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CHAPTER 4

Secondary and deviant uses of the imperative for requesting in Italian

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The use of the imperative for requesting has been mostly explained on the basis of estimations of social distance, relative power, and entitlement. More recent research, however, has identified other selection factors to do with the functional and sequential relation of the action requested to the trajectory of the ongoing interaction. In everyday activities among family and friends, the imperative is typically warranted by an earlier commitment of the requestee to a joint project or shared goal which the action requested contributes to. The chapter argues this to be the *primary* use of the imperative for requesting in Italian informal interaction, and distinguishes it from other uses of the imperative that do not conform to the predominant pattern. These other uses are of two kinds: (i) *secondary*, that is, less frequent and formally marked imperatives that still orient to social-interactional conditions supporting an expectation of compliance, and (ii) *deviant*, where the imperative is selected in deliberate violation of the social-interactional conditions that normally support it, attracting special attention and accomplishing more than just requesting. This study extends prior findings on the functional distribution of imperative requests and makes a point of relating and classifying distinct uses of a same form of action, offering new insights into more general aspects of language use such as markedness and normativity.

Keywords: imperative, requests, secondary use, deviant use, project, course of action, benefit, continuity, normativity, markedness

1. Introduction

The imperative is a central resource for making requests in many languages (Floyd et al. 2014; Floyd, Rossi, and Enfield under review). As a grammatical form, it is intimately connected to the action of requesting by virtue of its semantics, which encodes the speaker's attempt to get another to do something (Lyons 1977: 746–748; Sadock and Zwicky 1985: 170–171). But when is the imperative actually used

for this function? Previous research has explained the use of the imperative for requesting as warranted by estimations of social distance, relative power, and entitlement (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987; Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989; Lindström 2005; Drew and Walker 2010; Craven and Potter 2010; Antaki and Kent 2012). More recently, other selection factors have been identified concerning the functional and sequential relation of the action requested to the trajectory of the ongoing interaction. In informal settings, imperatives are typically licenced by an earlier commitment of the requestee to a joint project or shared goal which the action requested contributes to. This means that the action requested is connected to a larger course of action and benefits both requester and requestee (Wootton 1997, 2005; Rossi 2012; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). This chapter builds on this finding and argues this to be the *primary* use of the imperative for requesting in Italian informal interaction, for two reasons. One is that this use is by far the most frequent; the other is that the imperative so used is typically bare and unmitigated. That said, the focus of this chapter is on cases that do not conform to this predominant pattern. These alternative uses of the imperative are of two kinds, which I will refer to as *secondary* and *deviant*.

Most imperative requests that do not conform to the *primary* use described above are requests that – unlike those contributing to a joint project – are made to the benefit of the requester alone. I will show that, while serving an individual outcome, these requests are placed so as to be *compatible* with the current situation of the requestee, either because the action requested “piggybacks” on what the requestee is currently doing, or because the requestee is momentarily doing nothing. By selecting an imperative form here, requesters maintain an orientation to a central factor for requesting in informal settings: the *non-discordance* of what is requested with the requestee’s line of action. At the same time, this use of the imperative is often marked relative to its *primary* use by the inclusion of first person dative pronouns (*mi* ‘to/for me’), mitigators (*dai, valà*, ‘will you’, *un attimo* ‘a moment’, *per favore* ‘please’), and sometimes explanations of the special circumstances motivating the request (e.g., *mentre entri* ‘as you go inside’, *se non hai niente da fare* ‘if you have nothing to do’). This additional marking, together with the lower frequency of such requests, characterises this use of the imperative as *secondary*.

These cases must be distinguished from other uses of the imperative that are best described as *deviant* (e.g., Heritage 1984: 248). Here, the imperative is selected in deliberate violation of the social-interactional conditions that normally support it, and this selection is associated with special actions that go beyond requesting, with particular consequences for the interaction.

This study extends prior findings on the functional distribution of imperative requests by documenting other environments in informal interaction that support an expectation of compliance. At the same time, it addresses the matter of relating

and classifying distinct uses of a same form of action, offering new insights into more general aspects of language use such as markedness and normativity.

2. The imperative form in Italian

Italian has both morphological and syntactic means to distinguish imperatives from interrogative and declarative sentence types. 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 (it is constructed with *non* ‘not’ + infinitive, e.g., *non parlare* ‘do not speak!’), whereas the plural is morphologically ambiguous (e.g., *non parl-ate* ‘don’t speak!’ or ‘you don’t speak’). One reliable cue for morphologically ambiguous forms is the position of pronominal elements in the clause.

- (1) *mi* *leggi* *un libro*
 1SG.DAT read-NPST-2SG a book
 you read a book for me
- (2) *leggimi* *un libro*
 read-NPST-2SG=1SG.DAT 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 (1)). 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 (2)). The same syntactic principle applies also to negative forms (e.g., *non mi leggi un libro* ‘you don’t read a book for me’ vs. *non leggermi un libro* ‘don’t read me a book!’).

