Cambridge Books Online

Questions

Formal, Functional and Interactional Perspectives

Edited by Jan P. de Ruiter

Chapter

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Cambridge University Press

4   Mobilising response in interaction: a compositional view of questions

Tanya Stivers and Federico Rossano

4.1   Introduction

A fundamental puzzle in the organisation of social interaction concerns how one individual elicits a response from another.[1] Whereas a linguistic approach suggests that this is what "questions" (more generally, and interrogativity, more narrowly) are for, a more sociological approach suggests that the social *action* a person is implementing is what mobilises a recipient's response. We argue that by deconstructing the notion of question we can see the role that a turn's design plays in mobilising response alongside the social action being employed and its position within a sequence. This perspective allows "question" to be a collection of features rather than a homogeneous category of action or form. In addition, this chapter offers a model of response relevance that allows sequential position, action and turn design to each contribute to response relevance.

4.2   Mobilising response

A fundamental question in the organisation 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.

```
(1)    HM [Lance and 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))
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What properties of sequentially initial turns reliably mobilise a co-participant 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 (Bolinger 1957, Bussman 1996: 395). This view typically privileges lexico-morpho-syntactic features (Schegloff 1984). Thus, it is linguistic form which matters for whether an utterance is taken up.

In contrast with this perspective, within sociology Schegloff and Sacks argue that responses are mobilised through the functional properties of actions. They express this through the property of conditional relevance (Schegloff 1968, Schegloff and 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 (e.g., depending on the types of repair initiations see Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977 and Selting 1996; and on requests see Curl and Drew 2008). What has not been discussed is whether turn design is consequential for whether or not response is provided at all.

We suggest that speakers mobilise response through the combination of many resources employed simultaneously: through the social action a speaker produces, the sequential position in which an action is produced and through turn design features that increase the recipient's accountability for responding – interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax, 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 and Sacks 1973) – we suggest that response relevance is best conceptualised 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 this way we suggest a compositional view of questions.

4.3   Background

With particular actions, Schegloff asserts, social actors impose on co-interactants 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 non-occurrence it can be seen to be officially absent – all this provided by the occurrence of the first item" (Schegloff 1968: 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: (1) a type-fitted response is regularly provided; (2) speakers orient to recipient failure to provide relevant responses *as* failure; and (3) recipients orient to not producing such 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 fifty 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.

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(2)   RD [dyadic; following a fourteen-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 head shake and a simultaneous "Mm mm."

Another canonical first pair part, 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.

```
(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 mm?,
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) tickets,
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The regularity and reliability of response that is exemplified in extracts 1–3 is further supported by a previous report that in English 85% of responses to questions were answers (Stivers and Robinson 2006). Finally, a recent study across ten 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 organisation – consider that upon recipient failure to respond to an information request, speakers may sanction failures by demanding answers or demanding that the selected next speaker respond (e.g., "I asked you a question" or "Answer me").

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 1984b; Stivers and Robinson 2006). Most commonly when someone fails to answer s/he provides an account for not answering (e.g., "I don't know" or "I can't remember" or "She hasn't said"). 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 non-answer responses.

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

4.4   Turn design features that mobilise response

The actions speakers perform in extracts 1–3 have been discussed as canonical first pair part actions – requests for information (1), offers (2) and requests for action (3). However, four features of turn design are recurrent across these cases: interrogative morpho-syntax (1,3), interrogative intonation (rising in English and Italian) (1,2), recipient epistemic expertise on the topic relative to the speaker (1–3) and speaker gaze to the recipient (3).[2] 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-morpho-syntax, 82% involve an enquiry about something in the recipient's domain of expertise, 61% are done with the speaker gazing at the recipient, and of cases involving no interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax, 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

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[2] We cannot see the precise gaze of the speaker in the request for information in (1), but his head is oriented to the recipient.

that what mobilises response in canonical actions is the inclusion of many 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 2001: 4). Interrogatives form one of the three basic types of sentences that occur in nearly all languages (Sadock and 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.[3] Both Schegloff (1984, 1995), through his concept of an action being carried by a vehicle, and Searle (1975b), in indirect speech acts, acknowledge the importance of interrogative morphology and syntax.

