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FEATURED DEBATE

Mobilizing Response

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A fundamental puzzle in the organization of social interaction concerns how one individual elicits a response from another. This article asks what it is about some sequentially initial turns that reliably mobilizes a coparticipant to respond and under what circumstances individuals are accountable for producing a response. Whereas a linguistic approach suggests that this is what “questions” (more generally) and interrogativity (more narrowly) are for, a sociological approach to social interaction suggests that the social *action* a person is implementing mobilizes a recipient’s response. We find that although both theories have merit, neither adequately solves the puzzle. We argue instead that different actions mobilize response to different degrees. Speakers then design their turns to perform actions, and with particular response-mobilizing features of turn-design speakers can hold recipients more accountable for responding or not. This model of response relevance allows sequential position, action, and turn design to each contribute to response relevance.

A fundamental question in the organization of social interaction concerns how one individual elicits a response from another. Virtually any stretch of interaction reveals interesting puzzles. For instance, in Extract 1 Lance’s assessments in lines 1–2 are not responded to by Gio, even though Gio is gazing at the hamburger patties to which Lance refers, and he is the only one participating with Lance in this stretch of interaction. By contrast Gio’s request for information at line 4 is answered immediately at line 5.

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Extract 1 HM [Lance & Gio have been in conversation; Judy is not visibly attending]

- 1 LAN: This is gonna be good.
- 2 These smell good.
- 3 -> (0.8)
- 4 GIO: D'ya remember which ones are Jude's?,
- 5 LAN: =>Y[eah ()]
- 6 LAN: [((points to burger))]

What properties of sequentially initial turns reliably mobilize a coparticipant to respond? Relatedly, do these properties render individuals accountable for producing a response?

Two different answers to these questions have been proposed: In linguistics, “questions” are seen as devoted to securing answers (Bussman, 1996, p. 395). This view privileges lexico-morphosyntactic features (Schegloff, 1984). Thus, it is linguistic form that matters for whether an utterance is taken up.

In contrast with this perspective, within sociology Schegloff and Sacks argue that responses are mobilized through the functional properties of actions. They express this through the property of conditional relevance (Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973): Depending on what sort of sequence-initial action an individual performs, a response of a particular type is relevant next (e.g., after greetings, requests, invitations, and offers). In this view, turn design is usually considered to be consequential for the *type* of response provided. For instance, the type of self-repair done (whole-turn repetition versus partial-turn repetition versus explication) is fitted to the type of other initiation of repair performed and the type of trouble this repair initiation is understood to be pointing to (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Turn design can also be understood to be conditioned by, for instance, speaker entitlement to make the request and contingencies in the addressee's granting it (Curl & Drew, 2008). What has not been discussed is the possibility that turn design may in fact condition whether or not response is mobilized at all.

These two views have somewhat converged but retain their relative priorities. A turn may perform an action using a particular design as a vehicle for that action (e.g., Pomerantz, 1978b; Schegloff, 1984, 1995). Thus, a request can be done through a question (as in “Can I borrow a pen?”), but it does not have to be (as in “I need a pen.”). Searle (1975), on the other hand, writing about indirect speech acts, has discussed the idea that questions become actions via their felicity conditions. But these positions remain unsatisfactory since neither adequately explains response mobilization.

We suggest that speakers mobilize response through the combination of multiple resources employed simultaneously: through the social action a speaker produces, the sequential position in which it is delivered, and through turn-design features that increase the recipient's accountability for responding—interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative prosody, recipient-focused epistemicity, and speaker gaze. In contrast with a view of response relevance as binary and discrete—either conditional or not (Schegloff, 1968; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973)—we suggest that response relevance is best conceptualized as on a cline such that speakers can rely on turn-design resources to increase the response relevance of a turn beyond the relevance inherent in the action performed. In what follows we address these issues systematically, providing support for a revised model of how speakers mobilize response in conversation.

BACKGROUND

With particular actions, Schegloff asserts, social actors impose on cointeractants the normative obligation to perform a particular type-fitted response at the first possible opportunity. Specifically, “given the first [utterance], the second is expectable; upon its occurrence it can be seen to be a second item to the first; upon its nonoccurrence it can be seen to be officially absent—all this provided by the occurrence of the first item” (Schegloff, 1968, p. 1083). Typical cases of social actions that make relevant a type-fitted response include offers, requests for action, and requests for information. An examination of these actions provides three robust types of support for this model of response relevance: (a) a type-fitted response is regularly provided; (b) speakers orient to recipient failure to provide relevant responses *as* failure; and (c) recipients orient to not producing a response as failure.

With respect to distributional support, a review of invitations, requests for action, requests for information, and offers (canonical action types) across some 50 hours of conversation in English and Italian videotaped data shows that these actions routinely and reliably receive response. Extract 2 shows an offer sequence. Kim and Mark, a married couple, are eating dinner together. Mark offers Kim more milk, which they have both been drinking with their meal.

Extract 2 RD [dyadic; following a 14 second lapse during which Mark got milk]

- 1 Mark: -> [Want s'm more milk?
- 2 [(M gazing at glass he's filling))
- 3 Kim: => Mm mm. (with small head shake))
- 4 (3.0)

In response, Kim declines the offer with a small headshake and a simultaneous “Mm mm.”

Another canonical first pair-part that is generally said to make response conditionally relevant is a request. In Extract 3 Kim asks Mark to get some tickets to a local baseball game—something he has done before by asking a friend of his for tickets. The request is provisionally granted at lines 43/45.

Extract 3 RD [dyadic]

- 1 Kim: Oh.
- 2 (1.2)/((K gaze to M)) [Uh:m (0.5) Lorraine's
- 3 [(K gazes down))
- 4 comin' tuh town ya know? an' she wants tuh go t'thuh
- 5 Dodger game?
- 6 Mark: Mm hm?,
- 7 Kim: -> >So d'you< think you c'n get some ticket[s?
- 8 [(K gazes to M))
- 9 (1.5)
- 10 Mark: When=d=she need 'em.
- ((32 lines of insert sequences omitted))
- 43 Mark: => 'I can ask my friend,°
- 44 (0.5)
- 45 Mark: => (tuh get) ticket[s,

Requests for information make relevant answers. In Extract 4 housemates are preparing dinner together. During the preparation Lance asks Gio whether he has been to France.

Extract 4 HM [dyadic at this point in conversation]

- 1 LAN: It's something you drink be[^]fore we eat.
 2 (.)
 3 GIO: hhh it's like apetizers.
 4 (1.0)
 5 LAN: It's an aperitif (.) as we like to say in France.
 6 (1.0)
 7 ((Gio is bent looking into refrigerator))
 8 [Lance gazing in Gio's direction]
 9 LAN: -> Did you: ev[er go to France?
 10 (0.5)/((brings gaze up and sees Lance gazing at him))
 11 GIO: => Yeah.

In response, Gio answers affirmatively.

The regularity and reliability of response that is exemplified in Extracts 2–4 is further supported by a previous report that in English 85% of responses to questions were answers (Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Finally, a recent study across 10 languages shows that approximately 90% of requests for information receive a response that either answers the question or deals with an inability to answer (Stivers et al., 2009).

With respect to the second form of support—observable speaker orientation to this normative organization—consider that upon recipient failure to respond to an information request, speakers have interactional resources for sanctioning failures. In Extract 5 Reina asks Tamaryn whether her boyfriend's mother calls to talk to her on the phone. Tamaryn fails to answer the question in the course of the following 1.0 s, but at that point copresent Sandra quips “No that('d)/('ll) be wastin' minutes” (line 3).