3. Background: Using the imperative for requesting

People’s use of the imperative against other forms of requesting has for the most part been explained in terms of 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 other forms such as interrogative utterances convey a directive 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). Also, since indirectness allows greater freedom for the requestee not to comply, it is typically taken to correlate with politeness (Searle 1975: 64–69; Leech 1983: 108). This makes imperatives seem generally less polite than other forms of requesting, though people's perception of particular levels of directness as more or less polite is influenced by culture (Blum-Kulka 1987; Oigermann 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 in naturally occurring interaction. Some studies in this area suggest that imperatives display a high degree of entitlement (i.e., right) to have something done by another person, and 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 factors. 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 lack 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 studies 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. This finding bears a significant relation to the patterns of selection I have identified in Italian adult interaction (Rossi 2012, 2015: Chapter 3). One of the factors influencing the choice of an imperative request form in my corpus is a relation of *continuity* between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing – in other words, the request extends a line of action already pursued by the requestee. This should be distinguished from a relation of *discontinuity*, where the request makes the requestee 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* (see Heritage and Sorjonen 1994; Schegloff 2007; Rossano 2012: Chapter 4; Levinson 2013; Robinson 2013). The central 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. 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: 128–129). What matters, in other words, is the organisation of multiple actions in relation to a commitment (Clark 1996, 2006; see also Michael, Sebanz, and Knoblich 2016; Zinken and Deppermann this volume) or, put another way, the directionality of a stream of moves as means to an end.

Besides the functional and sequential relation of the action requested to what the requestee is currently doing, another factor that matters for the use of the imperative is the distribution of the *benefit* brought by the action. The relevance of benefit for requesting behaviour has long been noted in the literature (e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1976: 31–32; Brown and Levinson 1987: 127; Schieffelin 1990: 184), but has rarely become a focus of analysis, one exception being Wootton (1997).¹ In the same study mentioned above, Wootton identifies benefit as another element characterising the actions that are requested in imperative form, which are normally understood to be desirable to both parties.

Once again, Wootton's findings bear a significant relation to the patterns observed in Italian interaction, where the majority of imperative requests are typically made for the benefit of requester and requestee together (Rossi 2012, 2015: Chapter 3). In the *primary* use of the imperative, shared benefit goes hand in hand with continuity between the action requested and what the requestee is currently doing. When these two dimensions converge, the request can be defined as *bilateral*.

Establishing the benefit of an action can be analytically complex and potentially slippery, especially if benefit is considered *globally*, in terms that transcend the immediate context (cf. Parry 2013; Clayman and Heritage 2014). Take, for example, a father asking his son to check the father's skis before a family outing (see Extract (11) below). In a strict sense, the action requested benefits the father alone. But one might also argue that checking a family member's skis here is more broadly in the interest of all members, in that it can prevent trouble during the outing that would probably affect the whole family. Extending the scope of benefit to such non-immediate consequences, however, makes it difficult to treat it objectively. For this reason, in this study benefit is analysed *locally*, within the boundaries of

1. 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 2014; 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.

the immediate context. This is in line with the analysis of sequential (*dis*)*continuity*, which is by definition a local matter pertaining to the current trajectory of action.

4. Data and sampling

This study is part of a larger project aimed at providing a comprehensive account of the use of alternative forms of requesting among speakers of Italian, as documented in a large video corpus of informal interaction. 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. The interactions are all informal, among people who know each other well (family, friends, neighbours, acquaintances), in highly familiar environments (homes, recreational places, communal work areas).² From this 50-hour corpus, I extracted a core 5-hour sample, made of 15-minute segments from 20 different recordings. The sample was constructed so as to be representative of various slices of everyday life, thus making possible reliable frequency statements. The sample yields a total of 339 requests, the large majority of which are in imperative form (36.6%, $n = 124$). The requests are all for actions to be performed here and now or in the immediate future (see Rossi 2015: Chapter 1 for further information).

5. Primary use

In previous work (Rossi 2012, 2015: Chapter 3), I have shown that in Italian informal interaction the imperative is mostly used to implement *bilateral* requests. This means that (i) the action requested is connected to what the requestee is doing at the moment at which the request is made, and that (ii) both requester and requestee stand to benefit from it. These are typically actions that contribute to an already established joint project between participants, as illustrated in the following three examples.

In Extract (3), Greta, Sergio and Dino are chatting, while Sergio dyes Greta's hair. As the dyeing proceeds, Dino notices that Sergio has a runny nose (line 1).

2. In a society like Italy, relations among adults in informal settings are mostly symmetrical. The few cases of potential asymmetry include relations between parent-in-law and child-in-law. The present corpus contains one such dyad, where the daughter-in-law addresses her mother-in-law using the second person formal pronoun (*Lei* instead of *tu*) and the corresponding verb inflections. The corpus, however, does not contain any requests between these two people.

Since Sergio's hands are busy with Greta's hair, Dino then volunteers to do 'this terrible thing' (line 5) – that is, to help Sergio wipe his nose.

(3) [Tinta_469934]

- 1 Dino ti sta pende(hh)ndo una goccia di-
 2SG.DAT stay-3SG hang.down-GER one drop of
 you've got a drop hanging do(hh)wn from-
- 2 Sergio ((sniffs)) lo so adesso
 3SG.ACC know-1SG now
 I know now
- 3 me la tolgo
 1SG.DAT 3SG.ACC remove-1SG
 I'm going to get rid of it
- 4 Dino ((gets some kitchen paper from the table))
- 5 madò mi tocca fare questa cosa tremenda
 Madonna 1SG.DAT touch-3SG do-INF this thing tremendous
 my god the fate fell to me to do this terrible thing
- 6 ((raises paper to Sergio's nose))
- 7 Sergio ((turns head to meet Dino's hand))
- 8 Dino ((begins to rub Sergio's nose))
- 9 Sergio [((brings free hand to nose))
- 10 [(((positions dye bottle in a way suitable for
- 11 Dino to grab it))
- 12 tieni questo ((holds out the dye bottle))
 hold-NPST-2SG this
 hold this
- 13 Dino ((grabs the bottle))
- 14 Sergio ((wipes 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. So he decides to assist him (lines 4–6). Sergio joins in the project by turning his head to Dino (line 7). A moment later, Sergio brings a hand to his nose to take over the wiping. Since this is rather difficult to bring off with just one hand, he requests that Dino take the dye bottle, to free up his second hand. Sergio's request is integral to their ongoing joint project – wiping Sergio's nose. It is sequentially and functionally connected to the progress of their actions and made in the interest of both (see Rossi 2014: 320–321 for further analysis of this case).