Second, interrogative prosody (rising in English and Italian) has been shown as a common way to signal that 'questioning' is being done (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik 1972, Ladd 1980, Pierrehumbert 1980, Kori and Farnetani 1983, Bertinetto and Caldognetto 1993). Although current work shows that this is not nearly as invariable as might have once been thought (Couper-Kuhlen this volume, Geluykens 1988), it is commonly present in our English and Italian conversation data and the fact that there are no morpho-syntactic resources for constructing polar questions in Italian points to the importance of other resources in mobilising response (Rossano 2010b).

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 and Roth 1995). For instance, if the speaker makes a statement about the recipient's plans, past experiences, likes or dislikes, that utterance is 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 home town, 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 expand on what s/he does not have access to (Pomerantz 1980). There is thus good reason to

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[3] It 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.

think that whether, for instance, 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 (1967) 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 chapter) (Rossano 2006).

As we saw in extracts 1–3, many of these turn design features (interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax, interrogative prosody, recipient-tilted epistemic 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 mobilises recipient response? To address this we turn to an action which is less frequently cited as an example of a first pair part that embodies conditional relevance, assessments (e.g., "It's beautiful out"). Although assessments have been identified as first pair parts (most recently see Schegloff 2007: 59), an examination of spontaneous conversation suggests that they do not exhibit the same strong normative patterns as the canonical actions discussed above. 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 above makes an independent contribution to holding the recipient accountable for responding to these kinds of actions and that the inclusion of many resources incrementally increases response relevance.

4.5   Assessments

By assessments 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. Assessments are particularly relevant to this discussion because they are common in conversation and have been systematically investigated (Pomerantz 1984a, Goodwin 1986, Goodwin and Goodwin 1987, Golato 2002, Heritage 2002, Heritage and Raymond 2005, Lindström and Mondada 2009). Assessments can be constructed in a variety of ways with both interrogative and declarative sentence types. Pomerantz observes that

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: 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 sequence)[4] are responded to with a second assessment or an agreement, it is not difficult to find (i) instances without response where (ii) 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 non-response 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 4.1). 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 attends to the patties (the topic of conversation), as can be seen in Figure 4.1. 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 both invite response and are commonly responded to, we also observe that they sometimes fail to mobilise response and in such cases no sanctioning has been observed.

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[4] Although 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 mobilising. For more discussion of sequence organisation see Schegloff 2007. We use "sequentially initial" to respect the possibility that they do not initiate a sequence.

Figure 4.1 Kitchen scene 1. Reproduced, with permission, from Stivers and Rossano 2010.

4.6   Assessments and their design

We now turn to whether the turn design features discussed earlier (interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax, interrogative intonation, recipient epistemic primacy and speaker gaze) are resources through which speakers mobilise 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 4 is an illustration. Nicole and Shauna are co-workers. Shauna has asked what Nicole is going to do for her boyfriend's birthday. Just before this extract Nicole told of her plans to go with him to a spa. Nicole delivers her assessments of how the experience will be 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 ni:ce" – and is additionally delivered with final rising intonation. Again it is an

assessment seeking agreement rather than an information request seeking an answer.

(4)   HS5 [dyadic]
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 coo:l" – and to the second assessment agrees. In both cases these assessments are designed with many response-mobilising features – speaker gaze, interrogative morpho-syntax and rising intonation.

Extract 5 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.

(5)   NB: VII.-2 telephone call (Pomerantz 1984a: 60)
1   EMM: =Oh honey that was a lovely luncheon 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 P]a: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 mobilise response.[5] Still, here we observe that an assessment delivered with three of our response-mobilising 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 and Raymond

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[5] In the phone call 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.

2005). However, as Heritage and Raymond note, part of the work of the syntax is to mobilise response with agreement being strongly preferred (p. 22). Thus, here the goals work hand in hand.

