

**Participants' Deontic Rights and Action Formation:
The Case of Declarative Requests for Action**

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Abstract

In the domain of conversation analysis, there has recently been a growing interest in the exact mechanisms of action formation; *why* is an utterance heard as conveying a certain action and not something else? This paper aims to contribute to this line of research; it considers the role of participants' *deontic* rights in action formation. By using declarative requests for action as an example, I demonstrate how participants make judgments about their deontic rights relative to their co-participants and use these judgments as a *resource* as they (1) design their turns at talk to carry out certain actions and (2) interpret their co-participants' turns at talk *as* certain actions. Two types of declarative statements are considered: (1) statements about the speaker and (2) statements about future actions. In both cases, it can be seen how the speaker's high deontic status relative to the recipient is the decisive condition for the recipient to recognize the utterance as implementing a request for him to act. On the basis of these findings, it seems that conversation analytically informed theorizing on action formation needs to deal with the "real world" features, such as the context of ongoing activities, the larger institutional framework and the participants' social roles, in a more systematic way than has been done in the past.

1 Introduction

Conversation analysts have long observed how interactional participants design their turns at talk so as to be recognizable as specific social actions. Still, the exact mechanisms of action formation have, for the most part, been unknown (Heritage, forthcoming). Certainly, the rigorous principles of sequential analysis have provided conversation analysts with a way to make claims about the "main job" i.e. – "action" – that a certain turn is performing locally in a particular situation: In order to tell what the speaker is up to, one should think about what the *response* must deal with in order to count as an adequate next turn (Levinson, forthcoming). In recent years, however, there has been a growing interest in looking beyond the "next turn proof procedure" (Sacks et al. 1974: 729) to find out the very reasons *why* a certain utterance makes relevant a certain type of next turn; what are the very features of the

utterance that are responsible for making it to be heard as conveying exactly this action and not something else? Thus, there have been studies on “action formats” of specific actions, such as requests (Drew/ Curl 2008; Wootton 2005; Lindström 2005; Heinemann 2006), offers (Curl 2006; Keisanen/Kärkkäinen 2010), proposals (Tykkyläinen/Laakso 2009), suggestions (Li 2009), announcements (Emmison/Danby 2007; Goodwin 1996) and complaints (Heinemann/Traverso 2009; Ogden, in press). Moreover, there has been some overall conversation-analytically-informed theorizing on the topic (e.g., Levinson (forthcoming)).

Since conversation analytic argumentation has traditionally dealt with formal features of interaction, such as turn-design and turn location, also the conversation analytic literature on action formation has primarily dealt with these, what Levinson (forthcoming) calls, “major” factors of action formation. Even though the context of ongoing activities, the larger institutional framework and the participants’ social roles have been acknowledged as significant factors of action formation, these “real world” features have not been taken systematically into the analysis of specific action formats, or into the overall theorizing on action formation. There is an important exception, however: John Heritage (forthcoming) has considered the role of participants’ epistemic rights in action formation and demonstrated how the relative “epistemic status” of the interactional participants dominates both interrogative morphosyntax and rising intonation in shaping whether an utterance is to be heard as a “request for information” or not. This paper has been strongly inspired by this research.

In the following pages, I will consider the role of participants’ *deontic* rights in action formation. I will start by explicating what is meant by the notions of *epistemics* and *deontics* and elucidating the analytical distinction between *stance* and *status*; I will introduce the concept of participants’ *deontic status* as a “real world” feature that can be made use of as a resource of action formation. Thereafter, by using declarative requests for action as an example, I will demonstrate how this resource can be made use of in practice.

2 EPISTEMICS AND DEONTICS

Authority, as a moral and political notion, has been a central theme in the philosophical and sociological inquiry. It involves the idea that a person may be an authority either in a certain *epistemic* domain of knowledge and expertise, or she may occupy a position associated with *deontic* rights to set the rules concerning what should be done (Bochenski 1974; Friedman 1973; Peters 1967; Walton 1997:76-79; De George 1985; Lukes 1978). In other words, *epistemic authority* is about *knowing* what is true, *deontic authority* is about *determining* what “will be true” (the ancient Greek word *deon*, “that which is binding”), and, as a logical consequence of that, what ought to be done (cf. Horty 2001).

The rise of research on institutional interaction in the 1990s has led conversation analysts increasingly to examine authority, by exploring the actions of interactional participants in specific institutional contexts, like various medical settings (Boyd, 1998; Heath, 1992; Heritage/Sefi, 1992; Heritage, 2005; Peräkylä, 1998, 2002), the classroom (Macbeth, 1991), and live news broadcasts (Raymond, 2000). These studies have shown how participants’ orientations to authority can be discerned in the subtle details of the turn-by-turn sequential unfolding of interaction.

When it comes to epistemic authority, conversation analysts have pointed out how interactional participants display a constant orientation to who knows what. Besides, they use certain interactional practices to manage their epistemic rights – i.e., their “relative access to, or rights to assess, knowledge, events, behavior, and the like in specific, locally organized sequences of talk” (Raymond/Heritage 2006:681; Heritage/Raymond 2005; Pomerantz, Gill/Denvir 2007; Raymond 2000; Wooffitt/Clark 1998; Peräkylä 1996, 1998, 2002; Komter 1995; Heath 1992; Drew 1991). Of course, epistemic rights are domain specific; they are

linked to participants' "territories of knowledge" (Heritage/Raymond 2005; Heritage forthcoming a, b; Goffman 1966).

Stevanovic/Peräkylä (submitted) have recently considered the deontic dimension of authority. Similar to epistemic rights, the deontic rights of a person vary from domain to domain. By using workplace meetings as data, the authors describe the ways in which participants regularly commit themselves to their joint future work tasks, enacting thereby either a rather straightforward speaker-tilted deontic asymmetry, or a more symmetrical relative distribution of deontic rights between the participants. In this regard, the authors expose subtle practices through which second speakers may challenge the distribution of the deontic rights between the participants, as suggested by first speakers.

Participants' epistemic and deontic orientations can be intertwined in many ways. For instance, we both *know* our plans and *decide* about them. However, we may also remember Weber's advice, according to which "sharp differentiation in concrete fact is often impossible, but this makes clarity in the analytical distinctions all the more important" (Weber 1964:326). Indeed, *epistemics* and *deontics* represent the two opposite "directions of fit" between "the words" and "the world" described by Searle (1976): While epistemics are about getting the *words to match the world*, deontics are about getting the *world to match the words*.