Bilateral requests are also frequently found in games – another type of joint project. In Extract (4), four friends are playing cards. As Bianca begins her turn

(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.

(4) [Circolo01_3027563]

1 Silvia ((discards a card))
 2 [vara che resto con una ((to Clara))
 look-IMP.2SG COMP remain-1SG 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
 give-IMP.2SG=1SG.DAT CON close-1SG this
 give {it to} me so that I {can} complete this one
 7 ((reaches out towards Bianca))
 8 Bianca ((passes card to Flavia))

The action requested is embedded in what participants are doing. Passing a card to be played is integral to moving the game forward. Besides this structural aspect, the bilateral nature of the request is reflected in the account appended to it ('so that I can complete this one'), which shows it to be functional to a shared goal.

The convergence of these two dimensions – sequential continuity and shared benefit – comes up very clearly also in a third example, 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 dry, Plinio 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). A moment later, Rocco makes a request that Plinio put away another tray that is lying on the floor in the area where they are working.

(5) [CampFamLava_591294]

1 Plinio questo servirà ancora ((holds up white tray))
 this serve-FUT-3SG 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
6 dishwasher))

7 Rocco metti via anche quello lì giallo ((points))
put-NPST-2SG away also that there yellow
put away that yellow one too

8 che se no gli pestiam sopra
CON if no 3SG.DAT step-1PL above
otherwise we're going to step on it

9 Plinio ((picks up yellow tray and puts it away))

Rocco's request is made within a joint project in which both he and Plinio are involved, and is also locally connected to a line of action pursued by Plinio a few seconds earlier – clearing their work area from unnecessary objects – as reflected in the use of the conjunction *anche* 'too'.³ Moreover, the account appended to the request, constructed with first person plural, indicates that both requester and requestee stand to gain from putting away the yellow tray, in that it will make the continuation of their task safer. More generally, both this account and the one seen in the previous case bring to the fore how the actions requested contribute to the ongoing joint project.

In sum, the cases in this section illustrate a previously documented use of the imperative for requesting that rests on two social-interactional factors. The first is the continuity between what is requested and the larger course of action in which the requestee is involved: bilateral imperative requests may be embedded in help sequences (Extract (3)), advance the progress of a game (Extract (4)), or contribute to the management of daily routines and domestic work (Extract (5)). The second factor concerns the benefit of the action requested, which is shared between requester and requestee. This emerges in the 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 accounts that make explicit the contribution

3. At a more fine-grained level of analysis, this case is somewhat different from the previous two. Unlike in Extracts (3) and (4), at the moment the request is made, the requestee is not already occupied with the relevant object and is instead wandering between the sink and the dishwasher. This makes the interactional configuration similar to the cases of “availability” described by Zinken and Deppermann (this volume), which typically involve an informationally more complex utterance, characterised by the use of heavier noun phrases (*quello lì giallo* ‘that yellow one’) and pointing gestures. This, however, does not change the fact that the requestee is committed to the larger project: Plinio is in charge of drying the dishes together with Rocco, and is waiting for the next round to come out of the dishwasher; his commitment, in other words, transcends brief moments of idleness or distraction, as it is bound to the completion of the project (cf. Lerner 1998).

of the action requested to a shared outcome (*che sero questa* ‘so that I can complete this one’, Extract (4), *che se no gli pestiam sopra* ‘otherwise we’re going to step on it’, Extract (5)). The nature of these accounts becomes especially important in contrast with other accounts examined in the next section.

I want to argue that this is the *primary* use of the imperative for requesting in Italian informal interaction. There are two reasons for this. First, this use is the most frequent, accounting for 73.4% ($n = 91/124$) of all imperative requests. Second, the imperative so used is typically bare and unmitigated. The relevance of this will become clearer as we move on to consider cases in which the imperative is used outside its primary environment.

6. Secondary uses

The focus of this section is on imperative requests that do not, or do not fully conform to the predominant use illustrated in the previous section, varying in the dimensions that constitute that use: the continuity between the action requested and what the requestee is doing, and the action’s shared benefit. Many of these requests, unlike bilateral ones, are made to the benefit of the requester alone. At the same time, however, their placement is such that what is requested does not disrupt what the requestee is currently doing. In other words, while serving an individual outcome, the action requested is *compatible* with the current situation of the requestee. One environment for this is when the action requested “piggybacks” on a trajectory of action in which the requestee is already engaged.⁴ This is illustrated by the next three examples.

Extract (6) is taken from the same card game as Extract (4) 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 cake from a plate that has been previously brought to the table for all the players. This occasions Clara’s request.

4. The term “piggybacking” has been used by Goodwin and Goodwin (1990) to refer to another, 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.