Another case is shown in extract 6 below. 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 behaviour 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 participants are engaged in mutual gaze. Maria presents her assessment as "according to me" (or "I think"), 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).

```
(6)   2GGOSS-viziata (Maria, Claudia) 12:52 [Italian; dyadic]
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-mobilising feature, here speaker gaze, Claudia agrees, saying that she too thinks their friend is acting spoiled.

In contrast to the assessments in extracts 4–6 are ones delivered without any response-mobilising 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 of sprinkling cheese over chili "tchuka tchuka tchuka"). 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 towards 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 4.1.) In the subsequent silence too Lance displays no orientation, visible or otherwise, to expecting a response. Unlike the assessments discussed in extracts 4–6, here the assessment is declaratively formatted – it does not have any interrogative lexico-morpho-syntactic elements (in contrast to "**Don't these** smell good" or "These smell good **huh**"). Thus, through the morpho-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, 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 4.1) 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 epistemic symmetry 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-mobilising turn design features this assessment receives no response. This is not treated as problematic.

Extract 7 shows the same pattern. Here Cheng and Jill are a married couple having dinner. Prior to this extract the couple have 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 dessert, which he says he may have after they walk. During a thirty-second lapse, which occurs immediately prior to line 1, Cheng finishes his dessert (something not prepared by either of them). He assesses it positively in line 1.

```
(7)   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.
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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 neighbour's house after dinner during their walk to enquire about something that happened in their neighbourhood. Again, neither party orients to a response as having been absent following Cheng's assessment.

Example 8 is similar to examples 1, 6 and 7 in showing that participants do not generally orient towards the absence of second assessments as problematic. Two housemates have begun eating and the third one, Luisa, is just sitting down. As Luisa moves towards the table she assesses the plates and cutlery that are on the table as dirty (line 1) (see Figure 4.2). After an initiation of repair (Schegloff *et al.* 1977; Drew 1997) Luisa redoes her assessment (line 3).

(8)   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 TCU
final tag marking is; e.g., *no?*). In both cases the prosodic contour is falling.
Finally, all co-participants have access to the referents. None of them is par-
ticularly responsible for cleaning up (and in fact they are just beginning a meal
so cleaning up is not relevant at this moment). Although this assessment could
be heard as complaining, it is not clearly within the domain of responsibility of
either recipient which militates against this hearing. Moreover, it is produced
as Luisa picks up a dish and then gets another one so its embodied produc-
tion contextualises it as a noticing and its verbal construction without response
mobilising features further contributes to the reduction of any complaint rele-
vance. See Figure 4.2.

To the extent that Luisa's observation is hearable as a complaint, response
relevance would be heightened by virtue of the addressees 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 morpho-syntax, without epistemic asymmetry,
speakers hold recipients less accountable for responding. 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 non-response 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 individ-
ual and thus select that individual to respond (on speaker selection see Sacks,
Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Lerner 2003). However, Maria's initiation of
repair after the first assessment suggests that she heard what had been said as

Figure 4.2 Kitchen scene 2. Reproduced, with permission, from Stivers and Rossano 2010.

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.

This section has argued that in the domain of assessments, particular turn design features mobilise 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 towards the recipient, then s/he holds the recipient more accountable for responding than with a design lacking these features. We argue that each feature is response-mobilising. Although for various reasons not all four features are always present, when speakers design their turns with multiple features they may hold recipients more accountable for responding.

Whereas we have argued that the assessments discussed in extracts 4–6 mobilise 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 under-analysed 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 is a gloss for an utterance that makes response relevant. Thus, we gain a better understanding of what speakers are doing with turn 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") 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-mobilising features rather than none of them. 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.

4.7 Pursuits of response

Turns designed with the four features we have outlined (interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax, interrogative prosody, recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry and recipient directed speaker gaze) are not only regularly responded to, they are also relied on to mobilise response in "pursuits of response" (Jefferson 1981, Pomerantz 1984b). Of course, when a speaker pursues a response this action is itself response-mobilising by virtue of redoing the action. Our interest here, however, is in the resources relied on to pursue response. For instance, see extract 9. 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 morpho-syntax, 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.

```
(9)   2RON1-try (25:00) [dyadic]
1     MAR:         Io ho perso (1.1) cinquantamila kili  in:  uh due giorni
                   I    lost        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:   =>    Sì?
                   Yes
      MAR:         Yes?
7                  (4.0)
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 six-second 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 towards Giorgio until the latter responds with a disagreeing "I no ((I)) don't think so". In this extract we see that in the face of non-response a speaker relies not on the same form but reformulates including the response-mobilising features we outlined – here gaze, lexico-morpho-syntax ("sì") and interrogative prosody.

   A second case is shown in extract 10, 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 eight-second lapse (line 4) Kim negatively assesses one of the types of ravioli that they are trying in a turn that has no response-mobilising design features. Mark fails to respond and keeps his gaze down on his plate.