Extract 5 TJ [multi-party]

- [(R gazing in T's direction; T off camera)]
 1 REI: -> [Does she call you and conversate wit'=ju on your phone?,
 2 (1.0)
 3 SAN: No that('d)/('ll) be wastin' minutes.
 4 (0.5)
 5 SAN: [Th-
 6 REI: => [>Ta- I want Tamaryn tuh answer the damn question.< Don't
 7 [answer for (h)[her
 8 SAN: [O(kay) [I'm sorry.
 9 REI: ((leaning towards Sandra)) Oh no it's okay.
 10 TAM: She called once to see if my mother had thrown a
 11 fit but no: other than that_

Although Sandra's response is formally type matched (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) and type conforming (Raymond, 2003), it is nonetheless treated as failing. Reina both indirectly sanctions Tamaryn for not answering (indirect only in that the turn is nominally addressed to Sandra): “>Ta- I want Tamaryn tuh answer the damn question<” and directly sanctions Sandra for answering on

Tamaryn's behalf: "Don't answer for her" (lines 6–7). This sanctioning elicits an apology from Sandra and, ultimately, an answer from Tamaryn (lines 10–11).

Similarly, at the beginning of a family dinner 9-year-old Cindy asks her mother whether she has to eat her dinner if she does not like it (Extract 6). The mother does not immediately provide an answer to the question. She asks Cindy to move some of her things. Following this, Cindy pursues an answer from her mother with a sanctioning reissue of the question "Well do I:," (line 5).

Extract 6 SD [dyadic at this point] ((Cin off camera))

- 1 CIN: -> Mommy if-I-if-I don't like the food do I have
- 2 to ea:t i:t,
- 3 MOM: First you need to move this out of the way so we can get
- 4 to the table,
- 5 CIN: => Well do I:, (.) I'd-[if-I]
- 6 MOM: [You need] to at least try it,

Although less overtly sanctioning than Reina's pursuit of Tamaryn's response, the design of this reissued question in line 5 still treats the mother as having failed to answer the first question. Cindy does not simply redo the question from lines 1–2, which would suggest an analysis that the mother had not heard the question. Rather in asking the question again in this way (with the "Well" preface, the elliptical "do I" as well as the emphasis on "do"), Cindy treats her mother as having failed to respond to a question that she heard, understood, and is responsible for answering.

Finally, with respect to the third form of support, when recipients do not provide answers, they still orient to an answer as having been due (Heritage, 1984; Stivers & Robinson, 2006). Most commonly when someone fails to answer s/he provides an account for not answering. In Extract 7 Gio asks Lance whether or not they will be cooking some of the food set out on the counter. Lance does not answer but does account for not answering: "I don't know." (Beach & Metzger, 1997).

Extract 7 HM 15.33

- 1 Gio: -> [We makin' these?,
(((Gio looking down at counter in front of Lance))
- 2 (0.2)
- 3 Lan: => .h I don't know.
(.)/((Gio looks to Judy))
- 4 Jud: Yeah_

Thus, in the context of requests for information recipients orient to themselves as accountable for producing an answer either by providing an answer or by accounting for nonanswer responses.

These cases of canonical first pair-parts provide compelling evidence that in sequence-initial position, speakers mobilize recipient response through the action they perform. However, could the design of these actions be implicated?

TURN-DESIGN FEATURES THAT MOBILIZE RESPONSE

The actions speakers perform in Extracts 2–7 have all been discussed as canonical first pair-part actions—offers (2), requests for action (3), and requests for information (4–7).¹ However, four features of turn design are recurrent across these cases: interrogative morphosyntax (3–6), interrogative intonation (rising in English and Italian) (2–5, 7), recipient epistemic expertise on the topic relative to the speaker (2–6), and speaker gaze to the recipient (3–5). These features are commonly present in these sorts of actions. In a preliminary inspection of 336 requests for information in Italian and English, 70% of these are done with interrogative lexico-morphosyntax; 82% involve an inquiry about something in the recipient's domain of expertise; 61% are done with the speaker gazing at the recipient; and of cases not involving interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, 89% are done with rising final intonation. No feature was present in all cases so no single feature appears to be intrinsic to the action of requesting information. However, no case in our data lacked all of these features either. Is it possible that what mobilizes response in canonical actions is the inclusion of multiple of these features in the construction of the action?

Prior work gives us some reason to think in these terms. First, in linguistics interrogative morphology (when there is a question word or morpheme) and syntax (e.g., subject–verb inversion in English questions) are widely understood as primary resources for “eliciting a verbal response from the addressee” (Haan, 2002, p. 4). Interrogatives form one of the three basic types of sentences that occur in nearly all languages (Sadock & Zwicky, 1985). Thus, interrogativity is a resource that can be expected to be available across languages even if the exact way of asking a question varies grammatically.² Both Schegloff (1984, 1995), through his concept of an action being carried by a vehicle, and Searle (1975) in indirect speech acts, acknowledge the importance of interrogative morphology and syntax.

Second, interrogative prosody (rising in English and Italian) has been shown to be a common way to signal that questioning is being done (Bertinetto & Caldognetto, 1993; Kori & Farnetani, 1983; Ladd, 1980; Pierrehumbert, 1980; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1972). Although current work shows that this is not nearly as invariable as might have once been thought (Couper-Kuhlen, *in press*), it is commonly present in our English and Italian conversation data, and the fact that there are no morphosyntactic resources for constructing polar questions in Italian points to the importance of interrogative prosody in mobilizing response.

Third, turns may be about states of affairs asymmetrically within the speaker's epistemic domain (e.g., “I'm tired”), or asymmetrically within the recipient's epistemic domain (e.g., “Do you like beets?”), or one to which both interlocutors have equivalent access and no particular asymmetry in authority (e.g., “Isn't it lovely today?”). Labov and Fanshel (1977) argued that assertions involving states primarily within the recipient's domain of authority (B-event statements) routinely attract response (see also Heritage & Roth, 1995). For instance, if the speaker makes a statement about the recipient's plans, past experiences, likes or dislikes, that utterance is

¹Some cases may be doing additional work, such as in Extract 6. In addition to requesting information, Cindy also indirectly requests being excused from eating her meal. This though does not alter the fact that, according to Schegloff's analysis, these questions make relevant a response.

²It should be noted though that interrogative syntax is typologically rare. Only 1% of languages surveyed have inversion as a grammatical option in polar questions (Dryer, 2008). However, most languages do have question morphemes at least for content (*wh*-) questions.

primarily (sometimes exclusively) within the recipient's epistemic domain (rather than the speaker's). The same could be said about anything of which the recipient has greater knowledge (his/her hometown, profession, children, etc.). Pomerantz has further shown that when a speaker mentions his/her own "limited access" (e.g., "Your phone's been busy all morning"), s/he invites the recipient to explain what s/he does not have access to (Pomerantz, 1980). There is thus good reason to think that whether an assessment is about someone/something primarily in the addressee's epistemic domain will affect response relevance.

Finally, the claim that gaze has a regulatory function in interaction has been made in relation to turn taking by Kendon (1967) and Duncan and Fiske (1977), who argue that gaze can be used to signal when a speaker is going to start or stop producing a turn of talk and pass the floor to another participant. Moreover, Kendon claims that with his/her gaze a speaker can indicate to a recipient that response is due (see also Heath, 1986). Related to this, in the storytelling context, Bavelas, Coates, and Johnson (2002) found that listeners were more likely to respond when the speaker looked to him/her. Finally, gaze can be used as a resource for pursuing uptake when response is missing, before resorting to a verbal pursuit (discussed more fully later in this article) (Rossano, 2006).

As we saw in Extracts 2–7, multiple of these turn-design features (interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative prosody, recipient-tilted episemic asymmetry, and recipient-directed speaker gaze) are commonly present in turns that perform canonical first pair-part actions; so how can we disentangle whether it is the action alone or the combined presence of these features that mobilizes recipient response? To address this we turn to actions that are less frequently cited as examples of first pair-parts that embody conditional relevance. These include announcements (e.g., "Marco said that he will come visit on Monday"), noticings ("It's started snowing"), and assessments (e.g., "It's beautiful out"). Although each of these has been identified as a first pair-part (most recently see Schegloff, 2007, pp. 2, 59, and 74–75), an examination of spontaneous conversation suggests that they do not show the same strong normative patterns as the canonical actions discussed previously. In particular, failures to respond to them are not sanctioned (and may not be sanctionable), nor are they oriented to as failures. We propose that each of the resources outlined previously makes an independent contribution to holding the recipient accountable for responding to these kinds of actions and that the inclusion of multiple resources incrementally increases response relevance.