(6) [Circolo01_1270484]

- 1 Bianca se te ghe n'hai doi
 if SCL EX PAR=have-2SG two
 if you have two
- 2 Flavia no no ghe n'ho doi no
 no not EX PAR=have-1SG 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
 give-IMP.2SG=1SG.DAT that crumble there PRT for favour
 give me that tiny piece there please valà (≈ will you)]
- 5 [((points to cake))]
- 6 Silvia ((passes cake to Clara))
- 7 Clara grazie
 thanks

Unlike the imperative request made in Extract (4), this one does not contribute to the progress of the card game. It is a request for a good to be consumed by the requester alone. Yet 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 targeted referent.

This use of the imperative is marked by two mitigators that are not 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 1–3, 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.

(7) [StubePrep_2055630]

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

- 2 è per la c- per
be.3SG for the for
is {good for} the c- for
- 3 l'o[ttite ((turns to the living room))
the=otitis
ear infections
- 4 Aldo [Silvio mentre entri
NAME while enter-2SG
 Silvio as you go inside
- 5 porta dentro un po' di birre dai=
bring-IMP.2SG inside one bit of beers PRT
bring in a few beers **dai** (~ will you)
- 6 Sandro =andiamo a pescar temoli e facciamo l'olio
go.1PL to fish-INF graylings and make-1PL the=oil
we go fishing for graylings and make oil
- 7 (2.3)
- 8 Silvio no vara òh non mi ricordo però c'è
no look-IMP.2SG uh not 1SG.DAT remember-1SG but EX=be.3SG
no look uh I don't remember {well} but there's
- 9 l'olio di fegato di merluzzo
the=oil of liver of cod
cod liver oil
- 10 che non mi ricordo per cos'è
REL not REFL remember-1SG for what=be.3SG
which I can't remember for what
- 11 che era
REL be-IPFV-3SG
it was
(7 seconds omitted)
- 12 Silvio ((walks into living room carrying beers))

Silvio has not been involved in the preparations that are going on in the backyard. He has just arrived on the scene and has not 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 is not 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 an “appealing” function similar to *valà*, roughly translatable with the tag ‘will you’ (see above).⁵

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 (8) 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 (lines 1–2), Eva steps in to fulfil the request in Mirko’s stead (lines 4–5), committing to give the chocolate to Fabri after she has found a dish 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 8) (on simple interrogative requests see Rossi 2012, 2015: Chapter 3).

(8) [NataleCucina02_3211092]

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

5. In this case, the action requested does not benefit the requester alone, but a larger group of people, which the requestee is about to become part of.

- 12 Eva tu [che metti giù la pezza Gildo
2SG.NOM REL put-2SG down the rag NAME
you, who's putting down the towel, Gildo
- 13 Ada [
[dov'è che è quella pezza rosa
where=be.3SG REL be.3SG that rag pink
where's that pink towel
- 14 avevo l'avevo data òh-
have-IPFV-1SG 3SG.ACC=have-IPFV-1SG give-PPT uh
I gave I gave it uh-
- 15 (.)
- 16 Eva Gildo dammi una pezza lì
NAME give-IMP.2SG=1SG.DAT one rag there
Gildo give me a towel {from} there,
- 17 che devo pulire [sto::
CON must-1SG clean-INF this
cause I have to clean this::
- 18 Gildo [
[è una pezza ((picks up
be.3SG one rag
is this a towel?
dish towel))
- 19 Eva sì
yes
- 20 Gildo [((passes dish towel to Eva))
[
- 21 Eva [è sporca ma
be.3SG dirty but
it's dirty but

Eva's interrogative request (line 8) is not immediately taken up by Ada, who is momentarily coordinating another task with Mirko (line 9). Meanwhile, another person, Gildo, has arrived in the kitchen, approached the sink (line 7), and is now putting his dirty plate in it (line 10). Eva sees what Gildo is doing (line 11) and addresses him (line 12) (Figure 1), 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 16–17). 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 the plate in the sink, he is also in a position to grab one of the dish 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').⁶ 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 1. Frame from line 12, Extract (5). Eva addresses Gildo ('you, who's putting down the towel, Gildo') as he puts 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 course of action creates a favourable environment for Eva to make her request without disrupting its trajectory, but only requiring a little extension of it.⁷

6. A concurrent explanation for the form shift may be that Eva's first attempt at requesting has made public her need for the dish towel, possibly increasing the expectability of compliance. Note, however, that in other cases of multiple attempts involving different requestees, requesters maintain the same form of requesting. This suggests that making the same request again – either to another or to the same requestee – is not in itself grounds for changing form.

7. It is worth noting how in this case a *local* analysis of benefit differs from a *global* one (see the final paragraph of §3 above). At a global level, the action requested does not benefit Eva alone, but also Fabrizio, to whom Eva will serve a cup of chocolate after she has cleaned it with the dish towel. At a local level, however, what matters is the relationship between requester and requestee(s) in the immediate context. Neither Gildo nor Ada have been involved in, or have attended

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 (9) takes place on the side of a sledging slope. A group of people including Carla and Pina are watching their friends sledging. 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 over 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.

(9) [CampGioPlatea_1133190]

```

1 Pina  [adesso hai      una parte totalmente bianca=
        now  have-2sg one part totally  white
        now you've got one part completely white
        [
2      [((Carla takes off gloves))
3 Pina  =e l'altra  marrone ((to Paolo))
        and the=other brown
        and the other brown
4      (0.5)/((Carla walks over to Paolo))
5 Adelina öhm
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-2SG=1SG.DAT 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.3SG COMP have-2PL one handkerchief
        don't you guys happen to have a handkerchief?

