	Olga	'ntanto il dolce si mangia mia adesso meantime the sweet IM eat-3S PCL now **by the way, the dessert shouldn't really be eaten now**
4		(.)/((Luca brings pastry to mouth))
5	Olga	[dopo after **later**
6		[((Luca holds up pastry))
7		(1.8)/((Luca looks at Olga))
8		(0.6)/((Luca makes 'purse hand' gesture))
9	Olga	puoi metterlo là 'l dolce ((points to tray)) can-2S put=INF=3S.A there the sweet **can you put the dessert there?**
10		(0.3)
11	Luca	perché **why**

12 Olga perché si mangia dopo te dao questo= ((points to other cake))
because IM eat-3S after 2S.D give-1S this
because it is to be eaten later, I'll give you this

13 Luca =ma io non lo mangio
but 1S.N not 3S.A eat-1S
but I'm not going to eat it

14 (0.6)

15 Luca anche se mi piace però
also if 1S.D please-3S but
I do like it but

16 (1.2)/((Luca eats pastry))

17 Olga lo sai cos'è ((points to other cake))
3S.A know-2S what=be.3S
do you know what it is?

Figure 4.1 Frame from line 8, Extract 4.4. Luca challenges Olga's first request with a *purse hand* gesture ('what's the problem?!').

Luca's reluctance to put the pastry back on the tray is first shown by his bringing the pastry to his mouth — rather than putting it back on the tray — in disregard of Olga's admonishment (lines 4 and 6). It is then made plain by his *purse hand* gesture, which expresses criticism at the request, calling its motives into question, as in 'what's the problem?!' (Poggi 1983; Kendon 1995). Olga's subsequent *puoi x* interrogative is therefore directly tied to the requestee's overt resistance to do what is being requested. By asking 'can you put the dessert

there?', Olga seeks the alteration of the requestee's position, giving him the opportunity to reconsider his resistance. The attempt, however, is unsuccessful. Luca continues his challenge to the request by soliciting an account ('why', line 11). Olga then restates the norm of behaviour invoked a few lines earlier ('because it is to be eaten later') and adds an inducement ('I'll give you this'), referring to another cake on the table. Focussing the attention to the second part of Olga's pursuit, Luca rejects it as grounds for complying, on the account that he is not going to have that other cake ('but I'm not going to eat it', line 13), shortly after which he eventually eats the pastry (line 16).

Consider another comparable case. Some time before Extract 4.5, Eliana has asked her brother Azio a big favour: to drive her to a nearby city, where she is going to have a guided tour of a castle with her schoolmates; to then wait for her for the duration of the visit and finally drive her to a shopping centre. When the extract begins, Azio is trying to obtain an important piece of information from Eliana, namely the time at which her guided tour will end, which he needs to know in order to organise his wait for her. Eliana, however, doesn't provide an answer: she first states that she cannot know this information ('I can't know that', line 3), and then gives an uncertain estimate ('I think at any rate that it should last around twenty minutes', line 5). At this point, Azio makes a first *puoi x* request.

Extract 4.5 BiscottiPome01_1154327

1	Azio	'scolta Eliana però tu mi devi dire a che ora
		listen-IMP.2S NAME but 2S.N 1S.D must-2S say-INF at which hour
		listen Eliana you've got to tell me at what time
2		finisci quella cazzo di vi[sita
		end-3S that dick of visit
		you're going to be done with that fucking tour though
3	Eliana	[io non lo posso sapere
		1S.N not can-1S know-INF
		I can't know that
4	Azio	°dio pò° ((peeved))
		god pig
		°goddamn°
5	Eliana	penso comunque che (vada dai) venti minuti
		think-1S anyway CMP (go-SBJ-3S from-the) twenty minutes
		I think at any rate that it (should last around) twenty minutes
6		(0.4)

7 Azio puoi chiamare e chiedergli quanto dura
can-2S call-INF and ask-INF=3S.D how.much last-3S
can you phone them and ask how long it lasts?

8 (0.7)

9 Eliana mmmhh::[: ((flutters hand conveying indecision))

10 Azio [vuoi che t'accompagni fallo
want-2S CMP 2S.D=accompany-SBJ-1S do-IMP.2S=3S.A
do you want me to drive you? {then} do it

11 (2.0)

12 Eliana allora piuttosto se fai così niente cè
then rather if do-2S like.this nothing PCL
alright if you're like this it's better to forget about it

13 (0.7)

14 Azio no 'scolta t- io devo sapere perché mi devo organizzare
no listen-IMP.2S 1S.N must-1S know-INF because RFL must-1S organise-INF
no listen t- I must know because I have to organise myself

15 (.)

16 Azio capisci=
understand-2S
do you understand?

17 Eliana =il massimo son venti minuti
the maximum be.3P twenty minutes
it's going to take twenty minutes maximum

18 (0.5)

19 Azio bom
ITJ
alright

((12 seconds omitted))

20 (9.5)

21 Azio puoi per favore procurarti l'indirizzo
can-2S for favour obtain-INF=2S.D the=address
can you please get the address?

22 (3.6)

23 Eliana ((raises an eyebrow))

```
24          (3.5)/((Azio keeps gazing at Eliana))

25 Eliana   sì ((nods))
            yes

26          (0.6)

27 Azio     mh
```

In response to Azio's initial request for information (lines 1-2), Eliana provides only an uncertain estimate, showing no proactiveness to obtain more accurate information. In this environment, Azio makes a first *puoi x* request for her to phone the tour guide ('can you phone them and ask how long it lasts?'). The prosodic design of the request conveys that this is something Eliana could have undertaken to do herself, but has failed to — the extra stress on the verb 'phone' highlights it as a salient solution for obtaining the information, while the general exasperated tone indicates Azio's annoyance at her lack of proactiveness. Eliana's reluctance is subsequently made explicit by her hesitant response 'mmmhh:::' (line 9). This interjection is a closed-mouth version of 'uhm', signalling that the speaker has not yet decided what to say or do next (Clark and Fox Tree 2002), and is here accompanied by the fluttering of a hand, a gesture that conveys wavering. In next position to a polar interrogative, such a response indicates that Eliana is vacillating between accepting and refusing the request. This prompts Azio to pursue his request in another way ('do you want me to drive you? {then} do it', line 10), which gives us an interesting comparison with his earlier *puoi x* interrogative. The imperative form ('do it') now makes compliance the only response option (see Chapter 3, also Craven and Potter 2010). This is further enforced by the preceding clause ('do you want me to drive you?'), which functions similarly to the protasis of a conditional sentence, thus characterising the pursuit as a threat (Hepburn and Potter 2011). The coercive nature of this form contrasts starkly with the stance conveyed by a *puoi x* interrogative, which makes compliance contingent on the requestee's disposition. This is reflected also in Eliana's distinct responses to the two forms: a hesitation between acceptance and refusal (line 9) as opposed to a dismissal of the whole transaction ('alright if you're like this it's better to forget about it'). In what follows, Eliana eventually dodges making the phone call by restating that the guided tour is going to take twenty minutes (line 17), this time with full epistemic commitment, which apparently satisfies Azio ('alright', line 19).

After a few moments, during which Azio and Eliana make some secondary arrangements for the trip, there is a lull in their talk (line 20). This is broken by Azio making

another *puoi x* request for Eliana to get hold of the address of the shopping centre to which he is going to drive her after the guided tour (‘can you please get the address?’). By going back to a *puoi x* form, Azio reorients to Eliana’s reluctance to cooperate with him so far, and seeks to overcome it by putting it to her to show compliance. Once again, however, Eliana’s first response is equivocal: after a 3.6 seconds gap (line 22), she raises an eyebrow without looking at Azio, conveying something like “if I really must”. This non-committal response is insufficient for Azio, who keeps gazing at Eliana for another 3.5 seconds (line 24), until she finally accepts the request with ‘yes’.

In this extract, two *puoi x* requests are made after the requestee has displayed resistance to cooperate in a certain project. The first (‘can you phone them and ask how long it lasts?’) comes after Eliana shows no proactiveness to help Azio obtain the information he needs for their trip; the second (‘can you please get the address?’) comes after the turbulent development of the prior sequence. The requestee’s unwillingness is manifested in her hesitant, equivocal and non-committal responses to the requests. In this environment, the *puoi x* form attempts to overcome unwillingness by putting it to the requestee to show compliance. This contrasts with other strategies to force compliance by coercion (‘do you want me to drive you? {then} do it’, line 10).

In Extracts 4.4 and 4.5, the basis for the requester to anticipate unwillingness is the overt resistance displayed by the requestee immediately before the request is made. In the next section, we look at another type of environment in which the *puoi x* form is sensitive to other interactional problems.

4.4.2 Low entitlement

Another ground for requesters to anticipate unwillingness is their low entitlement to make a certain request. Entitlement has been discussed as a general social-interactional dimension encompassing a wide range of rights and obligations (Curl and Drew 2008). Here, I refer specifically to the right to have another person do something that one could or should do oneself. In other words, low entitlement here captures the absence of a good reason to devolve an action to others. I now examine two such cases.

Some time before Extract 4.6 begins, Eliana has been asked by Mum — who is ill in bed — to warm up her soup. In line 1, Eliana enters the kitchen, where Furio and Sofia are working, and makes a *puoi x* request, attempting to delegate the task to them.

Extract 4.6 BiscottiPome01_3123967

1 Eliana ((enters kitchen))

2 scusate non è che potreste fare
excuse-NPST-2P not be.3S CMP can-CND-2P make-INF
excuse me guys, could you perhaps make

3 (0.9)/((Eliana lets cat out of the kitchen))

4 la mi- uh scaldar la minestrina per la mamma
the m- uh warm.up-INF the soup-DIM for the mum
the sou- uh warm up the soup for Mum?

5 (2.9)

6 Eliana uh
huh?

7 (0.3)

8 Furio no potresti farlo tu per esempio
no can-CND-2S make-INF=3S.A 2S.N for example
no, <u>you</u> could do it for example

9 (0.3)

10 Eliana mhm io ho [da fare
1S.N have-1S to do-INF
mhm I've got stuff to do

11 Furio [visto che non hai fatto-
seen CMP not have-2S do-PSTP
given that you haven't done-

12 e::heh da fare ((ironic))
ITJ to do-INF
o::h {right} stuff to do!

13 (2.3)

14 Eliana °che palle°
what balls
°what a drag°

15 (12.4)

16 Furio no no lo fai tu Eliana
no no 3S.A do.2S 2S.N name
no no <u>you</u> do it Eliana

17 Eliana perché: io da:::i
why 1S.N PCL
why: me? come o:::n

18 Furio senti
hear-NPST-2S
listen

19 (0.3)

20 Furio io sono andato a far la spesa
1S.N be.1S go-PSTP to do-INF the groceries
I went to get the groceries

21 (.)

22 Furio okey
okay?

((12 seconds omitted))

23 Furio assieme alla Silvia siamo andati un'ora e passa
together with-the NAME be.1P go-PSTP one=hour and pass-3S
Silvia and I went to get the groceries, it took over an hour,

24 e gn- a far la spesa okey tu non hai fatto un cazzo come sempre
and to do-INF the groceries okay 2S.N not have-2S do-PSTP one dick like always
okay? {while} you haven't done shit as always

25 ((0.8)

26 Eliana ((leaves kitchen slamming the door))

The delicacy of Eliana's request is apparent from its beginning. The turn-initial 'excuse me guys' serves as an entry device in the interactional space of her requestees; at the same time, it is a marked form relative to other alternatives for the same function (such as 'hey' or a vocative). Its use becomes all the more salient given that, earlier in the recording, Eliana has been coming and going from the kitchen without much notice. This preface shows Eliana's recognition that she is intruding into what Furio and Sofia are doing and prepares the ground for her request.

Similarly to the cases seen in the previous section, the request is first met with silence (line 5), a harbinger of trouble. After a pursuit of response ('huh?', line 6), this trouble materialises in Furio's rejection ('no'), followed by his turning the request back to Eliana ('you could do it for example'). In what follows, Furio explains the reasons for his rejection, while Eliana's responses reveal the basis upon which she could anticipate his unwillingness.

In line 10, Eliana gives a rather vague account ('I've got stuff to do') that doesn't present any concrete reason for why she can't do the task herself. This justification fails to

induce Furio to comply and ends up being derided by him (‘o::h {right} stuff to do!’, line 12). Eliana’s subsequent attempts to persuade Furio still don’t bring in concrete reasons for her case, but are limited to expressions of disgruntlement (‘°what a drag°’, line 14) and implorations (‘why: me? come o:::n’, line 17). By contrast, Furio’s firm statements display his conviction that Eliana’s attempt to “pass the buck” is unwarranted, providing strong arguments for his rejection: he and Silvia have already done their share of chores, spending over an hour to get groceries (line 23), whereas Eliana hasn’t done anything (line 24). Note that this claim is not denied by Eliana, who prefers to give up her request and to leave the scene slamming the door (line 26).

The development of the sequence demonstrates Eliana’s low entitlement to ask Furio and Sofia to warm up the soup for Mum. The turn-initial ‘excuse me guys’ signals the delicacy of the request from its beginning, while the design of the subsequent pursuits characterise it as an appeal to accord Eliana an unwarranted service. She fails to provide a compelling reason (‘I’ve got stuff to do’, line 10) and tries to persuade Furio with resigned and entreating lamentations (‘°what a drag°’, line 14, ‘why: me? come o:::n’, line 17). In other words, Eliana lacks the right to have the soup warmed up by somebody else. This supports the selection of a form that indexes an anticipation of unwillingness, which is subsequently manifested in Furio’s firm rejection.

In another case, Cinzia is in the kitchen, stirring hot chocolate on the stove with one hand, and fiddling with her mobile phone with the other. When the extract begins, Ada — who has been working with Cinzia — begins posing a question to Mirko (line 1) — who is standing just outside the kitchen — but quickly abandons it, announcing that she will ask another person instead (line 2). Ada then walks out of the kitchen, visibly directed to the living room. This is the point at which Cinzia makes a *puoi x* request of her (‘can you stir {this} one second, Ada, three seconds?’). The reason for asking Ada to take over the stirring is so that she can make a phone call in another room.

Extract 4.7 Natale02_1211413

```
1 Ada       secondo ti Mirko togo altri
            following 2S NAME take-1S others
            what do you think Mirko shall I get other-

2           no ghe domando ala Milena dai
            no D ask-1S at-the NAME PCL
            no well I'll ask Milena
```

3 (0.3)/((Ada walks out of the kitchen))

4 Cinzia puoi mescolare un secondo Ada tre secondi
can-2S stir-INF one second NAME three seconds
can you stir {this} one second, Ada, three seconds?

5 Mirko faccio io [faccio io ((walks in the kitchen))
do-1S 1S.N do-1S 1S.N
I'll do it, I'll do it

6 Ada [sì ((walks back in the kitchen))
yes

7 Cinzia scusame 'n secondo ((walks away from stove))
excuse-IMP.2S=1S.D one second
excuse me one second

8 ((Ada walks out again))

In this dinner preparation, Cinzia has been put in charge of making hot chocolate, and has overseen the process throughout. On a couple of occasions, another person who has been working side by side with her — Eva — has taken over the stirring. Each time, however, after a few moments Cinzia dismisses Eva from stirring on the account that she is in charge of it. The last time this happens before Extract 4.7, Cinzia sends Eva away by saying *va' via Eva, fago io* 'go away Eva, I'm doing it', displaying her right/obligation to see to the task. Another element of background to Cinzia's *puoi x* request here is that, a few minutes before Extract 4.7, she makes three phone calls with her mobile phone without interrupting the stirring, showing her commitment not to leave her post. All this demonstrates Cinzia's special responsibility for making the hot chocolate.

So when in Extract 4.7 Cinzia eventually leaves her post to make a phone call, this goes against the commitment she has previously displayed. This is further evidenced by the temporal modulation of the request ('one second', 'three seconds'), implying that Cinzia will get back to the stirring, and by her subsequent apology ('excuse me one second', line 7), showing that she is breaking a normative expectation. In other words, Cinzia's entitlement to leave the stirring to Ada is low.

Besides low entitlement, in this case a recognition of potential unwillingness seems to be motivated by another concurrent factor. The request does not just intrude into what the requestee is doing but entails a reversal of her current plan of action. Just before the request, Ada has announced that she is going to ask something to Milena (line 2) and has already walked out of the kitchen (line 3). Taking over the stirring would cause her to halt what she

has publicly just set out to do. The fact that Mirko — who is standing nearby — volunteers to take on the task in Ada's stead ('I'll do it, I'll do it', line 5) is further indication that Ada is not in a good position to do it. So, in this case, low entitlement goes hand in hand with high cost. The next section examines cases in which high cost becomes the main interactional problem addressed by a *puoi x* request form.

4.4.3 High cost

A third basis for requesters to anticipate unwillingness is that the action requested is costly for the requestee, that is, it constitutes an appreciable imposition. This is illustrated in the following two cases.

When Extract 4.8 begins, the family are seated at the dining table. Mattia has just finished his pasta and is ready get a second helping from the kitchen. As he stands up, Azio makes a simple interrogative request for him to pass the water jug (line 4). While this request sequence is underway, Mattia looks behind the diner on his right (line 3), plausibly checking if there is enough room for him to walk through that way to reach the kitchen area. He does a similar check — this time looking to his left — while passing the jug to Azio (Figure 4.2), shortly after which he makes the target *puoi x* request.

Figure 4.2 Frame from line, Extract 4.8. Mattia looks behind the people sitting on his left while passing the water jug to Azio.

Extract 4.8 NataleSala02_2271245

1 ((Mattia begins to stand up))

2 Azio uh M- Mattia
uh NAME
uh M- Mattia

3 (.)/((Mattia looks behind person sitting on his right))

4 Azio m- m- mi passi la brocca ((points to jug))
1S.D pass-2S the jug
w- w- will you pass me the jug?

5 (0.4)/((looks down to jug))

6 Mattia è:: un po' vuota ((picks jug up))
be.3S one bit empty
it's:: a bit empty

7 (0.7)/((Mattia holds jug out towards Azio))

8 Azio sì sì la riempio ((reaches for jug))
yes yes 3S.A fill-1S
yes yes I'll refill it

9 (0.7)/((Mattia looks behind people sitting on his left))

10 Mattia (oh voi)
(oh 2P)
(hey you guys)

11 (0.7)/((Mattia wedges himself in between cupboard and chair))

12 Mattia siccome non so fare i salti mortali
since not know-1S make-INF the jumps deadly
since I don't know how to do somersaults

13 potete spostarvi un attimo
can-2P move-INF-RFL one moment
can you guys move a little?

14 (0.7)

15 ((Plinio and Eliana move chairs forward to let Mattia through))

Unlike the cases examined in the previous section, the request here is not affected by low entitlement. As the account prefacing the request makes clear (line 12), Mattia has a good

reason to ask people to move a little: this is necessary for him to walk through behind them, get around the table, and reach the kitchen. The account 'since I don't know how to do somersaults' might at first glance seem critical, but arguably isn't. Its tone does not convey annoyance and the requestees do not orient to it as having a complaint element. Also, both requestees have been looking down throughout the whole previous sequence — one focussed on eating, the other on typing on his mobile phone. So it would be difficult for them to visually anticipate Mattia's difficulty. And there is no indication that they have failed to do so. The purpose of 'since I don't know how to do somersaults' seems rather to justify a request that is potentially imposing on Mattia's requestees, as it requires them not only to halt their activities but also to squeeze up in what is already a narrow space (see Figure 4.2). This is also suggested by the mitigator 'a little', which, similarly to the temporal adverbials in Extract 4.7, is designed to reduce the size of the service asked.

This extract gives us also a direct comparison with the request sequence taking place immediately before the target *puoi x* sequence (lines 2-8). Like in all cases seen in Chapter 3, the service requested by Azio is low-cost — it doesn't involve any appreciable imposition on Mattia, who can easily pass him the water across the table. In making this request, Azio doesn't need to recognise any potential unwillingness.

Consider another case of high cost. Two teenage friends, Lisa and Amerigo, are hanging out in Lisa's living room. When Extract 4.9 begins, they are talking about repainting rooms. During this talk, Amerigo makes a request that Lisa send a text message to a mutual friend, Siro.

Extract 4.9 Amerigo02_926460

1	Amerigo	quindi è meglio iniziare a dipingere tutto di verde ((to Aunt)) therefore be.3S better begin-INF to paint-INF all of green **so it will be better to start painting everything green**
2	Lisa	no **no**
3		(0.5)
4	Lisa	direi proprio di no say-CND-1S really of no **I really don't think so**
5		(0.8)

6 Amerigo bah
PCL
well

7 (0.3)

8 Amerigo (io direi) proprio di sì
(1S.N say-CND-1S) really of yes
I really think it will

9 (0.9)

10 Lisa invece dico proprio di no
instead say-1S really of no
and instead I really don't

11 (0.3)

12 Amerigo puoi mandare un messaggio al Siro
can-2S send-INF one message to-the NAME
can you send a message to Siro?

13 (0.4)

14 Amerigo da parte mia
from part my
on my behalf?

15 (0.5)

16 Amerigo o come vuoi insomma che che faccia gli auguri
or how want-2S PCL CMP CMP make-SBJ-3S the wishes
or in the way you like, I mean, that he send his wishes

17 al Giuseppe che oggi compie gli anni=
to-the NAME REL today complete-3S the years
to Giuseppe who has his birthday today?

18 Lisa =glieli ho fatti io da parte tua
3S.D=3P.A have-1S make-PSTP 1S.N from part your
I already sent him your wishes ((to Giuseppe))

19 Amerigo al-
at-the
to-

20 (.)

21 Amerigo gli dici gli dici al Siro che glieli faccia anche lui
3S.D say-1S 3S.D say-1S at-the NAME CMP 3S.D=3P.A also he
you tell you tell Siro to send him his {wishes} too?

22 (2.1)

23 Amerigo	cè gli dici "oggi comunque se vuoi	
	PCL 3S.D say-2S today anyway if want-2S	
	I mean, you tell him "by the way today	
24	compie gli anni il Giuseppe"	
	complete-3S the years the NAME	
	Giuseppe has his birthday"	

Similarly to Extracts 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6, the development of the request sequence is not straightforward. Amerigo's *puoi x* interrogative ('can you send a message to Siro?') is followed by a gap, during which no response comes from Lisa (line 13). Amerigo then adds an increment to his utterance ('on my behalf?'), followed by another gap (line 15), which is in turn followed by another, longer increment ('or in the way you like, I mean, that he send his wishes to Giuseppe who has his birthday today?'). The lack of uptake by Lisa is not due to her being busy with something else. Throughout lines 12-17 (6 seconds), Lisa keeps looking at Amerigo, showing recipiency, but no sign of acceptance or alignment. The trouble foreshadowed by her silence is confirmed by her subsequent account for not complying with the request ('I already sent him your wishes', line 18). This response accomplishes complex interactional work. On the one hand, it undercuts the basis for the request by stating that its purpose has already been achieved. At the same time, it reveals what is a seemingly inaccurate understanding of the action requested, prompting Amerigo to further articulate the request ('you tell you tell Siro to send him his {wishes} too?'). Amerigo is not asking Lisa to send his own wishes to Giuseppe, but to remind Siro not to forget to send his. Once again, however, this is met with silence. Lisa's continued lack of uptake supports the impression that her behaviour is driven not so much by non-understanding, but rather by her unwillingness to comply. Her silence is followed by yet another elaboration of the request (lines 23-24), which articulates even further that which has already been made quite plain in earlier turns. Shortly after this, Lisa eventually complies.

To understand Lisa's unwillingness, we need to look at what happens before Extract 4.9, about fifteen minutes earlier. At this point of the interaction, Amerigo is talking to Lisa's aunt, making fun of Lisa's delicate relationship with Siro — the friend he later asks her to text.

Extract 4.10 Amerigo01_3297466

1 Amerigo	ecco	
	PCL	
	right	

2 (.)

3 Amerigo siccome il nostro Siro è un re ((to aunt))
since the our NAME be.3S one king
since our Siro is a king

4 lei vuole diventare la regina Lisa
she want-3S become-INF the queen NAME
she wants to become Queen Lisa

5 Lisa ecco sì ((giggles))
PCL yes
oh there he goes

((3 minutes omitted))

6 Amerigo è scattato qualcosa dentro di lei che purtroppo ((to aunt))
be.3S go.off-PSTP something inside of she REL unfortunately
something happened inside her, which unfortunately,

7 non si ferma o meglio magari
not RFL stop-3S or better perhaps
or perhaps luckily, is not going to stop

8 (.)

9 Amerigo se[:
if:

10 Aunt [di lei o di lui
of she or of he
inside her or him?

11 Amerigo di lei
of she
her

12 (0.9)

13 Amerigo lui insomma:
he PCL
he, well:

14 (.)

15 Amerigo ri[cambia uh
reciprocate-3S
he reciprocates uh

16 Aunt [a- l'ha capito
3S.A=have-3S understand-PSTP
a- he's understood it?

17 Lisa [( )

18 Amerigo [lui rica- ricambia con una vera e propria confusione
he reciprocate-3S with one true and proper confusion
he re- reciprocates with a big embarrassment

19 Lisa m:h

20 (0.6)

21 Amerigo con risposte del tipo "boh non so"
with answers of-the type ITJ not know-1S
with answers of the kind "well, I don't know"

((3 minutes omitted))

22 Amerigo sa lei è molto im- come si dice paranoica ((to aunt))
know-2S.FRM she be.3S much im- how RFL say-3S paranoid
you know she's very im-, what's the word, paranoid

23 verso di lui nel senso pro[prio::
towards of he in-the sense properly
towards him, in the sense that really::

24 Lisa [(ma) sì esatto
(but) yes exactly
(oh) right absolutely

In this earlier interaction, Amerigo begins to disclose to Lisa's aunt that Lisa has a crush on Siro (lines 3-7). He goes on to reveal that Siro hasn't made at all clear whether he reciprocates Lisa's feelings (lines 15-21), then adding that Lisa is 'paranoid towards him' (lines 22-23), meaning that she is uneasy about the delicate state and uncertain development of their relationship.

What we can gather from this talk is that Amerigo is well aware that Lisa may be nervous getting in touch with Siro. So when later on (Extract 4.9) he asks her to text him, he can anticipate this to be costly for her. The action requested requires Eliana to contact someone she has feelings for, but who probably doesn't return them, so it requires her to deal with the potential uncomfortableness of their relationship. This cost is reflected in Eliana's reluctance to comply throughout Extract 4.9, which Amerigo manages to overcome only after multiple pursuits. Once again, the development of the interaction points to a reason for the requester to anticipate the requestee's unwillingness, and therefore to select a form that indexes the delicate nature of the request.