3 STANCE AND STATUS

In their seminal paper on epistemic authority and participants' epistemic rights, Heritage/Raymond (2005) put forward the idea that people cannot avoid making claims concerning the relative distribution of epistemic rights between the participants even in the case of agreement. Later, it has been pointed out how speakers unavoidably take some kind of an *epistemic stance* whenever their talk embodies clausal elements, with the exception of imperatively framed utterances; in other words, speakers display their analysis of how knowledgeable they are in the matter at hand, in relation to their co-participants (Heritage, forthcoming). The epistemic stance is often expressed through different grammatical realizations of the propositional content. Consider the following three utterances (Heritage 2010):

- (1) Are you married?
- (2) You're married, aren't you?
- (3) You're married.

By formulating a question about the recipient's marital position as an interrogative (*Are you married?*), the speaker presents herself as an unknowing questioner. The declarative formats *You are married*, *aren't you?* and *You are married*, on the other hand, embody a more knowing epistemic stance, that is, growing commitment to the probability that the recipient is indeed married (Heritage, forthcoming).

Epistemic status, then again, is to be seen as a relatively stable feature of a social relationship in a certain epistemic domain (Heritage, forthcoming). It is a "real world" feature that as such can be seen as an important element of action formation. As Heritage (forthcoming) has demonstrated, in order to understand how to interpret each other's utterances as social actions, interactional participants must at all times be aware of the real world distribution of knowledge and rights to knowledge between them.

In this paper, I will invoke parallel notions to those of epistemic stance and epistemic status: *deontic stance* and *deontic status*:

Deontic stance refers to the relative strength of deontic rights claimed by the choice of the form of the utterance. I will take it as given that participants cannot avoid making claims

about the relative distribution of deontic rights whenever their talk is somehow oriented to future actions (Stevanovic/Peräkylä, submitted). This is perhaps most obvious in situations in which the propositional content of the utterance has to do with specific non-verbal actions that the recipient should perform, either immediately or sometime after the interaction (cf. Houtkoop 1987; Lindström 1999). Importantly, however, by every utterance, speakers are likely to influence recipients' subsequent actions at least in terms of a potential verbal response (cf. Schegloff 1968:1083). From this point of view, the constraints on future actions in terms of participants' deontic rights are clearly related to what conversation analysts have traditionally called "conditional relevance". While conditional relevance is about utterances or actions and *their* relationship with one another, in other words, about "items" (Schegloff 2010: 39), deontic rights are about *actors* and *people*. Whereas a question sets constraints on the future actions of the next speaker, deontic stance is about the speaker's implicitly claimed rights to make this kind of a constraint—about her rights to impose on her co-participant the normative obligation to perform a certain type of response. Of course, depending on the turn-design, speakers may place more or less constraints on the recipients' verbal or nonverbal, immediate or deferred responses (cf. Stivers/Rossano 2010a; Stivers/Hayashi 2010; Raymond 2003; Heritage 2010). However, in all these cases, the speakers take *some kind of* a deontic stance.

To demonstrate what is meant by deontic stance, let us take *requests for action* as an example. Requests for action can be implemented through a variety of syntactic structures: *imperatives*, *interrogatives* and *declaratives*. We may imagine, for instance, that someone wants to get her spouse to stop humming so that she can hear the radio weather report. In principle, she could say one of the following utterances:

(4) Shut up!

(5) Would you please be quiet?

(6) I'm sorry. I can't hear the radio weather report.

All of these utterances convey the same social action – a request for (non-)action – but they have very different forms. While the imperatively framed request (*Shut up!*) involves a rather blunt deontic authority claim, the interrogative format (*Would you please be quiet?*) conveys a mitigated stance on deontic rights; the recipient's "quietness" is presented as something that is contingent on the recipient's choice to comply. Then again, by formulating the request as a declarative (*I'm sorry. I can't hear the radio weather report.*), the speaker claims even weaker deontic rights; indeed, it is entirely up to the recipient to sort out what deontic implications the speaker's utterance has on the recipient's own future actions.

While the differences between different request-forms are often accounted for in terms of politeness considerations (cf. Brown/Levinson 1987) – the first utterance (4) is clearly far less polite than the last (6) – in this paper, I take a slightly different perspective. Besides the degree to which the speaker cares about the recipient's feelings, I argue that the choice of the request-form has a lot to do with the fact that different participants – with different deontic rights – often need to resort to different request-forms to be able to perform the very same actions.

Deontic status can thus be regarded as the deontic rights that a certain person *has* irrespective of whether she momentarily *claims* these rights or not (cf. Heritage, forthcoming). It is in this respect that deontic status is slightly different from what has been called "entitlement" in the conversation analytic literature (Heinemann 2006; Curl/Drew 2008). Like epistemic status (Heritage, forthcoming), deontic status is to be seen as a relatively stable "real world" feature (cf. Tomasello 2009: 55). Importantly, however, it varies

from domain to domain. No one, no matter how big an authority, has high deontic status in *every* domain (cf. Bochenski 1974: 69). For example, an individual professor may have the right to decide about the questions she will ask in an exam, but she might not have the rights to decide what books the exam is about, and she has absolutely no right to decide whether the student will arrive at the exam on foot, by bus or by bicycle (Stevanovic/Peräkylä, submitted). While the question *who* the participants are, with regard to the social roles and hierarchical positions they occupy, is without a doubt crucial when participants make judgments about their deontic status relative to one another, the notion of deontic status covers more than that: Namely, it is the contextual embedding of interaction, the participants' overall activity framework, and the situational commitments arising through the sequential unfolding of interaction through which *certain deontic domains are invoked*. To be sure, to describe what the participants are up to in various single cases is possible by reference to these contextual features alone. However, as I will argue in the following pages, to be able to account for *how* participants in general design their turns at talk to implement specific actions, it is helpful to bring into play the more overarching concept of the participants' deontic status.

That deontic stance and deontic status are not always congruent with each other, is a part of our everyday experience. We have certainly seen how highly authoritative speakers rarely need to command, while speakers with low authority often seem intent on inflating their authority with more assertive directives. Why is this so? The claim put forward in this paper is that participants are constantly making judgments about their deontic rights relative to their co-participants and use these judgments as a *resource* as they (1) design their turns at talk to carry out certain social actions and (2) interpret their co-participants' turns at talk *as* certain social actions.