```

to, the interaction occasioning the request (lines 1–4). In the new participation framework set up by the request sequence, getting the dish towel is Eva's individual project; and there is no mention that the cup Eva needs to clean is for Fabrizio. Locally, then, Eva is the immediate beneficiary of the action requested, and Gildo and Ada are not.

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 below), 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) (*tieni questo* ‘hold this’). With these qualifications, the 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 looking down on the sledding slope (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Frame from line 11, Extract (9). Carla says ‘hold these for me one second’ to Pina, who is looking down on the sledding slope.

While the action requested is not connected to what the requestee is doing, it also does not make her depart from any ongoing course of action, as is the case in other requesting environments (see Eva’s simple interrogative request in Extract (8), line 8). To put it another way, we could say that here the requestee does not have a reason not to do what is being requested.

Consider another similar case. Eva is surveying objects on the kitchen worktop, to be selected for washing up or putting away. While she comments on the objects

she is selecting (lines 1–6), Mirko wanders about the kitchen, nibbling at what is left of an apple. Beginning in line 8, Eva turns her attention to finding a dish towel. In the first part of her turn, she mentions a ‘pink towel’ that was present in the kitchen earlier, and that is preferable over the rag that is lying in the sink (see Figure 3), which looks rather like ‘underpants.’ The turn then continues with an imperative request for Mirko to give her the towel.

(10) [NataleCucina03_1520516]

- 1 Eva questo:: l'è davert:
this SCL=be.3SG open
this one:: is open:
- 2 (3.8)//((Eva puts Parmesan bag on worktop))
- 3 Eva questa la è neta perché gh'era
this SCL be.3SG clean because EX=be.IPFV-3SG
this one is clean because it contained:
- 4 dentro: (.) le:: cose
inside the things
the:: stuff
- 5 (1.0)//((Eva rinses jug))
- 6 Eva gh'era dentro le mm: cose nete le::
EX=be.IPFV-3SG inside the mm things clean the
it contained the mm: clean stuff the::
- 7 (6.6)//((Eva puts jug into plate rack, while Mirko stands
beside her, finishing his apple))
- 8 Eva quella peza: rosina chi enveze dele mudande
that rag pink-DIM here instead.of of-the underpants
{what about} that: pink towel in place of the underpants
- 9 dame 'na peza rosina
give-IMP.2SG=1SG.DAT one rag pink-DIM
give me a pink towel
- 10 evenze dele mudande dai
instead.of of-the underpants PRT
in place of the underpants **dai** (≈ will you)
- 11 (0.8)//((Mirko glances around))
- 12 Eva en do sarala
in where be-FUT-3SG=SCL
where did it end up?
- 13 (0.9)//((Mirko throws out applecore))
- 14 Mirko boh
ITJ
dunno
- 15 (1.3)//((Mirko walks to other end of the kitchen))

```

16 Mirko vedem se rieso a trovarla
    see-NPST-1PL if manage-1SG to find-INF=3SG.ACC
    let's see if I manage to find it

```

When the extract begins, Eva has just begun tidying up the kitchen worktop. Although Mirko is present in the kitchen, he is clearly not involved in the task. So a request for him to get a towel here cannot be understood as bilateral. At the same time, however, Mirko is also visibly doing nothing, where “nothing” should be understood as a lack of involvement in any substantive course of action. To be sure, Mirko is eating an apple, but the apple has been visibly reduced to its core, which means that the eating is about to finish. Also, Mirko is not eating at the table, but wandering about the kitchen. In fact, throughout the first part of the extract, Mirko slowly follows Eva’s movements, reorienting his posture as she walks from the gas cooker (lines 1–2) to the sink (after line 4). And when Eva begins the turn that ends with the target request, he is standing beside her (Figure 3). This makes Eva’s request *compatible* or *non-discordant* with his situation, even though Mirko is not committed to the task (cf. Zinken and Deppermann this volume on cases of “availability” in which the requestee is committed to the overall activity). Once again, the use of an imperative here is mitigated, with the same particle *dai* ‘will you’ encountered in Extract (7).



Figure 3. Frame from line 8, Extract (10). Eva says ‘what about that pink towel’, while Mirko stands beside her, finishing his apple.

In another similar case, an interactional configuration in which the requestee is doing nothing and is therefore available for action becomes explicitly oriented to. When Extract (11) begins, Dad is in the kitchen making food and boasting about his cooking skills, which he claims are 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.

(11) [MaraniPrep_310020]

- 1 Dad probabilmente se vedono questo filmato
 probably if see-3PL 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-3SG close-PPT 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
 if not EX=have-2SG nothing to do-INF
 if you have nothing to do
- 10 dammi un'occhiata agli sci
 give-IMP.2SG=1SG.DAT one=look at-the skis
 check my skis
- 11 (2.4)
- 12 Aldo quali
 which ones?
- 13 (1.6)
- 14 Dad mah i Salomon::
 PRT the NAME
 uhm the Salomon::
- 15 (1.7)
- 16 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
- 17 (1.7)

18 Aldo (bom)
(ITJ)
(alright)

Whatever Aldo says in line 6, the sudden halt in Dad's singing indicates it to be the occasion for the 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 (4) and (5), this account is pre-posed to the request and accomplishes different interactional work. Instead of 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 at the skis for me'). What warrants 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 not one of discontinuity either.⁸

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 idle. In both these environments, the action requested does not curtail the requestee's line of action, as is the case when other request forms such as simple interrogatives are selected (Rossi 2012, 2015: Chapter 3). 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.⁹ Second, they often involve additional features that set

8. The cost of the action requested here may appear, at first glance, notably larger than the actions seen so far. Within a family of skiers, however, checking skis is common, especially when the whole family is preparing for a ski trip. All members of this family are experienced in the maintenance of skis, which are kept in a storeroom on the ground floor of the house. All Aldo needs to do here is go down one flight of stairs and take a couple of minutes to make sure that his father's skis are in order. In fact, what Dad literally asks Aldo to do is to 'take a look' at his skis.