4.5 Polite and over-polite use of *puoi x*

In his study of *please* reviewed above, Wootton (1984) notes that, in a few cases, the inclusion of *please* at the beginning of a child's request doesn't seem to be tied to any local basis for anticipating the unwillingness of the parent, but rather works as "a way of proposing the possibility that recipient *may* have some basis for rejecting the request, and in proposing such a possibility without having a basis for it a speaker can be seen as recognising that what she is asking for *could* run contrary to recipient's inclination" (p. 153, original emphasis). Wootton suggests that this use of *please* trades on its association with situations in which unwillingness is a real issue, and exploits it for the purpose of "mak[ing] one-self recognisable as 'being polite'" (p. 155). This same principle can be applied to the use of *puoi x* interrogatives in Italian adult interaction. Of the 19 cases of *puoi x* in my corpus, 3 don't reveal any evident basis for the requester to anticipate the requestee's unwillingness. One of these cases is reported below.

As the family are finishing their lunch, Dad arrives to the dining table bringing a large bowl of fruit. This comes as a surprise for Mum, who hadn't expected the fruit to be served so early (lines 1-3). Dad indirectly responds to Mum's puzzlement by looking at his watch and gazing back to Mum (line 4), conveying that there are good reasons to speed up the progress of the lunch (they are late for work). As this sequence winds down, Mum makes a *puoi x* request for Dad to get a knife for the fruit from the kitchen.

Extract 4.11 MaraniPranzo_1416453

1	Mum	devo aspet- uh formag- cè non ho capito
		must-1S wait-INF uh cheese PCL not have-1S understand-PSTP
		I must wai- uh chee- I mean I don't understand
2	Dad	cosa
		what
3	Mum	è già arrivata questa
		be.3S already arrive-PSTP this
		this is already here?
4		(0.7)/((Dad looks at his watch and gazes back to Mum))
5	Mum	e::hm::
		u::hm::
6		(.)

```
7 Mum       puoi prendere anche allora un coltello da [sbucciare=
            can-2S take-INF also then one knife to peel-INF
            can you then also get a knife to peel

8 Dad                                                  [m- m- ((nods))

9 Mum       =sta roba [già che vai] di là
             this stuff since CMP go-2S of there
             this stuff since you're going in there?
```

```
10 Dad                [ma certam- ]
                       but surel-

11          ma certamente
            but surely
```

In this context, there are no apparent grounds for Mum to anticipate Dad's unwillingness: requests for objects related to the lunch are frequent and straightforward during this interaction; and Dad hasn't shown himself to be unwilling to fulfil such requests at any point before this extract. Moreover, Mum has a basis to expect that Dad is on his way to return to the kitchen ('since you're going in there'), plausibly because the arrival of the fruit implies that the table is about to be cleared of the dirty plates. So Mum's selection of a *puoi x* form here comes off as conspicuously delicate — in other words, designed to sound polite.

Evidence of this effect is found in Dad's acceptance, which comes in the form of *certamente* 'surely'. As a polar response, this form is marked relative to the canonical *sì* 'yes' (cf. Stivers 2011:85 and references therein) and is here further emphasised by the turn-initial particle *ma* 'but', which functions as a strengthener.[36] What Dad seems to be doing here is matching a distinctly polite request with a congruously polite response (cf. Clark and Schunk 1980).

This polite use of *puoi x* hangs in the balance of subtle interactional features. For this reason, it may be prone to "going overboard". A case of this is given in the following extract, where the form of the request is oriented to as deviant. The specific form used here doesn't involve the verb *potere* 'can', but employs the same "semantic device" of *puoi x* (Clark 1979:433): an enquiry about the requestee's ability to do something.

Eva is in the kitchen cleaning up the worktop, while Ada is stirring the soup on the stove. In line 2, Eva suddenly remembers that Milena is waiting for her 'small pasta', which

[36] *Puoi x* requests are accepted with a positive polar element before fulfilment in 75.0% of the cases (*n*=9/12) (see below). Of these, the vast majority involve only the interjection *sì* 'yes' (88.9%, *n*=8/9).

is to be prepared separately from the rest of the dinner. So she addresses Ada (line 4), and asks her to put the water on.

Extract 4.12 Natale02_1840241

```
1            (5.0)

2 Eva        la pastina per la Milena
             the pasta-DIM for the NAME
             the small pasta for Milena!

3            (0.4)

4 Eva        M- Ada
                NAME
             M- Ada

5 Ada        ehi
             ITJ
             hey

6            (0.6)

7 Eva        ce la faresti a metter su una roba di acqua per la Milena
             EX 3S.A make-CND-2S to put-INF on one thingy of water for the NAME
             would you be able to put on the water for Milena?

8 Ada        eh mado'
             PCL Madonna
             of course for heaven's sake
```

Putting on the water for Milena's pasta requires Ada to halt stirring the soup to launch another course of action. Such a departure, however, is no more imposing than the departures examined in the previous chapter, which are normally managed through the use of a simple interrogative. Also, since Ada is occupied with pots on the stove, the departure caused by adding one more is arguably small (cf. the departure entailed by Cinzia's request in Extract 4.7). Finally, even though there is an indication that Eva may be in charge of Milena's pasta (line 2), there are no apparent grounds for anticipating Ada's taking over the task as problematic.

All these elements make the granting of Eva's request straightforward and so make her selection of a *puoi x*-analogue form excessively cautious and over-polite. This is evidenced by Ada in her complying response. If Dad's *ma certamente* 'but surely' in Extract 4.11 is marked relative to the canonical *sì* 'yes', Ada's *eh madò* here, roughly translatable as 'of course for heaven's sake', is even more marked (cf. also Ada's response in Extract 4.7).

This exclamatory phrase — composed of the particle *eh* and the word *mado'*, a shortening of *madonna* 'Madonna, Virgin Lady' — vigorously conveys the obviousness of Ada's willingness to comply, challenging the assumption of potential unwillingness carried by Eva's *puoi x* form (cf. Stivers 2011).

4.6 Discussion

This chapter has examined three environments in which the *puoi x* 'can you x' interrogative form is primarily used. One is immediately after the requestee has displayed overt resistance to do a certain action (Extract 4.4) or to collaborate in a certain project (Extract 4.5); another is when the requester has low entitlement make a certain request (Extracts 4.6 and 4.7); and another is when the action requested is costly for the requestee (Extracts 4.8 and 4.9). In the first environment, the requester can anticipate the requestee's unwillingness to comply on the basis of conduct that is immediately prior to the request. In the latter two, the reasons for the anticipation are to be found in the earlier interactional history of participants, but they are also often indexed in the course of the request sequence.

Across all three of these environments, the *puoi x* form has a well-defined function: recognise the problematic nature of the request and overcome it by appealing to the requestee's cooperation. In other words, the selection of *puoi x* signals an attempt to persuade the requestee to comply in spite of their anticipated unwillingness.

The pleading quality of *puoi x* requests is shown by the fact that they are pursued with inducements (Extract 4.4) and implorations (Extract 4.6), and in general by actions that make compliance contingent on the requestee's disposition. In *puoi x* sequences, in other words, "the fate of the request is constructed as lying in the requestee's hands" (Wootton 1984:150). This puts *puoi x* in contrast with forms that attempt to break the requestee's unwillingness by coercion, such as imperatives (see Extract 4.6, line 11). This distinction is in line with the findings of previous research on the strategies for pursuing compliance to requests (Wootton 1981, 1984; Ervin-Tripp 1988; Galeano and Fasulo 2009; Craven and Potter 2010).

The function of *puoi x* as a persuasive strategy is intimately connected to its polar interrogative form, and supported by a quantitative finding. A mixed effects logistic regression (see § 3.6) shows that successful *puoi x* requests are statistically more likely to be responded to with a positive polar element (e.g. *sì* 'yes') before fulfilment than both

imperative requests (odds ratio 45.60, standard error 0.81, $p < .001$) and simple interrogative requests (odds ratio 5.73, standard error 0.75, $p < .05$) (cf. § 3.9).[37] The fact that requestees exercise their right to verbally accept *puoi x* requests significantly more often than simple interrogative requests suggests that acceptance is less obvious in the former.

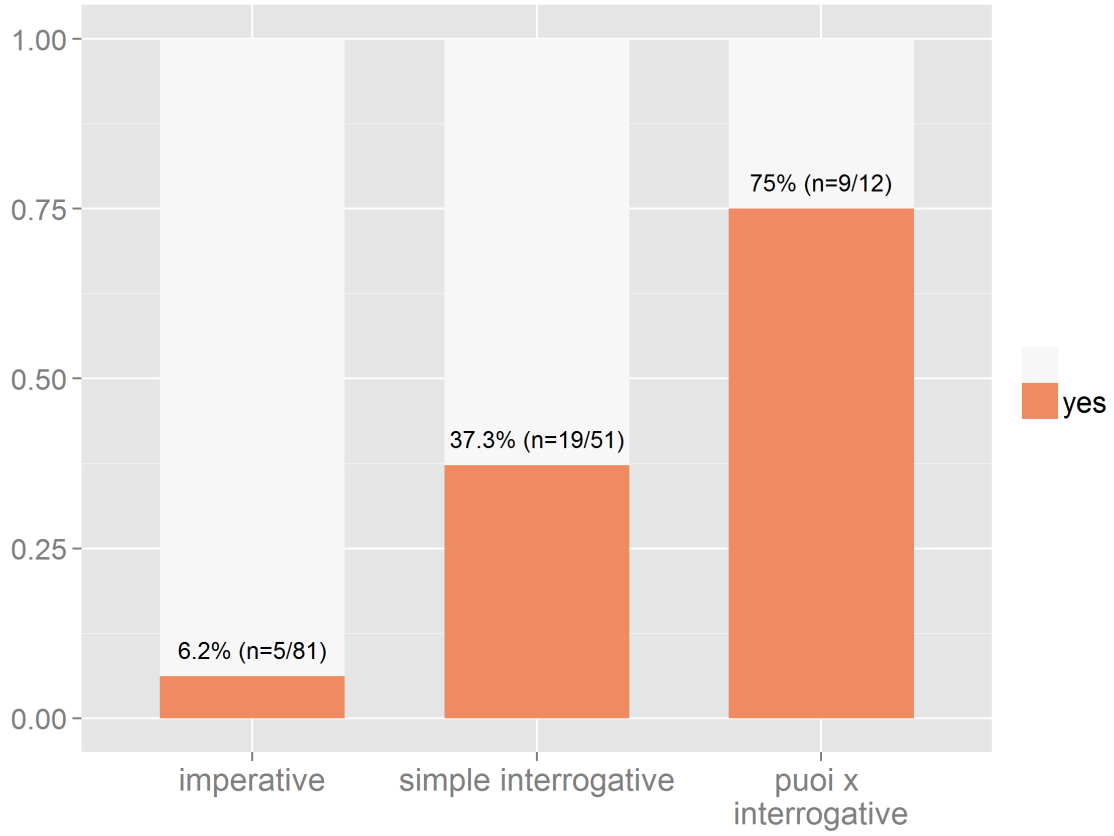


Figure 4.3 *Puoi x* requests are more likely to be responded to with a positive polar element (e.g. *sì* 'yes') before fulfilment than both imperative and simple interrogative requests, showing that their acceptance is less obvious.

This functional distinction between simple and *puoi x* interrogatives seems to be reflected also in their form. As a modal construction encoding ability, *puoi x* is marked relative to the simple interrogative, which is semantically and syntactically leaner (see § 3.5.1). This is consistent with the extra work involved in making a delicate request compared to an unproblematic one. Also, the semantic device employed by *puoi x* — an enquiry about ability — is potentially related to the fact that inability, unlike unwillingness, constitutes a

[37] Like the other statistics reported in the chapter, this is based on all *puoi x* requests found in the core and supplemental samples (45 recordings, 25 hours) (see fn. 34). Of the total 19 cases, 7 are excluded in which the request is not fulfilled or in which the presence or absence of a verbal response couldn't be determined due to noise in the recording.

normatively acceptable ground for requestees not to comply, thus foregrounding the most likely way out of the request.[38] Note, however, that this rationale would not hold for languages like English, where *can you x* forms are instead functionally comparable to the Italian simple interrogative (Wootton 2005; Curl and Drew 2008; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). This suggests that Italian and English speakers make different use of the grammatical resources at their disposal and indicates a promising avenue of future research exploring the semantic and paradigmatic processes that underlie the functional distribution of forms across different languages.

[38] Thank you to Jonathan Potter for this suggestion.

5 Pre-requests and their responses: the organisation of *hai x* 'do you have x' sequences[39]

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines a requesting strategy referred to as a *pre-request* (Sacks 1992a:685; Schegloff 1980:114; Levinson 1983:356; Schegloff 2007b: ch. 4), focussing in particular on the form *hai x* 'do you have x' — an interrogative construction asking if the requestee is in possession of an object. This form is illustrated below, in comparison to two others: the imperative and the simple interrogative, examined in Chapter 3.

Extract 5.1 DopoProve09-2_293350 (simplified)

1	Magda	hai un goccio di latte have-2S one drop of milk **do you have a bit of milk?**
2	Ada	mh mh:: ((nods))
3		((walks to kitchen to get milk))

Extract 5.2 MaraniPranzo_1000470

1	Mum	Aldo passami il piatto Aldo pass-IMP.2S=1S.D the plate **Aldo pass me the plate**
2	Aldo	((passes plate to Mum))

Extract 5.3 CampUniTaboo01_172458

1	Beata	mi dai anche a me un pezzo di scottex 1S.D give-2S also to 1S.D one piece of kitchen.paper **will you give a piece of kitchen paper to me too?**
2	Franco	sì ((turns to get kitchen paper)) **yes**

[39] A version of this chapter has been published as Rossi, Giovanni. 2015. "Responding to Pre-Requests. The Organization of Hai X 'do You Have X' Sequences in Italian." *Journal of Pragmatics* 82.

The previous chapters have already shown that different forms of requesting have different interactional properties that make them appropriate in certain contexts and not in others. An imperative form, for example, makes relevant the immediate fulfilment of the request and is used when the requester can assume the requestee's compliance. A simple interrogative, on the other hand, is a form that is legitimately responded to with acceptance before fulfilment or with a negative answer. Such a form conveys that the requestee's compliance is not assumed.

A *hai x* 'do you have x' utterance is similar to other interrogatives in that it makes the fulfilment of the request contingent upon the requestee's response. At the same time, *hai x* differs from other request forms in the kinds of objects it targets. Whereas forms like imperatives and simple interrogatives are used to request objects that are known to be available — the object is usually visible in the immediate environment, as in Extracts 5.2 and 5.3 — *hai x* is used when the requested object is not visible and its availability is uncertain. The *availability* of an object is a necessary requirement for it to be transferred or manipulated — a material as well as social contingency that enables a prospective transaction. Without availability, no request can normally be made about an object. The function of a *hai x* interrogative is therefore to check a precondition for a request — in other words, to make a *pre-request*.

But what does it mean exactly to make a pre-request? What difference does it make for the interaction compared to issuing a request proper? In this chapter, I show that the status of *hai x* 'do you have x' as a pre-request is reflected in special properties in the domains of preference and sequence organisation.

In Section 5.3, I illustrate a first property concerning negative responses. Answering 'no' to *hai x* does not tender a rejection of the request, but indicates that the precondition upon which the request is contingent does not obtain — this is analysed as a *blocking response* (Schegloff 2007b:30). The finding here is that, even though blocking responses to *hai x* are structurally dispreferred, they are not designed as such — that is, they lack features such as delayed production, turn-initial prefaces, hesitations, and accounts (Heritage 1984:265–80; Schegloff 2007b: ch. 5; Pomerantz and Heritage 2013).

Extract 5.4 Circolo01_2718316

```
1 Flavia    uh ti ghe nat
                2S.N EX PRT=have-2S=2S.SCL
            uh do you have any?

2 Bianca    no ((shakes head))
            no
```

A second property of *hai x* relates to sequence organisation. Besides fulfilment (Extract 5.1) and blocking responses (Extract 5.4), a pre-request can be responded to with a *go-ahead* response (Schegloff 2007b:30), confirming that the precondition for the request obtains. In Extract 5.5 below, the requestee responds to *hai x* by asserting that she has one unit of the target object ('one'). This invites the requester to produce another first pair part — a request proper ('give it to me') — which is eventually responded to with fulfilment (see Merritt 1976; Levinson 1983: ch. 6; Schegloff 2007b: ch. 4).

Extract 5.5 Circolo01_1406417

```
1 Silvia    ghe nat ((points to a card combination))
            EX PRT=have-2S=2S.SCL
            do you have any?

2 Clara     una
            one

3 Silvia    damela
            give-IMP.2S=1S.D=3S.A
            give it to me

4 Clara     ((passes card))
```

Prior literature defines structures such as Extract 5.5 as the "full canonical form" of a sequence initiated by a pre-request (Levinson 1987:88) and structures such as Extract 5.1 as its "ellipsed" or "truncated" form (Merritt 1976:326; Levinson 1983:362). In Section 5.4, I present a reanalysis of these two types of sequences. I first show that, when requestees are able to immediately fulfil the request projected by *hai x*, they normally do so in next position — a minimal two turn structure is the unmarked way in which a *hai x* sequence unfolds. I then argue that non-minimal four turn structures should be analysed as cases of sequence *expansion* (Schegloff 2007b). By only confirming that they have an object when they could immediately provide it, requestees break contiguity between a first pair part (the pre-request) and the accomplishment of the course of action initiated by it (the fulfilment of the projected

request), thus obliging the requester to produce another first pair part (the request proper). The expansion of a *hai x* sequence occurs in cases in which the requestee has a problem complying with the projected request. Here, delaying fulfilment is associated with a lack of alignment between participants. As a consequence, extended pre-request sequences should not be analysed as the "canonical form", but as a marked alternative to a minimal sequence.

5.2 The *hai x* 'do you have x' form

The *hai x* form refers to a construction built around the auxiliary verb *avere* 'have' inflected for second person — literally, 'you have x'. In standard Italian, the interrogative nature of the construction is formally marked by intonation (see § 1.6.4). In some of the Romance languages that coexist with Italian, however, interrogatives may also be marked morphosyntactically (see Lusini 2013). In the Trentino language, for example, which is occasionally spoken in this corpus (see § 1.6.4, fn. 6), this is done by moving subject pronominal elements from pre-verbal (*te gai* 'you have') to post-verbal position (*ga-t* 'do you have'). Examples of this can be found in Extracts 5.9, 5.10, 5.14 and 5.17 below.

The data used for this chapter are 36 *hai x* 'do you have x' interrogatives occurring across 45 recordings (25 hours) — combining core and supplemental samples (see Table 1.2). In addition, the analysis developed in Section 5.3 is based also on 79 simple interrogatives occurring in the same combined samples.

Because of the focus of this thesis on requests for practical actions to be performed here and now, the objects implicated are mostly "free goods" (Goffman 1983) that can be easily given away (e.g. a cigarette, handkerchief, sweets, milk) or lent (e.g. a phone charger, lighter, ruler, sledge), or "shared goods", that is, goods for common use (e.g. playing cards, kitchen utensils).

5.3 Blocking responses are not constructed as dispreferreds

The organisation of *preference* is one of the cornerstones of social interaction (Heritage 1984:265–80; Schegloff 2007b: ch. 5; Pomerantz and Heritage 2013). Underlying the concept of preference is the fact that participants have options: they can design turns in different

ways, produce different types of actions, initiate or promote different sequences of action. Crucially, these alternatives, at any given point of an interaction, are not symmetrical (Schegloff and Sacks 1973:314). Preference organisation refers to the principles that regiment people's choices among nonequivalent alternative conducts and forms of conduct.

An important domain regimented by preference is the construction of responses to first pair parts. Actions such as questions, requests and assessments make relevant at least two response types, one of which aligns with the action of the first pair part (answer, fulfilment, agreement), and is thus *preferred*, and another which doesn't align with it (non-answer, rejection, disagreement), and is thus *dispreferred*. The basic normative principle of this organisation is that preferred and dispreferred responses take different shapes. Dispreferred responses are structurally more complex than preferred ones: they are typically delayed, prefaced by linguistic components that mark their dispreferred status, and include an account of why the preferred response cannot be delivered. This contrasts with the concise and "unvarnished" design of preferred responses (Heritage 1984:266).

Consider the following two examples, illustrating rejections of requests formatted as simple interrogatives ('will you x').

Extract 5.6 BiscottiPome01_1884369

1	Azio	Furio mi presti le chiavi del garage
		NAME 1S.D lend-2S the keys of-the garage
		Furio will you lend me your garage keys
2		(3.6)
3	Azio	non ce le ho
		not EX 3P.A have-1S
		I don't have mine
4		(0.3)
5	Furio	eh uh eh sono mi- anche le mie chiavi di cat- di casa
		PCL uh PCL be.3P also the my keys of of house
		well uh well they're m- also my c- house keys

Extract 5.7 CampGioPrep_2666154

1	Paola	mi prendi un bicchiere di acqua
		1S.D take-2S one glass of water
		will you fetch me a glass of water?
2		(1.1)

```
3 Clara     ma mm c'è l'Orfeo per questo
            but mm EX=be.3S the=NAME for this
            but mm there's Orfeo for this
```

These examples illustrate the typical features of dispreferred responses: the rejection turn includes an account for not complying, it is preceded by prefatory particles (*eh* 'well', *ma* 'but') and contains hesitations (*uh*, *mm*); in Extract 5.6 it is also noticeably delayed, which prompts the requester to pursue the request by giving a reason ('I don't have mine', line 3). What we see here is in line with the findings of many other studies looking at the design of rejections and other dispreferred responses (see Atkinson and Drew 1979:58–61; Heritage 1984:265–6; Pomerantz 1984a; Raymond 2003:947–50; Schegloff 2007b:63–73; Kendrick and Torreira 2015).

Now compare the rejections just examined with the following negative responses given to *hai x* 'do you have x' interrogatives.

Extract 5.8 CampGioPlatea_1145281

```
1           (2.3)

2 Paolo     non è che avete un fazzoletto
            not be.3S CMP have-2P one handkerchief
            don't you guys happen to have a handkerchief?

3           (0.6)

4 Pamela    io no
            1S.N no
            I don't

5 Carla     usat(hh)o
            used
            {a} u(hh)sed {one}
```

Extract 5.9 Circolo01_2718316

```
1 Silvia    suo ((points to Clara))
            hers
            it's hers

2           (0.6)

3 Flavia    uh ti ghe nat ((to Bianca))
               2S.N EX PRT=have-2S=2S.SCL
            uh do you have any?
```

```
4 Bianca    [no ((shakes head))
             no

5 Clara     [mi ghe n'ho uno
             1S.N EX PRT=have-1S one
             I have one
```

Extract 5.10 Circolo01_1279726

```
1 Silvia    ((plays a card))

2 Flavia    gat da nar avanti ((points to card combination))
            EX=have-2S=2S.SCL to go-INF forward
            do you have anything to go on {here}?

3 Bianca    ((shakes head))
```

What is immediately apparent is that negative responses to *hai x* lack the features that characterise rejections of simple interrogative requests, and of other requests more generally. In Extract 5.8, Paolo's *hai x* ('don't you guys happen to have a handkerchief?') is responded to by one of the requestees with a simple negative phrase (*io no* 'I don't'), while the other requestee says that she only has a 'used' handkerchief, which amounts to having no usable one. In both Extracts 5.9 and 5.10, Flavia asks Bianca if she has a certain card for her to make a move. In the first case, Bianca responds with a bare 'no', accompanied by a head shake; in the second, the response consists only of a head shake. All these negative responses are packaged as one brief unit, produced with no noticeable delay, and without prefaces, hesitations or accounts for not complying. This pattern, and the way it contrasts with the construction of rejections of simple interrogative requests, is quantitatively supported, as shown in the following table.[40]

[40] The numbers reported here refer to cases in which the requestee clearly conveys that they are not going to fulfil the (projected) request. Cases in which the request was not heard, ignored, or otherwise dealt with (e.g. 'wait a second') are not included. As for the design features, prefaces include turn-initial components such as *eh* 'well', *ma* 'but' and *uhm*, while hesitations include inter-turn *uh*, *uhm*, and pauses; finally, accounts refer to the provision of a reason for not fulfilling the (projected) request or — in responses to *hai x* — for not having the requested object. The differences in the use of prefaces and accounts are statistically significant ($p < .05$, Fisher's exact test). This quantitative survey doesn't include measurements of delay, as this is methodologically more complex to implement (see Kendrick and Torreira 2015), all the more so with face-to-face interaction data. However, tendencies are visible on the basis of the measurements made by hand for transcription.

NEGATIVE RESPONSES	PREFACES	HESITATIONS	ACCOUNTS
to simple interrogative (*n*=10/79)	60.0% (*n*=6)	40.0% (*n*=4)	90.0% (*n*=9)
to *hai x* interrogative (*n*=12/36)	8.3% (*n*=1)	16.7% (*n*=2)	25.0% (*n*=3)

Table 5.1 Negative responses to *hai x* interrogatives lack the features that characterise rejections, which are instead abundantly found in negative responses to simple interrogatives.

Simple and *hai x* interrogatives are both used for requesting objects. Both forms are relevantly responded to by providing an object for the requester, which leads to a successful completion of the sequence. In terms of preference as a property of sequence structure, negative responses to simple and *hai x* interrogatives are both dispreferred, as they don't support the accomplishment of the activity (Heritage 1984:265; Schegloff 1988:453, 2007b:59–63). Why, then, are dispreferred responses to *hai x* not designed as such? Although people do sometimes produce undelayed and unmitigated dispreferred responses in order to add a special meaning to their action (e.g. convey annoyance or distress), this isn't the case here. Social solidarity isn't threatened in any of the above examples. Rather, responding with a simple and immediate 'no' appears to be the normatively expected, default way to halt the progression of a *hai x* sequence.

