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# How to do things with requests

## Request sequences at the family dinner table\*

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Requests for food and other things at the family dinner table generally run off smoothly, without “breaking the surface” of interaction. That is, in an environment of multiple concurrent involvements (Lerner and Raymond, 2014), requesting and fulfilling requests for food or other things usually only momentarily suspends or delays the progressivity of other concurrent activities. This conversation analytic study examines requests in which interactants do “more” than just requesting. Drawing on videotaped holiday dinners of nine families in the Northeastern United States, 91 requests (principally for food) were collected. I show how at each position in the unfolding of a request sequence, opportunities may be taken to implement some other action. That is, requests may be formulated in such a way as to do more than requesting (e.g. they may enact impatience, implement a complaint about the requested item, or treat an interlocutor as noncompliant). Responses to requests may be produced in such a way as to do more than fulfilling the request (e.g. they may enact attentiveness, critique being asked for the item, teach proper norms of conduct, or even perform a “tit for tat”). In third position also, appreciations or acknowledgements of fulfilled requests may do more than appreciating or acknowledging (e.g. they may be designed to acknowledge an impropriety in the fulfilling of the request). Findings indicate how the formulation, fulfillment and acknowledgement of requests may provide a structure through which norms of food consumption and distribution, family relationships and personhood may be enacted and negotiated.

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## 1. Introduction

This study examines how interactants initiate and implement the transfer of objects, mainly food and other food-service-related items, at the family holiday dinner table. I address this process principally in terms of how requests are made, responded to, and fulfilled. However I use the term “request” tentatively, as it is freighted with several generations and domains of intellectual legacy. In this report I hope to separate the interactional processes involved in object transfer from the “speech act theory” heritage of requests.

This chapter shows that the implementation and fulfillment of requests are not always innocent. Rather, they may provide opportunities for speakers to implement other actions. While some of these actions are related to the activity of requesting and fulfilling requests, others use requests and their fulfillment as an opportunity to implement other, non-request-related actions.

Prior research has addressed different aspects of how requests are composed. For instance, Blum-Kulka (2008), Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (2008), Brown and Levinson (1987), Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1981, 1982), Ervin-Tripp, Strage, Lampert, and Bell (1987), and others have examined comprehensively how different compositional features of requests may embody norms of politeness. Craven and Potter (2010), Curl and Drew (2008), Heinemann (2006), Lindström (2005), Wootton (1981), Zinken and Ogiermann (2013) and others have shown how different constructions (e.g. “Could/Can you” modal verb formulations vs. “I wonder if”, or “could you” vs. “couldn’t you”) may enact entitlement to having the request granted, and may be attentive to the contingencies involved in fulfilling the request. In my collection, almost a third of the requests (29 out of 91) were formulated with modal verbs. Of these, 17 were “Can I have” formulations, and 2 were “Can I get.” 6 were “Could you” “pass”, or “pour” or “give”, and 2 were “can you pass.” 17 requests were formulated as imperatives, such as “Nathaniel pass me the dressing”, 8 interactants formulated requests using just an object name such as “Salt” and 13 used pre-requests. There were 24 requests that were composed using other formats, including “I’ll have,” “I want,” or “I’ll take” X. (See Table 1.)

The composition of requests at these family dinners suggests that interactants enact high entitlement to have their request granted, and that they do not regard their interlocutors as facing contingencies that would prevent them from fulfilling the request by delivering the requested item (Curl & Drew, 2008).

As Jefferson has pointed out, the people to whom we are “rudest” are frequently the people to whom we are closest. Blum-Kulka (1997), Goodwin (2006) and others have noted that this may be one way in which we enact this closeness. Simple “Can I have” or object name constructions, sometimes with a *please* (although this occurs in only 17 of 91 cases, and appears to upgrade the insistence of the request) and

Table 1. Request formats

	Total: 91	Can I have (the) X	Can I get	Could you pass/pour/give	Can you pass	Other
Modal verb	29	17	2	6	2	2
Imperative	17					
Object name (e.g. salt, dressing)	8					
Pre-request	13					
Other (e.g. I'll have, I want, I'll take X)	24					
Please	17					
Addressee name	18					

sometimes with the name of the addressed interactant (18 times in this corpus) are most commonly simply granted by the passing to the requester of the requested item. If the item is close by, usually the person next to the requester will fulfill the request. If it is remote, the item may be passed from hand to hand. Others may help themselves to the food or gravy along the way. This is not treated as accountable in this collection. Participants were extremely alert to producing their part in the fulfillment of a request in a timely fashion. However in my corpus of requests for food, and other food-service related items, there is a significant number of requests through which other actions are implemented.

It is important to note that the family dinner table is a particular kind of environment for interaction. It is, in Raymond and Lerner's (2014) terminology, minimally, a context of dual involvements, since participants are involved in both eating and talking. Some requests occur during a food service round when everyone is engaged in filling their plate. Others are produced in response to an offer. Sometimes requests occur during a lapse in talking – during what Schegloff and Sacks (1973) have called a continuing state of incipient talk – and these requests may serve to reengage talk; other requests launch a second activity during some already ongoing activity.

In this chapter I show how at each position in the unfolding of a request sequence (Schegloff, 2007), interactants may implement some other action along with requesting. That is, requests may be formulated in such a way as to do more than requesting (e.g. they may enact impatience, implement a complaint about the requested item, or treat an interlocutor as noncompliant). Responses to requests may be produced in such a way as to do more than fulfilling the request (e.g. they may enact attentiveness, or treat the requester as impatient). In third position also, appreciations or acknowledgements of fulfilled requests may do more than appreciating or

acknowledging (e.g. they may be designed to address an impropriety in the fulfilling of the request). Further, at each next position in a request sequence, interactants may use the structure of requesting to introduce some other activity, such as, in this corpus, implementing a supportive action, performing a tit for tat, or teaching norms of proper conduct.

## **2. Data and methodology**

The corpus of requests examined here is drawn from a collection of 43 Thanksgiving, Easter and Passover dinners, videotaped over the last fifteen years on the East coast of the United States. Drawing on a subset of 9 of the videotapes from the larger collection of 43, 91 requests for food and other food-service related items were collected and analyzed using Conversation Analysis (cf. Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Sidnell & Stivers, 2013).

In these dinners, food is principally distributed through distribution rounds at the beginning of a course. Some food items (for example, cutlets) may be served plate by plate, but this is very rare. Some families have a buffet. Most commonly though, the food is brought to the table and attendees serve themselves or are served by those sitting near them, or by a host or cook. Much of the food distribution occurs at the beginning of a course, with serving plates and bowls being circulated, and hosts or cooks and sometimes others checking that everyone has everything. Some of the food may be shunted to a secondary table or credenza if the main table becomes too congested. So apart from requests for seconds, the requests examined in this study are principally made for somewhat more “sundry” items – such as salt, pepper, rolls, bread or matza, butter, drinks, ice, gravy, cranberries, stuffing, vegetables, salad, salad dressing and olives. Before requesting food items, interactants may be seen looking for them, presumably at least in part assessing whether or not they can reach them themselves, or to whom to direct a request.

While some requests barely break the interactional surface, and only momentarily become the primary focus of interaction, interactants may launch other activities through many requests and responses to them. It is these requests that implement more than just requesting that are the focus of this chapter.

## **3. Actions implemented via requests and their fulfillment**

A description of a simple request and its fulfillment provides a contrast with requests and fulfillments that implement some other action also.

### 3.1 A simple request

Frequently, requests for food and food-service related items at the dinner table do not “break the surface” of ongoing interaction. Rather, they are produced and managed as a kind of concurrent but “subordinate” activity. This occurs in extract (1), taken from a Thanksgiving Dinner. In line 12 Mom produces a simple request for the cider, and it is granted right away by Kayley, the daughter sitting next to her on her left.