ASSESSMENTS

Let's begin with assessments, by which we mean utterances that offer an evaluation of a referent with a clear valence (e.g., as good, bad, outrageous, tragic, or funny) such as those shown in lines 1–2 of Extract 1.³ Assessments are particularly relevant to this discussion because they are common in conversation and have been systematically investigated (Golato, 2002; Goodwin, 1986; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Heritage, 2002; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Pomerantz, 1984a). Assessments can be constructed in a variety of ways with both interrogative and declarative sentence types. Pomerantz observes that

³Although assessments commonly also compliment and complain, among other possibilities, we tried to avoid using such cases as exemplars. Still, the same argument holds for them as well (see Extract 20).

When a speaker assesses a referent that is expectably accessible to a recipient, the initial assessment provides [for] the relevance of the recipient's second assessment. That relevance is particularly visible when initial assessments have a format to invite/constrain subsequence, for example, as interrogatives. . . . That relevance, however, does not rely for its operation upon an interrogative format; initial assessments that are asserted also provide for the relevance of, and engender, recipients' second assessments. (Pomerantz, 1984a, p. 61)

Thus, Pomerantz suggests that turns performing first assessments initiate sequences via the action they implement but that they may be more likely to secure responses when delivered in interrogative format.

Pomerantz does not state whether she believes first assessments *normatively require* response although she declines to claim that they make second assessments conditionally relevant. In our data we see two types of evidence that suggest that assessments do not normatively require response. First, whereas most of the time first assessments (by which we mean they are not part of an ongoing sequence⁴) are responded to with a second assessment or an agreement, it is not difficult to find (a) instances without response where (b) this is treated by both participants as unproblematic: Recipients do not generally account for a failure to produce a second assessment, and speakers in these situations commonly let nonresponse pass, often initiating a new unrelated sequence. This is exemplified in Extract 1. Lance, Gio, and Judy are preparing dinner together in their shared house. Lance is standing in front of the kitchen counter shaping ground meat into hamburger patties while Gio is sitting next to him on the counter talking with Lance on and off (see Figure 1). At line 1 Lance assesses the hamburger patties he is preparing twice in quick succession.

Even if we only consider the second of these ("These smell good"), we see that following the assessment there is a substantial silence during which Gio offers neither a visible nor a vocal response but does attend to the patties (the topic of conversation), as can be seen in Figure 1. Following that silence, Gio initiates a new and unrelated sequence about whether Lance remembers which hamburger patties were meant for their housemate Judy. Neither party displays any orientation to a second assessment as having been officially absent. Although our data support Pomerantz's finding that assessments are commonly responded to, we also observe that they sometimes fail to mobilize response, and in such cases no sanctioning has been observed.

ASSESSMENTS AND THEIR DESIGN

We now turn to whether the turn-design features discussed earlier (interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative intonation, recipient epistemic primacy, and speaker gaze) are resources through which speakers mobilize response to an assessment. For this we examine a series of assessments—first several that secure response and then several that do not.

Most assessments are responded to. Extract 8 is an illustration. Nicole and Shauna are co-workers. Shauna has asked what Nicole was going to do for her boyfriend's birthday. Just before

⁴Although an utterance may be part of a continuing activity, the assessments we call sequentially initial are not responses in an ongoing sequence and thus are not in second or third position. None of them is a response to a previous assessment, for instance. We would expect that utterances in second and third position are, by virtue of that position, less response mobilizing. (For more discussion of sequence organization see Schegloff, 2007.) We use "sequentially initial" to respect the possibility that they do not actually initiate a sequence.



FIGURE 1 Frame from the beginning of line 1, Extract 1.

this extract Nicole told of her plans to go together to a spa. Nicole delivers her assessments of the birthday present at both lines 9 and 12 while gazing towards Shauna. Her assessment in line 9 also has the tag particle “huh,” which morphologically marks the turn as seeking response. The turn does not request information but seeks agreement. The second assessment in line 12 is designed interrogatively (“Wouldn’t that be nice?”) and is additionally delivered with final rising intonation. Again it is an assessment seeking agreement rather than an information request seeking an answer.

Extract 8 HS5 [dyadic]

- 1 NIC: How you think he’ll handle tha:t.
- 2 SHA: Have you ever had one there? [(before)?
- 3 NIC: [No I haven’t.
- 4 (.)
- 5 NIC: Tha[t’s what I’m sayin’. we gon’t go t’gether.
- 6 SHA: [Oh my go^:d it-
- 7 SHA: Go t’gether. An’ you’ll never w- go back t’(them)
- 8 again.
- 9 NIC: -> So that would be cool for him hu [h.
- 10 SHA: [That’d be gettin’
- 11 really coo:[l.
- 12 NIC: -> [Wouldn’t that be ni:ce?,
- 13 SHA: ^Uh huh,/((nodding))
- 14 ((N gaze away from S))

Shauna responds to the first assessment with an upgraded second assessment—she upgrades from “cool” to “really cool”—and to the second assessment agrees. In both cases these assessments are designed with multiple response-mobilizing features—speaker gaze, interrogative morphosyntax (a tag in line 9 and syntax in line 12), and rising intonation.

Extract 9 is a case shown originally by Pomerantz. Here we see Emma assessing Pat in line 7. In overlap Marjorie first agrees and then offers a second, downgraded, assessment.

Extract 9 NB: VII.-2 telephone call (Pomerantz, 1984a, p. 60)

- 1 Emm: =Oh honey that was a lovely lunchgon I shoulda ca:lled you
 2 s:soo[:ner but I:]l: [lo:ved it.Ih wz just deli:ghtfu[: l.]=
 3 Mar: [((f)) Oh:::] [°()] [Well]=
 4 Mar: =I wz gla[d y o u] (came)]
 5 Emm: [‘nd yer f:] friends] ‘r so da:rli:ng,=
 6 Mar: = Oh:::[: it wz:]
 7 Emm: -> [e-that Pa:t isn’she a do:[:ll?
 8 Mar: [Yeh isn’t she pretty,
 9 (.)
 10 Emm: Oh: she’s a beautiful girl.=

This case is taken from a telephone call, so gaze is not relevant as a resource to mobilize response.⁵ Still, here we observe that an assessment delivered with three of our response-mobilizing features: interrogative syntax (“isn’t she”), rising intonation, and this time additionally the feature of recipient epistemic expertise (Emma’s assessment is about Marjorie’s friend Pat who Emma only just met at a party at Marjorie’s house) is responded to. Here interrogative syntax is also a resource for asserting epistemic primacy (Heritage & Raymond, 2005). However, as Heritage and Raymond note, part of the work of the syntax is to mobilize response with agreement being strongly preferred (p. 22). Thus, here the goals work hand in hand.

Another case is shown in Extract 10. Here Maria and Claudia have discussed various friends. At the beginning of this extract they are talking about how difficult it can be to find the job of your dreams and that you must adapt to what you find. At line 6 Maria returns to the behavior of a close friend of both of theirs who is unemployed and consistently rejects job opportunities as unworthy of her. She assesses her as “spoiled.” In this case, Maria’s assessment of their mutual friend is delivered while the participants are engaged in mutual gaze. Maria presents her assessment as “according to me,” which, as an epistemic downgrade, may further invite Claudia to affiliate with Maria’s assessment in much the way that people report what they know as a resource for finding out what another knows (Pomerantz, 1980).

Extract 10 2GGOSS-viziata (Maria, Claudia) 12:52 [Italian; dyadic]

- 1 MAR: Bisogna adattarsi
 Need.3s adapt
 MAR: One has to adapt ((to working conditions))
 2 (.)