The answer to this puzzle, I argue, lies in the specific nature of the action performed by a *hai x* interrogative. While the business of a sequence initiated by *hai x* is to request an object, the particular action implemented by *hai x* is not a request but a *pre*-request. The typical function of a pre-request is to check whether a precondition obtains for a request to be made successfully (Levinson 1983:346–7). This allows the requester to avoid rejection by withholding the request if the precondition isn't met (Levinson 1983:357; Schegloff 2007b:31). What this means is that a negative response to a pre-request such as *hai x* is not a response to the projected request, therefore not a rejection. Answering 'no' to a *hai x* interrogative is instead best analysed as a *blocking response* (Schegloff 2007b:30), which conveys that the precondition for the request is not satisfied (i.e. the object is not available). A blocking response to *hai x* is not about the disposition of the requestee towards the foreseeable request, but about a state of affairs that precludes the accomplishment of the activity. As such, it doesn't have the same status as other dispreferred responses.

Other interrogative forms like the simple interrogative ('will you x') and *puoi x* 'can you x' do not have the same response affordances as *hai x* 'do you have x' because they do

not function as pre-requests. These forms are not understood as enquiring about a precondition upon which the request is contingent. This is evidenced also by the fact that they cannot be normatively responded to "literally" — that is, with only a confirmation that the precondition they formally question obtains (i.e. the requestee's willingness or ability to do something). Such a response option is a prerogative of pre-requests, as we see in the next section.

5.4 Go-ahead responses lead to sequence expansion

In this section, I look at two types of responses that support the accomplishment of the course of action initiated by a *hai x* interrogative: 1) the immediate fulfilment of the projected request, and 2) the *go-ahead* response (Schegloff 2007b:30). These two types of responses give rise to alternative types of sequences: a minimal sequence and an expanded one. Before going into their analysis, however, it will be useful to introduce some of the key concepts from the literature on sequence organisation (Schegloff 1968, 2007b; Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Levinson 1983: ch. 6).

An adjacency pair (see § 1.6.5.1) such as a request sequence can be *expanded* to include additional sequences. There are three main types of additional sequences, which are defined on the basis of their structural position: a *pre-sequence* takes place before the base sequence; an *insert sequence* takes place between the first pair part and the second pair part of the base sequence; and a *post-expansion* (or *post-sequence*) takes place after the second pair part of the base sequence. These three types of additional sequences have distinct interactional functions.

A pre-sequence generally prepares the ground for a prospective base sequence to be produced. This includes obviating potential obstacles that may affect the successfulness or appropriateness of a prospective action. A pre-invitation, for example, checks the availability of the recipient for an activity (e.g. *are you doing anything tonight?*) (Sacks 1992a:685–92), while a pre-announcement can check the newsworthiness of a certain piece of news before a telling is made (e.g. *you know what happened today?*) (Terasaki 2004 [1976]). Preliminary actions such as these allow their producer to avoid an infelicitous prospective action if conditions aren't met (e.g. the invitee is busy or the recipient already knows the news) and enable the responder to anticipate what is coming. The occurrence of the prefigured action is

conditional on the response given to the pre-sequence initiating turn, where the responder has the opportunity to either encourage or discourage the subsequent production of the base first pair part (Schegloff 2007b:41).

Pre-requests are another type of preliminary action whereby the requester checks whether some precondition obtains for a request to be made successfully (Levinson 1983:357; see also Merritt 1976). When wanting to support the course of action initiated by a pre-request such as *hai x* 'do you have x', the responder has two main alternatives.[41] One is to give a *go-ahead* response (Schegloff 2007b:30), illustrated in the example below.

Extract 5.11 (Merritt 1976:324)

```
1 A         Hi. Do you have uh size C flashlight batteries?
2 B         Yes sir
3 A         I'll have four please
4 B         ((turns to get))
```

In line 2, the responder confirms that the target object is available, and therefore that the questioned precondition on the request obtains. In so doing, he forwards the sequence to the request proper (*I'll have four please*), which is then fulfilled. Since early analyses of such cases (Merritt 1976), it has been observed that, in lieu of playing out this four turn sequence in full, the responder may short-circuit it by fulfilling the request in next position, as in the following example.

Extract 5.12 (Sinclair 1976:60)

```
1 S         Have you got Embassy Gold please?
2 H         Yes dear ((provides))
```

Cases like 5.12 have been described as "elliptical" (Merritt 1976:326) or "truncated" sequences (Levinson 1983:362, 2013:111). Such an analysis implies that the four turn sequence in Extract 5.11 is the baseline structure: the unmarked, "canonical" way (Levinson 1987:88) in which a sequence initiated by a pre-request unfolds. Consequently, reduced two turn structures like 5.12 should be seen as departures from the baseline. At the same time,

[41] The response alternatives to a pre-request include also pre-emptive offers (Sacks 1992a:685; Schegloff 1979a:49) and hedging responses (Schegloff 2007b:31). Since neither type occurs in my data, they are not discussed here.

however, it is widely agreed that a minimal sequence in which the projected request is fulfilled in next position is the *most preferred* one, as it pre-empts the need to make a request proper (Levinson 1983:361; Schegloff 2007b:90).[42]

So the standard analysis of pre-request sequences points to a mismatch between structural markedness and preference. The "full canonical form" of these sequences is the least preferred one, whereas the contracted and therefore marked form is the most preferred one. But is it really so? Does this generally reflect the structural organisation of the actions that follow a pre-request?

The standard analysis of Merritt and Levinson is based on pre-request sequences occurring in service encounters. In cases like Extract 5.11, it may not be possible for the server to fulfil the request until the customer specifies how many batteries she wants. This seems to be common in encounters where the quantity or variety of the good wanted cannot be anticipated (Merritt 1976:340; Levinson 1983:362–3; see also Clark 1979). When we look at pre-request sequences in informal settings, however, a different picture emerges. In everyday interaction among family and friends, the requests projected by pre-requests are mostly transparent, which means that they can be immediately fulfilled.[43] Here, the immediate fulfilment of the projected request is not only the most preferred but also, I argue, the unmarked trajectory. The evidence for this comes from the fact that whereas minimal sequences run off in an unproblematic and straightforward way, non-minimal sequences exhibit interactional turbulence. Here, forwarding the sequence to a request proper becomes a way to defer fulfilment and expose a lack of alignment between participants. So, rather than minimal sequences being *truncations* or *contractions* of the canonical form, it is non-minimal sequences that are best analysed as *expansions* of the unmarked and most preferred form. In what follows, I support this argument with examples of both sequence types, starting with minimal ones, which are the most frequent.[44]

In Extract 5.13, a group of people are hanging out in the living room. Snacks and drinks are on the table, including beer and juice, but not milk.

[42] An analogous argument is made for self-identifications on the telephone (Schegloff 1979a, 2007b:88–90).

[43] This applies to all cases in my dataset, and arguably to the majority of cases in everyday informal interaction.

[44] Minimal sequences account for 30.6% of all *hai x* cases (*n*=11/36), whereas non-minimal sequences account for 22.2% (*n*=8/36). The 47.2% (n=17/36) of cases that aren't classified as either minimal or non-minimal sequences include all 12 cases of negative response (see Table 5.1), as well as 5 cases that can't be assigned to any of the other categories, either because the response is not clearly audible, or because it implements an alternative action (the requestee tells the requester where to find the object rather than physically providing it), or because the sequence gets derailed.

Extract 5.13 DopoProve09-2_293350

1 Magda	Ada	
	NAME	
	Ada	
2 Ada	((looks up))	
3 Magda	hai un goccio di latte	
	have-2s one drop of milk	
	do you have a bit of milk?	
4	(0.5)	
6 Ada	mh mh[:: ((nods))	
7 Mina	[vuoi il succo ((to Magda))	
	want-2s the juice	
	do you want juice?	
8	(0.5)	
9 Magda	[no grazie ( )	
	no thanks ( )	
10 Ada	[((stands up and walks to kitchen))	

In line 1, Magda addresses Ada — the group's host — and, after having established eye contact with her (line 2), asks if she has milk, which is not among the beverages available on the table. Ada responds to Magda's *hai x* with a positive polar element (*mh mh*, line 6), accompanied by nodding, and shortly afterwards proceeds to fulfil the request (line 10).

In this context, Magda's question ('do you have a bit of milk?') projects a specific course of action: getting the milk for drinking. Though not currently on the table, milk is a conventional beverage that can be easily asked for among friends. As host of the gathering, Ada can be expected to be aligned with a request that fits into the ongoing activity of consuming refreshments. Given the unproblematic nature of the projected request, there is no reason for Ada not to bring the course of action immediately to completion.

The next example is taken from a card game, in which cards are played by joining them into combinations on the table. Before the extract begins, Clara has passed several cards to her teammate Silvia to be played. While sorting the cards to pass, Clara has temporarily placed some of them on the side. As she comes to the end of her turn, two of these cards — two kings — are still left on the table unplayed. Upon noticing this, Bianca (a member of the opposing team) asks if Clara has three kings.

Extract 5.14 Circolo01_2250009

1 Clara t'hai fat bem ((to Silvia))
2S.SCL=have-2S do-PSTP well
you did well

2 (0.3)

3 Bianca gat tre- tre re ((tapping on the two kings on the table))
EX=have-2S=2S.SCL three three king
do you have three- three kings?

4 (0.6)/((Clara is busy inspecting her cards))

5 Clara me tegn- sì sì ghei dago subito
1S.D keep-1S yes yes 3S.D=3P.A give-1S immediately
I'll kee- yes yes I'll give them to her right away

6 (.)

7 Clara [tre re ((puts cards on the table))
three kings

8 Silvia [ecco
ITJ
there

In order to count for a score, kings must be played in triplets. By asking Clara if she has three kings, Bianca invites her to complete the triplet and play it. In response to Bianca's *hai x*, Clara proceeds to carry out the projected action straightaway. After cutting off the beginning of an unrelated turn ('I'll kee-'), she confirms that she has all the three kings ('yes yes') and commits to giving them to Silvia for them to be played ('I'll give them to her right away'), shortly after which she passes the cards (line 7).

Once again, fulfilling the projected request in next position seems to be the unmarked way to realise the course of action initiated by a *hai x* interrogative. Having previously selected two kings to play, Clara is evidently in accord with Bianca on the need to complete the triplet and end the move. Her response reflects her full alignment with getting the activity accomplished. Note that, both here and in the previous example, fulfilment is preceded by confirmation ('mh mh', 'yes yes yes'). This shows people's understanding of *hai x* as an enquiry to be responded to verbally. *Hai x*, in other words, has a dual nature; it is a request for information that projects a request for action (see Searle 1975; Clark 1979:434–6; Schegloff 2007b:76; Levinson 2013:119, among others). In the data at hand, requestees verbally answer the question in about half of the minimal sequences (*n*=5/11). The criteria for

giving confirmation before fulfilling the request lie beyond the scope of this chapter, but see Clark (1979) for a model of how this might work.

Consider now a third example, where Aldo and Bino are hanging out after lunch at Aldo's place.

Extract 5.15 Aldo&Bino_2973469

```
1            (1.0)

2 Aldo       andiamo a fumare un zait intanto
             go-NPST-1P to smoke-INF one cigarette meantime
             let's go smoke a cigarette in the meantime

3            (0.9)

4 Aldo       tu ne hai
             2S.N PRT have-2S
             do you have any?

5 Bino       sì
             yes

6 Aldo       grande
             big
             great

7            ((both walk out to hall))
```

Aldo's *hai x* comes up in the context of a proposal to smoke a cigarette together. Bino responds by confirming that he has cigarettes for both. Shortly after this, the two of them walk out to the hall, where Bino has left his jacket and cigarettes. What is notable in this sequence is Aldo's third-position turn in line 6 ('great'). Before Bino stands up and goes to get the cigarettes, Aldo acknowledges his compliance with the projected request. In so doing, Aldo orients to fulfilment as forthcoming even before he has full evidence of it — in other words, he takes Bino's 'yes' as a commitment to give him a cigarette. This shows an understanding of the sequence as being complete without the need for him to produce a request proper.

In the three cases we have examined so far, the course of action initiated by *hai x* is realised through a two turn structure. After *hai x* is produced, the requestee confirms the availability of the target object and provides it straightaway, that is, in next position. I argue that this sequence type is not only the most preferred (Levinson 1983:361; Schegloff

2007b:90), but also the canonical way in which a *hai x* pre-request is dealt with in everyday informal interaction. This status of unmarked sequence type emerges even more clearly when we compare cases such as 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15 with others in which the requestee confirms the availability of the target object in next position but does not proceed to provide it, thus leading to a non-minimal sequence.

Extract 5.16 is taken from a bit earlier in the same interaction as Extract 5.15. Aldo and Bino are making plans for an excursion on the snow with friends. Before this extract, they have been talking about the equipment that some of them will bring, including skis for Aldo.

Extract 5.16 Aldo&Bino_2798871

1 Bino e Silvio o sci o ciaspole vab- vabè quello
and NAME or skis or snow.shoes PCL PCL that
and Silvio either skis or snow shoes, wel- well that

2 (0.9)

3 Bino tu ce l'hai la slitta con gli sci sotto
2S.N EX 3S.A=have-2S the sledge with-the skis under
do you have the sledge with the skis underneath?

4 (0.5)

5 Aldo sì
yes

6 Bino integra
intact?

7 Aldo sì (.) però è un po' pesantuccia
yes but be.3S one bit heavy-DIM
yes but it's a bit heavy

8 (0.7)

9 Bino eh [perché io stavo pensando che se] c'è se adesso è fresco
PCL because 1S.N stay-IPF-1S think-GER CMP if EX=be.3S if now be.3S fresh
well because I was thinking that if there is, if it's fresh now

10 Aldo [( )]

11 (0.6)

12 Bino cè la neve è fresca io c- le mie son tutte da::
PCL the snow be.3S fresh 1S.N the my be.3P all for
I mean {if} the snow is fresh, I- my {sledges} are all for::

13 Aldo mh

14 Bino casomai potresti prestarmela
in.case can-CND-2S lend-INF=1S.D=3S.A
could you maybe lend it to me?

15 (0.4)

16 Aldo sì sì (.) è che pesa solo quello
yes yes be.3S CMP weigh-3S only that
yes yes it's just that it's heavy, that's all

17 Bino ma da tirare in su dici
but to pull-INF in up say-2S
to drag along you mean?

18 Aldo eh
PCL
right

19 (1.0)

20 Aldo eh adesso te la faccio sentir giù
PCL now 2S.D 3S.A make-1S feel-INF down
now I'll bring you downstairs to feel it

Bino's *hai x* is produced in the context of listing the snow gear that each friend will bring to the excursion (line 1). The pre-request clearly projects a request to borrow the sledge with 'skis underneath' from Aldo, a request that can therefore potentially be granted in next position, just like in all cases seen above. This time, however, while confirming the availability of the target object, the requestee does not yet undertake to provide it.[45] That Aldo is withholding a granting of the projected request becomes even clearer in the follow-up pre-request sequence (lines 6-7), where Bino asks if the sledge is in a sufficient state of repair. Once again, Aldo responds positively to the pre-request ('yes'), but doesn't show compliance with the projected request. Instead, he raises a potential problem with using the sledge ('but it's a bit heavy'). At this point, Bino begins to build a request proper, starting from the reason why he wants to borrow Aldo's sledge: the snow is fresh and Bino's own sledges don't work well on it (lines 9-12). Note that, after Bino presents his reason, Aldo has yet another opportunity to show compliance, but limits himself to a minimal acknowledgement (*mh*, line 13). At last, Bino comes to delivering an explicit request ('could you maybe lend it to me?'). While eventually accepting the request ('yes yes'), Aldo

[45] Although the provision of the object cannot physically happen in the next few seconds, it is relevant in the here-and-now of the interaction, if only slightly delayed. At the end of the extract (line 20), Aldo says that he will 'now' bring Bino downstairs to inspect the sledge.

reiterates his concern about taking that particular sledge, which may be heavy to carry up the mountain.

This example illustrates how the interactional dynamics of a non-minimal pre-request sequence differ from that of a minimal one. Even though the request is transparent, the requestee withholds an immediate granting. He does so by exploiting the response affordances of pre-requests, which — unlike requests — allow him to advance the sequence by giving only a go-ahead. A go-ahead response forces the requester to do extra work to secure compliance. In this case, Bino first produces another pre-request checking on the usability of the sledge, then provides a reason for wanting to borrow it, and finally delivers a request proper. Forwarding the sequence to these additional steps is a way for Aldo to defer granting and allows him to exhibit a lack of alignment with the projected request. Aldo reveals the reason for his hesitance when giving the go-ahead to the second pre-request (‘yes but it’s a bit heavy’, line 7) and then again when granting the request (line 16).

The next example is taken from the same card game as Extract 5.14. The interaction revolves again around selecting cards to play.

Extract 5.17 Circolo01_1345578

1	Clara	((discards a card))
2		(2.7)
3	Bianca	gat en do ((to Flavia)) EX=have-2S=2S.SCL one two **do you have a two?**
4		(0.4)
5	Flavia	no (.) gò un uh (e- en) jolly gò no EX=have-1S one uh (one one) joker EX=have-1S **no I have a uh (a- a) joker**
6		(0.9)
7	Bianca	no ma gat no but EX=have-2S=2S.SCL **no but do you have**
8		(0.7)/((Bianca points to discard pile))
9	Bianca	per cia- per torla quela lì no for get- for take-INF=3S that there no **{one} to ge- to take that one, do you?**

10 Flavia una ghe nò
one EX PRT=have-1S
I have one

11 (1.1)

12 Flavia una con en jolly
one-F with one-M joker
one with a joker

13 (0.8)

14 Bianca e alora (.) ghe n'è dentro do trei ((points to drawing deck))
and then EX PRT=be.3S inside two three
well then there still two or three in

15 (0.8)

16 Flavia bom ((lays one card))
PCL
alright

17 ((lays another card))

18 mi fago quel che te me disi ti
1S.N do-1S that REL 2S.SCL 1S.D say-2S 2S.N
I do what you tell me to

After Clara discards a card, it is Flavia's turn, and her teammate Bianca asks if she has a 'two' to play. The course of action initiated by Bianca's *hai x* is initially blocked by Flavia ('no'), who however hints at another possible move by asserting that she has a 'joker'. Flavia's response turns out to reveal an apparently problematic understanding of Bianca's pre-request and prompts Bianca to do a third position repair (Schegloff 1992): she reformulates the pre-request and specifies its aim, which is to get hold of the last card on the discard pile (lines 7-9). At this point, Flavia has all the information needed to proceed to fulfil the projected request. But she still doesn't get on with it. Instead, her response is limited to confirming that she is in possession of the target card ('I have one'), and then, after a silence, to reconfirming that she has both the target card and a joker ('one with a joker'). This puts Bianca in a position to pursue Flavia's compliance (line 14). By asserting that there are still two or three cards of a particular type in the drawing deck, Bianca tries to persuade Flavia that the move she is inviting her to perform is a good one. Note that the fact that Bianca doesn't specify what move this is indicates that Flavia knows it already, and therefore that Flavia has given a go-ahead response in an environment in which she could have carried out the projected request straightaway.

As we saw in the prior example, a go-ahead response allows the requestee to defer fulfilment while not precluding it. By putting the requester in a position to pursue compliance, the requestee conveys her hesitance about the projected request. The issue here is that Flavia is not keen on using a joker — a valuable card — for this move. This is seemingly resolved by Bianca's pointing out that there are still two or three jokers in the drawing deck (line 14), which induces Flavia to eventually comply ('alright'). Her acquiescence comes as a result of a negotiation, which has been realised through the expansion of the pre-request sequence. Flavia's final remark ('I do what you tell me to') is a further indication of her reluctance, which has been overcome only by Bianca's persistence.

In a last example, a group of friends, members of a vocal ensemble, are hanging out after their weekly rehearsal. While they are drinking and eating snacks, Magda and Bruna fill out a tax form related to the vocal ensemble. Note that the object requested here, a social security number, is something that every citizen must have. The *hai x* interrogative then refers to whether the requestee has the number *with him* or not.

Extract 5.18 DopoProve09-2_236068

1 Mina	aggiungo 'l Pietro che gò 'l codice fiscale	
	add-1S the NAME CN EX=have-1S the code fiscal	
	I'll add in Pietro, for whom I have the social security number	
2 Bruna	ah beh ma alora aggiungi anca lori basta domandarghelo	
	PCL PCL but then add-NPST-2S also 3P suffice-3S ask-INF=3P.D=3S.A	
	oh well then add them in too, we just need to ask them for it	
3	(1.0)	
4 Bruna	ce l'avete voi il codice fiscale cari ((to Furio))	
	EX 3S.A=have-2P 2P.N the code fiscal dears	
	do you have the social security number, dears?	
5 Furio	((nods))	
6 Bruna	non carri cari	
	not carts dears	
	not tears, dears	
7 Furio	((laughs))	
8	((nods))	
9	sì sì	
	yes yes	
	yes {we do}	

10 (0.5)

11 Bruna ma da::i hanno un codice fiscale
but PCL have-2P one code fiscal
no wa::y, they do have a social security number!

12 (0.5)

13 Bruna [pensa tu
think-IMP.2S 2S.N
fancy that!

14 Mina [ce l'hai a memoria uh (no- o no)
EX 3S.A=have-2S to memory uh (no or no)
do you know it by heart uh (no- or not)

15 Furio ce l'ho qua però ((puts cake down on table))
EX 3S.A=have-1S here though
{no} but I have it here

16 ((searches for social security card in his wallet))

When the extract begins, Mina and Bruna have arrived at a section of the tax form requiring them to list the core members of the vocal ensemble, together with their personal details and their social security number. In line 2, Bruna prompts Mina to 'add them in too', by which she refers to Furio and his two brothers — the youngest members of the ensemble. Then, continuing her turn, she anticipates the making of a request for their social security number ('we just need to ask them for it'). After a brief silence, Bruna goes on to produce the target *hai x* interrogative. Although the utterance is addressed to a plurality ('dears'), Furio is the only actual recipient, as his brothers are momentarily not present in the room. Furio is sitting across the table from Bruna, eating cake. Upon hearing Bruna's pre-request, he raises his gaze to her and responds by nodding — confirming that the precondition being enquired about obtains. In lines 6-7, a side sequence takes place in which Bruna topicalises her use of the word *cari* 'dears' and makes a pun on its similarity to another word (a minimal pair). Furio responds to the pun with laughter, after which he reiterates the go-ahead response to Bruna's pre-request ('yes we do', line 9). In so doing, Furio passes up a second opportunity to proceed to fulfil the projected request (giving his social security number to Bruna and Mina).

What happens next sheds further light on the marked status of go-ahead responses in the organisation of everyday pre-request sequences. Seeing that no fulfilment of the projected request is forthcoming, Bruna produces a tease based on the very relation between Furio's

response and that which was expected. By producing a mock news receipt ('no wa::y, they do have a social security number!'), she humorously recasts the *hai x* sequence as information-seeking. Under this scenario, Furio has just given her a trivial piece of information, in that every citizen must have a social security number. What is crucial is that the humour arises from a contrast between Bianca's parodic reinterpretation of the foregoing *hai x* sequence with its real purpose: getting the social security number from Furio. Bruna's jovial mockery displays her understanding of Furio's go-ahead responses (lines 5, 8-9) as flouting the normal development of the sequence — that is, as delaying a fulfilment that was expectable in next position to the pre-request.[46] The course of action comes to a close after Mina pursues Furio's compliance by asking if he knows his social security number by heart (line 14). At this point, Furio responds by fulfilling the projected request.

5.5 Discussion

Hai x 'do you have x' interrogatives have a specific function in the Italian request system: they launch a sequence aimed to request an object possessed by the requestee that may or may not be available. The potential unavailability of the object is a real contingency upon which the request is conditional. This makes the action performed by *hai x* interrogatives a *pre-request* (Sacks 1992a:685; Schegloff 1980:114; Levinson 1983:356). In this chapter, I have been concerned with how the status of *hai x* as a pre-request is reflected in the domains of preference and sequence organisation.

Hai x sequences exhibit two special properties that are not found in other request sequences. The first relates to negative responses to *hai x*, which are defined as *blocking responses* (Schegloff 2007b:30). The finding here is that blocking responses are not designed as dispreferreds. This suggests that, even though — from a structural point of view — blocking responses do not align with the action of the first pair part (Schegloff 2007b:59), they don't have the same status as other dispreferred responses. Why should this be so? The answer seems to lie in the nature of preliminary actions and in their relation to the actions they are preliminary to.

[46] One plausible reason for Furio to delay fulfilment here is that he is busy eating his cake. Responding with only confirmation is consistent with not halting his current activity to engage in another (retrieving his social security card). This is supported by the fact that Furio keeps eating his cake throughout the sequence, and that he eventually puts it down only after Mina pursues his compliance (line 15).

A request proper — implemented, say, through a simple or *puoi x* 'can you x' interrogative — makes compliance contingent on no prerequisite other than the willingness or disposition of the requestee. Rejecting or denying a request is therefore done on the basis of the requestee's choice, however motivated. And if the choice is compelled by reasons beyond the requestee's will, these need to be introduced into the interaction and explained. As such, rejections require qualifying and justifying what would otherwise be a potential infringement of social solidarity (Heritage 1984:265–80; Brown and Levinson 1987). A pre-request like *hai x*, on the other hand, anticipates by its very design the possibility of a condition preventing the realisability of a course of action. Blocking such a course of action is not done on the basis of the requestee's individual reasons, but on an eventuality that is already understood by the requester as precluding compliance — which the blocking response simply reports.

The status of such a responding action can also be captured in terms of reduced *agency*. In most cases of everyday interaction, not being in possession of particular objects — handkerchiefs, lighters, sweets, specific playing cards — is a condition that is beyond a person's control. This means that the requestee's flexibility to determine the outcome of the sequence, and their accountability for it, is much reduced (Kockelman 2007; Enfield 2013b: ch. 9). In other words, if I don't have an object and I'm not accountable for lacking it, I don't need to qualify or motivate my inability to provide it.[47] Similar principles may play a role in the design of blocking responses to other types of preliminary actions (e.g. pre-offers and pre-invitations) — a worthwhile avenue of future research.

In Section 5.4 of this chapter, I have been concerned with the organisation of sequences that are successful in soliciting the transfer of an object. In my data, there are two types of responses that support a *hai x* pre-request: 1) the immediate fulfilment of the projected request, and 2) the *go-ahead* response (Schegloff 2007b:30) — a confirmation that the target object is available. These two responding actions give rise to two different types of sequences: 1) a minimal two turn structure, and 2) a non-minimal structure in which the go-ahead is followed by (at least) a request proper and its fulfilment.