```
(10)    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 which 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 the pursuit 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 mobilise response in the face of failing in a first effort – lexico-morpho-syntax, 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-mobilising is more coercive of response.

Finally, see extract 11. 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.

```
(11)    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
        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 won the Erasmus to Heidelberg
        A:      Well Angela won the Erasmus for Heidelberg (0.2)…
```

Figure 4.3 Kitchen scene 3. Reproduced, with permission, from Stivers and Rossano 2010.

After one second of silence A looks up and they engage mutual gaze (lines 4–6). This looking up towards 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 seconds (see lines 3–5). The gist of the gesture (shown in Figure 4.3) is "what a pity" or "What can you do". They re-engage eating and after 7.5 seconds A starts a new course of action.

This section has discussed a series of non-canonical actions. In each case a speaker begins using a turn design that is less response-mobilising. Recipients are therefore less accountable for not responding. But following non-response in each case the speaker pursues response by utilising a shift from declarative to interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax (9,10), to interrogative prosody (10), to the recipient's domain of epistemic expertise (10) and/or to gazing at the recipient (9–11), see Table 4.1.

Thus, these resources are what speakers rely on to mobilise 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-mobilising turn designs.

Table 4.1 *Use of response-mobilising features in pursuits of response.*

	Form initially (minus or plus)	Pursuit adds
9	– Interrogative morpho-syntax – Interrogative prosody – Speaker gaze – Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Speaker gaze + Interrogative morphology
10	– Interrogative morpho-syntax – Interrogative prosody – Speaker gaze – Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Interrogative morpho-syntax + Interrogative prosody + Speaker gaze + Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry
11	– Interrogative morpho-syntax – Interrogative prosody – Speaker gaze – Recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry	+ Speaker gaze

4.8   Turn design and response pressure

In each of the cases discussed in this section, response is invited (likely desired) but the turns are nonetheless initially designed without response-mobilising features. Why would speakers not always design their turns to maximally mobilise response? Returning to several of our cases, we can see that maximally response-mobilising 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-mobilising turn designs (see Curl and 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 12. Just prior to the target announcement in line 7 Mark's idiom (line 1) 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 register any notice of 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 noticings; see Enfield 2011 on the issue of animating such contributions). In the absence of this, she announces the addition.