⁵In the telephone context, the lack of visual displays of recipient attentiveness to the conversation might require a more systematic reliance on verbal responses to display a continuous engagement with the conversation.

- 3 CLA: Bisogna molto adattarsi. Allora se hai il culo di
Need.3s a lot adapt Then if have.2s the ass of
- CLA: **One has to adapt a lot. Then if you have the luck**
- 4 trovarti una roba che effettivamente e' quello
find you a thing that actually be.3s that
- CLA: **of finding something that actually is what**
- 5 [che vuoi fare °pero°]
that want.2s to do but
- CLA: **[you want to do °but°]**
- 6 MAR: [.hh E' viziata] secondo me.=
Be.3s spoiled according to me
- MAR: **[.hh She is spoiled] in my opinion.=**
- 7 CLA: ->=Secondo me si' ((annuendo))
According to me yes
- CLA: ->=**In my opinion yes ((nodding))**

The same pattern is observed: Following an assessment with even one response-mobilizing feature, here speaker gaze, Claudia agrees, saying that according to her too their friend is acting spoiled.

In contrast to the assessments in Extracts 8–10 are ones delivered without any response-mobilizing features. A first instance was in Extract 1. Here, just prior to the assessments, Lance and Gio have been talking about something unrelated (the sound one makes when sprinkling cheese over chili “tchka tchka tchka”). The assessments represent a change of topic and a possible new sequence (though this does not emerge). Both of Lance’s assessments “This is gonna be good” and “These smell good” are delivered as he gazes toward the burger patties in front of him on the counter. He does not indicate with his gaze or body orientation that he expects a response from Gio; however, Gio is the only person with whom Lance has been interacting—it is certainly not addressed to Judy on the other side of the room attending to the stove (see Figure 1). In the subsequent silence too Lance displays no orientation, visible or otherwise, to expecting a response. Unlike the assessments discussed in Extracts 8–10, here the assessment is declaratively formatted—it does not have any interrogative lexico-morphosyntactic elements (in contrast to “**Don’t these** smell good” or “These smell good **huh**”). Thus, through the syntactic design of the turn Lance also shows no orientation to a response as expected.

Third, the intonation of the assessment is final falling. Prosodically too, then, we argue that Lance shows no expectation for response. Finally, although Gio has direct access to how the patties look—he is sitting next to them on the counter, is looking at them (see Figure 1), and is close enough to smell and touch them—there is nothing about the meat patties that makes them particularly within his epistemic purview. There is arguably no epistemic asymmetry here. Although Lance is shaping the burgers, neither housemate is the primary cook in the household; Lance has not added any ingredients to the beef, and neither specially selected the beef. Thus, since neither party has epistemic priority, this adds no pressure for response. In the absence of response-mobilizing turn-design features, this assessment receives no response. This is not treated as problematic.

Extract 11 shows the same pattern. Here Cheng and Jill are a married couple having dinner. Prior to this extract the couple has eaten dinner and decided to take a walk after they finish dessert. As they are both eating dessert, Jill offers Cheng a second piece of desert, which he says he may have after they walk. During a 30-s lapse that occurs immediately prior to line 1, Cheng finishes his dessert (something not prepared by either of them). He assesses it positively in line 1.

Extract 11 CL [dyadic] ((both have been eating dessert. During a lapse Cheng has cleaned his plate))

- 1 CHENG: This is pretty good.
- 2 -> (0.2)
- 3 JILL: #hm# ((throat clear))
- 4 (.)
- 5 JILL: I wanna stop by Blake an' Cora's an' ask them
- 6 if they know what happened on thuh corner.

Once again Cheng's assessment is delivered without gazing at Jill, without interrogative syntax, without rising intonation, and without recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry—it was a gift to them—and both contributed to preparing the rest of the meal.

Jill offers no response, then clears her throat and proposes stopping by a neighbor's house after dinner during their walk to inquire about something that happened in their neighborhood. Again, neither party orients to a response as having been absent following Cheng's assessment.

Extract 12 is similar to Extracts 1 and 11 in showing that participants do not generally orient to the absence of second assessments as problematic. Two housemates have begun eating, and the third one is just sitting down. As Luisa moves toward the table, she assesses the plates and cutlery that are on the table as dirty (line 1) (see Figure 2). After an initiation of repair (Drew, 1997; Schegloff et al., 1977), Luisa redoes her assessment (line 3).



FIGURE 2 Frame from beginning of line 1, Extract 12.

Extract 12 3PMARIA-sporco 3:10 [Italian; multi-party]

- ((lapse during which Maria and Paolo are eating and Luisa moves the table in order to sit down))
- 1 LUI: Cioe' e' tutto sporco. Forchette piatti tutto.
I mean be.3s everything dirty forks plates everything
- LUI: **I mean everything is dirty. Forks plates everything.**
- 2 MAR: uh?
huh
- MAR: **Huh?**
- 3 LUI: E' tutto sporco tutto da lavare.
Is everything dirty everything to wash
- LUI: **Everything is dirty everything ((must)) be washed.**
- 4 -> (3.0)
- 5 LUI: Com'e'? ((guardando la pasta))
How is
- LUI: **How is it? ((Looking at pasta on the table))**

In both lines 1 and 3 Luisa delivers the assessment without gazing at either Maria or Paolo. In both cases the assessments are declaratively formatted (interrogative syntax in yes–no questions is not possible in Italian but post final tag marking is: e.g., *no?*). In both cases the prosodic contour is falling. Finally, all coparticipants have access to the referents. None of them is particularly responsible for cleaning up (and in fact they are just beginning a meal so cleaning up is certainly not relevant right at this moment). Although this assessment could be heard as complaining, it is not clearly within the domain of responsibility of either recipient. Moreover, it is produced as she picks up a dish and then gets another one so its embodied production contextualizes it as a noticing and its verbal construction without response mobilizing features further contributes to the reduction of any complaint relevance (see Figure 2).

To the extent that Luisa's observation is hearable as a complaint, response relevance would be heightened by virtue of the addressee's being treated as somehow responsible for the problem. Either way our point remains: In the context of an utterance without speaker gaze to the recipient, without rising prosody, without interrogative morphosyntax, without epistemic asymmetry, speakers hold recipients less accountable. Indeed it is possible that Maria disagrees with Luisa's assessment of things being dirty, but in this case too we see an orientation to nonresponse as an alternative that is not treated as problematic.

Unlike the dyadic cases, here it is possible that the recipient's lack of response is due to the speaker's failure to clearly address her talk to a particular individual and thus select that individual to respond (On speaker selection see Lerner, 2003; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). However, Maria's initiation of repair after the first assessment suggests that she heard what had been said as possibly relevant for her. The response to this initiation of repair is certainly addressed to her and should her initiation of repair have been inappropriate, that would have been a place where we would have expected Luisa to correct such a misunderstanding (e.g., "I was talking to Paolo"). Thus, there seems to be some indication that the lack of response is not for lack of understanding the action as relevant for her.

Two final cases are shown in Extract 13. Here Mark and Kim are having dinner. They have been eating for a while. Just prior to this Kim has declared one kind of ravioli the best of all, and Mark has read from the package what it is made of. Here, in line 1, Mark makes a global assessment of

the ravioli they have been eating that is syntactically and intonationally declarative, is delivered with speaker gaze down, and is not recipient-tilted in epistemic primacy. It is neither initially responded to nor is it responded to after a mild pursuit (line 3) though even here Mark is gazing down. After a 5-s lapse Mark produces the second target assessment—that the pasta goes well with the salad dressing. Both Mark and Kim have salad with dressing and ravioli pasta on their plate. The salad dressing is also still on the table.