Previous literature analyses minimal sequences as a *truncation* or *contraction* of the full non-minimal form (Merritt 1976:326; Levinson 1983:362). This terminology is justified when comparing the two sequence types at a surface level: a two turn sequence is reduced

[47] This is another possible point of divergence between *hai x* sequences in informal interaction and in institutional service encounters, where merchants do sometimes account for not having certain goods in stock (Merritt 1976).

relative to a larger sequence of four turns or more. But if our purpose is to define the structural relation between the two sequence types from an interactional point of view — that is, from the point of view of the participants that construct them — the analysis needs to be revised.

In the everyday informal interactions examined in this study, the request projected by *hai x* is always transparent. This being the case, its fulfilment should normally occur in next position. Cases like 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15 show that a two turn structure is the canonical, unmarked way in which *hai x* sequences unfold. This is in keeping with a widespread preference for progressivity in interaction (Schegloff 1979b:268; Stivers and Robinson 2006; Heritage 2007), which favours actions that facilitate the accomplishment or advancement of an activity over actions that disrupt it (cf. Levinson 1987 on minimisation). On this account, a responding action that delays the fulfilment of the projected request is a symptom of some interactional difficulty or friction. And indeed, as cases like 5.16, 5.17 and 5.18 show, go-ahead responses are associated with a lack of alignment between participants. While the reasons for this vary across cases, what is common to them is that forwarding the sequence with a go-ahead is a way for the requestee to defer compliance, as this forces the introduction of at least two additional actions (the go-ahead itself and the subsequent request proper). This puts the requester in a position to do additional work to secure compliance. Given the possibility of complying in next position, this larger sequence is best characterised as an *expansion* of what could have been a minimal sequence.

This resembles the interactional outcomes of other kinds of sequence expansions, and in particular the way in which other-initiated repair *insertions* can operate as *pre-rejections* and *pre-disagreements* (Schegloff et al. 1977:380; Drew 1997; Schegloff 2007b:102–6). The expansion of a pre-request sequence presents obvious differences from "pre-dispreferred" insertion sequences. For one thing, a repair initiation works retrospectively by establishing a backward sequential relation to the repairable turn (Schegloff 2007b: ch. 11), whereas a go-ahead response is made relevant prospectively as a legitimate second pair part to the pre-request. Also, whereas pre-rejections and pre-disagreements are harbingers of dispreferred base second pair parts, most pre-request sequences furthered with a go-ahead response are eventually completed by a preferred second pair part to the request. Yet the two types of sequence involve a common structural operation: pre-dispreferreds and go-ahead responses both break contiguity between a first pair part and the accomplishment of the course of action

initiated by it. Referring to both phenomena as cases of *expansion* is therefore motivated by the displacement of a sequentially implicated next action (Schegloff 1979b:267–8).

In sum, the *hai x* 'do you have x' form functions as a pre-request, an enquiry about a precondition for a request to be made. Recipients always have the possibility to take it at its face value and respond to it only as a question. But when the projected request is transparent, they should not stonewall. If they do, it is for a reason.

This mechanism isn't restricted to pre-requests for practical actions. A pre-request for information like 'do you have the time?' cannot be normally responded to with only 'yes I do' — such a response would be taken as deliberately uncooperative (Clark 1979). The mechanism is also not restricted to pre-requests in the *hai x* 'do you have x' form. Consider the following example. During a family dinner, Eliana points to a water jug sitting next to Mattia and asks him if it is full.

Extract 5.19 NataleSala02_2494409

1	Eliana	la brocca è ancora piena Mattia ((points to water jug)) the jug be.3s still full NAME **is the jug still full Mattia?**
2	Mattia	come how **sorry?**
3	Eliana	è piena ((keeps pointing to water jug)) be.3s full **is it full?**
4		(1.0)/((Mattia looks into jug))
5	Mattia	no però a metà sì ((passes jug to Eliana)) no but to half yes **no but half full yes**
6		(0.7)
7	Eliana	°(grazie)° **°(thanks)°**

Eliana's question here is motivated by the fact that she cannot know if there is still water in the jug, because it is not see-through and is distant from her. After the repair sequence (lines 2-3), Mattia's first response demonstrates the function of Eliana's utterance as a request for information. He looks into the jug to obtain the information (line 4) and then provides an

answer: ‘no’ (line 5). At the same time, an utterance like ‘is it full?’ produced at the dining table makes it easy for Mattia to anticipate that Eliana wants the water for drinking, which he is in a position to provide straightaway (cf. Extract 5.13). The second part of Mattia’s answer (‘but half full yes’) orients to this. Though the jug isn’t literally full, it contains enough water for Eliana to pour herself a glass. This verbal response is simultaneous with Mattia’s passing the jug to Eliana.

Here, again, a pre-request makes a request contingent on the obtaining of a precondition. At the same time, it makes the fulfilment of the request possible in next position. A response merely confirming the precondition here would be taken as stonewalling. What this chapter has shown, then, is a general principle that potentially applies to a wide range of preliminary actions in everyday interaction.

6 At the borderline of requesting: the use of impersonal deontic declaratives[48]

6.1 Introduction

Sentence types and constructions generally have more than one pragmatic function (Bolinger 1957, 1967; Sadock and Zwicky 1985; Heritage 2012b; Couper-Kuhlen 2014). A declarative construction like *it's late*, for example, can be used for a wide range of purposes including informing, complaining, requesting, and more. For the analysis of any multifunctional form, there are two central questions. How is the form fit for its different functions? And how do people know which function the form has in a given context?

Explaining how linguistic structures are designed and understood to deliver different social actions is a long standing challenge for pragmatics (see Levinson 2013 for a review). While some scholars have emphasised the role played by the linguistic signal itself — with its morphosyntactic details and prosodic realisation — others have emphasised the importance of the social, sequential and material context. This tension between *bottom-up* and *top-down* cues in the ascription of action is a matter of ongoing debate (Levinson 2013:116–7). Progress in this area, however, is unlikely to turn on whether it is the signal or the context that rules — we need both — but on understanding their distinct contributions and relative salience on different occasions (Heritage 2012a:77).

The present study feeds into this line of research by focussing on impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x'. These constructions are used in Italian and other languages to express the obligation or need to carry out an action without specifying who the obligation refers to or who should fulfil it (Berman 1980; Benincà and Poletto 1994; Hansen 2001; Yan and Siewierska 2011; Zinken and Ogiermann 2011).

It has been argued that, when a Polish speaker uses the construction *trzeba x* 'it is necessary to x', they are neither *asking* nor *telling* somebody to do something (cf. Craven and

[48] The study reported in this chapter was done in collaboration with Jörg Zinken (Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim), using both Italian and Polish data. The two-language version of the study has been accepted for publication in *Language* as Rossi, Giovanni, and Jörg Zinken, "Grammar and Social Agency: The Pragmatics of Impersonal Deontic Statements." In this chapter, I present a qualitative analysis of the Italian data, and — in appendix — a quantative analysis of the Italian and Polish data combined.

Potter 2010), but simply *mentioning* a necessary action, thus giving others the opportunity to "assume responsibility and actively involve themselves in accomplishing that action" (Zinken and Ogiermann 2011:270–1). But impersonal deontic declaratives aren't only a strategy for getting others to act. By saying 'it is necessary to x', speakers may also explain or justify their own behaviour as they undertake to do something, or even justify their own behaviour while simultaneously getting another person to help. One of the goals of this study is therefore to explain how this form can function as a *request* in some cases, as an *account* in others, or as both and neither of these.

At the core of this versatility is the grammatical make-up of impersonal deontic declaratives. By being deontic and impersonal, they have the potential to both mobilise and legitimise an act by different participants in the speech event. They sit on the edge, as it were, between different types of actions. At the same time, their pragmatics is systematically shaped by two factors: i) the relative responsibility of participants for the task in question, and ii) the presence of particular nonverbal features accompanying the speaker's utterance. In Section 6.3.2, I show that:

- when the responsibility to deal with a necessary task clearly falls on a specific person before the impersonal deontic declarative is produced, this person is designated as the agent;
- when, however, the responsibility cannot be readily determined, the designation of the agent becomes contingent upon other interactional elements, most importantly the speaker's nonverbal conduct while uttering the statement.
    - On the one hand, speaker gaze to a co-participant regularly prompts this co-participant to deal with the necessary task, giving the statement the force of a request;
    - on the other hand, the incipient engagement of the speaker in doing the task promotes the speaker's lone involvement in it, as it is likely to obviate the need for other co-participants to see to it. This gives the statement the force of an account of the speaker's own behaviour.

But the pragmatics of impersonal deontic declaratives cannot be reduced to an opposition between two actions — requests versus accounts. In Section 6.4, I show that the use of this form can give rise to more complex interactions, including ones in which the

import of the statement cannot be categorised as either a request or an account, others in which the designation of the agent becomes a matter of negotiation, and still others in which the statement simply goes unresponded. The analysis of these interactions invites us to consider how impersonal deontic declaratives afford an open response space.

6.2 Impersonal deontic forms

Impersonal deontic declaratives are semantically modal. They express the obligatoriness or necessity of an event, as do English verbs such as *must* and *need* or constructions like *the door is to be kept shut* (see Lyons 1977b: ch. 17; Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994: ch. 6; Van Der Auwera and Plungian 1998; Palmer 2001). In addition, they leave unspecified both who the obligation refers to and who ought to carry out the necessary act. In Italian, this can be achieved in at least two ways. The first and most frequent one is by using the impersonal auxiliary *bisogna*: a subjectless verb that takes a non-referential third person singular inflection (*-a*), expressing a state of necessity specified in the infinitive clause that follows it (Benincà and Poletto 1994).

Example 6.1

bisogna *aggiungere* *più* *parmigiano*
necessitate-3S add-INF more Parmesan
'it is necessary to add more Parmesan'

Another way of expressing an obligation without tying it to any particular individual is by intransitive constructions with non-human subjects, as in the English *the rubbish has to be thrown out*.

Example 6.2

ci *vuole* *un* *mestolo*
EX want-3S one ladle
'there must be a ladle / a ladle is needed'

Example 6.3

c'è il pane da tagliare
EX=be.3S the bread to cut-INF
'the bread is to be cut'

For the sake of simplicity, I refer to all these construction types as impersonal (cf. Siewierska 2008). In terms of modality, the obligation or necessity expressed by these forms can be interpreted as grounded in social, ethical norms, or as determined by natural, environmental causes. For our purposes, what matters is that both kinds of conditioning factors are external to the participants involved. The statements can therefore be referred to as *deontic* (Palmer 2001:6). Their use in the present data doesn't call for a pragmatic distinction between different modal meanings.[49]

The data used for this chapter include 68 cases in which an impersonal deontic declarative functions primarily as a request, exhaustively drawn from 45 recordings (25 hours), combining core and supplemental samples (see Table 1.2). In addition, it also includes 21 cases — drawn from the same recordings — in which the same form functions primarily as an account.

The collection was restricted on the basis of the constructional status of the statement in the speaker's conversational turn. The focal cases are ones in which the statement is built as the main turn-constructional unit of the turn (Sacks et al. 1974:702–4). In grammatical terms, these are cases in which the statement is the only clause in the turn (e.g. 'oh, it is necessary to open the window, John'), or the clause around which other clausal elements are syntactically organised (e.g. 'it is necessary to open the window, I think, because it's getting too hot in here'). Cases in which the statement is subordinated to another clause (e.g. 'we should get started, because it is necessary to finish the job by tonight') are excluded.

[49] The term *deontics* has been recently used to refer to people's rights and obligations to direct each other's practical behaviour (Stevanovic and Peräkylä 2012, 2014). Here, the term doesn't refer to the linguistic coding of obligatoriness or necessity, but to the social organisation of action. According to Stevanovic and Peräkylä, deontic authority is "the right to determine future actions", that is, the right to decide whether or not something should be done. In the present study, another dimension becomes relevant. When someone makes an impersonal deontic statement, the issue is not — or not only — *whether or not* something should be done, but rather *who* is going to do it.

6.3 Impersonal deontic declaratives as one of two actions

6.3.1 Requests versus accounts

Impersonal deontic declaratives often appear to realise one of two social actions: either a *request* for someone to do something, or else an *account* of the speaker's doing that something. I begin the analysis by illustrating these two distinct actions and the way in which impersonal deontic declaratives come to implement them.

In sequence organisation, a request is the first pair part of an adjacency pair that projects a second pair part with one of two outcomes: the fulfilment of the request or a rejection of it (Schegloff 2007b:59). A request makes the occurrence of one of these next moves conditionally relevant, which means that any other next move including nonresponding becomes accountable and sanctionable (Schegloff 1968; Schegloff and Sacks 1973). Crucially, fulfilment or refusal to fulfil the request are actions to be produced by the recipient of the request: a person different from the speaker.

Extract 6.4 shows a case in which an impersonal deontic declarative has the force of a request. People are working in the kitchen of a holiday camp. Eliana addresses Linda and obtains her attention (lines 1-4), at which point she tells her that 'the next tray is to be put in [the dishwasher]'. Linda then takes the tray and proceeds to load it.

Extract 6.4 CampGioLava_1368792

1	Eliana	Linda NAME **Linda**
2		(.)
3	Eliana	donna delle dei piatti woman of-the of-the plates **dishes woman**
4		(1.1)/((Linda turns to Eliana and smiles))
5	Eliana	ehm la nuova ringhiera è da metter dentro ((points to tray)) uhm the new railing be.3S to put-INF inside **uhm the next tray is to be put in**
6	Linda	((takes dishwasher tray from Pamela))

The structure of this interaction is analogous to a request sequence. A first action (the target statement) is paired with a relevant next action (the fulfilment of the need) produced in response to it. The impersonal deontic declarative here has a similar effect to an imperative or interrogative form of requesting (e.g. 'put in the next tray' or 'can you put in the next tray?'). But why does Eliana use this form? One reason seems to be that Linda isn't the only person involved in the task. The request here is not a simple one-to-one transaction. Another person (Pamela) has just removed the tray from where it has been unloaded and, together with others, will help Linda reload it with dirty dishes. Although Linda is the main person assigned to taking the tray in and out of the dishwasher — the 'dishes woman' (line 3) — other people are implicated in making this happen. The statement mobilises Linda to start the process without restricting participation in it to her alone, but rather presenting it as a collective affair.

Let's now consider a case in which an impersonal deontic declarative plays out as an account. An account can be broadly defined as the provision of a rationale for a stretch of the speaker's behaviour (Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984: ch. 6; Antaki 1994; Parry 2009). Upon leaving a conversation, for instance, somebody may say *I need to use the bathroom* (Goodwin 1987). Accounts can be produced both as remedial actions to untoward behaviour (Scott and Lyman 1968) and in reference to regular conduct, for example to "make it plain" (Antaki 1994:2), or to "validate and promote a current agenda" (Waring 2007:367). In sequence organisation, accounts can be made relevant after a complaint (Drew 1998) or explicitly requested through a question: *why did you do that?* (Bolden and Robinson 2011). But they can also be provided without having been solicited, as in the case of our impersonal deontic declaratives.

In Extract 6.5, a large family dinner has just begun. Some of the diners are queueing in the kitchen area to get their portion of pasta. After having distributed a few plates, Eva notices that the Parmesan is missing (line 1) and turns to the other workers in the kitchen to request that they get it and distribute it (lines 3-5). The request is accepted by Ada (line 4), who then moves towards the diners who have already been served. In the following few seconds, Eva makes another portion of pasta for Lisa and, in line 6, asks her if she wants Parmesan on it. Seeing that the Parmesan hasn't been fetched yet, Eva looks around for it (line 8), finds the bag (line 9) and hands it over to Ada (line 10). As the diners gather around Ada, she states that 'it is necessary to open it'.

Extract 6.5 Natale02_2528056

1 Eva manca 'l formaggio
lack-3S the cheese
the Parmesan is missing

2 (0.3)

3 Eva scuseme podé tor (.) puoi [pren]dere il formaggio=
excuse-NPST-2P=1S.A can-2P take-INF can-2S take-INF the cheese
excuse me can you guys get can you get the Parmesan

4 Ada [sì]
yes

5 Eva =e darglielo lì
and give-INF=D=3S.A there
and give it to them?

((5 seconds omitted))

6 Eva formaggio
cheese
Parmesan?

7 Lisa u::h sì grazie
u::h yes thanks

8 Eva el formaggio no so ((turns around looking for the Parmesan))
the cheese not know-1S
the Parmesan, I don't know

9 (0.7)/((Eva grabs Parmesan bag))

10 Eva l'è [chi ((hands Parmesan bag to Ada))
EX=be.3S here
it's here

11 Ada [qua ((takes Parmesan bag))
here

13 Eva ( )

14 Ada bisogna: bisogna aprirlo ((seizes one side of bag to tear it))
necessitate-3S necessitate-3S open-INF=3S.A
it is necessary to: it is necessary to open it

15 (1.2)/((Ada opens Parmesan bag))

16 Ada pronti
ready-P
there we go

```
17          (0.4)

18 Ada      pronti formaggio
            ready-P cheese
            there we go with the Parmesan
```

While saying that 'it is necessary to open it', Ada seizes one side of the Parmesan bag to tear it off. The temporal overlap between Ada's words and actions characterises her statement as an account of what she is doing. Unlike in Extract 6.4, the statement does not project the accomplishment of the necessary task by another person, and no response comes from any of the people around her.

Ada could have formulated an account of her behaviour also with a first person form like 'I need to open it'. But this would not reflect the configuration in which the necessary task becomes relevant. Ada is not opening and distributing the Parmesan for a personal reason, but in response to a problem raised by Eva a few moments earlier: the Parmesan is missing (line 1) and the diners are waiting for it (lines 6-7). Opening the bag is therefore necessary on behalf of all the people gathered around her.

6.3.2 How do people know how to respond?

We have seen that impersonal deontic declaratives sometimes work as a request and sometimes as an account. But how do recipients know which it is, and thus how to respond? How do they understand who is to carry out the necessary task if the statement itself does not specify it?

6.3.2.1 *Responsibility*

One factor is that the task may clearly fall within someone's responsibility. In everyday interaction, responsibilities often derive from the distribution of labour and roles in joint activities. In Extract 6.4, Linda is in charge of taking trays in and out of the dishwasher — she is the 'dishes woman' (line 3). Within this domain, her obligation to act is higher than for others, until the activity is over. Similarly, in Extract 6.5, by accepting Eva's request (line 4), Ada has committed to getting and distributing the Parmesan, which is reflected in the fact that Eva hands the bag over to her (line 10).

At other times, an asymmetry in the relative responsibility of people for an action emerges more contingently. Someone can be more responsible for an action at a given moment because it becomes relevant as part of a course of action in which they are already engaged, or because they are manipulating tools or objects implicated in the action. Consider the next two cases.

In Extract 6.6, Eva and Mirko are peeling carrots. In line 1, Mirko finishes peeling a carrot and places it in the grinder. Having no more carrots within reach, he then walks to the table where Eva is peeling (line 2) and takes two peeled carrots to take them to the grinder (line 3). Upon noticing this, Eva states that the carrot tops are yet to be cut.

Extract 6.6 Camillo_805644

1	Mirko	((finishes peeling carrot and places it in the grinder))
2		((walks to table))
3		((takes two peeled carrots from table))
4	Eva	manc- bis- gh'è da taiarghe i [cosi eh lack- necessitate- EX=be.3S to cut-INF=D the thingies PCL **there's- it is nec- the thingies are to be cut**
5	Mirko	[va bene go.3S well **alright**
6		(4.0)/((Mirko walks back to grinder))
7	Mirko	((cuts off carrot tops))

Eva and Mirko are involved in preparing the carrots together. Generally speaking, then, the responsibility for cutting off their tops doesn't belong to either of them in particular. If anything, the carrots in question are carrots that Eva herself has peeled and not yet finished preparing. When Eva makes her statement, however, Mirko has taken the carrots in his hands and is moving back to the worktop where the grinder is. What makes it clear that Mirko should be the one cutting off the tops is that the carrots are now in his physical control.

In another case, people are doing washing and cleaning up after lunch. Leo has just brought a tray in the kitchen with some leftovers. He first offers the leftovers to the others (1-3), and then, following a proposal by Sandra (lines 4-10), sets out to throw them away. But, as he looks to the rubbish bin (around line 12), he slows down, appearing to notice that the

bag is full, and glances around to locate a free spot where he can rest the tray (line 14). At that point, he produces an impersonal deontic declarative while placing the tray on the worktop (line 15), after which he walks off to the kitchen pantry, where the new rubbish bags are kept.

Extract 6.7 CampUniLava_521433

```
1 Leo       pezzo di panettone ((to Gigi, off-camera))
            piece of panettone
            {want a} piece of panettone?

2 Gigi      (  [  ) ((off-camera, probably declines offer))

3 Leo          [after
                later

4 Sandra       [sono fuori da due giorni comunque eh ((to Leo))
                be.3P out from two days anyway PCL
                they've been out for two days actually

5           secondo me si possono anche b[uttar vi]a
            following 1s.A RFL can-3P also throw-INF away
            I think we can also throw them away

6 Leo                                     [  anda  ]
                                              PCL
                                         off they go?
7 Sandra    ((nods))

8           (0.8)

9 Sandra    cè son rimasti proprio fuori senz[a::
            PCL be.3P remain-PSTP really out without
            I mean they've been simply out without any::

10 Leo                                        [(vabom)
                                               (PCL)
                                               (alright)

11          ((picks up leftovers and moves to rubbish bin))

12 Gioia    beh al massimo sono un po' (s[ecchi)
            PCL at maximum be.3P one bit (dry)
            well at worst they're a bit (dry)

13 Leo                                    [(e)::: ((slows down))
                                           (and)
                                          (uhm):::

14          (0.3)/((Leo glances around))
```

15	Leo	'petta bisogna prendere i:: °sacchetti° ((puts tray down)) wait-IMP-2S necessitate-3S take-INF the sacks-DIM **wait it is necessary to get the:: °bags°**
16		((walks to pantry to get rubbish bags))

As Leo says 'it is necessary to get the bags', he undertakes to perform the necessary action himself. The statement here functions as an account of his behaviour, providing a rationale for what might otherwise be interpreted as abandoning what he has just set out to do (cf. Goffman 1967: ch. 4; Garfinkel 1967: ch. 2). Leo could achieve this also by saying 'I need to get the bags'. Such a form, however, would frame the action as his individual business, dissociating it from the larger collaborative activity. Leo is throwing out the leftovers by virtue of a joint decision with others in lines 4-10, which motivates framing what he is doing as a collective pursuit.

But how do Leo's co-participants know that they aren't being asked to help? The strongest cue here seems that getting new rubbish bags becomes necessary as part of a course of action Leo is already engaged in. Having taken it upon himself to throw out the leftovers, Leo is in a position to see to other actions that may be required along the way. Another cue is that, unlike in Extracts 6.4 and 6.6, the impersonal deontic declarative is not *addressed* to anyone. Leo doesn't gaze at any of his co-participants and produces the end part of the statement with low voice ('°bags°').

6.3.2.2 *Speaker's nonverbal behaviour*

In all cases examined so far, the interpretation of an impersonal deontic declarative is informed by the context in which it occurs. The matter of who is to carry out the necessary task — and therefore of whether the statement is functioning as a request or as an account — is readily sorted out on the basis of people's relative responsibility for it. Such a contextual determiner, however, isn't always available. Consider the interaction leading up to the statement in the following two cases.

In Extract 6.8, Magda and her friends, members of a vocal ensemble, are hanging out after their weekly rehearsal. While they are drinking and eating snacks, Magda reads out a tax form about the vocal ensemble, and a consultation takes place on how questions should be answered. Up to this point, however, no record has been kept of the decisions made.

Extract 6.8 DopoProve09-1_1183900

1 Magda e in più: il discorso de:i degli amministratori
and in more the discourse of-the of-the administrators
and then also the matter of the managers

2 del codice fiscale dello stato dove sono assunti
of-the code fiscal of-the status where be.3P employed
of the social security number, of the status they get

3 (3.0)

4 Magda bisom tor na mati:ta °così da veder 'n atimo se::°
necessitate-3S take-INF one pencil so to see-INF one instant if
it is necessary to get a pencil °to see a moment whether°

5 (2.0)

6 Magda la prima volta che ( )
the first time CMP
the first time that ( )

7 [((mumbles))

8 Pietro [beh secondo me [to' guarda una matita qua c'è ((leans))
PCL following 1S.A ITJ look-IMP.2S one pencil here EX=be.3S
well I think- here you are, look here is a pencil

9 Bruna [((reaches for pencil))

10 Magda [vai
PCL
there we go

11 Bruna [((hands pencil to Pietro))

12 Pietro ((hands pencil to Magda))

In lines 1-2, Magda lists a few more points of the tax form that need to be dealt with. After a pause (line 3), during which she raises her head from the form, Magda produces an impersonal deontic declarative about the need of getting a pencil for taking notes of what is being agreed upon.

Our focus here is on the interactional configuration before the statement is produced. A few pencils, which were used for the rehearsal, are scattered on the table, buried under snacks and drinks. Nobody has a pencil now or has just used one. Since Magda is leading the decision process, she is plausibly in a better position to keep notes, but this doesn't imply that it is easier for her to retrieve a pencil. Throughout lines 1-3, Magda's co-participants have

been all sitting about, munching and nibbling on their snacks. Thus, at the time of Magda's impersonal deontic declarative, there's no apparent basis for assigning the responsibility for getting a pencil to any one individual.

A comparable situation can be found in Extract 6.9, where a group of friends is about to play a board game. Before the extract begins, Franco has proposed to play girls against boys. But Sofia points out that there are more boys (line 1) and goes on to suggest that one of them join the girls' team (line 4). A discussion then arises as to who this should be. Beata proposes Franco (line 6), but Diego and Sofia express their opposition to this (lines 8, 10 and 12). In this context, Sandro states that, in any case, 'a man must play with the girls'.[50]

Extract 6.9 CampUniTaboo01_701320

1 Sofia sì però voi siete di più
yes but 2P.N be.2P of more
yes but you guys are more

2 (0.6)

3 Franco ah è vero
oh be.3S true
oh that's true

4 Sofia o o un uomo vie- gioca con noi
or or one man come-3S play-3S with 1P
either a man com- plays with us

5 Sandro eh [Mario gioca con:
PCL NAME play-3S with
well, Mario will play with:

6 Beata [io voto Franco
1S.N vote-1S NAME
I vote for Franco

7 (0.9)/((Beata and Sofia laugh))

8 Diego [no no no no
no no no no

9 Mario [e ( )
and
and ( )

[50] The statement here is not entirely impersonal, in that it restricts the possible candidates to the male participants. However, the fact that it does not tie the obligation to any particular individual makes it akin to the other forms in the collection.