4 DECLARATIVE REQUESTS FOR ACTION

In the following, I will argue for the view that participants need to be aware of their deontic rights relative to one another in order to understand how certain turns at talk are to be interpreted as social actions. However, to be able to demonstrate the precise role that deontic rights play in action formation, I will limit my analysis to very specific kinds of actions and action forms: *to requests for action* and, more specifically, to those requests for action that, in terms of their syntactic structure, embody only a *minimal* claim to deontic rights. These are the ones delivered in the form of a *declarative statement* (cf. Example 6). While forms like the imperative are easily interpreted as requests for action (even in cases in which the speaker's claim to deontic rights appears illegitimate), in contrast, declarative statements are regularly *not* interpreted that way. Thus, when a declarative statement is heard and treated as a request for action, we may indeed ask why it is so.

One potential explanation for why declarative statements can sometimes be heard as requests for action can be found in the conversation analytic literature on request sequences, in which participants' orientations to requests as *problematic* actions has been highlighted. Requests are frequently preceded by accounts, mitigations, and candidate "excuses" for the recipient, which may postpone the turn in which the actual request is made – if it is made at all (cf. Houtkoop 1990). Indeed, more often than not, similar to the "dispreferred" second pair-parts (cf. Pomerantz 1984a), requests may be mitigated "to the point of actual non-articulation" (Schegloff 2007: 83). Accordingly, there appears to be a preference for offers over requests. For example, when a speaker inquires about the recipient's possessions (*Do you have it?*), the recipient should not just *inform* the speaker about the matter (*Yes, I do.*), but to display his willingness to *offer* these goods (*I'll be glad to let you have it*) and thus preempt the speaker's need to make a request altogether (Schegloff 2007: 81-90). On the other hand, as Schegloff (2007) has noted, the problem is that "the preference structure requires

action by one who may not be aware that such a project is even relevant” (p. 82). Therefore, alone the fact that requests are problematic actions does not help us to explain *why* declarative statements are sometimes heard and treated as requests for action and sometimes not.

In the following pages, I will consider two different kinds of declarative statements: (1) statements about the speaker, her present state of body and mind, and (2) statements of future facts, decisions or plans. Both types of declarative statements can sometimes be interpreted as requests for action. Thus, my question is *under what circumstances* this happens.

4.1 *Statements about the Speaker*

We will start by considering those utterances in which a speaker makes a statement about herself, her needs, inclinations, and deficiencies.

Statements about the speaker’s needs

Let us start by discussing two declarative statements presented by Ervin-Tripp (1976) in her classical paper on directives. The question is about statements of need – utterances that, according to Ervin-Tripp, are typical for persons differing in rank. This is demonstrated by Extract 7, in which it is clearly a superior who implies an obligation on the part of the subordinate. Interestingly, however, need statements are typical also in families. They are, so Ervin-Tripp, among the earliest directives by children (ibid. 29) – something to be shown in Extract 8.

(7) (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 29)

(Doctor to hospital nurse):

I’ll need a 19 gauge needle, IV tubing, and a preptic swab.

(8) (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 30)

(Four-year-old to mother):

I need a spoon. Mommy, I need a spoon.

Apparently, in both cases, the speaker’s statement of need conveys a rather blunt directive. Indeed, Ervin-Tripp presented “need statements” as *first* in a list in which different directive forms were ordered “according to the relative power of speaker and addressee in conventional usage and the obviousness of the directive” (p. 29), thus placing them ahead of imperatives, which were ranked as second in the list. The impression of the relative bluntness of need statements comes clearly from the implication that the speaker’s mere expression of need is all that is required to direct the recipient to take action to satisfy the very need. But where does this *implication* then come from? In Extract 7, the speaker (doctor) has apparently a higher social position than the recipient (nurse). Therefore, we might be apt to consider anything that a doctor says as a potential directive. However, in Extract 8 (with a child as the speaker), the question is hardly about the speaker’s overall superiority relative to the recipient. Nevertheless, in a strikingly similar way, both the doctor and the child design their utterances under the presupposition that they *deserve* the recipients’ support in their attempts to satisfy their needs. Indeed, even though a child may generally appear to be in a subordinate position in relationship to her parents, she is, however, “entitled” to be taken care of by her parents (cf. Heinemann 2006). In other words, in both cases, the speakers seem to count on having a high deontic status relative to the recipient – not in a “universal” sense, but in a certain domain invoked by the overall activity frameworks of an operation (Extract 7) and a family mealtime (Extract 8). It seems that both the domains of “operating” and “eating” endow these particular recipients with most specified obligations to offer their assistance to these particular speakers.

In sum, irrespective of what the relevant domains of deontic superiority in each case are, high deontic status in these domains offers the speakers with a vital interactional resource: they can formulate a declarative statement about their needs and yet be confident that their utterances are heard and treated as implementing requests for action. On the other hand, *without* this kind of circumstances, need statements can easily be interpreted as implementing other types of action. This is demonstrated by Extract 9, drawn from a church workplace meeting, in which a priest (P) and a cantor (C) are preparing upcoming church events. At the beginning of the fragment, the cantor makes a proposal concerning a certain hymn that could be sung in the next Sunday's Mass (l. 1-2). Subsequently, the priest expresses a need: she needs to have a Hymnal in order to assess the cantor's hymn proposal (l. 4).

(9) (M2PAS 6:12)

- 01 C: toi olis aika hyvä toi:, (0.4)
 that be-COND quite good that
 that would be quite good tha:t, (0.4)
- 02 neljäseittemänkaheksan yks viiva kolme.
 four.seven.eight one slash three
 four-seven-eight from one to three
- 03 **(0.7)**
- 04 P: -> m_äki kaipa_an sitä virsikirjaa
 I-CL_I need-SG1 SG3-PAR hymnal-PAR
 I also need that Hymnal
- 05 mut millon viimeks.
 but when previous.time
 but when was the last time.
- 06 **(0.3)**
- 07 P: .hhh elikä toi seittemännollakolme nii, (0.2)
 PRT that seven.zero.three PRT
 .hhh so that seven-o-three, (0.2)

In Extract 9, neither the cantor, nor the priest, seems to orient to the priest's statement as a request for action: The cantor does not respond to the priest's need statement in any way (l. 6). The priest starts elaborating on the cantor's proposal (l. 7). As a consequence, the priest's need statement sounds like an *account* for her inability to assess the cantor's hymn proposal, more than an attempt to get the cantor to take action to satisfy the priest's need of a Hymnal. For sure, the times are long gone since the cantor was to be regarded as the priest's servant in this kind of matter.