9. 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.

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 (6), (7), (9), (10)). Although these are sometimes included also in imperatives that contribute to the progress of a joint project, a mixed effects logistic regression shows that they are statistically more likely to appear in imperatives that do not (odds ratio 2.71, standard error 0.49, $p < .05$) (Figure 4).¹⁰

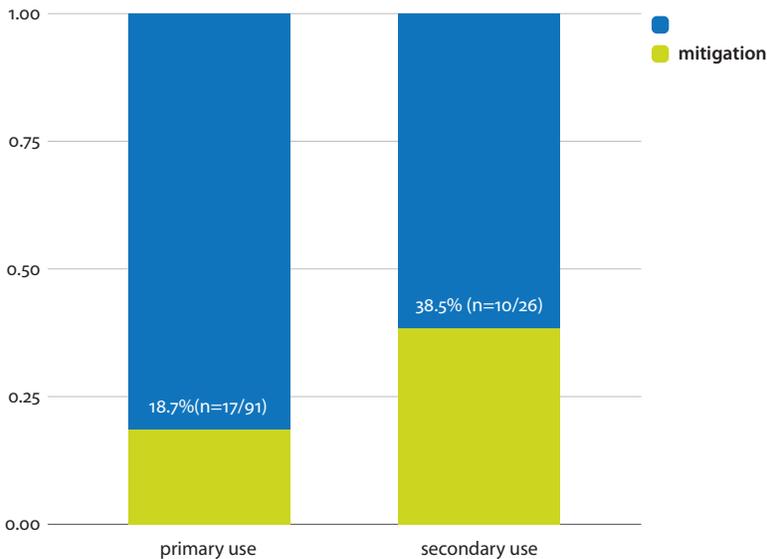


Figure 4. Secondary uses of the imperative are more likely to be mitigated than primary ones.

Another feature that is absent from bilateral imperatives is accounts or mentions that the requestee’s line of action is not being disrupted (e.g., *mentre entri* ‘as you go inside’ in Extract (7), *se non hai niente da fare* ‘if you have nothing to do’ in

10. Mixed effects logistic regression can assess the ability of a binary independent variable (here, whether the use of the imperative is primary or secondary) to predict a binary dependent variable (here, the presence or absence of mitigation). One case of secondary use was excluded from the analysis because the last part of the imperative is inaudible. This quantitative analysis relies on the assignment of each imperative to either a primary or secondary use based on the qualitative analysis presented above. Although it is grounded in observable features of the interaction, such an analysis is nonetheless subject to human interpretation, and therefore to the possibility of interpretive bias, which can be obviated only by a measure of reliability involving multiple coders (see, e.g., Roberts and Robinson 2004; Dingemanse et al. 2015: 4). This further validation of the findings is left to future research.

Extract (11), which is another way for requesters to justify their use of the imperative form outside of a joint project. Note that these accounts or mentions are different both in content and position from the accounts appended to bilateral imperatives (*che sero questa* ‘so that I can complete this one’, Extract (4), *che se no gli pestiam sopra* ‘otherwise we’re going to step on it’, Extract (5)), which make explicit the contribution of the action requested to a shared outcome and are post-posed to the imperative. In contrast, accounts and mentions supporting secondary uses of the imperative do not tie the action requested to a joint project, but instead explain how the action is nonetheless compatible with the situation of the requestee. Moreover, they are often pre-posed to the imperative, suggesting that the conditions warranting an expectation of compliance need to be foregrounded before the request is actually made.

Finally, secondary uses are distinguished from primary ones by a statistically higher proportion of first person dative pronouns (see Extracts (6), (8), (9), (10), (11)), reflecting the frequent self-directedness of the request (odds ratio 6.11, standard error 0.49, $p < .001$) (Figure 5).

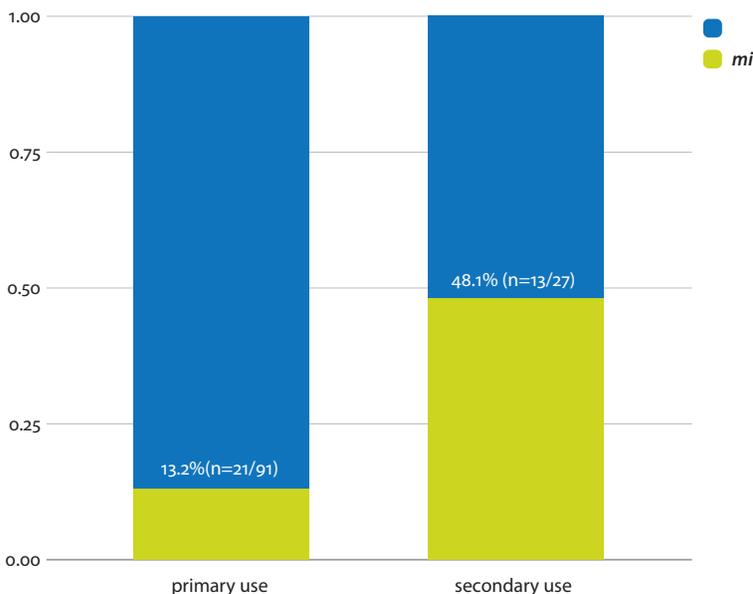


Figure 5. Secondary uses of the imperative are more likely to contain the first person dative pronoun *mi* ‘to/for me’ than primary ones, showing that they tend to be self-directed.