#### Extract 1. Cider

```

01          (2.5)
02  DAD:      Where is the co:ncert
03            tak[ing place at]
04  GRA:      [you-the do:c]tors will be so::[so:: ]
05  KAY:      [Carolyn's
06            (0.4)
07  GRA:      ta:lented=
08  DAD:      =I'm not sure where that is. Youn- you know where;
09            (1.5)/((KAY takes a mouthful))
10    →      (0.5)/((MOM looks up across table))
11    →      (0.5)/((MOM points then[reaches with left hand])
12  MOM:→      [C' ha:ve the- (.) ci:der please;
13  MOM:→      [((looks to her right, reaches for glass))
14  KAY:→      [((reaches for[cider and passes to Mom))
15  KAY:      [(I don' know how t' get there)
16            but- I know where it i:s,
17    →      (1.3)/((MOM takes cider))
18  MOM:      [((Holds up cider jug;[starts to pour cider))
19  MAR:      [What movie [(a- 'ave-) ]
20  GRA:      [((GRA looks up))
21  GRA:      [In which ho:]spital is she.
22  MOM:      [She's in Cle:veland.= I don't=
23  MOM:      [((pouring cider))
24  MOM:      =remem[ber the na:me of [it.
25  MOM:      [((pouring ends)) [((holds glass suspended))
26            (0.4)/((Mom puts jug down))
27  GRA:      He:re?
28  MOM:      In Cle:veland.
29  GRA:      O[h
30  MAR:      [mm

```

In the talk immediately preceding this extract, Mom has been talking with Grandma about someone they know who is having a heart transplant that day, while Dad (who is not quite visible at the opposite end of the table from Mom) has been talking with Kayley about a concert she will be attending. Note that Mom's request in line 12, “C' have the- cider please”, is produced after Grandma in lines 04 and 07 has addressed to Mom an assessment of the heart transplant doctors: “the do:c]tors will be so:: so:: ta:lented”, to which an agreement or disagreement or second assessment from Mom might be relevant, and in line 8 Dad has addressed an inquiry to Kayley, “I'm not sure where that is. Youn- you know where;”. So at the point where Mom produces her request, there are two sequences open at line 9, where Kayley takes a mouthful, and then Mom looks across the table, possibly locating the cider, points at it, and reaches towards it

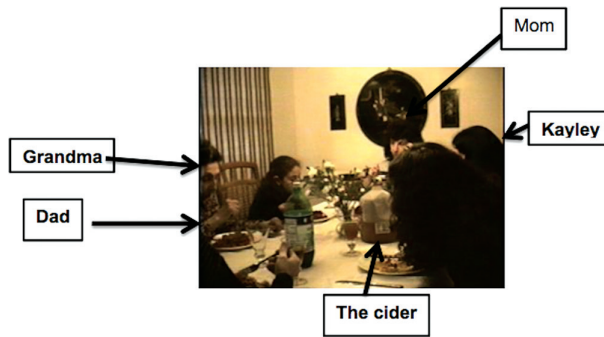


Figure 1. Extract 1

and simultaneously with the reach in line 12, asks, “C’ ha:ve the- (.) ci:der please?” In line 13 we see Mom looking to her right and reaching for her glass, apparently assuming that the cider will be delivered. Simultaneously, Kayley reaches for the cider, and as she picks it up in lines 15–16 she responds to Dad, “(I don’ know how t’ get there) but- I know where it i:s,” Kayley delivers the cider to Mom just as she completes her utterance. The fulfillment of the request coincides with the completion of her second pair part to Dad.

We can make several observations about this extract that will provide us with a baseline organization for “simple” requests as we later consider others that implement actions in addition to requesting. First, the request barely emerges from concurrent ongoing activities; rather Mom produces her request during a gap, but there are two open first pair parts, Grandma’s to Mom in lines 4–7, and Dad’s to Kayley in line 8. Mom is chewing, and Kayley has also just taken a mouthful in line 9, although Mom does not appear to see this. There are therefore several concurrent involvements (Raymond & Lerner, 2014) at the point where Mom produces her request. Second, Mom composes her request with the modal formulation, “C’ have”, “can I have”, a common formulation for requests in this collection, indicating high entitlement to have the request fulfilled. Third, the request is not addressed to a designated request recipient. Goodwin (1980) has noted that cut-offs, sound stretches, etc. are often associated with seeking recipient eye gaze. Here we cannot see Kayley’s gaze, and Mom is oriented to the cider rather than an addressed recipient, but it may be that her cut-off and micro-pause are designed to attract the attention of a recipient, while her point and then reach towards the cider indicate the item she is seeking.

This also raises the issue of the projectability (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974) of a request, as this has an impact on when a request can be fulfilled. While “C’have” strongly projects a request, in English, the noun (that refers to the requested object) is placed at the end of the turn-constructural unit, and here the cut-off and gap occur

before the noun. So exactly what it is Mom will ask for is not available until late in the utterance, although her point and reach (towards the cider) provide a strong indication. Her “please” extends the turn constructional unit beyond the name of the requested item, and thus facilitates the request being fulfilled immediately upon the turn’s completion.

Fourth, Kayley moves to fulfill the request immediately upon its completion, and Mom appears to assume immediate compliance, as she turns and reaches for her glass. Fifth, it is the person next to the requester who fulfills the request. This seems logical, since both the cider and Kayley are closest to Mom. However it is nonetheless notable that since they continue their current involvements without showing any orientation to Mom’s request, others at the table do not appear to take it that the request might have been addressed to them. Finally, we can note that there is no “thank you” here. We find “thank you”s in 8 out of 91 requests, further indicating the high entitlement embodied in the way requests are composed and responded to. In this extract, then, a request is produced and fulfilled without disrupting other ongoing action, and without implementing anything more than “merely” requesting and fulfilling a request.

### 3.2 Doing more than just requesting

While there is much to be said about how interactants organize their talk and bodily conduct so as to accomplish a smooth arrangement of concurrent actions, the focus of this paper is on requests in which interactants do more than just requesting, using the structure of the request to implement or occasion other actions. Next I show how “more than just requesting” can be implemented at each position in a request sequence (Schegloff, 2007).

#### 3.2.1 *Implementing “more than” a request in first position*

In first position, a request can implement “more than just requesting.” There are two ways in which this may occur. First, this may occur when the request is formulated in such a way as to convey something additional, such as impatience. Second, the implementation of the request may provide a “vehicle” that “carries” another action, such as implementing a supportive action. I discuss each in turn. In Extract (2), through the way in which he implements his request for salad dressing, Dad at the head of the table treats his son Nathaniel as non-compliant. (See Figure 2 for the arrangement of participants). Shortly before this segment, Nathaniel has taken salad and, in line 01, he picks up the salad dressing. In lines 3–4 Dad begins to serve himself salad. After Deb has inquired in lines 8–9 why there is no turkey at this Thanksgiving Dinner, and Mom has responded at line 11, there is a one-second gap during which Dad looks around

across the table. In overlap with Deb's third position response to Mom's response about the turkey, in lines 15–16 Dad points across the table and simultaneously quietly asks for the dressing from Nathaniel: "Nathaniel pass me the: dressing.°". He then keeps his hand outstretched for the dressing, and prompts Nathaniel for the dressing again in line 25, "The dressing please". Just before he asks again in line 25, he raises his eyebrows, points, and lurches his head towards the dressing, a motion that appears to combine impatience and prompting, treating Nathaniel, who apparently has not heard Dad's request (as his repair initiator, "What?" in line 23 indicates), as noncompliant.