We may conclude, therefore, that, even though statements of needs and desires are commonly heard as embodying a strong claim to deontic rights, they are not *intrinsically* directive. In other words, this impression of directivity does not originate merely from the *deontic stance* that speakers take when choosing to use these request forms, but from our judgments on the speaker's *deontic status* relative to the recipient.

Statements about the speaker's inclination

Let us now consider another type of declarative statement through which speakers may invite recipient's actions. Extracts 10 and 11 are from a study on male physicians' directives to their patients (West 1990).

(10) (West 1990: 96)

(Doctor to patient):
 Ah'd drink plen'y flu:ids,=ah'd take
 that as:prun ruhligously

(11) (West 1990: 96)

(Doctor to patient):
 ah'd prob'ly lay off till about Thursday.

According to West (1990), directives with the form “I would do X” are “perhaps the most aggravated of them all” (p. 97); the form implies that the recipient should engage in a particular course of action simply because the speaker would do so; “its form proposes that the speaker’s inclinations should serve as a *model* for the others’ behaviors” (p. 97). But what led an analyst like West to think that the speaker’s inclinations really *should* serve as a model for the recipient’s behaviors? Indeed, the more general question, whether some speakers’ suggestions and recommendations are to be understood as (1) attempts to influence the recipients’ behavior “directly” (*deontic hearing*), or whether the question is about (2) attempts to guide the recipients’ thinking and the process by which the recipients arrive at their *own* decisions (*epistemic hearing*), is a question widely discussed in the literature on advice-giving in different contexts (Vehviläinen 2003; 2009; Sarangi/Clarke 2002; Elwyn et al. 2000; Charles et al. 1997; Lehtinen 2007).

As can be seen in light of the following example, also in association with the form “I would do X”, the participants seem to orient to the existence of the above-mentioned two different ways of interpretation. The extract is drawn from a telephone conversation between two women friends who sell Avon cosmetics from their homes for a small commission. Marylou is thinking about having a public showing and Clare is advising her to organize it herself.

(12) (Do it on your own, sb1027-1)

01 Mar: (neet nuh) Norma ca:lled me en she thought this wz: she
 02 said she used to use this: 'n she couldn't get it.
 03 (.)
 04 Cla: Ah:[h a h ,]
 05 Mar: [En that sh]e liked it very mu::ch. 'n she ↑wondered
 06 why she: (.) dih- we didn't have a representative [here=
 07 Cla: [hh
 08 Mar: =you know.
 09 Cla: Ah: hah,
 10 (.)
 11 Mar: A:nd ah
 12 (0.4)
 13 Mar: So she wz real happy about the situation?
 14 (0.2)
 15 Mar: Felt it was a good ↑dea~*: [1.
 16 Cla: [Ah hah,
 17 (1.2)
 18 Mar: So: [I ho]pe]
 19 Cla: [Well] k]I *u-ah:: I don't uh:m (0.2) t hhh (0.3) uh
 20 => I'd just go ahead and do it on your ↑o::wn. <Uh that's what
 21 Minnie says you almost have to ↑do things on your ↓o~*:wn.
 22 Mar: -> Well I guess that's what I'll have to do::.. I d- I don't
 23 know quite how to go about it ah:: (0.2)

Clare’s suggestion, delivered in the form of a statement about her own inclinations (*I'd just go ahead and do it on your own*. l. 20), is followed by another statement (*Uh that's what Minnie says you almost have to do things on your own*. l. 20-12). In these statements we can see Clare

displaying an orientation to the possibility that her utterance with the form “I would do X” could somehow get misunderstood. Given the ways in which Clare modifies her message in her subsequent utterance, she seems to have oriented to avoiding two different kinds of recipient mishearings: (1) that the question would be *merely* about Clare’s own inclinations having nothing to do with Marylou’s future actions, and, on the other hand, (2) that Clare would like to impose her own personal preferences as some kind of a standard. Namely, in her subsequent utterance, Clare does two things: (1) by referring to the necessity of “doing things on your own”, she presents her own preferred course of action as something that also Marylou *should* pursue; (2) however, by invoking a third party, Minnie, as the ultimate authority in the matter at hand, Clare mitigates her own role as advice-giver; even though Marylou should organize the public showing on her own, it is not merely because Clare tells her that but because it is “factually” the best way to proceed. This is also the hearing that Marylou displays in her response to Clare’s recommendation: On one hand, Marylou reciprocates Clare’s orientation to the necessity of the suggested course of action (*I’ll have to*, l. 22). On the other hand, by invoking her own agency at the beginning of the utterance (*Well I guess*, l. 22), Marylou refrains from acknowledging Clare’s deontic rights in the matter at hand as the decisive reason for her still-tentative decision but, instead, presents herself as the sole decision-maker in the matter at hand.

On the basis of the analysis above, it seems that, in principle, an utterance with the form “I would do X” can be heard in *three* different ways: (1) as an “innocent” report about the speaker’s own inclinations, (2) as a recommendation with the implicit frame “if I were you” without any deontic bindingness, however, or (3) as an aggravated “directive() by example” (cf. West 1990: 97).

But when are utterances with the form “I would do X” interpreted as directives? According to West’s analysis, this was the case in Extracts 10 and 11. Hence, similar to need statements, the question seems not to be about some deontic *stance* encoded in the syntactic structure of the utterances as such, but about the speaker’s deontic *status* relative to the recipient in some relevant domain. Indeed, the whole activity framework of medical consultation is very much associated with the idea that doctors’ sayings, especially the ones delivered in the closing phase of the consultation, have deontic implications on the patients’ doings after the encounter (cf. Stivers 2006).

Let us now turn to the other extreme and consider the following instance, in which a priest (P) and a cantor (C) are discussing an outdoor event for children – a happening which is supposed to start with a short devotion. Previously in the episode, the priest (P) has expressed her anxiety about the fact that she is supposed to participate in the church event in question. This duty had been assigned to her only recently and she had thus not had time to consider her role in the event.