Extract 13 RD [dyadic] 27.20

- 1 Mark: -> It's not ba:d_ ((gazing down))
- 2 => (0.5)
- 3 Mark: -> M ya know,;
- 4 => (1.0)/((Kim's gaze down; drinking milk))
- 5 Kim: #h#m:. ((voiced sigh as she finishes gulp of milk))
- 6 (4.0)
- 7 Mark: -> (It goes) good with This dressing's really good
- 8 with it.
- 9 => (11.4)
- 10 Kim: Hahh. ((voiced sigh; not a response to Mark))
- 11 (4.0)
- 12 Mark: I don't like thuh bean one.

Mark's assessment in lines 7–8 is also offered without gaze to Kim, with declarative syntax, with falling intonation, and without recipient-tilted episemic asymmetry (though she has access to it). Again, the assessment does not receive a response. After a long silence Mark performs a new action—assessing one of the types of ravioli (line 12).⁶

This section has argued that in the domain of assessments, particular turn-design features mobilize response. We believe that this is because when a speaker designs an assessment with interrogative morphology or syntax, interrogative intonation, as within the recipient's domain of epistemic expertise or with gaze toward the recipient, then s/he holds the recipient more accountable for not responding than without these features. We argue that each feature is response mobilizing and that, while for various reasons not all four features are always present, when speakers design their turns with more of these features they treat recipients as more accountable for responding.

Whereas the assessments we have discussed in Extracts 8–10 mobilize response in part through specific design features, two issues arise. First, an alternative perspective is arguably that in cases where assessments are being responded to, questions are serving as vehicles for the assessments and thus response relevance is being derived from the question (see Schegloff, 1984, 1995, 2007). We will discuss this position in more detail later, but for the present we simply note that it leaves underanalyzed both what a question is and what interactional import there would be for formulating an assessment in this way. *Question*, even within linguistics, is ill defined (Schegloff, 1984). Indeed, questioning (as opposed to requesting information) is not a social action that conversationalists *do* in interaction. Rather, it seems mainly to be a gloss for an utterance that makes response relevant. Thus, we gain a better understanding of what speakers are doing with turn

⁶Mark is part owner of a restaurant. They are sampling the ravioli to see whether he wants to purchase it for the restaurant.

design by attempting to understand what the composition of the turn is and what the interactional effects of this composition may be.

A second issue is whether the action of, in this case, assessing is fundamentally modified by the four features we have outlined. The cases we have seen (“That would be cool for him huh.”; “Wouldn’t that be nice?”; “That Pat isn’t she a doll?”; “She’s spoiled in my opinion.”; “This smells good.”; “This is gonna be good.”; “This is pretty good.”; “Everything is dirty everything must be washed.”; “It’s not ba:d_”; “This dressing’s really good with it.”) are, we argue, all sequentially initial assessments in the contexts in which they are produced. As actions they invite agreement. This is not fundamentally different in the cases that are designed with one or more of the response-mobilizing features rather than none of them. Specifically, the inclusion of, for instance, interrogative syntax does not transform these assessments into requests for information. The difference between the two assessment formats—declarative versus interrogative—appears to lie in the degree of pressure placed on recipients to respond, preferably with agreement or an agreeing second assessment.

OTHER NONCANONICAL ACTION TYPES

In the last section we restricted ourselves to assessments in order to show that within one broad action type different design features make a difference for the mobilization of response. In this way we attempted to show that, holding action constant, turn design affects degree of response mobilization. However, the patterns we showed for assessments are not particular to them. For instance, when people make announcements they treat the information as relevant and consequential for their addressee. Sometimes announcements account for departures from a setting (e.g., “I’m gonna go get some more tea”). Other announcements inform the addressee of “big news” (future marriage or a baby, for instance). However, here we are interested in announcements that tell the addressee something they do not know but may want to know and which, like assessments, invite uptake but do not inherently pressure recipients for response. In Extract 14 A and B are making plastic flowers, and B is explaining the procedure to A. B buys the various materials at different shops. Several minutes earlier A had asked B where she buys one of the materials. In line 3 B announces that another material (the leaves) can also be purchased at the shop mentioned previously.

Extract 14 2PERLINE - compro 08:10

- 1 B: Poi ci vog- poi ci mettiamo le foglie
Then cl. wa- then cl. put. 1p the leaves
- B: Then we ne- then we put the leaves**
- 2 (0.7)
- 3 B: -> E anche queste ((leaves)) le compro alla Rummola.
And also these them buy at the Rummola
- B: -> And I buy these ((leaves)) too at the Rummola.**
- 4 (1.4)
- 5 B: [per esempio]
for example
- B: [for example]**
- 6 A: [Ma scusa questi come] li chiami

- But excuse me these how them call.2s*
- 7 A: **[But excuse me how do you] call these ((holding a stick))**
 tu quando [vai la']
 you when go.2s there
- A: **when you [go there]**
- 8 B: [Non lo so]
 Not it know
- B: **[I don't know]**

B looks at A during the first three words of the announcement (*e anche queste* “and also these”), but then she turns to her right to look for other materials in a box. The announcement is delivered with declarative syntax, falling intonation, and speaker-tilted epistemic asymmetry (A does not know where B buys the materials). After 1.4 s of silence, B resumes her explanation of the procedure to assemble plastic flowers while A picks up a stick on the table and asks B how she refers to those sticks when she goes to the shop to buy them. After the announcement at line 3 there is no uptake or response from the recipient. And this lack of uptake is not problematic.

Similarly, Extract 15 shows Mark and Kim with infant Blake. They are preparing dinner. Just prior to this extract Kim has asked about the camera and spoken to the baby. Mark has been home for part of the day and is home well before Kim, who has just arrived from work. In line 3 Mark announces some of what he’s planning for their meal as he carries a bag from the freezer to the kitchen counter (see Figure 3). This announcement tells Kim that he did not forget about dinner preparation and that he does in fact have it planned. Kim does not attend to this announcement during the 10 s of silence that emerges nor when she completes removing a utensil from her son’s hand (line 9). During that time Mark does not look to Kim or in any other way treat her as still accountable for responding to his announcement, and indeed it was delivered in a way that only minimally invites uptake.

Extract 15 FD [2 adults with infant]

- 1 KIM: Blake we’re on so smile.
 2 (10.0)
- 3 KIM: ((sigh))
 4 (8.0)
- 5 MAR: -> [Here we got bags, dinner: an’ boxes.
 6 [((said as he walks behind Kim who is looking at infant))
 7 (0.2)
- 8 KIM: [Oh honey no no no no >no=no=no.<
 9 [((removing utensil from infant’s hand))
 10 (10.2)
- 11 KIM: Are you hot?, ((to infant; Mark is preparing dinner))

This section has shown that not only with assessments but in the case of other noncanonical action types when a speaker delivers them without response-mobilizing features, s/he holds the recipient less accountable for responding and in this way less reliably engenders response. In such cases nonresponse is not treated as problematic.



FIGURE 3 Frame from the beginning of line 5, Extract 15.

PURSUIITS OF RESPONSE

Turns designed with the four features we have outlined (interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative prosody, recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry, and recipient-directed speaker gaze) are not only regularly responded to, they are also relied on to mobilize response in “pursuits of response” (Jefferson, 1981; Pomerantz, 1984b). Of course, when a speaker pursues a response, this action is itself response mobilizing. Our interest here, however, is in the resources relied on to pursue response. For instance, see Extract 16. In this extract Marco and Giorgio are eating lunch that Marco has just prepared. Giorgio has just said that he has had a reduced appetite, which is helpful as he had gained too much weight during the winter (it is May). At line 1 Marco mentions that he has lost weight (due to being sick lately).

Marco delivers this initial self-deprecating assessment looking down, shifting his gaze to Giorgio only at the completion of line 4. He then continues looking at Giorgio during the following silence. The target assessment in line 4 lacks interrogative morphosyntax, is not particularly in Marco’s epistemic domain, and is not uttered with interrogative prosody. It is designed in a way that, although it invites response, does not hold Giorgio accountable for responding.