Figure 2. Extract 2

### Extract 2. The Dressing

OR16\_TheDressingPlease\_Fam34\_2-58\_jr

((Participants (Clockwise from left side head of the table): DAD, DEBBIE, (MICHELLE, not at the table), ANN, TODD, NATHANIEL, and MOM))

```

01 NAT:      ((picks up salad dressing))
02           (2.0)
03 DAD:      ((picks up salad tongs
04            [and takes salad])
05 MOM:      [((Picks up pepper, [grinds, shakes onto plate, replaces])
06 NAT:      [((pours salad dressing))
07           (4.0)
08 DEB:      °This is supposed to be a- (0.3) Thanksgiving
09            Dinner then why is there no turkey°
10           (1.0)
11 MOM:      [Turkey we'll be doing a lot of wee:ks
12 NAT:      [((begins to put cap on dressing; licks finger))
13           → (1.0)/((DAD looks around across table))
14 DEB:      [Well I ( )]
15 DAD:→     [((points across the table towards NAT))] °Nathaniel pass
16 DAD:→     me the: [dressing.°] [((keeps arm & hand extended))
17 TOD:      [But I didn't ha:ve][to do it.
18           → (0.3)/((DAD's finger retracts; arm remains extended))
19 DEB:      [Oh you ha:ve it?
20 DAD:→     [((arm remains extended))
21 NAT:→     [((NAT looks to his right))
22           → (0.3)/((DAD's arm remains extended; NAT looks at Dad))
23 NAT:→     What?
24           → (0.5)/((DAD raises his eyebrows, points & lurches head forward))
25 DAD:→     The dre[ssing please.
26 NAT:      [((Picks up dressing and passes to DAD))]
27 DEB:      Cause I [ thought you ha:d it;
28 DAD:      [((DAD takes dressing bottle and shakes))

```

In reissuing his request with “The dressing please,” naming the item, with a “please”, Dad can be heard to implement a request, but the raised eyebrows, prompting nod, and point that precede it seem designed to indicate impatience, seeking Nathaniel’s compliance before reissuing the request. In implementing his request in this way, Dad conveys that he takes it that Nathaniel should already know what it is Dad wants, and that he is being noncompliant in not fulfilling the request. Indicating impatience, and treating Nathaniel as noncompliant here are implemented as part of the execution of the request.

Requests may also be used to implement other kinds of actions that are not directly related to the activity of requesting. Rather, making a request can be used opportunistically as, in Schegloff’s (2007) terms, a “vehicle” for implementing some other activity. In Extract (3), Mangita uses a request as a way of disassociating herself from the collectivity that was poking fun at Mom’s jello. At this Easter Dinner Mangita, a guest of the family, and Tim’s girlfriend, apparently in response to a compliment on the jello from Bobshi, Mom’s mother, to Mom, asks for jello first from Mom, who is sitting across from Mangita, and then from her boyfriend Tim, sitting next to her. Mom does not move to fulfill Mangita’s request, and Tim refuses to fulfill it. Ultimately, she is served jello by Tim’s brother Jon, in a kind of stealth dessert delivery to be examined later. Note Mangita’s requests for jello in lines 17 and 19. They seem to implement more than just a request for jello: they also implement a demonstration that Mangita should not be taken to be a member of the jello-disparaging party.

### Extract 3. Jello

OR36\_Jello\_Fam7b\_14-51\_LD\_ra

((Mangita has just put sugar in Tim’s tea))

```

01  MAN:      ↑hm hm hm
02            (1.3)
03  MOM:      tch ↑Ca:n't do a:nything right ca:n you?
04            { (0.4)
05  MOM:      { ((squirts whipped cream))
06  MAN:      { (shakes her head)
07  MAN:      No:.
08            [ (0.9)
09  MOM:      [ ((replaces lid on whipped cream))
10  BOB:      [That j_e[llo tas[tes refreshing Silvia.]
11  MOM:      [ ((turns head towards BOB))
12  MAN:      [I'm ve:ry bad girlfri:]end.
13  MOM:      [°iYeh?°
14  MOM:      [ ((nods))
15  MOM:      [=SEE my mo:ther li:kes the [ jello?
16  MOM:      [ ((turns to Tim)) [ ((looks down at her dessert))
17  MAN:→     ↑I':ll have some jello.
18            (0.5) / ((Mom picks up spoon & resumes eating dessert))
19  MAN:      [ ((turns head to TIM))
20  MAN:→     [↑Ca:n I 'ave [↑some jello::]
21  JON:      [Go:d she's °n]ice,°=
22  TIM:      =NO. Do:n' ask
23            it [ from this °person° ]
24  MAN:      [>Alright,<[↑what's the other] thing over ] there;

```

25 MAN: [((Points across table to her right))]  
 26 (0.3)  
 27 MOM: ((points at pie))/(0.7)  
 28 MOM: Rigo:tta chee:se pi::eɪ  
 29 JON: [((moves whipped cream))]  
 30 MAN: [°okay°  
 31 (1.3)

Earlier in this Easter Dinner, when dessert is first brought out, Tim, Jon, and Dad, (who is not currently at the table), have played with the jello, turned the bowl with jello in it upside down, and generally made fun of it. Before this segment also, Bobshi has taken Mom to task for the jello (asking “What was the jello for”) and then reminiscing about a time that she, Bobshi, made jello with bananas, Mom said Tim would not like it, but he ate it at Bobshi’s place. So not only has Bobshi earlier disparaged today’s jello, she has used this story about jello as a way of indicating Mom does not know her own children’s taste in food. In Extract (3) then, when Bobshi produces a compliment of the jello in line 10, it can be heard as a “remedial” compliment, possibly designed to repair some of the earlier interpersonal damage. That it may be tied back to earlier talk is hearable in the use of “that” in line 10 in referring to “That jello”. “refreshing” is hearable as a positive assessment, well-fitted to jello. Mom somehow understands that Bobshi’s turn is addressed to her after the “je” of jello, turning her head to Bobshi, behind Jon. She acknowledges the compliment with a quiet “yeh” before turning to Tim, sitting directly across from her, and in line 15 announcing quite loudly, “SEE my mo:ther likes the jello”.

In describing “evidential vindication”, Kendrick (ms, p. 7) notes that “See?” launches a retro-sequence (Schegloff, 2007). That is, it occupies a responsive position to something prior, while also beginning an adjacency pair in which it serves as a first pair part. Here “See” links back to Bobshi’s compliment, a *positive* assessment of the jello that had been so *negatively* assessed earlier in the interaction. The stress on “my mother” can be heard as contrastive. It is not clear whom Mom is including in the jello-dislike party, but it might be hearable that anyone at the table is included, except for Bobshi, who, on the basis of the positive assessment at line 10, Mom now infers likes the jello. Mom here uses Bobshi’s positive assessment of the jello as evidence that at least “someone” likes the jello. Immediately next, in line 17 Mangita, Tim’s girlfriend, and a guest in the house, asks for some jello: “I’ll ‘ave some jello”. The contrastive stress on “I’ll” may serve to make it hearable that here Mangita is separating herself from others who did not want jello. It seems that asking for a food item embodies or claims a liking for that food – at least enough of a liking to want to eat some. Built into, and hearable in, a request for food, apparently, is an intention to eat that food. So when Mangita volunteers to have some jello, she may be attempting to prove that she is *not* a member of the jello-disparaging party against whom Mom was launching her vindication. Rather than disparaging the jello, she would like to eat some. This makes available the inference that she too likes the jello, and in this way she also produces a supportive action (Pomerantz, 1978) towards Mom. Mom apparently does not take up

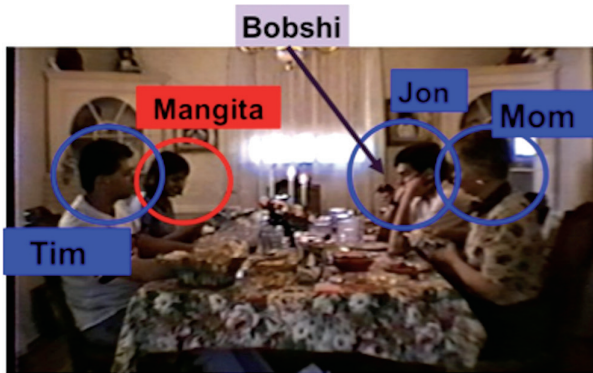


Figure 3. Extract 3

this request;<sup>1</sup> in line 18 during the 0.5-second gap, she picks up her spoon and resumes eating her dessert.