(13)(PM 21:26)

- 01 P: ↑oisko siin joku mitä siihe alkuun ###
 be-COND-Q in.there some what in.it beginning-ILL
 would there be something to the beginning
- 02 jos on joku ↑alkuhartaus niim
 if be some opening.devotion PRT
 if there’ll be some opening devotion so
- 03 mitä siin voidaal °laulaa°,
 what in.there can-PASS sing-INF
 what could be sung °in there°,
- 04 C: no siis? (0.4) mm::hhh (.)
 well I mean? (0.4) mm::hhh (.)

((43 lines removed; a side sequence, during which the participants talk about the clothes they are going to wear in the event))

- 48 C: .hhh niin tota, (2.0) mä ↑laulasin
 PRT PRT I sing-COND-SG1
.hhh so erm, (2.0) I would sing
- 49 siinä sitte ehkä (0.3) ↑ehkä soittasin
 in.there then probably probably play-COND-SG1
in there then probably (0.3) probably I would play
- 50 (.) jotenki tota viiskielistä kannelta
 somehow that-PAR five.string-PAR Finnish.zither-PAR
(.) somehow that five-string (Finnish) zither
- 51 niin, .hhhh ihan ↑ensiks
 PRT PRT at.first
so, .hhhh right at the beginning
- 52 kamanat kohottukohot se ↑tiäksä
 SongName SG3 know-SG2-Q+SG2
kamanat kohottukohot that you know
- 53 ***kamanat kohottukohoot lakin päästä laskematta* ((singing))**
- 54 >se on joku,< [.hhh ↑ka]levalainen
 SG3 be some
>it is some,< [.hhh Ka]levala
- 55 P: [joo:::,]
 [ye:a::,]
- 56 C: @↑vieraantervehdys@ [niminen] (.) laulu,
 @greeting of a guest@ [named] (.) song,
- 57 P: [joo-o?]
 [uh huh?]

Given the priest's previously expressed anxiety in the matter at hand, the priest's question at the beginning of the fragment (*would there be something to the beginning if there'll be some opening devotion so what could be sung in there*, l. 1-3) sounds like some kind of request for advice. Thus, the cantor's subsequent statement about her own inclinations (l. 48-54, 56) is delivered in a sequential context that is rather similar to those of Extracts 10-12. In this case, however, we may assume that the cantor is *not* telling the priest what she should do. Instead, the cantor is telling the priest what she *herself* would do, should she get the priest's approval of her proposal.

But what clues are there then available for *us* (for participants themselves the question is hardly a problem) to make such an interpretation? How is this utterance different from the male physicians' "most aggravated" (West 1990) orders? Is there any difference between the utterances "I would sing in there then probably" and "ah'd prob'ly lay off till about Thursday"? I think not. As a consequence, I argue that it is only to the extent that the statements about the speaker's own inclinations are interpreted in light of the speaker's superior deontic rights in the domain in question that their utterances can be heard as aggravated "directives by example" and not as proposals seeking for recipient approval. In this case, the cantor's statement could certainly be heard as a rather straightforward directive, were she in a position to tell the priest what she should do in the domain in question.

It is apparent that expressing one's own inclinations does not automatically lead to a situation in which the recipient tries to imitate the speaker's way of doing things. Hence, when this happens, it is only because of who the participants are and what kinds of deontic domains, in which the participants' deontic rights are distributed in different ways, are made relevant in the overall activity framework of interaction. This is the reason why this kind of utterance can be heard as directive in the first place. From this point of view, it is certainly a "risky" endeavor to suggest recipient action in the form of a statement about the speaker's own inclinations and assume that the mentioned implications of the utterance will definitely be recognized. As will be discussed later in this paper, people most commonly display an orientation to each participant having primary deontic rights concerning their *own* future actions. Only a speaker with a sufficiently high *deontic status* relative to the recipient in the domain in question may be able to count on an exception to that rule.

Statements about the speaker's deficiencies

It is fairly common that when the speaker asserts his incapability of doing something – physically or mentally – his turn at talk is heard as a request for the recipient to take action to remedy or to compensate for this deficiency. Consider Extracts 14-16: Extract 14 comes from an article dealing with directive-response sequences in girls' and boys' task activities (Goodwin 1980). Extract 15 was originally presented by Lindström (2005), who examined requests in interactions between senior citizens and home help providers in Sweden. Extract 16, again, is drawn from a telephone conversation between two nurses.

(14) (Goodwin 1980)

Michael (boy assuming leadership of the boys' group):

Man: I told you it kind a crowded around here. Now I can't stand it.

(15) (Lindström 2005:221-222)

- 01 SC: -> de star en citronflaska därinne: (0.2)
it stands a lemon+bottle there+in
there is a lemon extract bottle in there (0.2)
- 02 i dörren däruppe men ja får inte upp den,
in door there+up but I get not up it
in the door up there but I can not open it,
- 03 HH: **Mm:?**
- 04 **(0.2)**
- 05 SC: (Se) om du e
(See) if you are
(See) if you have
- 06 [stark (i fingrarna),
[strong (in fingers)
[strong (hands),
- 07 HH: [.hh de ska ja hjälpa dej me se
that will I help you with see
[.hh I'll help you with that
- 08 **(.)**
- 09 de går bra de hh. (.) .h[h:
that goes well that
no problem (.) .h[h:

10 SC: [ser du den
see you it
[do you see it

11 (.)

12 SC: högst upp,
highest up
up on top,

(16) (Schegloff 2007: 107)

01 Ros: hh ^Why ^dont'you come'n ^^see [me ~so:me[t i : m e s.~]
02 Bea: [hh [I would l i]:ke
03 ~to*:.
04 Ros: I would like[you to <let m[e just]
05 Bea: -> [hh [I: do]n't know just whe:re thi-ih
06 th:is address ^i[:s:.
07 Ros: [Well u-^whe:re d-uh which part of town do
08 you ~l[*ive.

In Extract 14, Michael's statement of his incapability to "stand" the current situation can be heard as a straightforward directive, and it has also been analyzed as such by Goodwin (1980). The other two extracts speak for the plausibility of Goodwin's interpretation: also statements about much less "acute" problems can be interpreted as requests for action:

In Extract 15, the senior citizen (SC) and the home helper provider (HH) are in the kitchen. The home help provider is cleaning the kitchen when the senior citizen specifies the location of a lemon extract bottle that she is incapable of opening. These facts alone – so Lindström (2005) – allow the statement to be interpreted as a request. This is because of the fact that "home help provider is supposed to assist with tasks that the senior citizen is unable to manage on her own" (p. 222). Even though, verbally, there is only minimal uptake from the home help provider, the video shows a notable change in her bodily orientation right after the senior citizen's statement of incapability.