Everyday social interaction can generate a range of environments licencing the use of an imperative for requesting. The analysis reported here identifies one

predominant use and two less frequent but still recurrent ones. The relative frequency and constructional features of recurrent uses shows them to be distinct, the former being primary and the latter being secondary.¹¹ That said, what is common to primary and secondary uses is that they are both normative – that is, they are understood as ordinary behaviours conforming to social norms. This is what distinguishes them from *deviant* uses.

7. Deviant uses

This section examines cases where the use of the imperative for requesting is *deviant*. In a technical sense (e.g., Heritage 1984: 248), this refers to a behaviour that violates normative expectations, with visible consequences for the interaction. In the data at hand, the use of the imperative can be analysed as deviant in 4.8% ($n = 6/124$) of the cases. Unlike the variant, secondary uses described in the previous section, these are cases in which an imperative form does not orient to any of the social-interactional conditions that normally support it. Such a selection of the form in the “wrong” environment attracts special attention and accomplishes more than just requesting.

In Extract (12), the participants 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 embarrassing him and Luca (lines 1 and 4). His admonishments are backed up by Luca and Angela, who express their (jovial) disapproval of Rosa’s behaviour (lines 5–10). As the reproaches mount, Angela makes a request that Rosa pass the milk for the coffee.

11. Besides the kinds of cases presented here, secondary uses also include a handful of cases where the selection of the imperative outside a joint project seems to be motivated by the relative urgency of the action requested, which tends to be in the interest of others. In one case, for example, a mother tells her daughter to ‘turn on the oven a moment, otherwise those two will be unwell’ (*accendi un attimo il forno perché se no stanno male quelle due*), referring to the need of warming up the kitchen before the imminent arrival of two elderly women. In another case, the requester approaches a table with a hot water kettle and says to the people sitting: ‘wait, make room for me to put this boiling hot thing somewhere’ (*spetta fatemi posto che metto questa qua bollente da qualche parte*). This request is motivated, in the first place, by the need of putting the kettle down, but is ultimately also in the service of making the hot water available for everyone. These other secondary uses, however, seem to be occasional.

(12) [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-3SG do-GER some insinuations
you're making insinuations::

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

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

7 Gigi [((chuckles))

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

9 Angela [vendetta]
revenge

10 Gigi [zizzania
discord
[

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

12 (0.3)

13 Angela ZIZZANIA
discord
DISCORD SOWER!

14 (0.3)

15 Angela [ZANZARA
mosquito
PEST!
[

16 Rosa [((passes milk to Angela))

The request pops up in the midst of Angela's growing condemnation of Rosa's behaviour, which she continues to upgrade after the request (lines 13–15). The action requested is not part of an already established joint project. Some time before the

extract, Angela 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 the collective deprecation of her behaviour). All this makes an imperative form inappropriate and rather motivates the selection of another form such as a simple interrogative.

Angela’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 adverb *almeno* ‘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 design features could have conceivably been applied to an interrogative utterance as well. The choice of an imperative, however, better serves Angela’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 – that is, requests made by a superior to an inferior on the basis of relative power and authority.

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.

(13) [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
REFL be-IPFV-1SG habituate-PPT
I had got used
- 5 [all'idea di non farlo
at-the=idea of not do-INF=3SG.ACC
to the idea of not doing it
[

6	Baldo	[OH DEVO TAGLIARE IL PANE ITJ must-1SG cut-INF the bread HEY I HAVE TO CUT THE BREAD,
7		DATEMI IL PANE IL COLTELLO E- give-NPST-2PL=1SG.DAT the bread the knife and GIVE ME THE BREAD, A KNIFE AND-
8		(0.9)/((others keep doing their own tasks))
9	Baldo	e tagliato fu and cut-PPT be-PST-3SG and it was cut
10	Michele	Baldo mi sembra ((entering the kitchen)) NAME 1SG.DAT seem-3SG Baldo, it seems to me
11		[un po' come] dire one bit how say-INF a bit, how to put it,
12	Baldo	[coltello] ((claps hands once)) knife
13		(.)
14	Michele	troppo quello che chiedi too.much that REL ask-2SG too much what you ask:
15		"devo tagliare il pane datemi must-1SG cut-INF the bread give-NPST-2PL=1SG.DAT "I have to cut the bread: give me
16		il pane e il coltello" the bread and the knife the bread and a knife",
17		"devo mangiare datemi must-1SG eat-INF give-NPST-2PL=1SG.DAT "I have to eat: give me
18		[la pasta la forchetta= the pasta the fork pasta, a fork
19	Baldo	[((giggles))
20	Michele	=e imboccatemi" cazzo and spoonfeed-NPST-2PL=1SG.ACC 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 THE BREAD, A KNIFE AND-', line 7), and completes it after a short pause, with lower voice ('and it was cut').¹²