Next in line 20 Mangita produces a request for jello that she addresses to Tim, her boyfriend “Ca:n I ‘ave some jello”. Redoing the request here may demonstrate Mangita’s seriousness about wanting some jello, indicating that “I’ll have some jello” was not just a *pro forma* request. She produces it in a somewhat wheedling voice, perhaps orienting to the fact that Tim was one of the jello antagonists earlier. In overlap with this, Jon in line 21 produces an appreciation of Mangita: “Go:d she’s nice”. This may indicate that he hears the supportive action toward Mom that Mangita has implemented by requesting jello in the wake of Bobshi’s complimenting it.

Here then in addition to the request providing for Mangita to prove that she is not a member of the jello-disparaging party, the request also provides a venue for an assessment of Mangita’s civility. This is not part of the ongoing course of the requesting action, but is fitted to it, and is hearably directly responsive to Mangita’s request, targeting the supportive action towards Mom that this request implements. Note that in lines 22–23 when Tim refuses to grant Mangita’s request for the jello, saying “NO. Don’t ask it from this person” he may in this way resist the revised assessment of the jello embodied in the request, and perhaps thereby also Mangita’s supportive action towards Mom. As a guest of the family, and Tim’s girlfriend, Mangita is in a somewhat delicate position in terms of the concurrent relationships she must manage. In affiliating with Mom by requesting jello, she risks disaffiliating with Tim, a primary jello-antagonist earlier in the meal. Her rapid relinquishing of her request for jello, turning

1. Or as Stivers (personal communication) notes, perhaps it is an offer – Mangita may be heard to be *offering* to have some jello. This observation opens further consideration of differences and similarities between directives, offers, and requests (see also Clayman and Heritage, this volume).

to other possible desserts, may be sensitive to this. Requesting jello, it turns out, may not be an innocent activity.

With regard to the first position of a request sequence, then, we saw that the way in which the request is implemented may serve to do more than merely requesting – in extract (2) Dad enacted his impatience towards Nathaniel through the way in which he asked for the dressing. In extract (3), Mangita's request (or possible offer) implemented or carried a new action: extracting herself from the jello-disparaging party, and thereby producing a supportive action towards Mom.

### 3.2.2 “More than” fulfilling a request in second position

We find that in second position also, the way in which the request is fulfilled can do more than just fulfilling a request, and this can also occasion other actions. For instance, in second position, the specific way in which the request is fulfilled can implement not just fulfilling the request, but fulfilling it in a way that prioritizes other-attentiveness over self-attentiveness, or prioritizes self-attentiveness over other-attentiveness. In addition to implementing other actions through the way in which requests are fulfilled, we see that the process of fulfilling a request can provide a vehicle for implementing other actions, such as a tit-for-tat.

Second position request fulfillments may be done in such a way as to prioritize other-attentiveness over self-attentiveness. In Extract (4), Mom offers stuffing to Jamie, her daughter-in-law. Jamie turns her down, but Tess and her sister Lynn ask for stuffing in lines 09 & 10. However Dad, who is a little hard to see to Mom's right, takes the stuffing and serves himself. In lines 24–26 Mom asks Tess for the butter. In the way in which she fulfills Mom's request, Tess enacts attentiveness towards Mom, temporarily suspending a self-attentive matter, monitoring Dad's progress with the stuffing, presumably so as to get stuffing for herself when he is done, to respond to Mom's request for the butter immediately. Tess suspends her incipient move to her left to take stuffing for herself, and swings laterally to the right to get the butter and pass it to Mom.

#### Extract 4. Butter

OR23\_CanIhaveTheButter\_Fam32a\_19-36-1\_JP\_jm

```

01 TES:      >I think it's okay< we've got ple:nty
02           of room over here
03           (..)
04 TES:      [((places glass pan to her right))
03 TOM:      [((moves fork of food towards Tommy's mouth))
04 MOM:      [You want stu:ffing- _Ja:me:
05 MOM:      [((moves bowl of stuffing nearer to Jamie))
06 TES:      I-
07 JAM:      I'll have some la:ter (      )
08 DAD:      [((moves stuffing to his side of the table))
09 TES:      [=I:: would like some=
10 LYN:      =I: would too.
11 TES:      (•hh) $we're like- we wa:nnit:
12 MOM:      huh huh huh huh •hh
13           (0.2)/((TES looks to her left where DAD has the stuffing))

```

14 LYN: Ho:n, you wa:nt some of this?  
 15 (1.3)/((TES picks up her fork; MOM looks along table))  
 16 TOM: ((looking at Tommy)) °Like tha:t°  
 17 ( ): (In the oven)  
 18 LYN: [What does 'e 'a:ve.  
 19 TES: [((takes a mouthful, head directed towards MOM))  
 20 TOM: [°S[wee:t (pota[toes)°  
 21 DAD: [((moves stuff[ing bowl over to TES))  
 22 JAM: [((Leans for[ward & looks over at R's plate))  
 23 TES: [((removes f[ork from her mouth))  
 24 MOM:→ [Tess can I 'ave the  
 25 TES: [((brings fork to plate))  
 26 MOM:→ [bu:tter,  
 27 TES:→ [((wipes side of nose; about to reach left))  
 28 LYN: ('t d[oesn't matt]er)  
 29 TES:→ [((Reorients body ]to right; reaches right hand towards butter))  
 30 TES:→ [Yeah Mom ]  
 31 TES: [((reaches for butter plate in the shape of a duck))  
 32 TOM: ( )  
 33 JAM: He li:kes my sweet pot[ato.  
 34 TES:→ [((picks up butter plate by beak))  
 35 TES: [By the ↑bea:k!  
 36 LYN: [(He does.) ]  
 37 MOM: [((reaches left hand for butter dish))] (0.5)  
 38 TES: [((hands DAD the butter dish)) ]  
 39 DAD: [((Reaches up for butter dish)) ]  
 40 JAM: [I made it just for [him:]  
 41 DAD: [((Takes butter dish from TES))  
 42 (0.7)  
 43 DAD: [((Puts butter on table between him and MOM))  
 44 TOM: [heh heh  
 45 TES: [((takes stuffing from the bowl on her left))

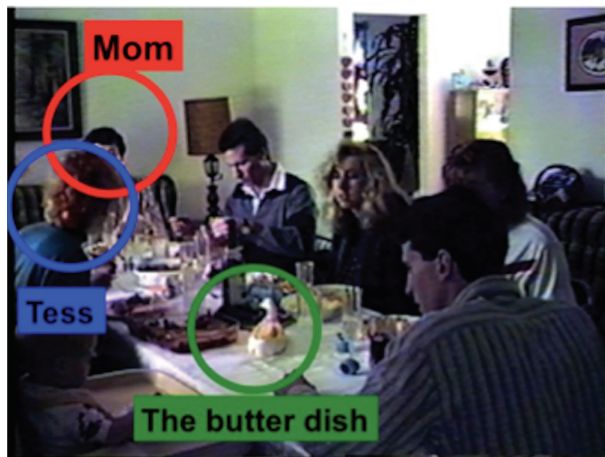


Figure 4. Extract 4

Here Tess apparently abandons the incipient action of picking up the stuffing bowl (the fulfillment of her own request for the stuffing) in favor of fulfilling Mom's request immediately. By both suspending her prior action of extending her right hand across

her body as part of an incipient two-handed reach to take the stuffing (which would complete the fulfillment of her own request for stuffing), and by pivoting her right hand quickly to her right and extending it toward the butter dish (that is to say, she moves economically, Raymond & Lerner 2014, into the new action of fulfilling Mom's request), Tess enacts attentiveness to Mom. In this way she literally embodies her stance towards fulfilling Mom's request, treating it as a priority, enacting a strong obligation towards the other. We might think of this as a kind of "family values" in action, where through these tiny shifts a daughter is maximally attentive to her mother's request. Of course, attentiveness of this sort need not be reserved for family members, and we often see family members insisting on their own priority rights.