In Extract 16, Rose's initial utterance can be heard as an invitation for Bea to come and visit Rose. From this point of view, it is clear that Bea's statement (*I don't know just where this address is*. l. 5-6) is a *request* for Rose to provide Bea with the information she is lacking (cf. Schegloff 2007: 107). And indeed, this is what Rose subsequently begins to do (l. 7-8). Even though, in principle, Rose could have left Bea to find out the way to her place by herself, nevertheless, in order to confirm that her invitation was "serious", Rose had the moral obligation to display her willingness to remove all the obstacles there might be for Bea to accept her invitation. Indeed, at this particular moment in time, Bea was entitled to get support from Rose just as much as the senior citizen from the home help provider in Extract 15.

In sum, irrespective of whether the speakers' deontic status in the currently relevant domain is invoked by the speaker's overall authority position among his fellows (Extract 14), by the institutional setting (Extract 15), or by the dynamics of the current action sequence (Extract 16), from the point of action formation, the effect is essentially the same: It makes it possible for the speaker to formulate his request for the recipient action as a declarative statement about his own deficiency.

Let us compare these instances with Extract 17 from a church workplace meeting, in which a priest (P) and a cantor (C) are planning *kinkerit* – i.e., home gathering, held regularly during Lent, in which congregation members read the Bible and the Catechism with the priest, and practice church hymns with the cantor. Before the fragment, the participants have discussed the recently suggested idea that priests and cantors would transport people in their cars as they

drive to *kinkeri*-homes, which are sometimes far away from the village. The priest and the cantor were of the opinion that they did not have time for that and decided, therefore, to forget about the whole idea. The decision was made despite the fact that, apparently, some arrangements had already been made in the matter: As can be seen in Extract 17, the cantor even knew the initials of one person who was supposed to be picked up.

(17) (K 21:55)

- 01 C: kyl siel joku nimi jotku nimikirjaimet
 PRT there some name some-PL initial-PL
 sure there is some name some initials
- 02 -> koo pee ↑ON mutta mä en tiedä kyllä ketä ne
 K P be but I NEG know PRT who-PAR PL3
 K. P. but I don't really know who they are
- 03 piti tarkottaa.
 be.supposed.to-PST mean-INF
 supposed to mean.
- 04 **(0.3)**
- 05 P: joo.
 yea.

The cantor's question is clearly not a request for the priest to remedy her lack of knowledge. Given the fact that the participants have previously made a decision that some people could assess as cruel, the cantor's "not knowing" who they were supposed to help serves as a neat justification for the decision. The priest's response is in line with this orientation: she does not even try to help the cantor to figure out who is meant with the mysterious initials.

Hence, even though it is usual for statements about speakers' deficiencies to be heard and treated as requests for recipients to take action to remove the problems, this is not always the case. Such an interpretation is contingent on the recipient acknowledging his obligations towards the speaker, in other words, on his judgments about his deontic status relative to the speaker in the domain in question – something that is of course based on participants' joint understanding of the momentary "common ground" (Enfield 2006) and mutual alignment vis-à-vis the referents of the talk.

In this section, we have discussed declarative statements in which the speaker makes a statement about herself – about her present state of mind or body, her needs and desires, inclinations, and deficiencies. In many instances, such utterances are used to implement requests for recipient action. In my analysis of such instances, I pointed to the speaker's high deontic status relative to the recipient as a decisive condition for the recipient to recognize a declarative statement as implementing a request for action (Extracts 7, 8, 10, 11, 14-16). On the other hand, I showed how, *without* such speaker-tilted deontic asymmetry, speakers' statements about themselves could serve other interactional purposes, such as accounting for the speaker's omissions (Extract 10), seeking the recipient's approval (Extract 13), or justifying the speaker's ignorant behavior (Extract 17), but not those of requesting recipient action.

4.2 Statements about Future Actions

In this section, we will consider utterances in which the speaker makes a statement about a future action that someone *is going to* perform, either instantly in the interaction, then and there, or sometime after the interaction. I will show that also the kind of utterances, in which

certain future actions are presented as *independent* of the recipient can be used *de facto* to implement a request for *recipient* action. This idea might need more elaboration:

When people talk about their intentions and plans, the question is often not only about *knowing* the plans, but also about *deciding* on them; who has the *deontic* rights to *determine* the future actions in question? Therefore, a statement about a future event can be heard and treated in two different ways: (1) as an “innocent” informing or (2) as a deontic announcement of a decision. Of course, on some occasions, recipients may orient to both of these dimensions in the first speaker’s utterance (e.g., on the composite utterance “oh-okay”, see Schegloff 2007: 127-128, 135-137). In other instances, the recipient may strategically disregard the deontic dimension of the first speaker’s utterance, in order to resist its unfavorable implications (Stevanovic/Peräkylä, submitted; cf. Goodwin/Goodwin 1987: 4; Heritage 1984: 260). In any case, the question of what makes a statement about a future event recognizable as an informing or as an announcement is essentially a question about action formation.

When a statement about a future action is interpreted as a request for recipient action, it is easy to assume that the “actor” of the statement is also the recipient. However, as I intend to show in the following pages, the speaker may also talk about her *own* future actions and yet implicate obligations to the recipient. I will argue, therefore, that to identify a statement about a future action as a request for the *recipient* to act is not directly related to the question whether the propositional content of the statement *per se* concerns the recipient (*you*), the speaker (*I*), or both (*we*). Instead, it is the speaker’s deontic status relative to the recipient that guides participants’ interpretations also in this kind of utterance.

Statements about the recipient’s future actions

As mentioned earlier, when speakers make statements about recipients’ future actions, their utterances can easily be heard “in a deontic way”. Indeed, on such occasions, the question is not only about the speaker implicating obligations for the recipient, but that the actualization of the propositional content of the statement is directly dependent on the recipient *performing the mentioned actions*. Therefore, as can be seen in the following instances drawn from family interactions (Goodwin 2006), such statements are not always greeted with joy and pleasure: In Extract 18, Mom attempts to get her son Luke to take a bath; Luke, however, protests against the directive. In Extract 19, Mom calls her son Jonah, who is in the bedroom, from the kitchen, thus trying to get him to come to clean up his dishes from the kitchen table; also Jonah’s opposition is rather obvious.