10 Sofia [io non lo voglio ((points to Franco))
1S.N not 3S.A want-1S
I don't want him

11 (0.3)/((Mario walks away to get a chair))

12 Diego Franco mi serve
NAME 1S.D serve-3S
I need Franco

13 Sandro u- un uomo deve giocare con le ragazze ((gazes at Mario))
one one man must-3S play-INF with the girls
a- a man must play with the girls

14 Mario bom gioco io dai
PCL play-1S 1S.N PCL
alright I'll play {with them}

15 Flora vai perfetto
PCL perfect
okay excellent

The discussion until line 12 shows that, before Sandro's statement, it isn't clear who should join the girls' team. All the five males who are present are potential candidates. Shortly after Sofia raises the issue of making the teams equal, Sandro begins a turn that seems to suggest on which side Mario should play ('well, Mario will play with:', line 5). However, he abandons the turn before it is complete, thereby making no effective suggestion.[51] Moreover, even assuming that Beata and Diego's objections are sufficient to rule out both Franco and Diego, when Sandro states that 'a man must play with the girls', there are still three available candidates: Sandro, Mario and another person.

The analysis suggests that, in cases such as 6.8 and 6.9, the nonverbal behaviour of the speaker during the production of the impersonal deontic declarative can serve as a cue for designating the accomplisher of the necessary task. A key behaviour with this functional property is speaker gaze. In Extract 6.8, while producing the statement, Magda noticeably tosses her head towards Pietro and gazes at him (Figure 6.1). In so doing, she singles him out as a privileged recipient of her statement. After a pause, Magda goes back to reading the tax form (line 6), at which point Pietro responds by registering the presence of a pencil on the table ('here you are, look here is a pencil') and by simultaneously leaning forward to reach it. As Pietro reaches across the table, Bruna locates the pencil, picks it up, and hands it to him (line 11), after which the pencil finally arrives in Magda's hands.

[51] Sandro's hesitance here is meaningful in view of the alternative strategy he later selects to enlist Mario.

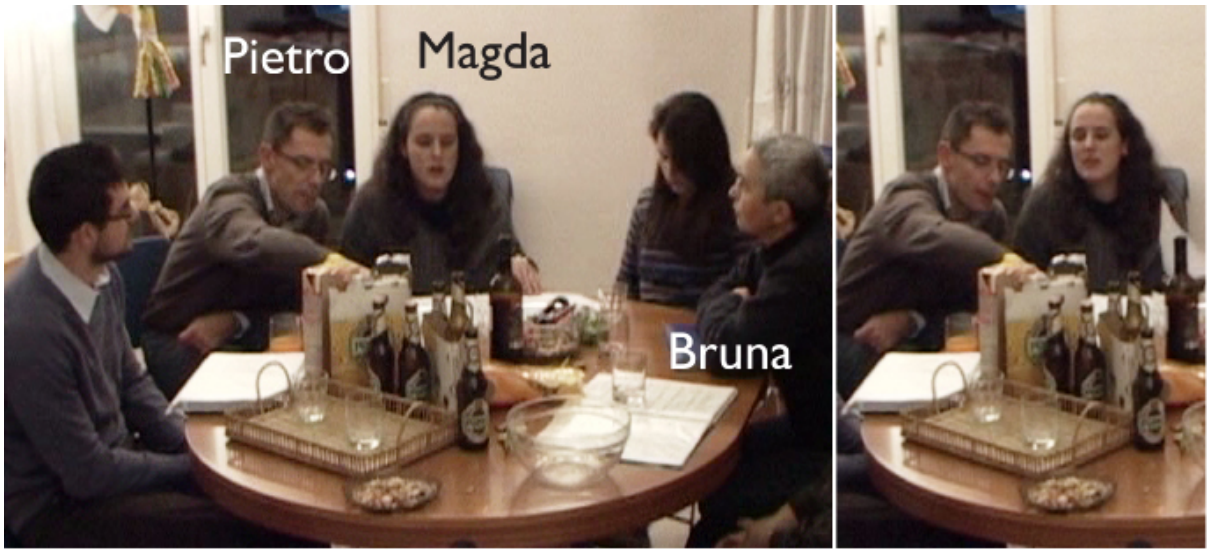


Figure 6.1 Frames from lines 3 and 4, Extract 6.8. In the left frame, Magda raises her head from the tax form; in the right frame, she says 'it is necessary to get a pencil' while tossing her head towards Pietro and gazing at him.

Similarly, in Extract 6.9, Sandro produces his statement while gazing to Mario as he walks around the table to get another chair (Figure 6.2). Mario then responds by volunteering to play with the girls.

Figure 6.2 Frame from line 11, Extract 6.9. Sandro says 'a man must play with the girls' while gazing at Mario as he walks around the table.

It is well-established that gaze behaviour combines with speech in accomplishing different kinds of interactional work (e.g. Kendon 1967; Goodwin 1979, 1980, 1981; see Rossano 2013a: ch. 1 for a review). For example, gaze is one of the methods that speakers use to address utterances to co-participants in multiparty interaction (Lerner 2003). When asking questions, questioners look at recipients in the majority of cases (Rossano, Brown, and Levinson 2009; cf. Kendon 1967), and the presence of the questioner's gaze correlates with faster responses (Stivers et al. 2009). More in general, several studies show that a central function of gaze is to solicit or pursue response by others (Kendon 1967; Bavelas, Coates, and Johnson 2002; Kidwell 2009; Stivers and Rossano 2010; Rossano 2012: ch. 3). In Extracts 6.8 and 6.9, Magda's and Sandro's gaze while producing the target statement appears to have just such a function. The declarative and impersonal form of a statement like 'it is necessary to x' doesn't inherently mandate a response by any particular recipient. While there are cases such as 6.4 and 6.6 where the context makes it already clear who should take on the necessary task, in cases such as 6.8 and 6.9 this isn't obvious. Here, speaker gaze can serve to increase response pressure on a narrower subset of the audience (Stivers and Rossano 2010), thereby inviting them to deal with the relevance of the stated need.

Speakers of impersonal deontic declaratives often gaze also when the addressee is already understood to be responsible for the task in question, as it happens in both Extracts 6.4 and 6.6. This strengthens the association of gaze with mobilising others to act. However, while in 6.4 and 6.6 gaze comes on top of a contextual specification of responsibility, in 6.8 and 6.9 it becomes a focal element of interpretation. Note also that gaze normally goes together with another aspect of the speaker's behaviour while producing the statement, namely, a relatively stationary bodily configuration, or better, a visible non-engagement in the necessary task. The relevance of this becomes clear as we compare cases in which the statement functions as an account.[52]

Having discussed how speakers can design an impersonal deontic declarative so as to mobilise another person to act, I now consider how they can also, on the other hand, promote their lone involvement in carrying the task out. The analysis indicates that this is

[52] If the purpose of the speaker's gaze is to mobilise another person to act, it is clear why it often goes together with a relatively stationary bodily configuration. But the meaning of this aspect of the speaker's behaviour is also independent of its correlation with gaze, as it stands in opposition or *antithesis* to engaging in the necessary task (Darwin 1872: ch. 2; see also Enfield 2013b:132–3).

systematically achieved through another kind of nonverbal behaviour at the time at which the statement is produced: the incipient practical engagement of the speaker in the task at hand. I consider the speaker to be *projectably engaged in doing x* when their bodily actions at the time at which the statement is produced are preparatory to the accomplishment of *x*. This is illustrated in the following two cases.

Extract 6.10 takes place in a kitchen. Ada, Furio and Eva are searching around for 'big bowls'.

Extract 6.10 Camillo_188722

1 Furio beh uh:: qua non sono nessune grandone heh
PCL uh here not be.3P none big-AUG
well uh:: here there's no big ones heh

2 (0.3)

3 Ada bison chiedere alla Milena= ((opens another cupboard))
necessitate-3S ask-INF at-the NAME
it is necessary to ask Milena

4 Eva =ma dai che [quella lì va bene ( )
but PCL CN that there go.3S well
come on this one is all right ( )

5 Ada [sì che le avete sempre avute le ciotolone
yes CMP 3P.A have-2P always have-PSTP the bowls-AUG
but you guys have always had big bowls

6 ve[ro che le hanno sempre avu]te le ciotol[one da
true CMP 3P.A have-2P always have-PSTP the bowls-AUG to
isn't it true that they've always had big bowls for

7 Furio [però secondo me] [bisogna
but following 1S.A necessitate-3S
but I think **it is necessary to**

8 andare a cercare [nell'armadio fuori ((opens kitchen door))
go-INF to search-INF in-the closet outside
go look in the closet outside

9 Eva [secondo te dove saranno ((to Michele))
following 2S.A where be-FUT-3P
where do you think they can be?

10 Ada ah sì grazie ((to Furio, while moving to kitchen's threshold))
oh yes thanks

At the beginning of the extract, Furio has opened a cupboard for everyone to look into, and in line 1 he registers that the kinds of 'big bowls' they are after aren't in there. After a brief pause, Ada produces an impersonal deontic declarative ('it is necessary to ask Milena') as she opens another cupboard that doesn't contain any bowls. Eva responds by pointing out that another bowl on the table should do for their purposes (line 4). Her remark is sequentially deleted by Ada (lines 5-6), who insists on the fact that 'big bowls' must be somewhere in the house. In overlap with this, Furio utters the target impersonal deontic declarative, stating that it is necessary to look for the bowls in a closet outside the kitchen. Once again, before the target statement is produced, there isn't any clear reason to think that someone in particular should look for the bowls. All participants are equally engaged in the search.

But consider now the speaker's behaviour while producing the statement. As he says 'but I think' (line 7), Furio turns to the kitchen door and then moves to open it, thus taking the first steps towards 'going to look in the closet outside' (Figure 6.3). The relevance of this aspect of the speaker's nonverbal behaviour is obviously that, if he can be understood to be already seeing to the necessary task, this will normally obviate the need for other co-participants to deal with it. In other words, Furio's bodily actions make available his bid to fill in the role of *animator* of the task at hand (Goffman 1981: ch. 3). Ada's response 'oh yes thanks' in line 10 shows that she has understood him as taking on this role, and orients to this as something Furio is doing on behalf of a larger group.

Figure 6.3 Frame from line 7, Extract 6.10. Furio says 'it is necessary to go look in the closet outside' while opening the kitchen door.

In a second case, a group of friends is making a booklet of readings from the Bible, the printouts of which are scattered on the table. Before the extract begins, Rino has begun looking for a digital version of the texts on the computer. In line 1, Guido asks Rino if he has found it, but Rino answers that he hasn't (line 3). After a short repair sequence (lines 4-5), Guido goes on to state that it will be necessary to dictate the text (to Rino, for him to type it up on the computer). While producing the last part of the statement, Guido moves his hands in the direction of the printouts. He then picks up one of the readings and prepares to dictate it.

Extract 6.11 Precamp01_1237403

1	Guido	l'hai trovato
		3S.A=have-2S find-PSTP
		did you find it?
2		(1.1)
3	Rino	°no non c'è°
		no not EX=be.3S
		°no it's not here°

4 Guido eh
ITJ
huh?

5 Rino non c'è
not EX=be.3S
it's not here

6 (0.4)

7 Guido non c'è allora bisogna dettarlo
not EX=be.3S then necessitate-3S dictate-INF=3S.A
it's not there? then it is necessary to dictate it

8 (1.3)/((Guido grabs sheet))

9 Luca sì ma l'ultimo pezzo lo omettiamo cè
yes but the=last piece 3S.A omit-1P PCL
yes but we're going to leave out the last part, I mean

The task in question here requires that Rino type up the text on the computer, which excludes him as a candidate for dictating it. Also, among the other people present at the table, Eliana and Ilaria are intensely engaged in talking about something else, which plausibly makes them less attentive to the target sequence. But there is at least one other person, besides Guido, who is available for taking on the task: Luca. At the time at which Guido makes his statement, Luca is visibly looking at him, which would make it easy for Guido to look at him in turn, and invite him to respond (Figure 6.4). What Guido does instead, however, is to gaze down on the table and begin moving his hands over it, which results in him reaching for the text and taking on the task of dictating.

Figure 6.4 Frame from line 7, Extract 6.11. Guido says 'it is necessary to dictate it' while gazing down on the table and beginning to reach for the text.

In this section, we have seen that, when the responsibility for the necessary task can't be clearly attributed, the speaker's nonverbal behaviour at the time of the impersonal deontic declarative can steer the interaction in one of two directions.

- by gazing to another person without making any bid to take on the necessary task, speakers prompt this other person to deal with it, giving the statement the force of a request;
- on the other hand, by beginning to engage in the task without gazing to other people, speakers favour their doing the task alone, giving the statement the force of an account.

The reliability of these alternative behaviours in shaping the trajectory of the interaction is quantitatively supported in the Appendix Section 6.6.

6.4 An open response space

The picture given by the analysis so far is that of a form implementing one of two actions, as determined by the responsibilities of participants and by the nonverbal behaviour of the speaker. But the pragmatics of impersonal deontic declaratives is more complex than this. In this section, we consider cases in which the interaction generated by the statement cannot be readily categorised as either a request or an account, showing elements of both actions, or of neither. This allows us to fully appreciate the multifunctionality of an impersonal deontic declarative form. At the core of the argument is the fact that this form affords an *open response space* and can therefore serve as a point of departure for various interactional trajectories.

6.4.1 Multiple agents

I begin by considering two cases in which an impersonal deontic declarative functions as both a request and an account. In Extract 6.12, Furio and Sofia have just finished their lunch and are sitting at the kitchen table. Before lunch, in the morning, they went out for groceries, which are still lying in the living room, and also started making biscuits. Now that lunch is over, in line 1 Sofia proposes that they begin shelling walnuts, to continue the biscuits preparation.

Extract 6.12 BiscottiPome01_2205830

1	Sofia	dai facciamo noci PCL make-1P walnuts **come on, let's prepare the walnuts**
2		(3.7)
3		((Furio stands up))
4	Furio	sì bisogna portare::: ((moves away from kitchen table)) yes necessitate-3S bring-INF **yes {but first} it is necessary to bring:::**
5		(3.5)
6	Sofia	eh ITJ **huh?**

7	Furio	eh bisogna mettere i latticini: ((enters living room)) PCL necessitate-3S put-INF the dairy.products **well, it is necessary to put the dairy products:**
8		(0.6)/((Sofia gazes at mozzarellas on the kitchen table))
9	Sofia	in frigo in fridge **in the fridge?**
10	Furio	sì **yes**
11		(1.2)/((Furio rummages in grocery bags))
12	Sofia	ora li metto now 3P.A put-1S **now I'll put them**

A few seconds after Sofia's proposal (line 1), Furio stands up and begins to produce the target statement. He aligns with the proposal ('yes') but then states that something else is necessary. As it emerges in the following lines, Furio refers to the urgency of putting in the fridge the dairy products they bought in the morning. The first version of Furio's statement (line 4) is uttered after he has stood up and while he moves away from the kitchen table and towards the living room (where the groceries are sitting) — that is, while Furio engages in doing *x*. One primary function of Furio's statement is therefore to account for his leaving the room and departing from the course of action proposed by Sofia (cf. Goodwin 1987). At the same time, Furio's statement has the effect of getting Sofia involved in putting away the dairy products as well. This emerges a few lines later (after a repair sequence, lines 10-11) when Sofia registers her engagement in the task: 'now I'll put them' (line 13).

So here an impersonal deontic declarative has a dual action force: it serves to justify the speaker's behaviour and, at the same time, to recruit the collaboration of another person. Putting away the groceries is an activity that can be contributed to by more than one person, allowing for multiple participants to get involved. A similar case is given below.

A group of people is working in the kitchen of a holiday camp. Guido and Orfeo have been looking after the pasta. When the extract begins, they are assessing whether it is done. After some hesitation, Guido confirms his opinion that the pasta has been boiled enough (line 6). Rather than proceeding immediately to strain it, however, Guido then turns to Enzo — one of the elder coordinators of the camp — and, after managing to get his attention (lines 8-14), tells him that 'it is necessary to strain it'.

Extract 6.13 CampGioPrep_2739426

1 Orfeo è cotta
be.3s cooked
is it done?

2 (3.4)/((Guido tastes the pasta))

3 Guido ( ) (scolarla)
strain-INF=3S.A
( ) (strain it)

4 (0.8)

5 Orfeo basta
suffice-3s
enough?

6 Guido ((nods))

7 ((turns to Enzo))

8 OH ENZO ENZO
ITJ NAME NAME
HEY ENZO, ENZO

9 (0.5)

10 Guido ENZO
NAME
ENZO

11 Clara ti chiamano ((to Enzo))
2S.A call-3P
they're calling you

12 (1.3)

13 Guido ENZO
NAME
ENZO

14 Enzo ((turns to Guido))

15 Guido [bisogna] s- =
necessitate-3s
it is necessary to s-

16 Enzo [cosa]
what?

17	Guido	=bisogna scolarla perché è su ( ) necessitate-3S strain-INF=3S.A because be.3S on **it is necessary to strain it because it's (been) on**
18	Enzo	fammela as[saggiare ((walks to stove)) make-IMP.2S=1S.D=3S.A taste-INF **let me taste it**
19	Luca	[Guido ma è dura NAME but be.3S hard **Guido but it's {still too} hard**
20	Guido	va' guara che dopo a la[sciarla dentro si- PCL look-IMP.2S CMP after to leave-INF=3S.A inside RFL **look, consider that when you then leave it in there it-**
21	Enzo	[no no c'ha ragione ((to Luca)) no no EX=have-3S reason **no no he's right**
22		c'ha ragione:: EX=have-3S reason **he's right::**
23		(0.6)/((Guido, Orfeo and Enzo gather around stockpot))
24	Guido	[allora then **so**
25	Enzo	[dov'è che è la pezza where=be.3S REL be.3S the rag **where's the towel?**

Similarly to the previous case, straining the pasta here is an activity that can be contributed to by more than one person. In fact, one person alone would not be enough to handle the large stockpot where the pasta has been cooked (for over thirty people). In response to Guido's statement, Enzo walks to the stove (line 18) and, a few moments later, becomes involved in the straining process (see line 25, 'where's the towel?'). One of the effects of the statement, then, is to enlist Enzo's help. But this is only part of what Guido's 'it is necessary to strain it' is doing. The fact that he addresses the statement explicitly to Enzo, among the many people who are present in the kitchen, shows that he is specifically seeking his attention on the matter. This can be explained by the fact that Enzo is the only elder person present in the kitchen.[53] What Guido seems to be doing is to seek Enzo's backing of his assessment that the pasta is ready to be strained. The statement 'it is necessary to strain it', then, is also a way to

[53] For this particular lunch, Guido and other younger participants in the holiday camp have been put in charge, as an opportunity to prove their adult autonomy.

legitimise the action that he and Orfeo have decided to take. This is reflected in Enzo's verbal response 'let me taste it' (line 18), which makes an endorsement contingent on his own assessment of the pasta.

In what follows, Enzo doesn't actually get to taste the pasta, as he abandons this purpose as a result of what happens next. As Enzo says 'let me taste it', another person, Luca, addresses Guido from the other side of the kitchen, questioning the decision to strain the pasta ('Guido but it's still too hard', line 19). Guido then begins an account referring to the fact that large quantities of pasta continue to cook after being strained and poured back in the stockpot. As he is in the process of formulating this, Enzo weighs in on Guido's side ('no no he's right he's right::', lines 21-22), thereby solving the dispute. This sequence lends further support to the fact that, in this context, straining the pasta is an accountable action that needs to be legitimised. In sum, the interactional import of Guido's impersonal deontic declarative is twofold: it justifies what he and others are about to do and at the same time solicits Enzo's collaboration in the process.

6.4.2 Agent negotiation

Complex 'it is necessary to x' interactions aren't restricted to multi-person tasks. Even with one-person tasks, the statement can make relevant the involvement of different people, leading to a negotiation of *animatorship* — that is, of the identity of the animator of the task.[54]

In Extract 6.14, Sergio, Greta and Dino are chatting in a kitchen while Sergio dyes Greta's hair. Before the extract begins, Greta has asked Sergio to remove a 'thingy' from her forehead. After some initial difficulty understanding what exactly this is, Sergio identifies it as a wisp of hair (line 1) and realises that it has glued up because some dye has run down on Greta's forehead. This leads him to state that: 'it is necessary also to wipe away the dye from the forehead'.

[54] In a compositional notion of human agency, *animator* refers to the social unit (usually an individual) that physically executes an act, to be distinguished from its *author*, the unit that chooses how the act will be articulated, and from its *principal*, the unit that is accountable for it (see Goffman 1981: ch. 3; Enfield 2013b: ch. 9; cf. Kockelman 2007).

Extract 6.14 Tinta_2051380

```
1 Sergio    [questo- ((gets hold of wisp of hair))
             this-

2 Greta     [(eh non lo so) c'ho un coso
             (PCL not 3S.A know-1S) EX=have-1S a thingy
             (well dunno) I've got a thingy

3 Sergio    scusa sì bisogna pu[lire:: anche la crema dalla fronte
            sorry yes necessitate-3S clean-INF also the cream from-the forehead
            sorry yes it is necessary also to wipe away:: the dye from
            the forehead

4 Dino                          [((turns and reaches)) faccio io
                                                       do.1S  1S.N
                                                       I'll do it

5 Greta                         [((reaches out for kitchen paper))
```

The necessary task here could be taken on by any of the three participants, including the speaker. Sergio is the person who is most directly involved in the dyeing process, and who is responsible for having let the dye drip on Greta's forehead, as displayed by his turn-initial apology 'sorry' (earlier in the interaction, Greta has warned him to make sure her face doesn't get dirty). While uttering the word *bisogna* 'it is necessary to', Sergio moves his hand in the direction of the table, possibly beginning to reach towards the kitchen paper, but then hesitates. At the same time, he gazes at Dino, thereby inviting him to get involved. Dino is arguably in a better position to do the wiping than Sergio, because Sergio is wearing gloves that are dirty with dye. Also, Dino has repeatedly assisted Sergio earlier in the interaction, often seeing to side tasks such as cleaning. So it comes as no surprise that, in response to this situation and to Sergio's gaze, Dino volunteers his help (line 4). But, as he reaches for the kitchen paper, the third participant, Greta, gets to the paper before him and eventually takes on the wiping of her own forehead.[55]

This example shows how an impersonal deontic declarative can make a response relevant for multiple people. When the task is a one-person task, responders may find themselves "competing" for it, as do Dino and Greta here. The next case illustrates a reverse situation, one in which people dodge becoming involved.

Azio and Remo have just prepared an herbal infusion and are looking for a utensil to pour it into mugs. In line 1, Azio notices a soup ladle in the sink, which is immersed in a dirty

[55] Dino is in a good position to wipe away the dye also because he can see it on Greta's forehead. At the same time, Greta has a good reason to be the one to do it in that it is her own body.

pot. As Azio gets hold of the ladle and inspects it, Remo states that 'it would be necessary to wash it'.

Extract 6.15 Camillo_1241239

1 Azio cè ci sarebbe questo
PCL EX be-CND-3S this
well there is this one

2 (2.4)/((reaches towards soup ladle in the sink))

3 Azio c'è un po' di pizzoccheri (nel recipiente) però ((grabs ladle))
EX=be.3S a bit of NAME (in-the container) but
there's some *pizzoccheri* (in the container) but

4 Remo allora bisognerebbe lavarlo
then necessitate-CND-3S wash-INF=3P.A
then it would be necessary to wash it

5 (2.6)/((Azio shakes ladle and lifts it out of pot))

6 (0.5)/((Remo walks to kitchen door))

7 Azio ma vuoi farlo tu ((turns to Remo))
but want-2S do-INF=3S.A 2S.N
do you want to do it?

8 (0.3)

9 Remo come
how
sorry?

10 Azio ( ) lavarlo (volevi lavarlo)
wash-INF=3S.A (want-IPF-2S wash-INF=3S.A)
( ) wash- (you wanted to wash it)?

11 Remo no no no ( ) perché stavo ( ) perché io ho un impegno
no no no because stay-IPF-1S because 1S.N have-1S one commitment
no no no ( ) because I was ( ) because I've got something to do

As in other cases above, there are arguably no grounds here for one participant being more responsible for the task at hand. One element that may at first glance tilt the balance is that, when the impersonal deontic declarative is produced, Azio is manipulating the ladle. This puts him in a better position to go ahead and wash it. But note that this manipulation follows from his just-prior noticing and is not embedded in any already established course of action (cf. Mirko's manipulation of the carrots in Extract 6.6). Moreover, Remo is standing just beside him (up until line 6), with visibly nothing to do. Such a configuration appears to

warrant a negotiation of the task's animatorship. In line 6, Remo walks away from the sink, making a bid to leave Azio in charge, at which point Azio attempts to devolve the washing to him ('do you want to do it?'). Note that the form of this utterance isn't that of a request for a favour, which is typically formatted as a simple interrogative (see Chapter 3). This suggests that Azio is not asking Remo to take over a task that is his (cf. Extract 3.15), but rather bringing into the open the matter of designating an agent. This displays his understanding that the task could be equally done by both.

6.4.3 Not responding

The range of responding options afforded by an impersonal deontic declarative includes the possibility of *not* responding. For one thing, this happens in the majority of cases where the statement functions primarily as an account (61.9%, *n*=13/21), indicating that a statement that justifies the speaker's actions doesn't require a response (see Extracts 6.5, 6.7 and 6.11). But it also happens in other cases where the speaker creates an opportunity for another person to take on the necessary task.

When Extract 6.16 begins, Ada has finished loading the dishwasher, while Eva has just walked to the sink to wash up one last pot left from the dinner. In lines 2-4, Ada announces that the dishwasher is full and turns to the sink to wash her hands. In lines 5-6, while Eva suggests adding more kitchenware into the dishwasher later, Ada turns the hot tap down and the cold tap on. This becomes an issue for Eva as cold water is less effective for washing up.