Sometimes the addressed recipient of a request may delay fulfilling the request. This may be done for practical reasons, such as needing to free up a hand for passing. Alternatively, an interactant can insist on their primary rights to the requested item, implying that the requester has over-assumed their entitlement to the object, or is not paying proper attention to the needs or rights of others. In my corpus during a Passover dinner in Extract (5) (not transcribed, as most of the key action is embodied rather than verbal) we see a mother temporarily suspending the activity of spreading something (possibly cream cheese) on her matza when her son Jake requests the butter, which is close to Mom. However she does not immediately abandon her spreading to do this.

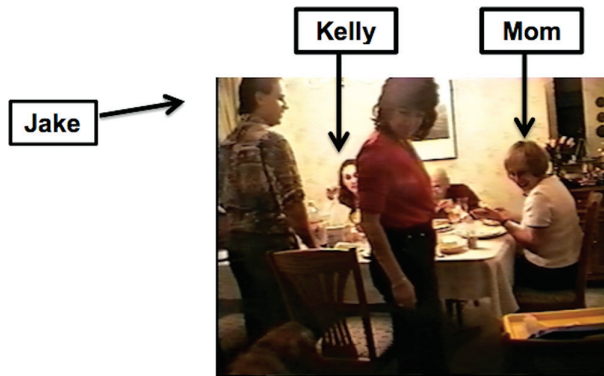


Figure 5. Extract 5

Mom temporarily suspends spreading while observing her grand-daughter on the floor, but after her son Jake requests the butter, asking "Ma can you pass the bu:tter" she resumes spreading briefly. As Figure 5 shows, Jake is looking over at Mom when he asks her for the butter, and can therefore presumably see that she is holding matza in her left hand, and in her right hand a knife loaded with spread, poised above the matza, spreading temporarily suspended while looking at her granddaughter on the floor to her left.

Although Jake can presumably see Mom is still engaged in spreading her matza, he makes a request for the butter that would implicate her suspending her own spreading

to pass it to him. Resuming her spreading immediately after his request but before fulfilling it does not seem to embody resistance to fulfilling Jake's request though. The resumption of spreading is brief and economical, and seems to be being done for instrumental reasons. She resumes spreading just enough to remove from her knife and deposit on the matza the new chunk of spread she had taken just previously with the knife. The "wipe" of her knife on the matza is visible, followed by brief, economical spreading moves, apparently designed to show that she is just freeing her knife of the spread so that she can put it down in order to pick up the butter dish.

These constrained spreading moves contrast with the spreading of the full expanse of her matza that she engaged in previously. The knife is in her right hand, and the matza is in her left hand. She needs to put down the knife in order to be able to use her right hand to pass the butter, since the butter dish is on her right. She puts down the knife she has just relieved of its spread, and by still holding her matza poised in buttering position, she preserves her commitment to spreading her matza, indicating that she has only temporarily suspended spreading while passing Jake the butter. Once the butter has been conveyed to her son, she resumes spreading. Here we see Mom fulfilling her son's request, delaying its fulfillment for practical reasons, but through the way in which she implements the delay, indicating maximum attentiveness to fulfilling the request, within the constraints of managing the physical logistics of her own spreading.

This contrasts with another occasion of butter-passing from the same family that occurs shortly after Extract (5). Here Jake enacts peremptory rights to the butter when his sister Kelly asks for it, and attempts to refuse to give it to her, claiming that he is not done with the butter as the reason for restraining his father, sitting in between them, from fulfilling the request. Refusing to fulfill a request appears to be extremely rare, occurring just three times in my corpus of 91 requests.

### Extract 6. Butter por favor

OR45\_butter por favor\_fam35a\_17-31\_jm

```

01 KEL:                [((Takes [a piece of matza))
02 BAB:                [ah ah]
03 BAB:                mm
04                     (0.5)
05 DAD:                Just startin'
06                     (0.3)
07 JAK:                ((putting [butter on his matza]) )
08 JAK:                [( [ ) ]
09 KEL:→              [Could you pass de bu:tter por favo:r.]
10 KEL:                [((Looking down))
11 JAK:→              =>I'm not [do:ne wit[h it yet<
12 DAD:→              [((Lifts plate of butter and moves it towards KEL))
13 JAK:→              Hey!
14 DAD:→              [((Stops progress of butter and returns towards JAK))
15 KEL:→              [>Thank you<
16 KEL:→              [((Reaches for butter as DAD retracts it))
17 JAK:→              [I still have the butter knife.
18 DAD:→              [((Returns butter towards JAK))
19 JAK:→              [I'm not even done with it.
20 DAD:                [((Swings butter back towards KEL))

```

21 DAD:→ Take: [take: take a chunk  
 22 KEL:→ [I'm taking my: knife]  
 23 (0.2)  
 24 BAB: eh h h h  
 25 BAB: uh HE:H E:H E:H e:[:h ] heh  
 26 KEL:→ ["thank you"]  
 27 (1.8)  
 28 JAK:→ °You impatient little [we:nch  
 29 MOM: [Oh that's a good idea!  
 30 KEL: °Oh °oh °oh [°oh ahhhh°  
 31 MOM: [Get that out of the way  
 32 KEL: Blasphemy  
 33 (0.7)  
 34 JAK: How's that blasphemy?  
 35 (0.3)  
 36 JAK: You're not Go:d.  
 37 (0.5)  
 38 KEL: Yes: I am::  
 39 [(JIL bends over to pick up baby)]  
 40 MOM: [ I::: got 'chu! ]

While Jake in line 11 protests that he is “not done with it yet”, Dad picks up the butter to pass it over to Kelly. Jake attempts to stop Dad in line 13 with “Hey”. Dad halts the progress of the butter towards Kelly, and begins to return it to Jake. In line 15 Kelly says thank you, reaching for the butter as Dad retracts it. In line 17 Jake’s “I still have the butter knife” is hearable as protesting, by providing further evidence that he is not yet done with the butter. As Dad continues to swing the butter back towards Jake, Jake reiterates that he is not done with it: “I’m not even done with it” (line 19). Dad offers a solution, inviting Jake to “Take a chunk” in line 21, and in line 22 Kelly offers a solution to the butter knife not having traveled with the butter: “I’m taking my knife”. She thus seems to be persisting in taking the butter, despite Jake’s resistance. In line 26 Kelly thanks Dad for the butter with a quiet “thank you”, and in line 28 Jake censures Kelly, calling her “You impatient little wench”. Here Jake’s insistence on keeping the butter despite Kelly’s request for it contrasts quite strongly with the tendency in this corpus for unproblematic, swift fulfillment of requests, even where doing so may not be convenient, as we saw in Extract (4), where Tess abandoned her move to take the stuffing in favor of passing the butter to her Mom, and in Extract (5), where Mom rapidly stabilized the spread on her matza, and put down her knife, before fulfilling Jake’s request, doing so in a way that indicated that she was fulfilling the request as fast as was logistically possible. Jake’s insistence on his priority with the butter treats Kelly’s request as ill-timed, and prioritizes his needs over hers. It is tempting to say that this instantiates sibling competition over scarce resources, indicating that in some cases it does not end with adulthood. Perhaps insisting on one’s own needs and rights over those of another is a way of enacting intimacy. Here this is enacted through delaying fulfilling a request.