(18) (Goodwin 2006: 533)

4 Mom: Luke:, bath. Come on.
5 Luke: NO:: Not ye:::t!

((7 lines removed.))

13 Mom: -> You are taking a bath now.
14 Luke: After piano:::
15 Mom: Nope.

((40 lines removed.))

56 Luke: I don’t want to do it now. I’m tired:::.
57 Mom: -> Yes you are doing it now.
58 I’m going to get your clothes.
59 Luke: Ah:::
60 Mom: Here.

(19) (Goodwin 2006: 522)

01 Mom: JONAH LYLE. SWEETIE!
 02 SOMETHING TO DO.
 03 YOU HAVE A PROJECT! ((yelling from kitchen))
 04 Jonah: I'M NOT (.) DOING IT.
 05 Mom: -> YES YOU ARE:. ((singsong))
 06 Jonah: NO I'M NO:T. ((singsong))
 07 Mom: -> OH YES YOU ARE: ((singsong))
 08 Jonah: OH NO I'M NO:T.
 09 Mom: IF I HAVE TO DRAG YOU BY THE HAIRS
 10 OF YOUR CHINNY CHIN CHIN ((singsong))
 11 Jonah: NO I'M NOT.
 12 Mom: ((walks towards Jonah's bedroom))
 13 OH YES I AM. (singsong))
 14 -> OH YES YOU ARE:.

Both instances demonstrate what is commonly at stake in utterances in which speakers dare to make straightforward statements about recipients' actions. Albeit, in families, parents have generally a lot to say as regards the actions of their youngsters, even in these instances, we see how participants orient to the view that, in the domain of one's own actions, people are normatively expected to have superior deontic rights relative to their co-participants. In these instances of disagreement, Mom constantly emphasizes the word *are*, which, in a paradoxical way, by contrasting her son's compliance with non-compliance, only underlines the fact that the actualization of the propositional content of her utterance is in reality very much contingent on her son's compliance. Besides, in Extract 19, Mom uses "singsong prosody" – a resource that can be used to invoke the impression that the speaker is not entirely the "principal" of the utterance in question (Gumperz 1982: 34; Goffman 1981: 124-159); in other words, even Mom herself seems to orient to the normative expectation according to which people commonly have primary deontic rights concerning their own actions. Of course, this orientation is most apparent in the talk of the children, Luke (Extract 18) and Jonah (Extract 19), who oppose their Mom's demands in most bold ways.

The normative expectation concerning the participants' subordinate rights to make statements about their co-participants' actions is apparent also in the following data extract from a church workplace meeting, in which the priest (P) explains to the cantor (C) some details concerning the program of the upcoming Bishop's visitation.

(20) (PTM 1:52-2:01)

01 P: diakoniatyöntekijöille on delegoitu,
 deacon-PL-ALL be delegate-PPPC
the Vesper has been delegated,

02 (0.4) iltahartauden pito?
 vesper-GEN holding
(0.4) to the deacons?

03 tarkottanee? Oilia.
 mean-POTE nameF
this means? Oili I guess.

04 **(0.6)**

05 C: selvä.
alright.

06 P: hänen kanssaan sitte,=
 she-GEN with then

with her then,=

07 C: =juu (.) mää kysyn häneltä.=
 PRT I ask-SG1 she-ABL
 =yea (.) I'll ask her.=

08 P: -> =sovitte.
 agree-PL2
 =you'll make the arrangements.

At the beginning of the fragment, the priest makes a statement that is seemingly relevant for the cantor, who is supposed to work in the mentioned Vesper. This is followed by a pause (l. 4) during which the priest is gazing at the cantor, who is writing in her calendar. Thereafter, the cantor seems to orient to the implications of the priest's turn: She needs to discuss the details of the vesper with Oili. Her response (*alright*, l. 5) is spoken while still writing, without eye contact with the priest. The priest's dissatisfaction with the cantor's response is apparent by the fact that subsequently the priest begins to explicate the very consequences his decision has on the cantor (l. 6). Due to this, the cantor immediately raises her gaze toward the priest and apparently interrupts him (*yes (.) I'll ask her*, l. 7) before the priest has spoken the finite verb (*sovitte*, l. 8) of his utterance, begun in l. 6.

Hence, as a consequence of the delayed and seemingly absent-minded response by the cantor, first the priest (l. 6, 8) and, in response to him, also the cantor (l. 7) end up spelling out the implicit request for action embedded in the priest's announcement (l. 1-3). But as can be seen also in this instance, the participants orient to the normative expectation concerning exactly this implicitness: In his initial statement, the priest uses the passive voice (*has been delegated*, l. 1) when announcing the decision – even though the priest has presumably made the decision himself, thus downplaying his deontic authority in the matter at hand. Besides, the priest explicates the consequences that his statement has on the recipient (*you'll make the arrangement*, l. 8) only after there have been interactional problems. Moreover, at this point, the cantor, in turn, seems to try to interdict what is about to happen: Given her rush to display her compliance before the priest brings his utterance to closure, she seems to be trying to undermine the relevance and necessity of his utterance prior to its articulation.

Extract 21 is drawn from a church workplace meeting in which *two* priests and a cantor are planning the next Sunday's Mass. One of the priests is going to be the celebrant, and, in this role, she is responsible for the Mass as the whole. The other priest is supposed to assist the celebrant. Curiously, though, the assisting priest is the vicar of the church – i.e., the person who is superior to all the priests of the congregation, including the celebrant. In this fragment, the question is about the Intercession: Who – the celebrant (CE) or the assisting priest (AP) – is supposed to prepare it?