Extract 6.16 Capodanno02_42713

```
1            ((Eva turns on hot water))

2 Ada        sto qua l'è piena questa e quindi la fem partir
             this here SCL=be.3S full this and therefore 3S.A make-1P start-INF
             this is full and so we get it started

3            (0.8)

4 Ada        ((puts hand under running hot water))

5 Eva        [e dopo sen meterà qualcos'altro
              and then RFL=PRT put-FUT-3S something other
              and then we'll put something else
```

```
6 Ada       [((turns down hot tap and turns on cold tap))

7           (.)

8 Eva       [no chi ghe vol roba calda perché se no no se::
             no here EX want-3S stuff hot because if no not RFL
             no here hot stuff is needed because otherwise it won't::

9 Ada       [((begins washing her hands))

10          (6.5)/((Ada continues washing her hands,
                    Eva continues scouring the pot))

11 Ada      ((finishes washing hands, turns off both water taps
              and moves away from sink))

12 Eva      qua ((turns hot water back on))
            here
            here {we go}

13          (2.2)

14 Eva      calda calda calda
            hot hot hot
```

The central issue here is the concurrence of two courses of action — Eva's washing the pot and Ada's washing her hands — that require water at different temperatures, hot the first, cold the second. At the beginning of the extract, Eva turns on the hot water (line 1). A few moments later, Ada turns it down and turns on the cold water (line 6). Cold water is more comfortable for washing one's hands, but is less suitable for washing up a greasy pot such as the one Eva is working on. This is the rationale that underlies Eva's impersonal deontic declarative ('no here hot stuff is needed because otherwise it won't::'), which she produces while busy scouring the pot. During the long silence after the statement (line 10), no uptake comes from Ada. She simply continues washing her hands and eventually turns off both water taps (line 11). Had Eva used another strategy to get Ada to turn the hot water up — such as an imperative or a simple interrogative — Ada's response would be *officially absent* here (Schegloff 1968:1083, 2007b:20), and would probably be treated as such, for example with a pursuit of response (see Jefferson 1981; Davidson 1984; Pomerantz 1984b; Stivers and Rossano 2010; Rossano 2012: ch. 3; Bolden, Mandelbaum, and Wilkinson 2012). This is not what Eva does. Instead, as Ada moves away from the sink, Eva proceeds to turn the hot tap back on herself (line 12) and continues the washing-up, accompanying this with talk referring to the necessary task ('here we go', 'hot hot hot'). This talk is not a sanction, nor a pursuit of

response, but rather works almost as an "online commentary" of her actions (Heritage and Stivers 1999).

Consider another case, where people are working in the kitchen. Anna and Gina are washing up some dishes; Piera is preparing a salad; and another two people are busy with other tasks. When the extract begins, Anna has just agreed with Gina that they won't need to wipe the dishes, but simply to put them on a trolley outside the kitchen to dry off (line 1). She then walks out of the kitchen and, shortly after, comes back to get more clean crockery (line 3). In the following lines, Gina notifies Anna that she will wipe just one particular bowl (line 4) and Anna agrees with her (lines 6-7). Soon after Anna has left the kitchen again (line 7) — and plausibly touched off by the talk about dishes — Piera states that 'it is necessary to also get the dishwasher started guys'.

Extract 6.17 CampFamPrep_984945

1	Anna	metem en zo e i se suga da soli lì ((exits kitchen))
		put-1P in down and SCL RFL dry-3P by alone there
		we put them upside down and they'll dry off by themselves there
2		(9.5)
3		(4.7)/((Gina enters kitchen to get more clean glasses))
4	Gina	asciugo questo
		dry-1S this
		I'll wipe this
5		(0.9)/((Gina walks to kitchen door))
6	Anna	sì quel lì sì perché m- metem anca via
		yes that there yes because put-1P also away
		yes that one yes because w- we put {it} away
7		che no serve ma ((exiting kitchen))
		CN not serve-3S but
		since it's no longer needed but
8		(3.9)
9	Piera	bison (che d') enviar via anca la lavatrice ragazzi
		necessitate-3S (CMP of) start-INF away also the dishwasher guys
		it is necessary to also get the dishwasher started guys
10		(7.5)
11	Piera	non credevo de proprio eser così stanca
		not believe-IPF-1S of really be-INF like.this tired
		I didn't expect to be so tired

Piera's statement is not taken up by any of her co-participants. Gina and two other people simply keep doing their tasks. After a long gap (line 10), Piera doesn't pursue response but instead launches into a complaint about how she is feeling.

Note that the statement is produced as Piera is busy cutting the salad, looking down on the worktop. At the same time, however, it contains the vocative *ragazzi* 'guys', which addresses it to all those who are present in the kitchen, and so potentially invites them to respond. Despite this, the interaction proceeds without anyone taking on the necessary task. Once again, the statement creates an opportunity for others to act on it, but goes unresponded, and this isn't oriented to as a problem.

Cases such as those we have just examined are not exceptions. In my data, we can find 3 more cases like Extract 6.16, where the statement is not responded to and the speaker ends up taking on the necessary task alone,[56] as well as 3 more cases like Extract 6.17, where the statement is not responded to and nobody takes on the necessary task. Another case of the latter kind is reported below. This case is important in that it is the only case in the data at hand in which the speaker pursues response to an impersonal deontic declarative; though, as we will see, the pursuit is a mild one.

Mario and Azio have just arrived in the kitchen to get some hot chocolate, which is contained in a pot on the stove. As Mario looks for a mug, Eva — who is doing the washing-up — directs him to where he can find it (lines 1-2). A few seconds later, she goes on to produce an impersonal deontic declarative.

Extract 6.18 Natale03_2377044

1 Eva	se no la gh'è là che p- presumo uh l'è qua lavada	
	if not SCL EX=be.3S there REL presume-1S uh SCL=be.3S here washed	
	if it's not there, as I presume, uh it's here {just} washed	
2 Mario	sì sì sì	
	yes yes yes	
3	(3.0)/((Mario gets mug from cupboard))	
4 Eva	dopo forse ghe voleria en cuercio	
	then maybe EX want-CND-3S one lid	
	then maybe a lid would be needed	

[56] In Section 6.6, the outcome of these cases is operationalised as an *account* outcome, in that it is the speaker himself who ends up doing the task.

5		perché no se rafreda masa 'l latte because not RFL get.cold-3S too.much the milk **so that the milk doesn't cool down too much**
6		(0.3)/((Eva looks in the direction of Mario and Azio))
7	Eva	forse **maybe**
8		(4.6)/((Azio pours hot chocolate in his mug))
9	Azio	(usi tu) ((to Mario, while leaning ladle on pot rim)) (use-2S 2S.N) **(are you going to you use it?)**
10	Mario	(oh vabè) grazie (oh PCL) thanks **(oh that's okay) thanks**

The statement here refers to the need of putting a lid on the pot to keep the chocolate warm. Eva produces it while she is visibly busy washing up, momentarily unable to fetch a lid herself. Azio and Mario, on the other hand, are in a good position to do this (as soon as they have got their chocolate). Yet neither of them does, or shows any uptake of Eva's statement. This happens in spite of Eva's attempt to mobilise their response, first by looking in their direction (line 6) and then by adding an increment to the statement ('maybe'), which renews its relevance. Note, however, that this is a mild pursuit. The adverb 'maybe' does not strengthen the statement but downgrades it epistemically. Also, 0.5 seconds after it, Eva turns her head and focusses back on the washing-up. Such a pursuit is weak compared to others strategies found, for example, after second person interrogative requests. In Extract 4.6, Eliana pursues response to her *puoi x* 'can you x' request with the interjection 'huh?' (line 6); in Extract 4.9, Amerigo pursues the same request form by incrementing and reformulating it with multiple units (lines 14-17); and in Extract 4.5, Michele keeps direct and sustained gaze at Eliana until she gives verbal acceptance (line 24) (see also Ervin-Tripp 1988; Craven and Potter 2010). In the extract above, on the other hand, Eva abandons the sequence, without orienting to the lack of response as a problem. Like in Extract 6.17, the interaction simply results in nobody taking up the necessary task.

To conclude, in the cases examined in this section, recipients do not respond to the impersonal deontic declarative, even though the speaker's behaviour creates an opportunity for — or appears to invite — them to do so. Yet there is no sign that this constitutes a violation of a normative expectation. No negative sanction comes from the speaker, and the

absence of an uptake appears to be simply let through as a missed opportunity to take on a job. In the only case in which response is pursued, this is done mildly.

Together with a majority of account cases in which the statement doesn't get a response, these cases suggest that impersonal deontic declaratives may not function as canonical first pair parts (Schegloff 1968; Schegloff and Sacks 1973). A declarative and impersonal form doesn't inherently mandate a specific response of a specific person. In other words, it is low in response mobilisation (Stivers and Rossano 2010:27–8) What mobilises a particular person to act is, for one thing, their responsibility for the necessary task, and, when responsibility isn't clear, the speaker's gaze to a particular person, which can increase pressure on them to respond (see § 6.3.2.2). These factors, however, are not always present, and when they are, they are not determinant but probabilistic.

Cases like 6.16 and 6.17 suggest that no response is more likely when the speaker doesn't use any response-mobilising features (Stivers and Rossano 2010), or uses a feature that doesn't select a single addressee, such as the plural vocative *ragazzi* 'guys'. In addition, Extract 6.18 suggests that, even when a speaker does pursue a response somewhat, they don't go very far with it. This makes sense in view of the pragmatic versatility of impersonal deontic declaratives. The cases presented in this whole section (6.4) show that these statements are points of departure for a range of different trajectories, nonresponding being one of the options. Impersonal deontic declaratives, in other words, afford an open response space, which is the reason for using them in place of other forms.

6.5 Discussion

In this chapter, I have examined the use of impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x'. This form asserts the existence of a need or obligation without tying it to any particular individual. Such a statement has the potential to both legitimise and mobilise the accomplishment of an act, and can therefore fulfil different pragmatic functions or actions. My goal has been to explain how these actions come into effect as a result of the synergy between the grammar of an impersonal deontic declarative, the environments in which it is deployed, and the nonverbal conduct that accompanies it.

Impersonal deontic declaratives often appear to realise one of two alternative actions: a *request* — prompting another person to do something — or an *account* — rationalising

what the speaker herself is about to do. These actions are easily ascribed when the speaker or another person is understood to be responsible for the necessary task. When responsibility can't be clearly attributed, the speaker's nonverbal behaviour at the time of the statement becomes crucial in steering the interaction in one or the other direction. By gazing to another person without making any bid to take on the necessary task, the speaker increases the chances that the other will do it. On the other hand, the speaker's incipient engagement in the task and the absence of gaze to other people favour the speaker's doing the task alone (see § 6.6 below for a quantitative analysis supporting the reliability of these behaviours in bringing about alternative effects).

These findings extend prior research on the interplay between language and visible bodily conduct (de Jorio 1832; Goffman 1963; Clark 1996; Goodwin 2000; McNeill 2000; Kendon 2004; Enfield 2009, among many others). Focussing on the pragmatics of a specific grammatical form, I demonstrate how action formation and ascription is systematically shaped by specific kinds of nonverbal behaviours. This contributes to our understanding of action formation (Schegloff 2007b:xiv; Levinson 2013) as a multimodal and compositional process, enhancing prior findings on the response-mobilising function of gaze (Kendon 1967; Bavelas et al. 2002; Kidwell 2009; Stivers and Rossano 2010; Rossano 2012: ch. 3), and bringing to the fore the role of behaviours that involve the whole body (cf. Kendon 1990; Streeck et al. 2011; Broth and Mondada 2013; Mondada 2013).

But there is more to this story. While nonverbal conduct and relative responsibilities systematically influence their function, impersonal deontic declaratives maintain the potential to generate more complex interactions, which go beyond a simple opposition between requests and accounts. An impersonal deontic declarative can function as both a request and an account simultaneously (Extracts 6.12 and 6.13), function as a request for multiple people (Extract 6.14), give rise to a negotiation of who will do the task (Extract 6.15), or simply go unresponded (Extracts 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18). This versatility derives from the grammatical make-up of the statement: while its deontic meaning makes relevant the doing of a task, its impersonality doesn't constrain participation in the task, and its declarative form affords an open response space (cf. Vinkhuyzen and Szymanski 2005). These features give impersonal deontic declaratives a particular status in the Italian request system, placing them in opposition to forms that restrict the response space to one or two alternatives (imperatives and interrogatives, see Chapters 3 and 4) and/or that restrict the animatorship of an act to a single individual (e.g. 'I/you need to x'). Such distinctions are relevant across other languages

that provide similar formal alternatives (see Zinken and Ogiermann 2011; Rossi and Zinken accepted).

Impersonal deontic declaratives are a special tool for the management of social agency. While their use may seem equivocal at first glance, it is better characterised as usefully — if not designedly — ambiguous. The point of an impersonal deontic declarative is to present an act as the right thing to do for anyone in the current situation.

6.6 Appendix: quantitative analysis

This appendix section provides additional evidence for the functional relation between certain aspects of the speaker's nonverbal behaviour and the way in which the interaction generated by an impersonal deontic declarative unfolds. In Section 6.3.2.2, we saw that, when the responsibility for a necessary task cannot be readily determined, the designation of the agent becomes contingent on two alternative forms of conduct at the time at which the impersonal deontic declarative is produced. By gazing to another person without making any bid to take on the necessary task, speakers prompt this other person to deal with it; on the other hand, by beginning to engage in the task without gazing to other people, speakers promote their lone involvement in it.

Here, I offer a quantitative analysis of these behaviours in relation to the *outcome* of the interaction — that is, in relation to who, among the participants, ends up carrying out the necessary task. The analysis is based on both Italian and Polish data, as it was originally designed in the study.[57] Pooling the data is warranted by the strong similarities in the use of impersonal deontic declaratives in the two languages (Rossi and Zinken accepted). Moreover, given the relatively low frequency of this form, the data from a single language would lack sufficient statistical power. The similarity between the two languages is also supported by the absence of any statistical interaction between the effects reported and language.

This quantitative analysis is based on a systematic coding of all impersonal deontic declaratives by means of the following set of questions, where *A* refers to the participant

[57] The Polish data consist of 59 cases, taken from 13 hours of interaction in families living in Lublin (South-East of Poland) and Warsaw. This corpus includes 27 recordings featuring about 40 different participants. Like the Italian corpus, it involves not only casual conversation but also everyday activities such as cooking, having meals, playing games.

producing the statement (also referred to as the *speaker*) and *B* refers to their co-participant(s).

1. Does B end up doing *x*?
2. Does B refuse to do *x*?
3. Does A end up doing *x*?
4. Does A gaze to B when producing the statement?
5. Is A visibly moving to do *x* when producing the statement?

Questions 1 and 2 were answered with 'yes' when at least one co-participant, but not necessarily all, dealt with the relevance of their involvement in the necessary task, by either taking it on or refusing to do so. Question 3 was answered positively when the speaker of the statement undertook the task. For question 4, we considered A's gaze to B at any point during the production of the statement, or of an increment thereof (Ford, Fox, and Thompson 2002a; Couper-Kuhlen and Ono 2007). The target of A's gaze was mostly a single co-participant, but sometimes a group of individuals. Finally, question 5 was answered with 'yes' when A's visible bodily actions were preliminary to the accomplishment of the necessary task (see Extracts 6.7, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12).

To measure how systematic is the functional relation between the speaker's nonverbal behaviour and the action import of an impersonal deontic declarative we need to operationalise the notions of request and account as two possible outcomes of the interaction:

Request = B does *x* or refuses to do *x*[58]	63.4% (*n*=85/134)
Account = only A does *x*	25.4% (*n*=34/134)

Table 6.1 shows the association of request and account outcomes with, on the one hand, A's gaze to B and, on the other hand, A's projectable engagement in doing *x*.[59]

[58] This encompasses both cases in which B does *x* alone and cases in which B does *x* together with A. Refusals account for 11.8% of the cases (*n*=10/85).

[59] The counts exclude cases where a judgement could not be made because the speaker's body or gaze wasn't visible in the recording.

	A gazes to B	*A is projectably engaged in doing x*
Request	61.6% (*n*=45/73)	13.1% (*n*=11/84)
Account	12.9% (*n*=4/31)	69.7% (*n*=23/33)

Table 6.1 A *request* outcome correlates with A's gaze to B, whereas an *account* outcome correlates with A's projectable engagement in doing *x*.

The statistical significance of these associations was tested using mixed effects logistic regression. This statistic assesses the ability of multiple independent variables (the presence or absence of the two nonverbal behaviours) to predict — positively or negatively — a binary dependent variable (the occurrence of a *request* or *account* outcome), while controlling for possible confounding effects, namely the language spoken (Italian or Polish) and the particular recording from which each case is taken. Table 6.2 summarises the main results of the analysis testing the occurrence of a *request* outcome against an *account* outcome, as predicted by A's gaze to B and by A's projectable engagement in doing *x*. Using a *request* outcome as baseline to test the occurrence of an *account* outcome against it yields the same coefficients with opposite polarity.

	ESTIMATE	STD. ERROR	*Z* VALUE	*p*
(intercept)	1.3162	0.4433	2.969	< .01
A gazes to B	1.6092	0.6637	2.425	< .05
A is projectably engaged in doing x	-2.6324	0.5846	-4.503	< .001

Table 6.2 Fixed effects of mixed effects logistic regression, showing that a *request* outcome is positively predicted by A's gaze to B and negatively predicted by A's projectable engagement in doing *x*.

The results show that both nonverbal behaviours are statistically significant predictors of the outcome, with opposite effects. A's gaze to B while producing the impersonal deontic declarative increases the chances that the necessary task *x* will be dealt with by B and decreases the chances of A's lone involvement in carrying *x* out (odds ratio 4.99). The inverse is true for A's projectable engagement in doing *x*, which predicts positively the occurrence of an account outcome and negatively the occurrence of a request outcome (odds ratio 13.91).

The measures of goodness of fit for the statistical model are 89.3 (AIC) and 102.5 (BIC). The random effects are reported in Table 6.3.

	VARIANCE	STD. DEVIATION
recording	3.361e-14	1.833e-07
language	0.000e+0	0.000e+00

Table 6.3 Random effects of mixed effects logistic regression.

The analysis partially simplifies the interactional possibilities created by an impersonal deontic declarative, in that it excludes cases that cannot be straightforwardly categorised as as either a request or an account (11.2%, *n*=15/134). These are mainly cases in which the statement is not responded to and nobody takes on the necessary task (see § 6.4.3), or in which it turns out that the task is already accomplished or underway.[60] These cases, however, are only a minority, so the analysis is still representative of the data. Moreover, even if we wanted to include these cases as a third outcome variable in a multinomial logistic regression, its small size and the lack of variability in the distribution of nonverbal behaviours within the group makes it unsuitable as a baseline, introducing error in the model.

In conclusion, this quantitative analysis lends further support to the functional relation between the speaker's nonverbal behaviour and the trajectory of interaction generated by an impersonal deontic declarative.

[60] Also, in a few cases the categorisation simplifies the full dynamics of the interaction. Extracts 6.12 and 6.13, for example, are here treated as having a *request* outcome, even though the statement simultaneously functions as an account; on the other hand, Extract 6.16 is treated as having an *account* outcome, even though the speaker initially creates an opportunity for another person to take on the necessary task. For the purposes of this analysis, what matters is the ultimate outcome of the interaction.

7 General discussion and conclusion

7.1 A request system

The previous five chapters have presented an analysis of several forms of requesting in Italian in relation to the contextual factors that influence their selection, or put another way, of the social-interactional dimensions that those forms are used to manage. Some of the chapters have concentrated on the analysis of a single form; others have been comparative. So it is now time to ask how all the forms examined fit together, that is, to consider the totality of their relations. This is what I want to refer to as a *system*.

7.1.1 Systems in language and conversation

The notion of *systematicity* has been central in linguistics since the advent of structuralism. At its core is the fact that the rules that govern one aspect of linguistic structure interlock with the rules that govern others, resulting in a complex internal coherence. In Meillet's (1958) words, *tout se tient* 'everything hangs together'. This makes the structures of language internally motivated and partially autonomous, that is, operating independently of external factors (Haiman 2002). This internal organisation applies across different levels of language, including *syntagmatic* (combinatoric) relations and *paradigmatic* (oppositional) relations (Saussure 1959 [1916]). Examples of the latter are paradigms of phonological, inflectional, or demonstrative forms, that is, sets of forms that are available for a given function but are not equivalent in fulfilling it, where the particular way in which they fulfil it depends on their position in semantic space relative to each other.

I want argue that this organisation applies not only to the constitution of linguistic structures, but also to the use of these structures in interaction. Although not termed as such, the notion of *paradigmatic relation* has long been present also in conversation analysis, for example under the rubric of *slot alternatives* (Sacks 1992a:262, 308, 335; Goodwin 1980:285; Lerner 2004a:235, 2004b:180–1; see also Raymond 2013). Given a certain action, or interactional position, much conversation analytic work has been concerned with finding the criteria governing a speaker's choice among the different practices to implement that action, or to fill that interactional position, the sum of which is usually referred to as an

organisation of practices (e.g. Schegloff 2000). What defines such an organisation is the meaningful opposition of alternatives — a set of options that is internally organised. This is what I refer to as a *system* of forms or practices for action. Systems of alternative practices have been described, among other things, for other-initiation of repair (e.g. Schegloff et al. 1977; Hayashi, Raymond, and Sidnell 2013; Benjamin 2013), overlap management (Schegloff 2000), responses to polar questions (Raymond 2003), and person reference (Sacks and Schegloff 1979; Enfield and Stivers 2007). With this thesis, I want to add another system to the list, which is used to solve another recurrent problem in social life: the recruitment of others to deal with immediate practicalities.

7.1.2 Internal organisation of request forms

What makes forms of requesting a system is their internal organisation. Demonstrating this involves not only laying out the functional relations among all request forms, but also explaining the logic behind the form-function mappings, as grounded in the properties of each form in a larger linguistic and interactional apparatus. In what follows, I review the space of options at the disposal of Italian speakers as examined in this thesis.

We begin with requests that are made in situations of minimum contingency, where mobilising another person to action involves little interactional effort. These are environments in which the action requested contributes to an already established joint project and is highly projectable from the project's structure (Chapter 2). Here compliance can be assumed on the basis of the requestee's prior commitment to the project being advanced, and only a minimal amount of information is required to solicit the requestee's contribution. All that is needed is to configure the body in such a way as to make the requested action possible, which in most cases involves simply holding, placing or reaching for an object.

We then move on to consider requests that involve language, but only in minimal form (Chapter 2). This happens in two kinds of environments. In the first, the action requested is fully projectable but the requestee is not visually attending to the requester, which motivates the requester to produce a minimal utterance to get the requestee's attention — usually a verb without arguments (e.g. *alza* 'cut') or an imperative interjection (e.g. *to'* 'take/here you are'). Such utterances preserve the assumption that the requester's manual behaviour is sufficient for the requestee to understand the request and, at the same time, avoid the potential collateral effects of other attention-getting strategies (e.g. 'hey'). A second

group of minimal utterances is instead used when the action requested is projectable to some degree but some particular element of it isn't, such as the object in question (e.g. *coltello* 'knife'), its quantity (e.g. *una* 'one'), location (e.g. *quell'altro* 'the other one'), or destination. Here the requester specifies the nonprojectable element by naming it.

Like nonverbal forms, namings are normally used for requests that contribute to the progress of a joint project. Another form that is found in such an environment is the imperative (e.g. *tieni questo* 'hold this'). A core property of an imperative utterance is that it makes only one type of response relevant next: the immediate fulfilment of the request (Chapter 3). The imperative form, in other words, carries an assumption of compliance, which is normally warranted by the requestee's prior commitment to the project being advanced by the request. At the same time, an imperative is a clausal form, which allows the requester to specify more aspects of the target action than a noun phrase or a nonverbal form. This is why imperatives are often used when the requested action is not readily projectable.

The assumption of compliance carried by an imperative is applicable also in a smaller group of cases where the action requested does not contribute to a shared undertaking, but still maintains a relation of continuity with what the requestee is doing, or a relation of neither continuity nor discontinuity because the requestee is doing nothing (see Chapter 3). This can be regarded as a *secondary* use of the imperative in that it is often mitigated with particles (*dai*, *valà*, roughly 'will you'), phrasal minimisers (*un attimo* 'a moment'), and accounts or mentions that the requestee's line of action is not being disrupted (e.g. *mentre entri* 'as you go inside', *se non hai niente da fare* 'if you have nothing to do').

But of course not all requests contribute to a joint project or solicit a minimal extension of the requestee's line of action. Sometimes the action requested is unconnected to, and constitutes a departure from, what the requestee is currently doing. This introduces greater imposition in the launching of the action and is reason to give the requestee the option to grant or refuse doing it. This is what is accomplished by an interrogative request form, which doesn't assume compliance but makes it contingent on the requestee's response (Chapters 3 and 4). This sector can be further divided in two kinds of environments. Most requests that constitute a departure from what the requestee is doing still concern low-cost, unproblematic actions, just like the other request types reviewed so far. In this case, people use a simple interrogative form that purely asks if the recipient will do the action (Chapter 3). At other times, people find themselves making a request which they anticipate to be problematic or delicate, on the basis of the unwillingness or disalignment of the requestee

towards the matter at hand. Requesters signal this by using another interrogative form: *puoi x* 'can you x' (Chapter 4). As a modal construction encoding ability, this form is marked relative to the semantically and syntactically leaner simple interrogative, thus reflecting the greater interactional problem being managed.

Both the interrogative and the imperative sectors are cut across by another dimension: the distribution of the benefit brought by the requested action, which is reflected in the presence or absence of the dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me' (Chapter 3). This dimension is in principle independent of those we have considered so far. However, it tends to correlate with the relation between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing. Most imperative requests that contribute to an already established joint project concern actions that aren't directed to the speaker, and thus don't contain a first person singular dative. On the other hand, most projects launched by simple interrogative requests are in the service of an individual outcome, which motivates the inclusion of the pronoun *mi* 'to/for me'. Departures from this pattern are one of the main indicators that an imperative or a simple interrogative is being used for a *secondary* function (see above, and Chapter 3).

The space of options at the disposal of Italian speakers for requesting includes a third major interrogative construction, the selection of which is tied to yet another dimension that is orthogonal to the others. While all the forms we have seen presuppose the availability of the object(s) implicated in the requested action, the *hai x* 'do you have x' form is used when this availability is uncertain (Chapter 5). This form differs from the other clausal constructions of the system in that it does not formulate the action requested, but enquires about a precondition for it. *Hai x* 'do you have x' thus functions as a pre-request, characterised by particular sequential properties and response affordances.

Finally, this thesis has examined another social-interactional dimension that influences requesting in a special way: the determinate or indeterminate animatorship of action (Chapter 6). This dimension becomes relevant when it is not clear who, in a group of people, should carry out a certain task, or when participation in the task is not limited to one person. In such an environment, the request is no longer a one-to-one transaction mobilising a service from B to A, but potentially involves multiple people, including the requester, as candidate doers of the task. The forms used here are impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x', which don't constrain participation in the mentioned task, but leave it open to any relevant contributor. Because of their pragmatic versatility, impersonal

deontic declaratives often end up doing more than requesting. This puts them on the fringe of the space of request forms.