Delaying fulfilling a request may not always mean resisting fulfilling it, however. This is apparent in the jello segment discussed as Extract (3). Here we saw Mangita request jello, and Tim refuse to fulfill the request. While Mangita’s request could be

designed to disassociate herself from the jello-disparaging party, she requests jello twice, suggesting this is not just a *pro forma* request: she may be serious about having some jello. However, as we noted earlier, there is no uptake from Mom in response to the first request, and Tim refuses to fulfill her second request addressed to him, saying “No, don’t ask it from this person”. Mangita then turns to other possible dessert options. Next though we see Jon launch a kind of “stealth” jello delivery, quite some time after Mangita’s initial request for jello, but apparently motivated by it. In line 32, while Mom is listing for Mangita the other dessert options, Jon picks up the bowl of jello and puts it down next to his place at the table. In lines 38–39, Mangita requests a piece of the Easter bread that Mom has indicated. In line 41 she adds, “And I’m *hə:v*ing some *ˈje:llo.ə*.” Note that her volume drops on “je:llo”. Immediately next Jon puts a spoon into the jello (line 43), and in line 48 he asks Mangita for her plate, and puts jello on it before she passes the plate to Mom for the Easter bread.

### Extract 7. Jello

OR36\_Jello\_Fam7b\_14-51\_LD\_ra

```

10 BOB: [That je:llo tas[tes refreshing Silvia.]
11 MOM: [((turns[head towards BOB])
12 MAN: [I’m ve:ry bad girlfri]:end.
13 MOM: [ˈiYehə°
14 MOM: [((nods))
15 MOM: [=SEE my mo:ther li:kes the[ je:llo:
16 MOM: [((turns to Tim)) [((looks down at her dessert))
17 MAN: ↑I’:ll have some je:llo.
18 (0.5)/(Mom picks up spoon & resumes eating dessert))
19 MAN: [↑Ca:n I ‘ave [↑some je:llo::]
20 MAN: [((turns head [to TIM])
21 JON: [Go:d she’s ˈn]ice,°=
22 TIM: =NO. Do:n’ ask
23 it [ from this ˈperson° ]
24 MAN: [>Alright,<[what’s the other] thing over ] there:
25 MAN: [((Points across table to her right))]
26 (0.3)
27 MOM: ((points at pie))/(0.7)
28 MOM: Rigo:tta chee:se pi::e:
29 JON: [((moves whipped cream))
30 MAN: [ˈokay°
31 (1.3)
32 → ((JON picks up bowl of jello))/(0.3)
33 MOM: This is a very: (0.4)
34 MOM: plai:n [ Easter bread, ]
35 MAN: [↑think I’ve hə:d that] before.
36 (.)
37 MOM: ˈGoo:d.°
38 MAN: •hhh I’ll ha:ve a
39 MAN: little [pie:ce (ˈof that please°) ]
40 MAN: [((points & retracts right hand))]
41 MAN:→ And I’m hə:ving some ˈje:llo.ə
42 MOM: [(((pulls dessert towards her with knife in hand))
43 JON:→ [(((puts spoon into jello))
44 (1.3)
45 MOM: [You ‘ave a dess[ert [plate? ]
46 MOM: [((knife suspend[ed a[bove cake plat]e))
47 JON:→ [((JON ra[ises right hand in point] toward MAN and retracts))]
48 JON: [CA’ hə:ve your] pl[ate:]

```

49 MAN: [ Yu:]p  
 50 MAN:→ [Hə:ve a pla:te. Just- [nɔ:t too much] [for me[(please)  
 51 MAN:→ [((picks up plate with left hand;[retracts plate)) ] [((plate[ to JON))  
 52 MOM: [((brings knife down to [ cut cake)) ] [ ]  
 53 JON:→ [((Extends hand for plate; [retracts))  
 54 MOM: [B't you said [a piece] a thi:sɜ:ri:gh[tɜ:]  
 55 MAN: [ °Thank [you° ] [ ]  
 56 MAN:→ [((hands plate to JON)) [ ]  
 57 MAN: [Yeah=  
 58 DAD: ((from kitchen))=Silvia  
 59 ( [ ] ) ]again]  
 60 MOM: [A:ctually it tastes be:tter with bu:tter] [ ]  
 61 JON:→ [((Puts jello on MAN's plate & hands back)) [ ]  
 62 (0.3)  
 63 DAD: I had one of [your regular chrome ones I figured=  
 64 MAN: [((holds plate suspended))  
 65 DAD: =safe and I wa- opened a new  
 66 can a [co:ffee=  
 67 JON:→ [((replaces [jello))  
 68 MAN: [((extends plate))

Had Jon served jello to Mangita when Mom showed no move to fulfill Mangita's request, or after Tim refused to fulfill it, it might have come off as pointing out Mom's negligence or defying Tim. Here it is woven into the provision of an alternative dessert to Mangita. In delaying fulfilling Mangita's initial request for jello, and instead fulfilling it in parallel with Mom serving Mangita's dessert, Jon enacts a kind of "stealth" jello delivery that fulfills her request but avoids foregrounding the fulfillment in a way that might be disaffiliative with Mom or Tim.

These extracts indicate that the specific details of the manner in which the request is fulfilled, whether manually or verbally, or both, can do more than merely fulfilling the request, showing attentiveness to the other, or prioritizing one's own current involvement at the expense of immediate compliance.

Responses to requests may also implement other actions that are not directly request-related, but that can be carried on the particular way in which the request fulfillment is implemented. In Extract (8), Tim responds to Jon's request for salt at lines 22–24 by offering and retracting the salt several times (lines 30 and 33) before giving it to Jon.

### Extract 8. Salt

OR28\_salt\_Fam7a\_4-42\_ss

01 TIM: Iyeah Aunt Ma:rilyn nee::ds to be here.  
 02 (0.5)  
 03 MAN: uh(huh)  
 04 (0.7)  
 05 TIM: She hasta- put e:verything on e:veryone's pla:te.  
 06 MOM: Mm. The pota:to cheese a:re better.  
 07 (1.0)  
 08 MOM: ↑but the o:nes? I go:t at Chri:st:mas:.(.) were di:fferent.  
 09 (0.5)  
 10 DAD: Well they cha:nge manufa:cturers who ma:ke them you know.  
 11 (1.5)  
 12 DAD: [they do that. ]  
 13 MOM: [Cause remember] they were real fla:t.=and they got-

```

14          (1.0)
15 TIM:      (om.)
16          (0.3)
17 MOM:      Brow:n on both [sides
18 JON:      [((straightens up))]
19          (.)
20 JON:      [((looking up, left then right across the table, reaching hand ))]
21 DAD:      [lot:ta these places changes distributors like the weather.    ]=
22 JON:→     =Salt.
23          (.)
24 JON:→     [Tim please.
25 JON:      [((pointing at salt))]
26          (0.5)
27 TIM:→     ((picks[ up salt])
28 JON:      [((reaches across table for salt))
29 JON:→     [Thank you]
30 TIM:→     [((retracts salt then moves it forward))]
31 TIM:→     [((reaches for salt))]
32          [(1.5)]
33 TIM:→     [((offers then withdraws salt, twice))]
34 JON:→     [((reaches back and forth for the salt))]
35 DAD:      Boy the:se are nice and cru:nchy?
36 JON:→     ((Retrieves salt from Tim with slight smile))
37          (2.5)
38 MOM:      You like them?
39 DAD:      =I: like crunchy.
40 MOM:      °Okay.°

```

While this could be a way of simply implementing a tease, it is better understood as a “tit for tat”. Four minutes earlier, at the beginning of this Easter Dinner, the family has performed an Easter ritual. A bowl of eggs is passed from person to person, starting with Dad at the top of the table. Upon passing the bowl to the next person, the passer says, “May you live one hundred years.” In passing the bowl to Tim, Jon produces a teasing offer and retraction. He extends the ritual phrase by adding “my dea::r, swee::t bro:ther” as he offers and retracts the bowl of eggs. After Jon has passed the eggs to Tim, Dad laughs heartily.