Extract 16 2RON1-try (25:00) [dyadic]

- 1 MAR: Io ho perso (1.1) cinquantamila kili in: uh due giorni
 I lost1.s fifty thousand kilos in uh two days
 MAR: **I lost (1.1) fifty thousand kilos in: uh two days**
 2 GIO: hu hu

- 3 (3.0)
4 MAR: ->Cazzo ‘sta (0.2) ‘sta pasta sa di metallo. [sa;
[gaze to G
Dick this this pasta taste.3s of metal taste.3s
MAR: **Shit this (0.2) this pasta tastes like metal. tastes;**
(0.8)
5 MAR: Senti
Try.2s
MAR: **Try ((it))**
(6.0)/((G tries pasta))
6 MAR: =>Si’?
Yes
MAR: **Yes?**
(4.0)
7
8 GIO: Io no non mi sembra.
I no not me seem.3s
GIO: **I no ((I)) don’t think so.**

This initial assessment is not immediately responded to, even after Marco brings his gaze to Giorgio. While looking at Giorgio, Marco invites him to try the pasta (ensuring his epistemic access to the assessed item) and then gazes down and eats. During the 6-s silence Marco looks up, reinvoking Giorgio's accountability for responding. Giorgio does not react, and at this point Marco adds a post-positioned tag produced with rising intonation (line 6). Marco sustains his gaze toward Giorgio until the latter responds with a disagreeing "I no not." In this extract we see that in the face of nonresponse a speaker relies on the response-mobilizing features we outlined—here gaze, lexico-morphosyntax (*sì*) and interrogative prosody.

Similarly in Extract 17 Lianne has been reporting to Tara and Lyn various things she has heard from a mutual friend who has recently moved. In lines 1–7 Lianne is reporting how the friend is “OHkay:” about the ending of a relationship with her boyfriend, which is apparently due to the friend’s move to New York. At line 11 Lianne reports a particular piece of news—that the couple enjoyed a “<gre:t las:t night> together °though.” When response to the news delivery is not provided, Lianne pursues response from Tara through the use of an increment (Ford, Fox, & Thompson, 2002), thus recompleting with rising intonation.⁷ Note that Lianne and Tara were already in mutual gaze.

Extract 17 BD3 [triadic]

- 1 LIA: She's OHkay: about thuh Jaron thing,^o
2 (0.3)
3 LIA: She said she's used to seeing him once a wee:k,
4 an' it hasn't even been uh full we:ek,
5 ^othat he's been go#ne.^o[<so that might be#
6 LYN: [^o#Yea:h.#^o
7 LIA: #why [th't she's o:kay.#
8 TAR: [Mm hm:,

⁷Intonation is itself on a cline, and it could be that stronger rising is more response mobilizing. Here note that there is rise in line 14 relative to line 12.

- 9 (0.2)/((Tara nods))
 10 [(Lianne gazing at Tara))
 11 LIA: -> [She said they had uh <gre:at las:t
 12 -> night> together °though.°
 13 TAR: (0.2)/((very slight head movement))
 14 LIA: =>in New York,
 15 TAR: ((nodding))
 16 TAR: That's awesome.

All three girls knew that the mutual friend would be saying goodbye to her boyfriend in New York. When Lianne reports the news that they had a great last night, it is clear from the context that this would have been in New York. When “in New York,” is added as an increment to the turn (Ford et al., 2002), it primarily carries the rising intonation, which immediately secures both vigorous nodding and an assessment: “That’s awesome.”

A third case is shown in Extract 18, involving Mark and Kim. In lines 1–3 we see the end of an extended sequence that began with the request shown in Extract 3. After an 8-s lapse (line 4), Kim negatively assesses one of the types of ravioli that they are trying in a turn that has no response-mobilizing features. Mark fails to respond and keeps his gaze down on his plate.

Extract 18 RD [dyadic]

- 1 Kim: (It'd) be really cool.
 2 (1.0)
 3 Kim: An' I'll see her ya know_ (1.5) °I don' know(.)/(_)
 4 (8.0)
 5 [(Kim gazing down at plate))
 6 KIM: ->[I don't like this rainbow one.
 7 [(Mark stabbing ravioli))
 8 (0.5)/((Mark continues preparing bite))
 9 KIM: =>Do you?, ((gazing to Mark))
 10 (2.4)/((Mark eats bite on fork and gazes to package))
 11 KIM: I like this kinda. . .

Following the silence, Kim pursues response, shifting to an interrogative structure that has recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry (what *he* likes or does not like rather than what *she* likes or does not like). The pursuit also has rising intonation and is delivered while she gazes at him. In this case she still does not secure response—instead he eats the bite previously on his fork (which may or may not have been the “rainbow one”) and gazes at the packaging. She does not further pursue response but moves on to initiate another sequence about another sort of pasta. Although Mark fails to respond, our interest is in the resources Kim relies on to mobilize response in the face of failing in a first effort—lexico-morphosyntax, prosody, gaze, and epistemic domain. We can further observe that this instance of “telling my side” (line 6) (Pomerantz, 1980) invites response but is not coercive of it whereas the shift to a design that is highly response mobilizing is more coercive of response.

Finally, see Extract 19. Here A and B are having lunch together. Prior to this extract, A has complained that B ate some of her chocolate rabbit. Here, A complains to B about the absence of a

surprise in the chocolate Easter rabbit she recently bought. B looks at A during the complaint but does not respond to it.

Extract 19 2PLUNCH1-sorpresa 8:39

- 1 (2.5)
 [((A & B gazing down)) [((B looks up))
 2 A: [Io ci son rimasta male che non [c' era la sorpresa.
I cl. have stayed bad that no cl be.3s the surprise
A: I was disappointed because there was not the surprise.
 ((Inside the chocolate rabbit))
 3 (1.0)/((A looking down; B looking at A))
 4 (0.2)/((A shifts gaze to B))
 5 (1.3)/((A & B hold mutual gaze))
 6 **B: ((Hands out gesture + leftward head tilt + facial expression))**
 7 (7.5)
 8 A: Beh insomma Angela ha vinto l'Erasmus ad Heidelberg (0.2). . .
Well anyway Angela have.3s won the Erasmus to Heidelberg
A: Well Angela won the Erasmus for Heidelberg (0.2). . .

After 1 s of silence A looks up, and they engage mutual gaze (lines 4–6). This looking up toward B is the resource A uses to pursue a response from B, which arrives in the form of a gesture and facial expression, after 2.5 s (see lines 3–5). The gist of the gesture (shown in Figure 4) is “what a pity” or “What can you do.” They reengage eating, and after 7.5 s A starts a new course of action.



FIGURE 4 Frame from line 4, Extract 19.

TABLE 1
Use of Response-Mobilizing Features in Pursuits of Response

<i>Extract</i>	<i>Form initially (minus or plus)</i>	<i>Pursuit adds</i>
16	- Interrogative morphosyntax - Interrogative prosody - Speaker gaze - Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Speaker gaze + Interrogative morphology
17	- Interrogative morphosyntax - Interrogative prosody + Speaker gaze - Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Interrogative prosody
18	- Interrogative morphosyntax - Interrogative prosody - Speaker gaze - Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Interrogative morphosyntax + Interrogative prosody + Speaker gaze + Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry
19	- Interrogative morphosyntax - Interrogative prosody - Speaker gaze - Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Speaker gaze

This section has discussed a series of noncanonical actions. In each case a speaker begins using a turn design that is less response mobilizing. Recipients are therefore less accountable for not responding. But following nonresponse in each case the speaker pursues response by utilizing a shift from declarative to interrogative lexico-morphosyntax (Extracts 16, 18), to interrogative prosody (Extracts 17–18), to the recipient’s domain of epistemic expertise (Extract 18), and/or to gazing at the recipient (Extracts 18–19). (See Table 1.)

Thus these resources are what speakers rely on to mobilize response in contexts where a response was not otherwise forthcoming. With these resources speakers can increase pressure to respond, but it remains that speakers do not have the ability to sanction recipients for failure to respond to actions delivered with non-response-mobilizing turn designs.