This overview shows that the form-function mappings examined in this thesis constitute a meaningful set of alternatives that are paradigmatically related, the selection of which is influenced by interlocking social-interactional factors. Figure 7.1 condenses and visualises their organisation in a simplified form.

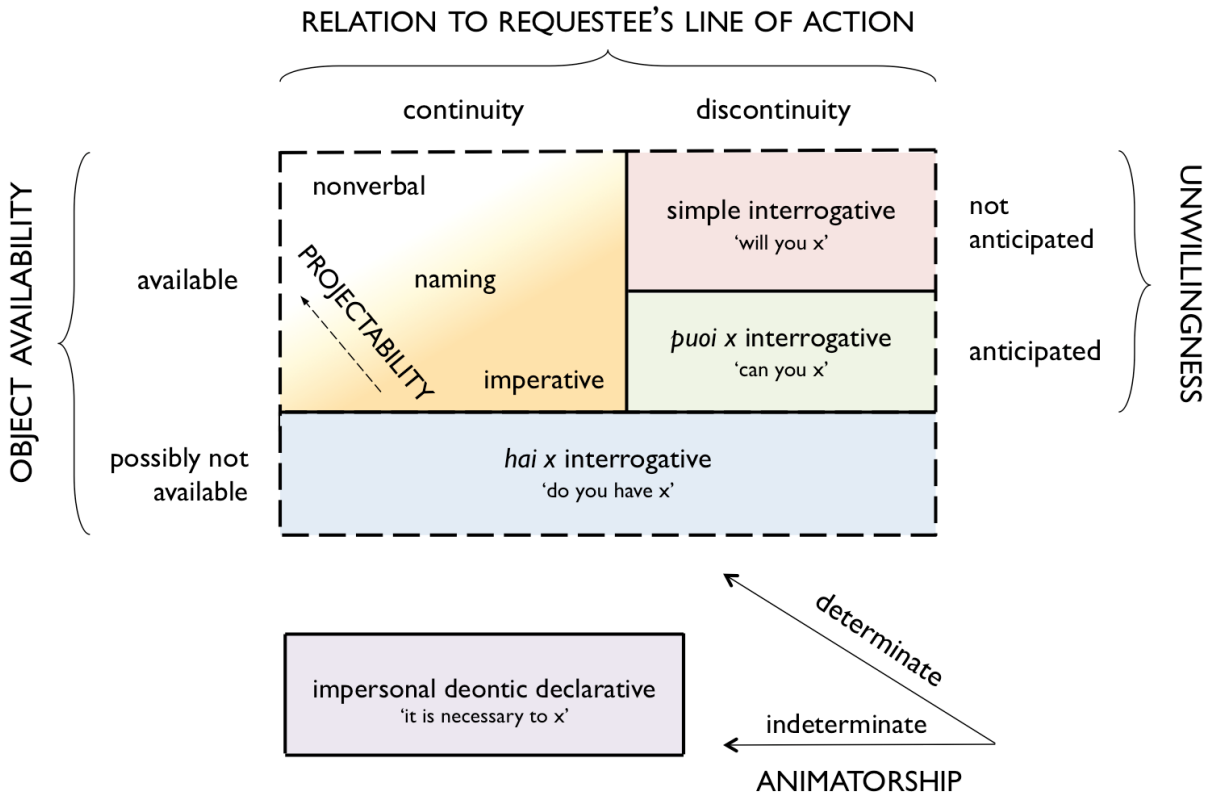


Figure 7.1 The Italian request system in informal interaction.

Figure 7.1 represents the coming together of two elements. On one side, there are contextual factors that bear on an act of requesting, the social-interactional concerns or pressures that matter for the construction of the request. On the other side, there is a set of forms the selection of which is influenced by those factors, a set of options to package the act of requesting so as to address the relevant social-interactional concerns. The position of each form in this space is determined by its properties and affordances relative both to the concerns to be addressed and to the other forms. This complex web of relations, I argue, qualifies as a system.

7.1.3 System economy

It is commonly assumed that people have countless forms of requesting at their disposal, thanks to the productivity afforded by the generative power of language. What is less commonly realised is that, in spite of this indefinite potential, people resort to a limited set of sedimented forms on most occasions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014).[61] The seven formal types examined in this thesis (nonverbals, namings, imperatives, simple, *puoi x* and *hai x* interrogatives, impersonal deontic declaratives) cover more than 70% of all requests made by Italian speakers in a representative sample of everyday informal interactions (see § 1.6.1 and § 1.6.2). And if we add four more formal types to be surveyed below (interjections, *facciamo x* 'shall we x' interrogatives, *devi x* 'you have to x' declaratives, and descriptions), we have nearly 90% of all requests realised by only eleven types.

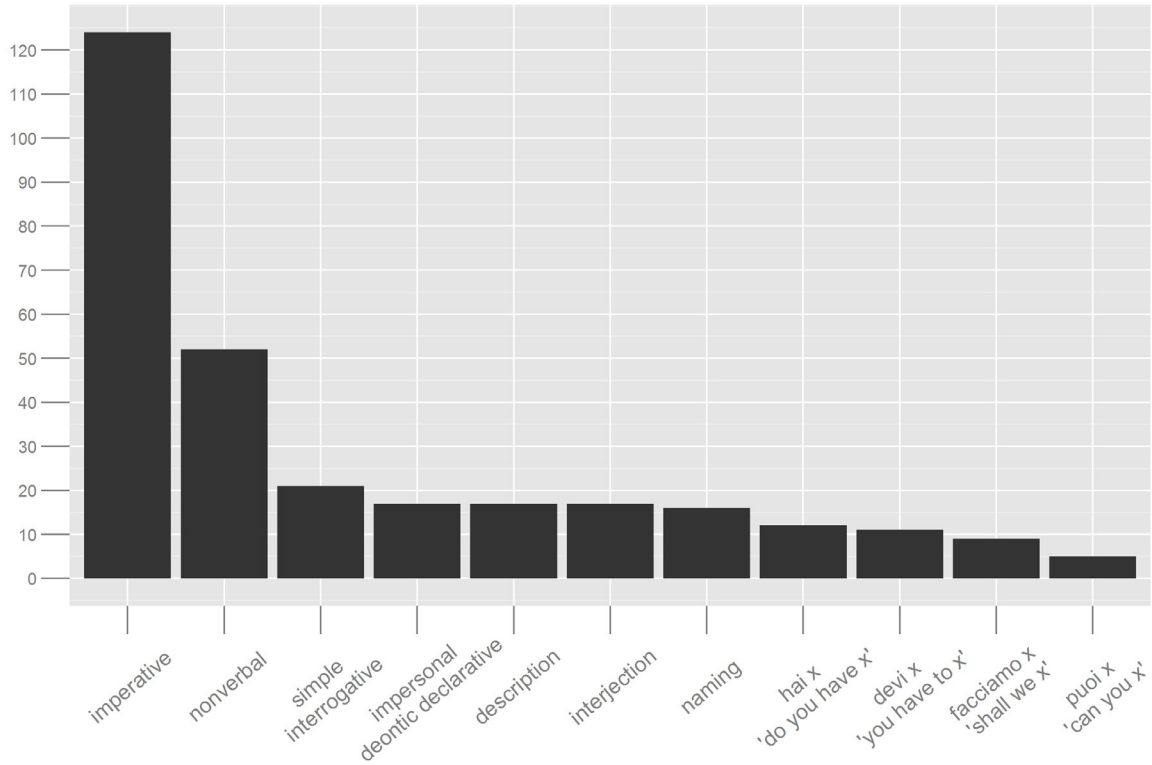


Figure 7.2 Formal types occurring at least 5 times in the core sample, accounting for 88.8% of all requests (*n*=301/339).

[61] On the notion of sedimented forms for social action, also referred to as grammatical practices or formats, see Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen (2005), Fox (2007), among others; cf. also Goodwin and Goodwin (1992:162).

To use an analogy by Zipf (1949), we can compare this economy to that of a carpenter's workshop. The organisation of requesting behaviour — and of linguistic behaviour more generally — is much like a workshop containing a set of tools to perform jobs. Although the carpenter has dozens of different tools at his disposal on the shelves and in the drawers of the workshop, only a limited number of them is arranged around the counter top (e.g. the saw, the hammer, the plane), which is proportionate to the number of jobs he has to perform recurrently (cutting, nailing, shaving). The carpenter keeps on the counter only a few tools of frequent and general use, even though he has many others for more specific and less frequent jobs.

One of the implications of this analogy is that the number of factors that routinely bear on acts of requesting is also limited — not in the sense that there is only *n* number of social-interactional dimensions that matter to people, but that we can identify a set of pervasive or recurrent concerns that are at play on most occasions:

- the projectability of the requested action;
- the requestee's visual attention;
- the relation of the requested action to what the requestee is currently doing;
- the distribution of the action's benefit;
- the requestee's potential unwillingness to do the action;
- the availability of objects;
- the action's animatorship.

Although the list is incomplete, these seven factors emerge from a comprehensive analysis of over 70% of the requests made in a representative sample of informal interactions. So I propose these as central criteria for making requests in everyday life.

Finally, it is important to note that some forms of requesting carry a bigger functional load than others. As people often find themselves enlisting the help of others in the context of joint activities, more than half of all requests are realised through forms that presuppose compliance and common ground (imperatives and nonverbals). To use the workshop analogy again, these are the hammers and nails of requesting — the tools that get used the most. Besides these, there are other tools that are used less frequently but still recurrently (simple interrogatives, namings, impersonal deontic declaratives, *hai x* interrogatives), and still

others, like spoke shaves or dovetail chisels, are used only rarely (*puoi x* interrogatives) (cf. Enfield 2013b:97).

7.2 Complementary forms of evidence

7.2.1 Distributional

This thesis argues for the existence of a coherent set of functional distinctions among forms of requesting in Italian, which I want to refer to as a system. This is based, in the first place, on an analysis of their distribution in different interactional environments or configurations. For each form, we can identify a *base* or *home* environment (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013) in which its use is *unmarked* (see Stivers, Enfield, and Levinson 2007:8). The identification and definition of such an environment is grounded in the regularities observed in the sequential development of different interactions, and especially events and behaviours prior to the request being made (see also § 1.6.5.1). Wherever possible, the analysis proceeds contrastively, comparing the use of different forms occurring in similar environments, which helps to pinpoint the social-interactional factor or dimension that discriminates those environments.

For example, while imperatives and simple interrogatives are both used to request similar low-cost actions, the selection of the latter over the former is influenced by a relation of discontinuity between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing (Chapter 3). Such an analysis can be supported by several elements. One is the structural status of the action requested in the ongoing activity — procuring chewing gum, for instance, is not part of talking about friends (Extract 3.13). Other elements can be found in the details of people's talk and nonverbal conduct. A sudden interruption of the speaker's current turn to produce the request shows the request to be disjunctive with what comes prior (Extract 3.13). Similarly, the requester's use of a vocative indicates the absence of mutual engagement (Extracts 3.14, 3.15, 3.17 and 3.18), as does the visible engrossment of the requestee in another course of action (Extracts 3.14 and 3.25), or their uninvolved body posture at the time of the request (Extract 3.15). These elements can be contrasted with others showing, conversely, a relation of continuity with an already established joint project — setting one's glass on the table as the other prepares to pour water into it, for instance, contributes to

making the pouring easier (Extract 3.5). The requestee's commitment to such a project is sometimes made explicit by an earlier agreement (e.g. Tina's *sì* 'yes' in Extract 3.5), but it can also be manifested in other details of requestee's conduct (e.g. Aldo's taking seat and laying his table napkin on his lap in Extract 3.10).[62]

This analytic method is primarily qualitative, but it is also essentially quantitative, in the sense that, for a selection pattern to be generalisable, it must be observed in a majority of cases where a form or practice occurs. In this thesis, "majority" is understood as covering at least the 70-80% of the relevant cases.

Needless to say, it is rare for all cases to (fully) conform to the identified pattern (Robinson 2007; pace Schegloff 1968). Sometimes part of the variance can be explained by the existence of a less frequent but distinct usage of the same form. This is the case for a small subset of imperative requests that don't contribute to a joint project but also don't disrupt the requestee's line of action, either because the action requested piggybacks on what they are already doing, or because the requestee is momentarily doing nothing (Chapter 3). The additional marking and mitigation carried by these imperatives is further evidence of their constituting a distinct functional category.[63] Another example of multifunctionality is found in nonverbal forms of requesting, a small subset of which occurs in environments that are not supported by the projectability of actions within a joint project (Chapter 2). In some of these cases, what appears to motivate the requester's choice of a nonverbal form is an effort to not interrupt simultaneous talk (see § 2.8, fn. 14). This too can be seen as a distinctive use, in that the lack of projectability is compensated for by a richer gestural elaboration of the request. To facilitate understanding, requesters resort to iconic gestures and to more complex manual actions than holding, placing, reaching or pointing. This use of nonverbal forms, however, runs a greater risk of incurring repair initiation.

[62] In most cases, requesting environments are defined by several converging aspects of people's behaviour. Occasionally, however, certain instances may be less determined, either because of the analyst's limited access to the prior interaction, or because the context contains ambivalent or conflicting elements that could in principle warrant more than one form of requesting (see Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). In the latter case, ambivalence is something that members, too, have to deal with. The analyst's job is to rigorously weigh up the different elements that constitute these environments, in close comparison with more clear-cut cases. When the upshot of the analysis is indeed an ambiguous or multivocal environment, offering multiple footings for action, this is grounds to appeal to the *reflexivity* of social practices (Heritage 2010:220). Using a certain form of action may not only *presuppose* a certain interactional configuration, but also occasionally *constitute* it, by invoking the social conditions and meanings normally associated with its use (see also Silverstein 1976:34; Gerhardt 1991).

[63] Another use of imperatives that doesn't necessarily conform to the main pattern described here are authority-based directives from parents to children (see Craven and Potter 2010, among others). This use is not documented in this thesis as my corpus features almost exclusively interactions among adults.

But not all cases that don't conform to a main pattern constitute secondary uses. Leaving aside the possibility of idiosyncratic behaviour (see Robinson 2007), there are cases which are properly classified as *deviant* (e.g. Heritage 1984:248). In the technical sense of the term, deviant cases show a departure from the expected behaviour which clearly constitutes a violation, with visible consequences for the interaction. Such cases are important because they bring to the surface the normativity of a distributional pattern (see § 7.2.3 below).

7.2.2 Linguistic

Another form of evidence used in this thesis is the correlation of request forms with particular turn-design elements, that is, with linguistic features such as datives, vocatives, full noun phrases etc., the presence or absence of which is in principle independent of the main lexico-syntactic construction used (e.g. imperative, simple interrogative, *puoi x* interrogative). These correlations support the pairing between a lexico-syntactic construction and a certain requesting environment, by connecting it to related social-interactional processes. Table 7.1 summarises the main patterns found in the previous chapters, presenting them as relations between relations (cf. Enfield, Kockelman, and Sidnell 2014:10).

LINGUISTIC RELATION	INTERACTIONAL RELATION	REFERENCE
Imperatives often have pronominalised or ellipsed arguments, whereas simple interrogatives are more likely to be designed with full noun phrases.	Requests connected to what the requestee is currently doing entail common ground, whereas requests that are disconnected necessitate new information to be understood.	§ 3.6
Imperatives are usually not preceded or prefaced by a vocative, whereas simple interrogatives often are.	If a request is connected to what the requestee is currently doing, the requestee is already available; if the request is disconnected, a new frame of interaction needs to be established.	§ 3.6
Imperatives typically don't include a dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me', whereas simple interrogatives regularly do.	Requests that contribute to a joint project serve a shared outcome, whereas requests launched as an individual project are in the interest of the requester alone.	§ 3.6
Imperatives are mostly responded to with nonverbal fulfilment, whereas simple interrogatives are much more likely to be responded to with a positive polar element (e.g. *sì* 'yes') before fulfilment.	An imperative request anticipates neither refusal nor acceptance, but simply compliance, whereas an interrogative request makes relevant both acceptance and refusal.	§ 3.9

The majority of imperatives are not mitigated and don't contain a dative pronoun *mi* 'to/for me', but a minority of them do.	For requests that contribute to a joint project, the requester can assume compliance and simply solicit the action, whereas requests that are connected (or not disconnected) to what the requestee is doing, but serve an individual outcome, should be qualified and marked as self-directed.	§ 3.7.2
Puoi x interrogatives are more likely to be responded to with a positive polar element (e.g. *sì* 'yes') than simple interrogatives.	The acceptance of a request is less obvious when unwillingness is anticipated than when it isn't.	§ 4.6
Negative responses to *hai x* interrogatives lack features such as prefaces, hesitations and accounts, which are instead abundantly found in negative responses to simple interrogatives.	A blocking response to a pre-request reports an eventuality (such as the lack of an object) that is already understood by the requester as precluding compliance, whereas the rejection of a request is done on the basis of the requestee's choice.	§ 5.3

Table 7.1 Linguistic and interactional relations supporting the connection between request forms and requesting environments.

7.2.3 Normative

The third form of evidence for the functional distinctions in the Italian request system — and therefore for the paradigmatic relations among the forms that constitute it — comes from cases in which the normativity of the patterns observed comes to the surface, either in the form of interactional failure, or in the form of a deliberate violation accomplishing special interactional work, or as motivation for a form shift.

Speaking of nonverbal requests (Chapter 2), a case was discussed in which the erroneous use of a nonverbal form without sufficient contextual support leads to the requestee initiating repair (Extract 2.8). This failure was plausibly caused by an overestimation of the recognisability of the request, or in other words, a misjudgement of the information required to understand it.

The use of a request form in the wrong environment may also be deliberate, that is, done for a reason. Studies of how norms of behaviour are flouted or strategically manipulated has a long tradition in sociology and linguistics (Goffman 1963; Garfinkel 1967; Grice 1975; Heritage 1984; Levinson 2000). One of the basic principles taken up in conversation analysis is that the use of a certain form or practice in an unusual environment can serve to do "extra work" (Stivers 2007:73). In our case, this means doing more than just requesting, or better,

requesting in a way that attracts special attention (cf. Schegloff 1996b; Raymond 2003; Enfield 2007, 2013a). This thesis has analysed a few such deviant cases. One of them involves the use of an imperative form in an environment where a nonverbal form is expected (Extract 2.14). The extra work accomplished here is a jovial retaliation against the requestee's ongoing mocking, which the request so verbalised seeks to break off. Two other cases involve the use of an imperative where another verbal form (e.g. a simple interrogative) would be expected. In the first case, the request occurs as the requester leads a collective reproval of the requestee's behaviour, and is issued as a way of putting the requestee back in her place (Extract 3.26); in the second, the request is made as a way of bossing around, which ends up attracting the sanction and criticism of co-participants (Extract 3.27).

Normative orientations become visible also when requesters shift from one form to another to implement the same request. This can happen, most simply, after a first attempt at requesting fails (Extract 2.8). But it can also be observed, for example, as a change of the requestee alters the interactional configuration for the request (Extract 3.22). Finally, the normative nature of form selection emerges also in cases of self-repair (Extract 3.25), which provide a window into the on-line process of action construction (Drew et al. 2013).[64]

7.3 The remainder of the system

The forms examined in this thesis cover a substantial part of the Italian request system, accounting for 72.9% of all requests (see Table 1.2). This, however, doesn't exhaust the data at hand. In this section, I briefly overview four forms that haven't been covered: interjections, *devi x* 'you have to x' declaratives, *facciamo x* 'shall we x' interrogatives, and descriptions, all of which occur at least 5 times in the core sample. Here, I can offer only some preliminary insights into their functional properties, based on ongoing work. Further research will be needed to provide a complete analysis.

[64] Cases in which people visibly orient to the norms being violated and cases of formal shift are difficult to come across — a difficulty which increases as the frequency of the forms in question decreases. For this reason, deviant cases cannot be provided for all request forms with the present data.

- Utterances classified as **interjections** comprise: non-lexical items or cries (e.g. *olé*, *shhh*, *uuh*), lexical items that aren't nouns (e.g. *no* 'no'), and nouns that aren't used referentially (e.g. *occhio* 'watch out', lit. 'eye'). Much like namings (see § 2.6), interjections appear to be used in environments where most of the requested action is projectable, but some aspect of it isn't. For example, the negative polar token *no* 'no' — which accounts for a bit less than half of the cases (*n*=7/17) — is used to stop someone from doing something when it is clear both what it is that they should stop and what else they should to do instead.

- The form ***devi x* 'you have to x'** accounts for nearly half of the requests classified as personal modal declaratives (*n*=5/11) (see § 1.6.4). These are distinguished from the impersonal declaratives examined in Chapter 6 by the fact that they are marked for person. *Devi x* is a construction that encodes obligation marked for second person singular, translatable as 'you have to x' or 'you must x'. Similar to the imperative, this form is typically used to solicit actions that contribute to an undertaking that has been committed to by the requestee. What appears to distinguish imperative and *devi x* requests, however, is the scope or temporal applicability of what the requestee is directed to do. While imperatives are used to request one-off actions, limited to the here-and-now, *devi x* declaratives function as more general or "global" directives, which go beyond the local circumstances and are applicable in the future (see Parry 2013).

- ***Facciamo x* 'shall we x'** refers to a construction with a verb inflected for first person plural (*-amo*). Unlike its English translation, the construction is not modal, but simply consists in an interrogative predication, formally marked by intonation (see § 1.6.4). *Facciamo x* is used to get another person to do something together with the speaker (e.g. *spostiamo là il divano?* 'shall we move the sofa over there?') (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1976:47–8). Since it is designed to mobilise the action of a plurality of people, this form can also be used to make proposals, that is, to launch collective activities (see Couper-Kuhlen 2014). As such, *facciamo x* interrogatives sit on the fringe of requesting, similarly to impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x', which too can result in more than one person doing what is requested (see Extracts 6.11, 6.12, 6.13).

- By **"descriptions"** I refer to a family of non-modal declaratives that can't be defined by a single lexico-syntactic formula. What they all have in common is that they describe a certain state of affairs or event in the near environment — often the lack of something (e.g. *manca sale* 'there isn't enough salt') or the reaching of a stage in a process (e.g. *bolle l'acqua* 'the water is boiling'). Crucially, these descriptions don't specify any target action. Rather, the requester relies on the requestee's ability to infer the target action from what is reported. Utterances like these functioning as requests have traditionally been called "indirect requests" or "hints" and have been the topic of a large body of literature (see § 1.4.1), most of which has concentrated on the inferential processes underlying their comprehension. When addressing the question of why use this form of requesting, the most common answer is that these utterances allow the speaker to not commit to a request intention, and to instead leave the interpretation up to the recipient, thus giving them options (Ervin-Tripp 1976:42; Brown and Levinson 1987:69, 216; see also Weizman 1989). But this captures only part of the problem: when an utterance like 'there isn't enough salt' or 'the water is boiling' is indeed taken up as a request, what else is it doing? This seems to depend on the status of the information conveyed by the description (Rossi 2013). A preliminary analysis shows that a frequent function of descriptions is to report new information. The requestee is told about something they don't know, which is — at the same time — reasons for taking a certain action. So descriptions are used to do more than requesting. Unlike in the cases reviewed in Section 7.2, "more" here is not in the sense of requesting in a special way, but rather in the sense of implementing another main action in addition to requesting (Schegloff 2007b:9; Levinson 2013:118–9).

7.4 Conclusion

This thesis started with a puzzle for both linguists and students of human interaction: why do we have different ways of making requests of one another? How are we to explain formal variability in requesting behaviour as both a linguistic and a social phenomenon?

I have offered some answers to these questions by focussing on requests made in everyday informal interaction among speakers of Italian. I examined over 500 instances of requests sampled from a diverse corpus of video recordings, drawing on methods from

conversation analysis, linguistics and multimodal analysis. A qualitative analysis of the data was supported by quantitative measures of the distribution of linguistic and interactional features, and by the use of inferential statistics to test the generalisability of some of the patterns observed.

The study has concentrated on some of the most frequent request strategies — ranging from nonverbal forms to different kinds of verbal ones, including imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives — as well as on less frequent strategies. It has covered forms designed to solicit action (nonverbals, imperatives, namings, simple and *puoi x* 'can you x' interrogatives), forms that question a precondition for action (*hai x* 'do you have x' interrogatives), and forms that can both mobilise and legitimise action (impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x').

By analysing the different environments in which these forms occur, I have derived a set of social-interactional factors or dimensions that bear on how acts of requesting are constructed:

- the projectability of the requested action;
- the requestee's visual attention;
- the relation of the requested action to what the requestee is currently doing;
- the distribution of the action's benefit;
- the requestee's potential unwillingness to do the action;
- the availability of objects;
- the action's animatorship.

These factors and the forms associated with their management constitute a request *system* — a set of functionally overlapping but not equivalent forms, with distinct affordances, that stand in paradigmatic relation to one another. Studying the properties of these forms also forces us to delve into other fundamental structures of social interaction, with payoffs for more general questions, including the relation between single actions and the structure of a larger activity (Chapter 2), the distribution of agency in joint and individual courses of action (Chapter 3), the management of social disharmony (Chapter 4), preference and sequence organisation (Chapter 5), and action ascription (Chapter 6).

In what follows, I reflect on the contribution of this thesis to the study of language and social interaction, while also discussing its limitations and suggesting directions for future work.

7.4.1 Implications for models of requesting behaviour

The findings presented in the previous chapters and summarised at various points in the sections above have implications for models of requesting behaviour and particularly of request form selection. Given the size of the prior literature, it would be impossible to consider all the ways in which this study confirms, disconfirms, or adds to it. So I will mostly limit the discussion to the major approaches and themes reviewed in the Introduction (§ 1.4.3).

7.4.1.1 *The primacy of situational factors*

Brown and Levinson's model of politeness (1987) and the cross-cultural pragmatic studies that apply it (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) foreground asymmetries in the long-term relationships of people — chiefly social distance and relative power. In the informal interactions analysed in this thesis, however, these kinds of asymmetries don't play any major role. Instead, most of the selection factors identified are *situational* — they are locally grounded in the physical contingencies and in the sequential development of the interaction prior to the request. Rather than long-term asymmetries, the social relationships that matter are best defined as short-term statuses, emerging in the moment-by-moment progression of everyday activities.