Such a non-response-mobilising design places minimal pressure for response on Mark, thus maximising his agency in assessing her addition, 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. The rising intonation in the pursuit also contributes to its seeking response.

```
(12)   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, working to overcome his second position with the assessment in line 12.

Similarly, return to extract 11. 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 4.3).

Finally, return to extract 8. There Luisa's assessment again invites uptake. An offer to clean up after the meal or an apology for not having cleaned up earlier or even an agreement might be optimal in this context (Pomerantz 1978). 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 task master in the household – a role she is, apparently, not keen to embrace.

In this section we have seen that while a lack of response-mobilising 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.[6] Interactants mobilise response to varying degrees through action and turn design: at times information is being requested and high response mobilisation is typical; at other times response may be welcome or invited but the turn is designed to minimise speaker pressure in order that the response is, at least optimally, not given under such circumstances.

4.9   Implications for a theory of response relevance

Response-mobilising turn features matter not only in the context of non-canonical action types where action and sequential position are not highly response-mobilising but appear to be at play in the context of canonical actions as well, evidenced by both the overwhelming frequency of their appearance in canonical first position actions and the fact that less direct versions of these actions typically lack precisely these features. In developing a theory of response relevance, it is possible that assessments, noticings and announcements could all be viewed as actions that are not organised around the adjacency pair but are organised via a wholly different sort of sequential organisation and thus do not make response conditionally relevant in the same way.[7] 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 sequentially initial actions necessarily making response conditionally relevant, actions can be designed in such a way as to mobilise response in a scalar fashion. A graphical representation of this is shown in Figure 4.4.

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[6] Another possible context where speakers may rely on non-response mobilising assessments is when the recipient's access is uncertain. If I do not know whether you have seen Paris in the spring I might be more likely to say "Paris is lovely in the spring" rather than "Isn't Paris lovely in the spring?" However, this would need further empirical investigation.

[7] Schegloff leaves open the possibility that there could be other sorts of sequence organisations (2007: 9).
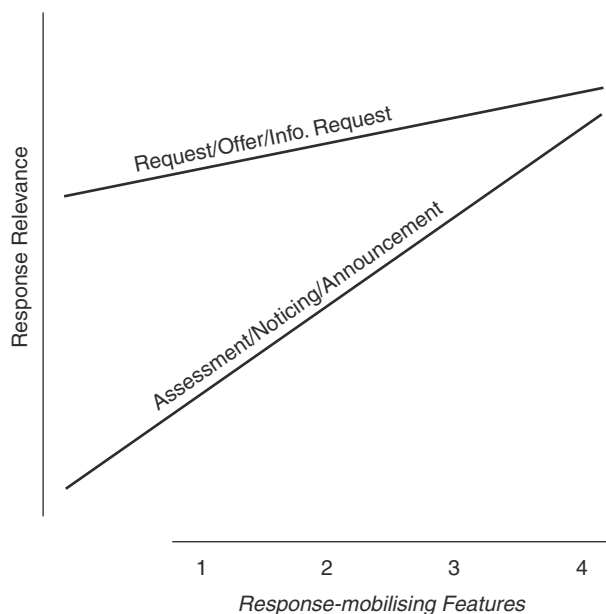
Figure 4.4 Revised model of response relevance.

Response relevance is shown on the y-axis and depicted as on a cline. Actions vary in the degree to which they mobilise 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 many response-mobilising 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 ritualised 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 morpho-syntax and/or prosody) would be still higher. Similarly, an assessment (or a noticing or announcement) would be low in response relevance. However, if it were designed with many response-mobilising features, this would increase the response relevance of the action.

Although we have focused on sequentially initial actions to hold sequential position constant, sequential position clearly also affects response relevance. As discussed earlier, actions positioned in initial sequential positions put some pressure on a recipient to respond, by virtue of their position. The pressure for recipient response to an assessment, for instance, in second position, is substantially weaker than that of an assessment in first position since in

second position, it would be hearable as proposing sequence closure. However, even in second position, response-mobilising features can work to hold recipients accountable. For instance, second assessments delivered interrogatively engender responses (Heritage and Raymond 2005: 29). Moreover, 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).

4.10 Discussion: a return to "questions"

We began with two hypotheses for how a speaker mobilises response from another. Schegloff and Sacks' proposal that sequence initial actions carry a property of conditional relevance which normatively requires the provision of a response, has gone unquestioned in social interaction studies for forty 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 mobilise response.

We suggest that the term "question", which vernacularly characterises an action, is in fact an omnibus term that expresses the institutionalisation of response mobilisation. Although each language grammaticalises different response-mobilising features, all languages have grammaticalised 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 mobilise 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 mid-turn in order to secure a response that claims understanding of a referent (Sacks and Schegloff 1979). Rossano has shown that 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 particular response-mobilising resources, we nonetheless expect that across languages, ethnicities and cultures people rely on the same resources – gaze, lexico-morpho-syntax, prosody and epistemic asymmetry – to mobilise response (see, e.g., Rossano, Brown and Levinson 2009). 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 and 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-mobilising properties of sequential

position (that sequentially initial actions are response-mobilising), action (that some actions are more response-mobilising than others) and turn design (that some features of turn design are more response-mobilising 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 mobilise 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 ritualised actions such as greetings and farewells. From the linguistic perspective, we accept that "questions" mobilise response but suggest that with a compositional notion of question we better understand *how* response is mobilised in conversation. This allows us to propose a new way of understanding how a speaker mobilises 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-mobilising features: interrogative lexico-morpho-syntax, interrogative prosody, recipient directed speaker gaze, and recipient-tilted epistemic asymmetry.