Four minutes later, in Extract (8), Jon looks for the salt, apparently locates it visually, near to his brother Tim across the table, and points across the table at it while simultaneously saying “Salt (.) Tim please” (lines 22–24). Tim moves to fulfill Jon’s request by picking up the salt and passing it to him, but he does not pass it directly. Just before the salt reaches Jon’s hand, Tim retracts it just slightly, so that it is just out of Jon’s reach, and offers and retracts it 4 times, with Jon’s outstretched hand advancing just slightly towards Tim each time. No words accompany this brief engagement, and no one else at the table appears to see it, but it is clearly reminiscent of Jon’s earlier offer and retraction of the bowl of eggs. Here then, the sequential organization of requesting – a request followed by the fulfillment of the request – affords Tim an occasion to pass something to Jon, and he exploits this opportunistically to “turn the tables” on Jon, passing the salt to him with a teasing series of offers and retractions, as Jon did to Tim when Jon passed Tim the eggs. It is interesting to note that Tim does nothing to call attention to this. It is not “camped up” with a smile or any accompany-

ing words, and the offers and retractions are done quite economically. It is possible that this conveys a kind of *pro-forma* tit for tat – the opportunity for retribution is taken, but it is done without fanfare, and apparently without drawing the attention of anyone else at the table. (cf. Lerner & Zimmerman, 2003 for teases of this kind among young children.)

In both first and second position, then, requesting and fulfilling requests can be used to implement more than just requesting, both in terms of how the request or fulfillment is produced, and in terms of what may be occasioned by reference to requesting and fulfilling requests. After the request has been fulfilled, in third position also, interactants may produce a third positioned item as part of the request sequence that implements more than simply, for instance, acknowledgment or appreciation. Interactants may also implement other actions by reference to this position in the request sequence.

### 3.2.3 “More than” appreciating a request’s fulfillment in third position

In third position, where the fulfillment of the request may be appreciated by the requester, interactants may exploit this opportunity to implement other actions, either related to the request, or parasitic upon it.

In Extract (10), Dad asks for the string beans in line 16, “You wanna pass down the string beans”, and Tim in line 19, apparently exploiting the “You wanna” format, says “No”. In line 28 Dad responds to Mom’s delivery of the string beans with a rather overdone “Thank you very much.”

#### Extract 10. String beans

OR84\_WantToPassDownStringBeans\_Fam7a\_16-19\_PL

((Participants are discussing when Tim’s fraternity was started))

01 MAN: Yea:r before you.  
 02 (1.0)  
 03 TIM: No it was- they were colonized  
 04 MAN: Oh  
 05 (0.5)  
 06 TIM: years ago.  
 07 (0.3)  
 08 MOM: Co:lonized?  
 09 (0.4)  
 10 DAD: That’s when th[e du:tch came over ɿ ]  
 11 MOM: [sounds like (nɑ:tives)]  
 12 TIM: That’s when the- du:tch come overɿ  
 13 (0.5)  
 14 DAD: ghhm ((throat clear))  
 15 (1.8)  
 16 DAD:→ You wanna pa:ss [dow:n the: strɪ:ng bea:ns  
 17 [(Tim looks over)]  
 18 (.)  
 19 TIM:→ [No.  
 20 → [(Mom looks at string beans)]  
 21 (0.3)  
 22 DAD:→ [Well do it anyway=  
 23 MOM:→ [(Mom unfolds arms and reaches for string beans)]  
 24 DAD:→ =[pleaseɿ

25 → [(Mom's hand reaches string beans))  
 26 TIM:→ No:,  
 27 → ((MOM picks up string beans and passes to DAD))/(2.0)  
 28 DAD:→ "Tha:nk you.=very much."  
 29 (1.3)  
 30 MAN: Did you ma:ke them?

In formulating the request in line 16 with “pass down”, Dad makes it clear that he cannot reach it himself. He does not address anyone specific in the format of the request, nor with his eye gaze, which appears to be directed to his plate as he continues eating while producing the request. Tim, who has just taken a bite of a roll, looks over towards Dad in the middle of Dad’s utterance. After a brief gap, Tim says “No”. His refusal seems to be parasitic on the format of Dad’s request – asking whether an unspecified someone *wants* to pass down the string beans. (This appears to be a comparatively unusual format for a request – there are only three in my corpus of 91 requests). At the same time that Tim produces this response, Mom looks over at the string beans. In line 22, Dad reasserts the request with, “Well do it anyway please” and Mom simultaneously reaches for the string beans. Tim says “No” again in line 26, and Mom picks up the string beans and passes them to Dad, fulfilling his request. Her reach indicates that the string beans are closer to Tim, and through her reach she displays that it is somewhat effortful for her to retrieve them. In line 28, as Dad extends his hand to receive the string beans from Mom, he says, “Thank you.=very much”. “Thank yous” are also quite rare in this corpus, occurring in just 8 of the 91 extracts, perhaps further indicating the high entitlement and low concern about contingencies (Curl & Drew, 2008) that these requests at the family dinner table embody. Here, however, Dad produces what we might call, after Schegloff’s (2002) work on “overwrought utterances”, an “overwrought” thank you; a “Thank you. very much” addressed to Mom. The addition of “very much” after Dad’s turn has come to a point of possible completion in line 28 can be heard to augment the appreciation Dad is enacting towards Mom for passing him the string beans. The overdone display of gratitude here may call attention to itself, thus converting Mom’s passing of the string beans to Dad into a kind of object lesson, where doing something for someone results in a strong gratitude display. In this way, Mom and Dad may make “doing the right thing” by readily fulfilling the request into an “object lesson” on proper conduct for Tim, who has refused to fulfill Dad’s request.

Interactants may also use third position to the request to implement actions beyond requesting and fulfilling requests that are not part of the request sequence, but are occasioned by it, as we saw in first and second position. For instance, in Extract (11) Jon asks Dad for a roll (lines 26 and 30), and rather than passing a roll, or the basket of rolls, Dad throws the roll to Jon (line 40). In third position, in lines 49–50 Mom censures them: “is this the way we act”. The fulfillment of the request thus apparently occasions a rebuke from Mom. She takes the opportunity to reinforce a norm of propriety at the dinner table.