A prime example of a situational factor is the relation of continuity or discontinuity between what is requested and what the requestee is currently doing, which influences the choice between two major verbal forms: imperatives and interrogatives (Chapter 3). This is a sequential criterion that hinges on how an action fits with a larger trajectory of actions, as either contributing to or departing from it, independently of the identities of the people involved. Within a dimension of continuity, the design of the request is further affected by another essentially situational factor: the projectability of the requested action, which is determined by its status within the structure and progressive realisation of an activity (Chapter 2).

Besides social distance and relative power, Brown and Levinson's (1987) model includes a third element contributing to the "weightiness" of a request: its degree of imposition — put simply, the size of the service or good in question. Although this is primarily based on the "absolute ranking" of impositions in a given culture (p. 74), the model allows for it to be adjusted according to situational factors, such as local rights and obligations to do what is requested, or contingent reasons for not doing it (p. 77). The findings of Chapter 4 reaffirm the importance of a situational definition of imposition. They show that people's anticipation of the requestee's potential unwillingness to do what is requested is typically based on events and understandings that have emerged in the prior interaction.

Finally, the situational factors examined in this thesis include elements of the physical arrangement of people and objects at the time of the request. One is the requestee's visual attention, which has consequences for choosing to verbalise the request or not, as motivated by the perceptual affordances of the visual and auditory modalities (Chapter 2). Another is the availability of the objects involved in the requested action (Chapter 5), which correlates with their visibility in the immediate environment.[65]

So focussing on everyday informal interaction takes the explanatory burden away from the long-term social asymmetries that have been central in a large part of the prior literature. In a society like Italy, where relations among adult family members and friends are mostly symmetrical, these factors don't really come out in requesting behaviour. What is central are instead situational factors grounded in the physical and sequential environment.

Future work will have to explain how the system changes in formal settings, where authority and institutional constraints come into play. Another promising avenue of research is also the comparison of societies like Italy with others where long-term social asymmetries are of greater significance in informal interaction — for example in South-East Asia (e.g. Laos), or in some indigenous communities of South America (e.g. the Chachi people of Ecuador) (Floyd et al. 2014; Floyd, Rossi, and Enfield in preparation). This will allow us, among other things, to test the validity of situational factors across cultures, and to explore their interaction with different social structures (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

[65] The use of *hai x* 'do you have x' interrogatives to manage the potential unavailability of the requested object is a case of form-function mapping that fits well the idea of dealing with the "greatest potential obstacle" (Francik and Clark 1985; Gibbs 1986) (see § 1.4.3.1), in that the form is directly related to the most likely reason for the requestee not being able to comply. Other form-function mappings examined in this thesis, however, seem less satisfactorily accounted for by this model.

7.4.1.2 *Face-work and preference*

The notion of *face* (Goffman 1967) has been influential in models of requesting ever since its elaboration in politeness theory. In Brown and Levinson (1987), strategies for requesting are explained by a tension between two basic wants of people: their desire to be unimpeded (negative face) and their desire to be approved of by others (positive face). Preserving these two aspects of face is fundamental to avoiding conflict and maintaining social cohesion.

It has been widely observed that the preservation of face and social solidarity is intimately connected the organisation of *preference* (Heritage 1984:268; Brown and Levinson 1987:38; Lerner 1996; Clayman and Heritage 2014b). One of the contributions of work on preference has been to add empirical specificity to how face maintenance plays out in the structural organisation of action, acquiring institutional autonomy from the particular desires of individuals. In what follows, I discuss how face-work and preference can be related to some of the selection factors identified in this thesis.

We begin with people's sensitivity to the projectability of action, which has consequences for the recognisability of requests (Chapter 2). The use of different forms in accordance with the higher or lower projectability of the action requested is, among other things, a way to avoid putting the requestee in a position to not understand, which can lead to a loss of face on both sides: of the requester, for posing an excessive demand on another's inferential capacity, and of the requestee, for causing disruption or delay in the interaction. This second aspect is also related to a general preference for progressivity, which motivates people to support and promote the smooth advancement of activities (Bolden 2011; Stivers and Robinson 2006; Heritage 2007). But if people design their actions, including requests, to be sufficiently informative, they also avoid "over-telling" (e.g. Schegloff 2007a:133; Enfield 2010:8), that is, being more informative than necessary (Grice 1975; Levinson 2000). This is because over-telling, too, can damage face — and particularly positive face — by conveying that requester and requestee share less knowledge than they actually do.

Another connection to face maintenance can be seen in people's concern for how the action requested fits with what the requestee is currently doing (Chapter 3). On the one hand, using a form that assumes compliance (e.g. an imperative) when the action contributes to a joint project conveys the requester's trust in the requestee's previous commitment — a regard for positive face. On the other hand, using a form that ostensibly doesn't assume compliance (an interrogative) when the action requested makes the requestee depart from what they are

doing is a way to express respect for their autonomy and desire to be unimpeded in their own actions — a concern for negative face.

A concern for negative face emerges also in people's use of a different interrogative form (*puoi x* 'can you x') when they anticipate the requestee's potential unwillingness — another way of acknowledging self-determination. Along a similar line, the use of pre-requests such as *hai x* 'do you have x' has long been recognised as a face-saving strategy that allows people to avoid rejection (Levinson 1983:357; Schegloff 2007b:31).

Finally, both negative and positive face considerations play a role in the use of impersonal deontic declaratives like *bisogna x* 'it is necessary to x' when the responsibility for a task is shared among multiple people, or when it isn't clear who should take the task on. This is connected, again, to not imposing on a specific individual when this isn't warranted (Brown and Levinson 1987:191–2), but also to recognising the collective ownership of a course of action (Lerner 1993; Wootton 1997:152–3; Sidnell 2011).

7.4.1.3 *Specifying sources of entitlement and types of contingencies*

I conclude this section with a discussion of Curl and Drew's (2008) approach to request form selection, which has been influential in recent conversation analytic work. The approach proposes two axes along which requesting environments vary: the entitlement or right to make a certain request, and the potential contingencies or obstacles to its fulfilment, which are reflected in the fine details of the talk and interaction that surround a request. These two analytic categories, however, were not designed to account for the whole range of functional distinctions found in the present work. For that, they appear to be too broad. This thesis suggests two ways to develop them: i) keep them analytically distinct, as variables that are independent of one another, and ii) decompose them, by asking: what are the sources of a requester's entitlement? And what are the recurrent obstacles to which requests are subject?

Some of the selection factors identified in this study are best thought of as different kinds of obstacles to the realisation or fulfilment of the request, like the requestee's visual attention or the availability of objects. Other factors can be instead seen as different sources of entitlement. The requestee's commitment to a project, for example, entitles the requester to assume their compliance with an action that contributes to that project's accomplishment (Chapter 3). A similar entitlement — with some qualification — can also be grounded in the continuity between what is requested and the requestee's current line of action, or in the fact

that the requestee is momentarily doing nothing. On the other hand, discontinuity and unrelatedness between the requested action and the requestee's current business put the requester in a position of having to ask. Within this latter domain, then, the recognition of the requestee's potential unwillingness motivates the choice of a marked interrogative form (Chapter 4), whereas the unproblematic nature of the request allows for using a leaner one.

This suggests that variation in requesting behaviour is multidimensional. For this reason, we need to develop the two axes of variation proposed by Curl and Drew to encompass qualitatively different and independent factors.

7.4.2 Towards a theory of systems of action forms

Section 7.1 dealt with the internal organisation and economy of a request system. Here, I take up some of these issues again as relevant not only to requesting, but more generally to any action or function with a comparable organisation of formal alternatives.

7.4.2.1 *Scope and organisation of selection factors*

Any system of language use will be shaped by a number of social-interactional factors influencing the implementation of a given action or function. In this thesis, I have proposed a list of factors (see above) that are central to requesting in Italian informal interaction. These are concerns or pressures that impinge on mobilising others to act — things that matter to people when appealing to each other's cooperation. But what is the place of these factors in the more general organisation of interaction? And how do they cohere?

Some are principles that affect interaction at large. The projectability of action, for example, has consequences for the design of virtually any contribution in interaction. It is part of a pervasive concern for maintaining common understanding, both in terms of the objects and entities we are referring to and of the actions we are implementing. Central to this process is the calibration of the information required by others to understand us, also referred to as an "informational imperative" (Enfield 2006, 2013b:26–7), and ultimately part of the larger management of common ground (Lewis 1969; Smith 1982; Clark 1996). Assessing the relative projectability of a requested action and adjusting what we say and do to solicit it accordingly is therefore an instance of a much more general interactional principle, which is likely to be a building block in any system of action forms.

A dimension that is also generally, though perhaps not pervasively, relevant in interaction is the distribution of the benefit brought by an action, which is reflected in the design of imperative and interrogative requests (Chapter 3). Benefit has been recently shown to be relevant to the formation and ascription of different action types, in particular requests, offers, proposals and suggestions (Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Clayman and Heritage 2014a). As an interactional "ticker" (Heritage 2012b), however, it seems to be active only when the action in question concerns the management of the physical or practical behaviour of people (Clayman and Heritage 2014a). But benefit is also part of a potentially superordinate dimension that has been referred to as the "me-us problem" (Enfield 2013b:xvi), that is, the matter of whether actions are being taken by people as separate individuals or as inhabitants of a single unit of agency and accountability (Kockelman 2007; Enfield 2013b: ch. 9).

Another dimension with a similar status as benefit is the relation of a given action to the trajectories being currently pursued in the interaction, which can be condensed to a basic distinction between forwarding and launching courses of action (Chapter 3). Besides requests, one area where this dimension influences the formation of action is questions, that is, requests for information. In a language like Spanish, for example, different intonation contours are selected on the basis of the question's position in a larger sequence of actions: either *sequence-internal* — furthering an ongoing course of action or topic, typically led by questionee, or by questioner and questionee jointly — or *sequence-initial* — launching a new course of action or topic that is often part of the questioner's own agenda (Torreira and Floyd 2012). This distinction applies also to questions in Italian (Rossi 2015; cf. also Couper-Kuhlen 2012 on questions in English). Moreover, the same dimension of forwarding versus launching courses of action seems reflected also in the use of turn-initial particles like the English *look*, *listen*, *so*, *and* — or the Italian *e* 'and', *ma* 'but', *no* 'no' — to manage the progress of conversational activities (Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Sidnell 2007; Bolden 2009; Fasulo 2009; Gazin and Ticca forthcoming).

Finally, some of the dimensions examined in this thesis appear to be mainly relevant to requesting environments, like the availability of objects for transfer or manipulation and the anticipation of a person's unwillingness to do what is requested.

One aspect that has been only limitedly explored here is the intersection of multiple social-interactional factors bearing on the same act of requesting. An example of this is the concurrent influence of recognitional and perceptual criteria on the design of highly projectable requests (Chapter 2). There are cases in which specifying the requested action

verbally is unnecessary from an informational point of view, yet in which the lack of the requestee's visual attention motivates the requester to verbalise the request in order to secure recipiency. The solution in these cases is to use a minimal utterance to attract attention and mobilise response (see Extracts 2.12 and 2.13), thus preserving the assumption that the requestee will know what to do only by seeing the nonverbal component of the request. Further research is needed to investigate the intersection of different selection factors, including the potential conflicts between them, the solutions adopted, and the emerging ranking of principles and preferences (see Enfield and Stivers 2007; Pomerantz and Heritage 2013).

7.4.2.2 *Paradigmatic relations among forms*

Alternative forms to implement a given action or function can be thought of as strategies to satisfy different social-interactional concerns (Brown and Levinson 1987), or in other words, solutions to solve recurrent problems (Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen 2005:497; Enfield 2013b:25). Forms of requesting serve to navigate the contingencies of mobilising others to action, just like forms of repair initiation serve to signal troubles of speaking, hearing and understanding. But what do we mean by forms *of* requesting or *of* repair initiation? That forms are dedicated to these functions? Probably not. Only few forms in language are assigned to a single pragmatic function, although some forms tend to be regularly associated with one (e.g. Couper-Kuhlen 2014).[66]

To understand this better, we can return to Zipf's workshop metaphor, though from a slightly different angle. Consider a carpenter using various tools to smooth wood. Some of these tools, like the plane or the sander, are mostly dedicated to smoothing, while others, like the rasp or the sandpaper, can also be used for other purposes as well. Selecting one or the other tool for smoothing at any given time depends, for one thing, on factors such as the type of wood, how thick it is, how rough, etc. At the same time, it is also motivated by the general affordances of each tool; not only how thinly or thickly it shaves, but also how easy it is to wield, whether it requires electric power, etc. In a similar way, alternative forms of action are selected in certain environments because of their properties in the larger linguistic and interactional apparatus, among which is their "core meaning" (see Chapter 3). An imperative

[66] The fact that forms are pragmatically multifunctional doesn't mean we can't define an invariant "core meaning" that is constant across its functions (cf. Wierzbicka 1996:239ff; Heritage 2010; Enfield 2014b:1–6).

form, for instance, carries an assumption of compliance, whereas an interrogative form conveys the speaker's uncertainty about it. These meanings motivate the selection of these forms across the different actions they implement.

So what is the nature of the paradigmatic relations among forms in a given system? This can be understood only in terms of "relations between relations" (Kockelman 2005, 2013; Enfield 2013b). Each form stands in relation to a certain action or function (e.g. requesting, or initiating repair) and such form-function mappings stand in relation to each other in the language more generally. Both of these relations are needed to understand the internal organisation of a given system.

A system is an analytic object, and defining its boundaries is ultimately a matter of framing. But we can find evidence that a certain framing is privileged, in the sense that people's behaviour seems to group its components together. The notion of *selection* among alternatives is supported by the normative consequences of their deviant use (see § 7.2 above) as well as by several distributional facts. One is that different forms of requesting are used by same requester with the same requestee,[67] as well as by different (or same) people for the very same action.[68] Also, forms stand in opposition to each other in sequences where more than one is used, for example because the first attempt fails (Extract 2.8). These cases can be meaningfully contrasted with others in which the same form is used on a subsequent attempt, confirming the appropriateness of the initial selection (Extract 3.14). Finally, some of the clearest evidence for people's selection among alternatives is found in cases of self-repair,

[67] Clara uses two forms with Silvia, a nonverbal in Extract 2.1 and an imperative in Extract 3.20; Sofia uses two forms with Paolo, a nonverbal in Extract 2.3 and an imperative in Extract 2.14; Bianca uses two forms with Flavia, an imperative in Extracts 2.6, 3.9 and a *hai x* interrogative in Extract 5.17; Flavia uses three forms with Bianca, a naming in Extract 2.9, an imperative in Extract 3.8, and a *hai x* interrogative in Extracts 5.4, 5.9, 5.10; Sergio uses three forms with Dino, an imperative in Extract 3.6, a simple interrogative in Extract 3.15, and an impersonal deontic declarative in Extract 6.14; Flavia uses both a minimal and a clausal imperative with Clara in Extracts 2.12 and 3.7; Mum uses two forms with Aldo, an imperative in Extract 3.10 and a simple interrogative in Extract 3.18; Dad, too, uses two forms with Aldo, a simple interrogative in Extract 3.16 and an imperative in Extract 3.24; Furio uses two forms with Sofia, a simple interrogative in Extract 3.17 and an impersonal deontic declarative in Extract 6.12; Eva uses two forms with Ada, a simple interrogative in Extract 3.22 and *puoi x* interrogative in Extract 4.12; Giulio uses both a naming and an imperative with Nino in Extract 2.10.

[68] Passing a plate or other object around the table is requested with four forms, a nonverbal in Extracts 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, an imperative in Extracts 2.5, 3.8, 3.10, 3.20, 3.26, a simple interrogative in Extracts 3.16, 5.3, and a *hai x* interrogative in Extract 5.14; cutting a potato is requested with three forms, a nonverbal in Extract 2.3, a minimal imperative in Extract 2.13, and a clausal imperative in Extract 2.14; laying down a playing card is requested with three forms, a nonverbal in Extract 2.1, an imperative in Extracts 2.6, 3.7, and a *hai x* interrogative in Extract 5.17; passing a towel is requested with both a simple interrogative and an imperative in Extract 3.22.

where the process can be inspected *in vivo* (Extract 3.25). These phenomena show that people orient to forms of requesting as belonging to a paradigmatic set.

The paradigmatic relations among forms of requesting will be relevant when considering other actions or functions that can be accomplished with (some of) the same forms (e.g. offers). Comparing the organisation of different systems within a language and testing the paradigmatic relations that hold across them will further our broader understanding of action formation.

7.4.3 At the intersection of language and social interaction

This study situates itself within a tradition of research at the intersection of language and social interaction. One strand of this tradition has been concerned with how the exigencies of interaction shape linguistic systems (see Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen 2014 for a review). Another, more recent development has focussed the attention on the functional distribution of linguistic forms in the accomplishment of interactional tasks (see Ochs et al. 1996; Selting and Couper-Kuhlen 2001; Hakulinen and Selting 2005; Szczepek Reed and Raymond 2013, among many others). This latter strand brings together researchers in conversation analysis, interactional linguistics, and also in areas of sociolinguistics and functional linguistics more generally. The common goal is both to explain linguistic form for what it does for us in interaction and to explain interaction for how it is enabled and managed through linguistic form. Categories like imperatives, interrogatives, declaratives, clausal and phrasal structures are not just elements of the internal organisation of a language, but tools for the construction of social action. This is central to understanding both the typological relevance of these categories across languages and their place within single linguistic systems. The goal of this research programme, however, isn't only to get a better grasp of language, but also of social interaction. Since actions are arguably the basic-level unit for social interaction (see Searle 1969; Goffman 1981; Sacks 1992a; Schegloff 1996a, 2007b; Enfield 2009; Levinson 2013, among others), it is crucial to understand the principles of their construction, in fine detail. To do this, we need to fully appreciate the richness of the formal apparatus provided by language.

In this endeavour, requests are and continue to be a prime object of analysis. One reason for this is that people construct requests drawing on a vast spectrum of their language's resources. Another reason is that actions of requesting are a primordial and

pervasive ingredient of human sociality. The findings of this thesis on Italian interaction are hypotheses to be tested in other communities and cultures. Is the organisation of the Italian request system transferable to other languages? How does grammatical variation influence its composition? And to what extent are functional oppositions similar or different? Some principles are likely to be shared across languages, especially those grounded in basic physical contingencies (e.g. visual attention) and general semiotic requirements (e.g. informational calibration). Other principles based in social-interactional categories (e.g. relations of continuity or discontinuity with the requestee's line of action) may instead be more prone to cultural specification; though here too there is suggestion of considerable commonalities (Zinken and Ogiermann 2013; Floyd et al. in preparation). The request system in Italian interaction is therefore one piece of a much larger effort to uncover some of the foundations of human cooperation and sociality.

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Samenvatting

Mensen overal ter wereld doen elke dag verzoeken. We doen niet alles zelf, maar schakelen voortdurend de hulp van anderen in voor de praktische zaken van het dagelijks leven, zoals het zout krijgen, een bank verplaatsen of een maaltijd koken. Het is al lang bekend dat we, wanneer we om hulp vragen, dit niet altijd op dezelfde manier doen. We gebruiken veel verschillende vormen waarbij we ons bedienen van de verschillende mogelijkheden die onze taal en ons lichaam ons bieden. Maar waarom is dat zo? Wat hebben we aan verschillende vormen van verzoeken? Het korte antwoord is dat we met deze verschillende vormen verschillende typen sociale relaties kunnen onderhouden. Maar wat voor relaties? Eerder onderzoek heeft voornamelijk de rol van langdurige asymmetrie benadrukt, zoals sociale afstand en relatieve macht. In dit proefschrift, daarentegen, staan sociale relaties en dimensies centraal die van moment tot moment tot stand komen tijdens alledaagse interactie. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn hoe makkelijk of moeilijk de actie waarom wordt gevraagd door de verzochte persoon te anticiperen is, of de actie waarom wordt gevraagd bijdraagt aan een gezamenlijk project of alleen een individueel project dient, of de verzochte persoon wellicht niet bereid is de actie uit te voeren en hoe vanzelfsprekend het is dat een bepaalde persoon betrokken is bij de actie. Dit proefschrift draagt bij aan het begrip van zowel taal als sociale interactie door te laten zien dat vormen die gebruikt worden om te verzoeken een systeem vormen, georganiseerd door een set van terugkerende sociaal-interactionele belangen.

Hoofdstuk 1 situeert het proefschrift in de context van de literatuur over menselijke socialiteit, taal en verzoeken. Daarna wordt het doel en het bereik van het onderzoek besproken, de data en methodologie geïntroduceerd en een overzicht gegeven van de komende hoofdstukken.

Hoofdstuk 2 bespreekt verzoeken die zonder taal worden gemaakt. Non-verbale vormen van verzoeken worden geanalyseerd in vergelijking met verbale vormen die in vergelijkbare contexten voorkomen - imperatieven en naamwoorden. Hierbij wordt laten zien dat de selectie van een non-verbale vorm afhangt van de projecteerbaarheid of anticipeerbaarheid van de gevraagde actie binnen de activiteit die plaatsvindt. Deze dimensie wordt verder verkend door gevallen van volledig projecteerbare acties te bestuderen waarbij het verzoek toch verbaal is. Dit kan verklaard worden door de noodzaak om de onmiddellijke

ontvangst van het verzoek te garanderen wanneer de verzochte persoon de verzoekende persoon niet ziet.

Net als in hoofdstuk 2 wordt ook in hoofdstuk 3 een contrastieve analyse opgezet van twee vormen van verzoeken; in dit geval imperatieven en simpele vraagzinnen ('zul je x'). Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat terwijl imperatieven normaalgesproken gebruikt worden voor verzoeken die bijdragen aan een reeds vastgesteld gezamenlijk project, simpele vraagzinnen gebruikt worden om nieuwe onafhankelijke projecten te starten die een individueel doel dienen. Het hoofdstuk beschouwt ook secundaire functies van deze vormen, waarbij dieper in wordt gegaan op de twee sociaal-interactionele criteria die hun selectie motiveren: een relatie van continuïteit of discontinuïteit tussen de actie waarom gevraagd wordt en wat de verzochte persoon aan het doen is, en de verdeling van het voordeel dat de actie met zich mee brengt.

In hoofdstuk 4 wordt de analyse van vragende vormen uitgebreid door te kijken naar het gebruik van *puoi x* 'kun je x'. Net als in simpele vraagzinnen vereisen acties die verzocht worden met behulp van *puoi x* een onderbreking van wat de verzochte persoon op dat moment aan het doen is. Echter, wat het gebruik van *puoi x* motiveert is de anticipatie dat de verzochte persoon niet bereid zal zijn in te stemmen. Deze anticipatie is niet aanwezig bij simpele vraagzinnen.

In hoofdstuk 5 wordt wederom een andere vragende vorm bestudeerd: *hai x* 'heb je x', die wordt gebruikt wanneer de verkrijgbaarheid van een object onzeker is. In tegenstelling tot andere vragende vormen wordt *hai x* begrepen als het informeren naar een relevante eerste voorwaarde voor een verzoek. Deze vorm functioneert dus als *pre-request* (pre-verzoek), wat consequenties heeft voor de sequentiële organisatie en voor de organisatie van *preference* (voorkeur). Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat negatieve antwoorden op *hai x* niet de vorm hebben van *dispreferreds* (ongewenste antwoorden), en dat *go-ahead* reacties - die de verkrijgbaarheid van het object bevestigen - leiden tot expansie van de sequentie.

In hoofdstuk 6 staan onpersoonlijke deontische declaratieven centraal, zoals *bisogna x* 'het is nodig om x te doen'. Deze vorm is pragmatisch gezien ambigu doordat hij niet specificeert naar wie de uitgedrukte verplichting verwijst of wie het verzoek zou moeten uitvoeren. Deze ambiguïteit is centraal in hoe de vorm gebruikt wordt. Het hoofdstuk beschouwt gevallen waarin de vorm als een verzoek functioneert, maar ook gevallen waarin de vorm gebruikt wordt om het gedrag van de spreker te verantwoorden. Het eerste gedeelte van de analyse beschrijft hoe mensen reageren op onpersoonlijke deontische declaratieven, gebaseerd op de context en, wanneer de context niet helpt, op het non-verbale gedrag van de

spreker. Het tweede gedeelte laat zien dat, terwijl context en non-verbaal gedrag hun functie systematisch beïnvloeden, onpersoonlijke deontische declaratieven het potentieel hebben om complexe interacties te genereren die niet eenvoudig als verzoeken of verantwoordingen kunnen worden gedefinieerd. Dit potentieel komt voort uit hun pragmatische ambiguïteit, die de ruimte voor reactie open houdt.

Hoofdstuk 7 begint met een bespreking van de bevindingen die in de voorafgaande hoofdstukken zijn beschreven, waarbij een uitgebreid beeld van verzoeken in Italiaanse informele interactie wordt gegeven. Er wordt beargumenteerd dat de organisatie van de verschillende vormen van verzoeken in relatie tot hun selectiefactoren als een *systeem* beschreven kan worden: een set van vormen in paradigmatische relatie tot elkaar die functioneel gedistribueerd zijn aan de hand van hun mogelijkheden. Daarna wordt het bewijs voor een dergelijke organisatie besproken, waarbij ook een overzicht gegeven wordt van vier vormen van verzoeken die niet in dit proefschrift onderzocht zijn. Het proefschrift wordt afgesloten door te reflecteren op de bijdrage die het heeft geleverd aan verschillende gebieden van de studie van taal en sociale interactie. Hierbij worden ook de limitaties van het proefschrift aangegeven alsmede suggesties voor vervolgonderzoek.

Biographical note

Giovanni Rossi studied Linguistics at the University of Bologna, where he received his B.A. in 2009, and at the Radboud University Nijmegen, where he received his M.A. in 2010. In the same year, he was awarded a Ph.D. scholarship from the European Research Council project *Human Sociality and Systems of Language Use*, led by Nick Enfield and hosted within the Language and Cognition department at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. While carrying out the research reported in this thesis, he also contributed to a number of collaborative projects comparing language use and conversational structure across cultures, including projects on the meaning and use of perception words, the organisation of conversational repair, place reference, and requesting, the latter of which he coordinated together with Simeon Floyd and Nick Enfield. He currently works as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki, in the Centre of Excellence in Research on Intersubjectivity in Interaction. His research topics include the interplay of language and bodily conduct in the formation of social action, the role of prosody in the design of questions across languages, and the normativity of linguistic behaviour.

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