TURN DESIGN AND RESPONSE PRESSURE

In each of the cases discussed in this section response is invited (likely even desired), but the turns are nonetheless initially designed without response-mobilizing features. Why wouldn’t speakers always design their turns to maximally mobilize response? Returning to several of our cases we can see that maximally response-mobilizing turn designs are also quite coercive and constraining of recipient response. Although at times, for better or worse, response may be desired, in many situations a ‘volunteered’ response may be more welcome and meaningful than one provided under pressure. This, we argue, is one environment where speakers make use of non-response-mobilizing turn designs (see Curl & Drew, 2008 for an illustration of contexts of use for specific turn designs).

With actions that are potentially face threatening or where who we are to one another may be at issue, there are clear advantages to a less coercive action design. For an example of one such case, see Extract 20. Just prior to the target announcement in line 7 Mark's idiom (line 7) is a reference to the fact that his business plans are now well known in the community. The target line initiates something completely new: "I put raisins in thuh salad."

Kim and Mark are newly married and only began living together in the last couple of months. She has put raisins in the salad that she has served them. Mark has failed to notice the raisins up to this point. His noticing the raisins and complimenting her on including them would likely have been the best outcome from Kim's perspective as she would be certain that he must really like them and that she made a good decision to add them to the salad (see Schegloff, 2007 on noticing). In the absence of this, she announces the addition. Such a non-response-mobilizing design places minimal pressure for response on Mark, though she *invites* response through the initial sequential position and action alone. Kim upgrades her pressure to secure a response after no indication of response from Mark: Perhaps it is best to know whether or not he likes raisins, even if it is brought about under coercion. As we saw in earlier pursuits, she shifts from a turn that has speaker-tilted epistemic asymmetry to one that has recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry—from a turn focused on what she has done to a turn focused on his likes. Second, the rising intonation in the pursuit also contributes to its seeking response.

Extract 20 RD

- 1 Mark: (It just-) (0.8) cat's outta thuh bag.
- 2 (2.3)
- 3 Mark: So_ (3.0)
- 4 Mark: Mm.
- 5 (.)
- 6 [((gazing ahead))
- 7 Kim: -> [I put raisins in thuh salad.
- 8 (.)
- 9 Kim: =>D'you like that? ((gazing at Mark))
- 10 Mark: Mm hm?,
- 11 (0.8)
- 12 Mark: Love raisins.
- 13 (5.1)

Indeed following this query he confirms liking the addition of raisins.

Similarly, return to Extract 19. There A's complaint about the lack of a surprise in the chocolate Easter bunny is designed in a way that places minimal pressure on B to respond. An expression of empathy, agreement, or a co-complaint might be most appreciated if it is delivered in such an environment (Jefferson, 1988). However, no response is forthcoming. The gaze does increase B's accountability to provide a response though we can see the interactional tug of war here as the response he ultimately provides under the pressure of A's gaze only borders on affiliative (see Figure 4).

Finally, return to Extract 12. There Luisa's assessment again invites uptake. An offer to clean up after the meal or an apology for not having cleaned up earlier might be optimal in this context (Pomerantz, 1978a). An alternative turn design (e.g., delivered while gazing at either Paolo or Maria or with the addition of *have you seen that*) would hold the addressee more accountable than

the actual format. These formats would, we suggest, be more likely to actually secure response but would also be substantially more coercive and place Luisa on record as a taskmaster in the household—a role she is, apparently, not keen to embrace.

In this section we have seen that while a lack of response-mobilizing features may lead to a lack of response, there are interactional reasons why speakers at times rely on a turn design that invites, through sequential position and action alone, but is not coercive of, response through turn design.⁸ Interactants mobilize response to varying degrees through action and turn design: At times information is being requested and high response mobilization is typical; at other times response may be welcome or invited, but the turn is designed to minimize speaker pressure in order that the response is, at least optimally, not given under such circumstances.

RECONSIDERING CANONICAL ACTIONS

There is general consensus that interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative prosody, epistemic domain, and speaker gaze are prototypical in canonical first pair-part actions. We have also shown that these features are response mobilizing in noncanonical actions and in the context of pursuits of response. We can now reconsider whether these features might also mobilize response in canonical first pair-part actions.

Consider requests. Although requests often involve interrogative morphosyntax as shown in Extract 3, they do not always. For instance, in Extract 21 Cheng has recently arrived home from work and is going through the mail on the table. Their cat is standing at the glass door to the patio, which is positioned directly behind Cheng. Jill, who was already home, states “Bear’s waiting to see you.”

Extract 21 CL (“Bear” is the couple’s cat)

- 1 JILL: -> [Bea:r’s [w₁aiting to see you.
- 2 JILL: [(((Gestures behind C to cat who is at glass door))
- 3 [(((Jill gazes towards cat; Cheng is looking down at letter))
- 4 CHENG: [(“I swear”) ((re: bill he’s looking at))
- 5 (0.5)
- 6 CHENG: Huh?,
- 7 JILL: -> [Bear °wants to see you.°
- 8 [((p[oints to cat))
- 9 CHENG: [(((turns towards window/door))
- 10 (0.5)
- 11 CHENG: Wanna what?,
- 12 (.)
- 13 JILL: -> [HE WANTS TUH SEE: YOU.
- 14 [((looking at cat))
- 15 (4.0)/((Cheng torques to looks outside towards cat; then
- 16 returns to facing room and reading))
- 17 CHENG: Didju turn tuh air off? ((air conditioning))

⁸Another possible context where speakers may rely on non-response-mobilizing assessments is when the recipient’s access is uncertain. If I do not know whether you have seen Paris in the spring I will likely say “Paris is lovely in the spring” rather than “Isn’t Paris lovely in the spring?” However, this would need further empirical investigation.

Although there are a series of repair initiations here, the critical point is that Jill is requesting that Cheng greet/pet the cat. However, it is done as an indirect request rather than a direct one. In fact we see two versions of this: “Bear’s waiting to see you” and “Bear/he wants to see you.”

Requests of this type have been the subject of much discussion. Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss these actions as a variety of indirect request that “implicates” a request. They argue that because the requests become such only through implicature, they are off record. They suggest that there are payoffs for speakers in designing face-threatening acts such as requests and offers in a way that is off record. Of the payoffs, one they list is that these speakers are being “non-coercive” (p. 71). But not only are speakers who rely on these off-record designs less coercive of a particular *type* of response, but they are also less coercive of *any response*. Arguably, making someone accountable for responding is already a threat to their negative face (Goffman, 1967, p. 37; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Thus, we see a further payoff for speakers in that such a design is minimally coercive of response.⁹ In fact, even after Jill redoes the request multiple times to deal with Cheng’s repair initiations, he does not respond.

Prior work on requests suggests that the turn design may be affected by such factors as the degree of entitlement and contingency involved in granting the request (Curl & Drew, 2008) and speakers’ desire to avoid rejection (Levinson, 1983). These accounts for turn design are compatible with the one we suggest. Thus, a request may be designed declaratively and without gaze (for instance) in order to allow the recipient to not respond (because they are less accountable for responding), which in turn allows them to avoid delivering a refusal, for instance. Moreover, in a context where the speaker should display an orientation to less entitlement or higher contingency, they may be more inclined to place less pressure for immediate response on their addressee.

Requesting is not alone. Consider offering.¹⁰ Although an offer might prototypically be interrogative (as in “Would you like a glass of water?”), it needn’t be (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Curl, 2006). Here, at the beginning of a videotaping session, the investigator has just thanked the subjects, next-door neighbors, for videotaping their dinner (Extract 22). Following a move to close in line 1, the investigator offers use of the Internet (lines 3–5/8).¹¹

Extract 22 FD [Dyadic]

- 1 MAR: See ya in a little bi:t,=
- 2 INV: [((gazing at Mark))
- 3 INV: [=Okay_ yeah=uhm (if) you finish dinner:, (.)
- 4 if you wanna (.) uhm (0.2) .tlk
- 5 look ‘t thuh internet (0.2) °>like<° later_ =
- 6 MAR: Yeah.
- 7 (.)
- 8 INV: jus’ let me know;
- 9 (1.3)

⁹Keep in mind that we say “minimally coercive” because by addressing a turn of talk to someone in an initial sequential position there is some pressure for them to respond provided they perceive themselves to have been addressed. We argue that the action being implemented and the turn design through which it is implemented can be made more coercive by increasing the accountability of a response.