If the analysis presented in Sections 5 and 6 is correct, then the selection of an imperative form here is deviant. Giving Baldo bread and knife is not part of an 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 (11)). Instead, the loudness with which the request is delivered gives it a derogatory tone similar to Angela's request in Extract (12). All these elements concur to characterise the request as out of the ordinary (in the sense of Grice 1975; Sacks 1992: 215–221; Levinson 2000), 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 10). After characterising what Baldo is requesting as 'too much', Michele re-enacts the request so as to 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 these strengthen the analysis built in the previous sections by demonstrating the consequences of an inapposite request form. Together with cases in which requesters make explicit the interactional configuration upon which the request is based (Extracts (7), (8), (11)), these cases bring to the surface the normativity of request form selection. Violating – or better, flouting – the conditions that normally support a certain form of requesting results in the request doing something special. In Extract (12), Angela's use of the imperative adds indignation

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

to the request, in line with the condemnatory talk that surrounds it.¹³ This shows the *doubly constitutive* nature of the norms that regulate request form selection and social behaviour more generally (Heritage 1984: 107–108). 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-the-ordinary purpose, however, can also have potentially unwanted effects, such as attracting negative sanction. This is what happens to Baldo in Extract (13), where his haughty request ends up being strongly deprecated.

8. Discussion

This study builds on earlier findings showing that, in Italian informal interaction, the imperative form is mostly used to request actions that are functionally and sequentially connected to what the requestee is doing, and that benefit both requester and requestee (Rossi 2012, 2015: Chapter 3). Typically, such actions are requested as contributions to a joint project. This use of the imperative – resting on the continuity between the action requested and what the requestee is doing and on the shared benefit brought by the action – has been documented in informal interaction in other languages (Zinken and Ogiermann 2013; Zinken 2013; see also other contributions to this volume) and is further supported by research on collaborative work in institutional settings (Parry 2013; Mondada 2014a, 2014b; De Stefani and Gazin 2014; see also other contributions to this volume).

The present study extends this prior research by examining alternative uses of the imperative in the same corpus of Italian informal interaction. These uses are of two different kinds: *secondary* and *deviant*.

In secondary uses, although the imperative request is made outside a joint project, the requester still orients to social-interactive conditions that can support an expectation of compliance. The action requested often maintains a relation of continuity with what the requestee is doing, or a relation of neither continuity nor discontinuity because the requestee is idle. This use of the imperative is secondary because (i) it is much less frequent – 21.7% ($n = 27/124$) versus 73.4% ($n = 91/124$) – and (ii) 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’). In addition, these imperative requests include significantly more first person dative pronouns *mi* ‘to/

13. Indignation and condemnation in this case are mostly non-serious.

for me', reflecting the frequent self-directedness of the request. These additional formal features are an indication of *markedness* (see Stivers, Enfield, and Levinson 2007: 8–10), in that their presence contrasts with their absence in primary uses, which are much more frequent. Moreover, the nature of these additional features as mitigators and accounts justifying an expectation of compliance indicates the requester's effort to qualify or redress (Brown and Levinson 1987) the imperative request.¹⁴

While in secondary uses requesters still abide by the norms and conditions that support an imperative form, in deviant uses they do not. These are cases in which the deliberate violation of selection criteria accomplishes special interactional work. 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 1996; Raymond 2003; Enfield 2007, 2013). The deviant cases examined in this chapter involve the use of an imperative where another verbal form (e.g., an interrogative) would be expected. In the first case, the request occurs as the requester leads a collective reproof of the requestee's behaviour, and is issued as a way of putting the requestee in her place (Extract (12)); 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 (13)). Both cases bring to the surface the normativity of request form selection (see Rossi 2015: 231–232 for further discussion).¹⁵

14. The distinction between primary and secondary uses of the imperative for requesting arises from the interplay between two factors: sequential relation and benefit. The values of these factors, however, may not always converge. In Extract (7), for example, the action's benefit is not restricted to the requester, but the use of the imperative can still be analysed as secondary due to the absence of any previous commitment by the requestee and on the basis of requester's orientation to the "piggyback" nature of the request. Moreover, a more finegrained analysis of sequential relation, for example in Extract (5) (see fn. 4), may point to other interactional elements (e.g. the requestee's occupation with the target object) that cut across primary and secondary uses. All this suggests that a categorical analysis of imperative uses such as the one presented here is compatible with a more continuous analysis such as the one presented by Zinken and Deppermann (this volume).

15. Normative orientations become visible also when requesters shift from one form to another to implement the same request. This can be observed in cases of self-repair (Rossi 2015: 113–115; see also Drew, Walker, and Ogden 2013), but also in cases such as Extract (8), where a change of the requestee alters the interactional configuration for the request.

The analysis given in this chapter obviously does not exhaust the range of applications of imperative request forms in social interaction as a whole. A form that 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: 95–96), 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). In informal interaction among adults, however, authority does not seem to play a major role. What is crucial is instead situational factors locally grounded in the sequential development of the interaction.

In conclusion, this study furthers our understanding of the use of the imperative for requesting, offering a more complete picture of its functional distribution in informal interaction among speakers of Italian. It also shows the importance of relating and classifying distinct uses of a same form of action, and how this requires a combination of distributional, linguistic, and normative evidence, which is further strengthened by quantitative support.

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