Figure 6. Extract 8

## Extract 11. Roll

OR\_26\_Fam7a\_3-09\_ls/jm

((Participants (clockwise from head of the table): Dad (DAD), Bobshi (BOB), Mom (MOM), Jon (Jon), Tim (TIM), Mangita (MAN)))

```

01          (3.5)
02  DAD:      (Ohh)
03          (0.3)
04  MOM:      °You can cover [ the as:-° ]
05  DAD:              [B'it got quiet.
06          (.)
07  MOM:      [((reaches to cover something))
08          [You can cover the asparagus.=so it
09          doesn't get cold.=
10  MAN:              [Okay.
11  MOM:      And: °(and we don't have enough =)
12          might as well°
13  TIM:      (But)/(W') Mom-Mom's not here.
14          (0.3)
15  MAN:      ooh ooh ooh
16  MOM:      What 's 'at mean? =
17  MAN:      =i(h) i' wz [ hō(h):t      ]
18  TIM:              [Tha's why it's] not noisy.
19  MAN:      (•hhh) heh heh
20  MOM:      ( [ ] ) one of t]he parts.
21  DAD:      [ Thank you: ]((spoons serving onto plate))
22  MAN:      I hope you don't
23          mind[ my [hands.
24  DAD:      [((puts serving utensil down))
25  JON:      [((raises h[ands]to "reception" position))
26  JON:      [DAD CAN [I 'A]VE A ROLL?
27  DAD:              [ No ]
28          (0.3)
29  DAD:      Huh? ((looks to [his right))
30  JON:              [A roll.
31          (0.5)
32  DAD:      [((Picks up basket of rolls & holds suspended))
33  TIM:      [Shē tries to coordinate the
34          whole [meal.=
35  JON:      [((raises his hands as though to catch something))
36  MAN:      =[Just throw it at 'im:.
37  DAD:      =[ (moves bread basket to his left)      ]
38  MOM:      =[((extends-retracts then puts hand out to receive bread basket))
39  MAN:      eh huh[huh
40  DAD:      [((throws roll))]

```

41 JON: [((Jon catches roll))  
 42 MAN: [°Just kidding°] [•(hhh) I WAS JUS]T  
 43 [((turns to Dad))]  
 44 °k(h)idd(h)ing° •(h[h]  
 45 JON: [ (Lint)  
 46 JON: [((laughing silently))  
 47 DAD: [ihuh hih hih [hih hih  
 48 MAN: [ [e::h huh •(hhh)  
 49 MOM:→ [((nodding)) [Is this- ]this is the  
 50 MOM:→ way we a:ct:  
 51 MAN: ↑e::h huh  
 52 JON: °huh huh •(hh)° [ (HA:H)]  
 53 MOM: [ U::h ]Jon, hand me the rye:  
 54 bread please.

Dad and the rolls are at the other end of the table from Jon, presenting Dad with the practical problem of conveying a roll or the basket of rolls to Jon. As Jon produces his request for a roll in line 26 he raises his hands into a catch reception position. In lines 22–27 Dad responds “No” to Mangita’s turn in lines 22–23, “I hope you don’t mind my hands”, and then in line 29 responds to Jon’s request for a roll with a “Huh?” Jon redoes his request in line 30, with “A roll”. As Dad picks up the basket of rolls, Jon lowers his hands, possibly to avoid appearing to be impatient by holding his hands in reception position for something that Dad is not yet prepared to transmit. As Tim continues a separate conversation with Mom in lines 33–4, Dad holds the basket of rolls suspended, and Jon again raises his hands into “catch” position. In line 37, Mangita’s “Just throw it at ‘im” may be responsive to Dad’s holding the basket suspended, apparently hesitant about how to implement roll-delivery, but it is possible that she is inspired by Jon’s hands held in catch-reception position. As Mangita is saying this, Mom beckons towards Dad, and extends her hand towards the basket, presumably prepared to take the basket and pass it on to Jon. Just prior to docking the basket in Mom’s outstretched hand, Dad takes a roll out of the basket with his left hand and tosses it to Jon, who catches it. As Dad throws the roll, Mangita says, “Just kidding I was just kidding”. Jon and Dad laugh, apparently in response to the throw through which Dad has fulfilled Jon’s request. Mom maintains a serious expression, and in overlap with the laughter produces a reprimand: “Is this- this is the way we act?” This is met with laughter from Mangita and Jon, and almost immediately next Mom asks Jon for rye bread for Bobshi.

Here an unorthodox food delivery is responded to with a reprimand in third position, after the request has been fulfilled. The fulfillment of the request occasions a rebuke from Mom, but the reprimand relies heavily on recipients to infer what the problem is, since Mom formulates the violation with the indexical “this”, and “the way we act”. Recipients must also infer to whom the reprimand is addressed, since she formulates the culpable agent as “we”. While Dad and Jon treat the unorthodox food transmission as funny, Mom reinforces what apparently she takes to be norms of propriety. Whether they are family norms, or societal norms is available for inference, but also not specified in the format of her reprimand.

The family dinner table may provide a particularly ripe environment for such third position “object lessons” as we see in Dad’s overdone “Thank you. Very much” to Mom in Extract 10 after Tim refused to pass the string beans, and as is occasioned by the way in which the request for the roll is fulfilled in Extract (11). This suggests that perhaps object lessons may be best conveyed on the coattails of other actions. In Extracts (10) and (11) we see how the management of object transfers through request sequences provides two different sorts of pretexts for socializing the family.

#### 4. Conclusions

Our examination of the other things that requests and their fulfillment may be used to implement along with object transfers – food transfers in these extracts – at the dinner table suggests that different ways of requesting, fulfilling requests, and responding to the fulfillment of requests may provide some insight into how family members propose, violate and manage proper norms of conduct at the dinner table. In Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik’s (2007) terms, this is a particular domain in which *morality* is taught and learned.

These requests are an interesting and fruitful domain for examining interaction, and especially for thinking about sequence organization, particularly because first pair part request initiating actions so often entail a responding action that is physical. In examining how multiple physical involvements are managed to hasten or retard the fulfillment of a request we have the opportunity to further extend our understanding of sequential implicativeness and preference organization in the domain of body conduct.

These requests for object transfer provide an opportunity to further explore action formation also, since they are another domain in which to think about how multiple simultaneous actions are implemented and managed, and how we think about what is, in Schegloff’s (2007) terms, the vehicle of these actions, and what is carried by them. Extract (1) indicated that some requests can implement “merely” requesting, but the other extracts showed that other requests may implement more than just requesting.

The composition of the turns through which requests are implemented also warrants further consideration in this particular domain. The high entitlement and low concern for contingency embodied in how these requests are composed provides further grist for the study of how family members take up stances vis à vis one another. The fulfillment of a request also may embody alignments between interactants, as we saw in Extract (3), Mangita’s request for jello. In refusing to fulfill the request, Tim sustained his anti-jello, and possibly anti-Mom, stance.

This work provides an opportunity for further consideration of politeness and how it operates in this domain, since Brown and Levinson’s (1987) and Searle’s (1969) early

work on requests raises this issue. As we discussed above, this corpus indicates that “please” does not necessarily increase the politeness of a request. In both Extract (2), “The dressing please”, and Extract (10) Dad’s “well do it anyway please”, the “please” adds to the imperative character of the request, rather than making it more polite.

This corpus also provides an opportunity to think more about what we might call the “moral economy” of food. Different ways of distributing food seem to embody or reveal different moral stances. What is the relative moral value of being offered food, in contrast to requesting it? Does asking for something you haven’t yet been served imply that the host is negligent? We see some orientation to this in pre-requests (Schegloff, 2007), not discussed here, deployed to ask for food that appears not have made it to the table. Modes of request fulfillment, as we saw, also have normative significance. Who should pass the requested food? The person nearest to the food, or the person nearest to the requester? If the person nearest the food is to deliver it, can they use their hands? How do they implement passing the food? We saw these challenges embodied in Extract (11) where Dad chose to throw the food to the other end of the table, and the consequences of unorthodox food delivery (which is to say manual delivery, rather than utensil-borne delivery).

Food itself seems to bear moral significance also. While some food seems to be morally neutral in these dinners – bread and butter, for instance – condiments seem to be more dangerous territory. Does asking for salt mean that the food is tasteless? Does asking for ketchup mean that it is dry? Asking for seconds and asking for dessert, and especially asking for seconds of dessert, all appear to be morally laden. If you have too much dessert, you are greedy. If you do not have enough you are not properly appreciative of the cook’s efforts. All of this morality is embodied in the particular ways in which requests are produced, responded to, and fulfilled.

In this corpus of requests we see simple, instrumental actions that implement or carry other, more relationally freighted actions. It seems that the nuances of our relationships with others may be embodied, reinforced and managed in the specifics of how we implement and manage requests for food and other things at the dinner table.

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