¹⁰And similarly, on inviting see Drew (1984).

¹¹Mark had previously indicated a desire to use the Internet, which they did not have, but the formulation of this was not recorded.

- 10 MAR: That'd be cool_
 11 INV: °^Okay_°

Although the offer could be “Would you like to come over and use the Internet after you’re done?” the conditional formulation shown in Extract 22, like the cases of non-response-mobilizing assessments shown earlier, puts less pressure on the recipient to accept or reject the offer, particularly since the “then” component is not fleshed out.

Thus, with respect to canonical first pair-part actions, we suggest that there may be contexts where particular turn designs are used (e.g., interrogatively designed requests, offers, or invitations versus conditionally designed ones). Those actions designed without response-mobilizing features are often indirect versions of these actions and would hold recipients less accountable for responding than their more direct counterparts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR A THEORY OF RESPONSE RELEVANCE

The previous section suggests that response-mobilizing turn features matter not only in the context of noncanonical action types where action and sequential position are not highly response mobilizing but may actually be at play in the context of canonical actions as well. In developing a theory of response relevance, it is possible that assessments, noticings, and announcements could all be viewed as actions that are not organized around the adjacency pair but are organized via a wholly different sort of sequential organization and thus do not make response conditionally relevant in the same way.¹² However, we believe that the evidence supports a view that these actions are not inherently different animals from canonical actions. There is general agreement (e.g., Pomerantz, 1984a; Schegloff, 2007), which our data support, that assessments, noticings, and announcements, for instance, *do* initiate sequences just as more canonical offers, requests, and information requests do and that they also set up expectations for response. Yet, evidence also supports a view that these less canonical actions do not, via their initial sequential position and action alone, normatively require response.

This leads us to consider a revised model of response relevance, one that forces us to reconsider how we understand the relationship between initiating and responsive actions more generally. We propose that rather than a sequentially initial action making response either conditionally relevant or not, actions can be designed in such a way as to mobilize response in a scalar fashion. A graphical representation of this is shown in Figure 5.

Response relevance is shown on the y-axis and depicted as on a cline. Actions vary in the degree to which they mobilize response in and of themselves. As can be observed, “question” does not appear because a question does not constitute an action type. The response relevance of an action can be increased depending on how the action is designed. The inclusion of multiple response-mobilizing turn-design features leads to higher response relevance than the inclusion of fewer or no features. There is a clear “ceiling effect” with actions that are ritualized and/or leave little room for design variation such as greetings and farewells. A request (or an offer or information request) is high in response relevance, but a request designed “directly” (e.g., with interrogative morphosyntax and/or prosody) would be still higher. Similarly, an

¹²Schegloff leaves open the possibility that there could be other sorts of sequence organizations (2007, p. 9).

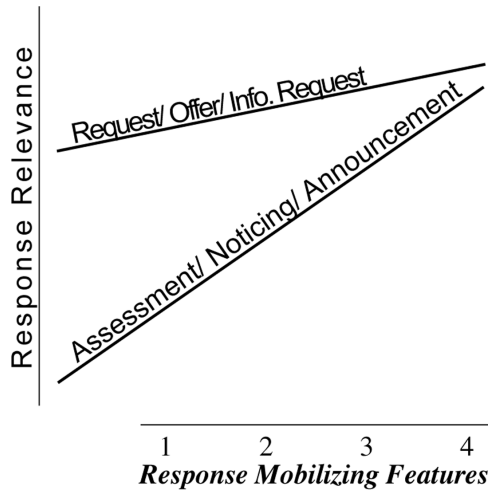


FIGURE 5 Model of response relevance.

assessment (or a noticing or announcement) would be low in response relevance. However, if it were designed with multiple response-mobilizing features, this would increase the response relevance of the action.

Although we have focused on sequentially initial actions, sequential position clearly also increases response relevance. As discussed earlier, actions positioned in initial sequential positions put some pressure on a recipient to respond, by virtue of their position, but this pressure is minimal. Still, it is arguably stronger than that of second or third position, where a similar utterance would be hearable as proposing sequence closure. However, even in second position these features can work to hold recipients accountable. For instance, Rossano has shown that if one participant is gazing during the delivery of a response (i.e., a second-position utterance), this typically leads to sequence expansion (Rossano, 2005). Similarly, second assessments delivered interrogatively engender responses (Heritage & Raymond, 2005, p. 29).

We began with a discussion of action types such as assessments, announcements, and noticings. There we could clearly analytically separate the actions from their response-mobilizing features. In this section we have proposed that this model applies more broadly. It remains to be understood whether and where a boundary might exist between a turn that invites response and one that normatively requires response. However, we have shown that such an analysis must take into account the action being implemented, where it is implemented, and how it is delivered.

DISCUSSION

The Relevance of “Questions”

We began with two hypotheses for how a speaker mobilizes response from another. Schegloff and Sacks’s proposal that sequence-initial actions carry a property of conditional relevance that normatively requires the provision of a response has gone unquestioned in social interaction

studies for 40 years. Running alongside this proposal linguists have maintained a view that formal turn features—interrogativity, narrowly, and questions, more broadly—are the primary resources through which speakers mobilize response.

We suggest that the term *question*, which vernacularly characterizes an action, is in fact an omnibus term that expresses the institutionalization of response mobilization. Although languages grammaticalize different response-mobilizing features, all languages have grammaticalized interrogative syntax, morphology, and/or epistemicity (e.g., Japanese, Lao, Tsafiki), and such utterances are typically classified as “questions.” Once “question” is decomposed, it becomes possible to see how these features independently mobilize response. For instance, consider the practice of “try-marking,” which uses interrogative prosody (rising intonation in English and Italian) and attaches it to lexical items midturn in order to secure a response that claims understanding of a referent (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). Rossano has shown the same practice can rely on speaker gaze rather than rising prosody on particular turn components (2006).

Although we expect that speakers of different languages rely to different degrees on response-mobilizing resources, we nonetheless expect that across languages, ethnicities, and cultures people rely on the same resources—gaze, lexico-morphosyntax, prosody, and epistemic asymmetry—to mobilize response. Here we propose a model for how responses to social actions are regulated across the species rather than for speakers of one language. In addition, although our focus was on sequentially initial actions, preliminary evidence (e.g., Rossano, 2005; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979) suggests that these features increase response relevance across sequential positions and across action types. We suggest that our model provides a unified explanation for when interactants respond. The model takes into account the response-mobilizing properties of sequential position (that sequentially initial actions are response mobilizing), action (that some actions are more response mobilizing than others), and turn design (that some features of turn design are more response mobilizing than others). And we argue that each of these increases the accountability of a recipient to produce a response.

We have shown that in initial sequential position both action and turn-design features work to mobilize response and thus can be used together such that a turn minimally or maximally pressures an interlocutor for response. Such a perspective effectively accepts the role of both the sociological and linguistic perspectives, in part. With respect to the position put forward by Schegloff and Sacks, we argue that action is indeed critical, but it is not, on its own, sufficient, except with highly ritualized actions such as greetings and farewells. From the linguistic perspective, we accept that “questions” mobilize response but suggest that with a compositional view of questioning we better understand what features of a turn mobilize response. This allows us to propose a new way of understanding how a speaker mobilizes response and how it is that a speaker holds another accountable for responding—one that relies both on the action being implemented in the turn and the turn’s design. We have done this by suggesting four response-mobilizing features: interrogative lexico-morphosyntax, interrogative prosody, recipient directed speaker gaze, and recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry.

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