(21) (HM1 32:20)

01 CE: <esirukous> joka sitte, (0.2) sitte (.) sää,
 <the Intercession> which then, (0.2) then (.) you,

02 (0.4) .hh

03 AP: .thh ää::m
 .tch e:r:m

04 (3.2)

05 AP: -> ku- kumpi te°kee°.
 who.of.us.both do
 wh- who of us both is doing °it°.

- 06 (0.7)
- 07 CE: -> s[ää.]
y[ou.]
- 08 AP: [tee]t sä vai mä.
do-SG2 you or I
[wil]l you or I do it.
- 09 CE: -> sää:..
you:..
- 10 AP: aha (.) okei. (.) joo.
I see (.) okay. (.) yea.
- 11 (.)
- 12 AP: .hh se on siis se meijjän perus- (0.2)
SG3 be PRT SG3 our basic
.hh it is I mean that our basic (0.2)
- 13 sabluunahan on että se on liturgin vastuulla,
template-CLI be that SG3 be celebrant-GEN responsibility-ADE
template is that it is under the celebrant's responsibility,
- 14 (1.0)
- 15 AP: j[a sitten]::.,=
a[nd then]::.,=
- 16 CE: [joo joo.]
[yes yes.]
- 17 CE: =mää voin delegoid[as °sen°.]
=I can delega[te °it°.]
- 18 AP: [sä voit] delegoida nii-i?
[you can] delegate uh huh?
- 19 sä voit delegoida.
you can delegate.
- ((8 lines removed.))
- 28 AP: joo. (.) eli mää#:[::#] [mä ho]idan
yea. (.) so I#:[::#] [I'll ta]ke care of
- 29 CE: [mä ↑to]iv[oisin.]
I wish-COND-SG1
[I would] w[ish for that.]
- 30 AP: esirukou[ksen.]
intercession-GEN
the Inte[rcession.]
- 31 CE: [mä to]i[vois]in.=
I wish-COND-SG1
[I would w[i]sh f]or that.=
- 32 AP: [joo?]

[yea?]

33 AP: =soppi. (.) joo.
 be.suitable PRT
 =that's fine. (.) yea.

34 (0.4)

At the beginning of Extract 21, the celebrant (CE) refers to the task of preparing the Intercession of the upcoming Mass only minimally (<*the intercession*> *which then (0.2) then (.) you*, l. 1). The assisting priest (AP), however, does not display commitment to perform the future actions implicated by the celebrant, but instead, hesitates (l. 3), remains silent (l. 4), and asks for clarification (l. 5, 8). As a consequence, the celebrant ends up announcing her decision in a rather blunt way (l. 7, 9). At first, it seems that the assisting priest complies without second thoughts (*I see (.) okay. (.) yea.* l. 10). But this is soon followed by the priest's announcement that *his* preparing of the Intercession is not to be regarded as routine in the congregation in question (l. 12-13). The celebrant, then again, attempts to justify her behavior by referring to the possibility that every superordinate has: that of delegating her tasks to subordinates. The justification is accepted by the assisting priest (l. 18-19).

The sequence is, however, still not treated as closed. In line 28, the assisting priest makes some kind of a formulation concerning the task that the celebrant has delegated to him, thus once more marking the matter at hand as something that is, by no means, self-evidently *his* task. This time, finally, the celebrant responds in a way which noticeably downgrades her earlier deontic authority claim (*I would wish for that.* l. 29, 31). The recipient's compliance, in other words, is no more something that will happen as a matter of course, but as something that is very much contingent on the recipient's approval. As a response for that, the assisting priest indeed articulates his *approval* of the celebrant's idea (*that's fine. (.) yea.* l. 33) and, by that, treats the sequence as closed.

What is noteworthy in this instance is that the assisting priest does not seem to oppose the celebrant's plan *per se*, but that he appears to be unsatisfied with the way the celebrant announces her plan. Even though the celebrant can be regarded as superior to the assisting priest in relationship to this particular Mass, in lines 12-13, the assisting priest invokes a domain in which he *as a vicar* has superior deontic rights in relationship to the celebrant – the matters concerning the work allocation systems of the whole church work community. According to these systems, then again, the celebrant has no right to regard *his* preparing of the Intercession as self-evident – that is, as something she could make statements about – but, instead, as something she needed to *request* him to do (l. 29, 31).

Hence, (also) in this case, the question seems to be about a situation in which the speaker clearly “crosses the line”; she claims more deontic rights than her deontic status – at least from the recipient's point of view – would allow her to do. As a consequence, the recipient protests, not exactly in the same straightforward way as the children in Extracts 18 and 19 but, in a way that – *unlike* in Extracts 18 and 19 (cf. Goodwin 2006) – indeed urges the speaker to downgrade her deontic *stance*.

Even though participants generally regard their own actions as a domain in which each participant has primary deontic rights, this does not mean that every statement about the recipient's future actions would be regarded as intrusion into the recipient's domain of deontic authority. As mentioned earlier, the deontic hearing of a statement about a future event involves also the recipient recognizing the consequences of the first speaker's statement as something that, at least partly, the first speaker's very act of making the statement has caused. The following data extract – drawn from the same church workplace meeting as Extract 20 – serves as an example of the “innocent” use of the personal pronoun *you* in statements about future events.

(22) (PTM 0:43)

- 01 P: sittel lähdetään muille, hh
 then leave-PASS other-PL-ALL
 then we'll leave to other, hh
- 02 (0.6) muille, (0.8) hetkinen <ei me>
 other-PL-ALL moment NEG we
 (0.6) other, (0.8) one moment <no we>
- 03 -> >mihkää! lähdetä< mutta, .hhh te lähdette.
 anywhere leave but you leave-PL2
 >won't leave anywhere< but, .hhh you'll leave.
- 04 **(0.5)**
- 05 C: nii et meitä [ei siel tarvita.]
 PRT that we-PAR NEG there need
 so that we wo[n't be needed there.]
- 06 P: [se vaihtuu] sosiaalitoimen,
 SG3 change social.work-GEN
 [it'll be changed to] negotiations,
- 07 **(0.3)**
- 08 C: joo.=
 yea.=
- 09 P: =neuvotteluiksi?
 negotiation-PL-TRA
 =of the social work?

Similar to Extract 20, also on this occasion, the priest (P) explains to the cantor (C) the program of the upcoming Bishop's visitation. Throughout the extract, the priest is reading a paper, implying thus visually that he is only the "animator" (Goffman 1981: 124-159) of the propositional content of his turns at talk. This effect is further emphasized through the priest's failure to include himself among the "actors" of the future action in question (*then we'll leave to other*, l. 1) and the priest's subsequent hesitations in this connection (*hh (0.6) other, (0.8) one moment <no we> won't go anywhere but*, l. 1-3). Because the participants have thus been positioned relatively equally when it comes to their power(lessness) to decide about the future actions in question, the cantor seems to interpret the priest's statement as a mere informing. Instead of displaying any commitment for future action, she signals her *understanding* of the *reasons* why the priest could make his statement (*so that we won't be needed there*, l. 5). In other words, in this case, the priest obviously had access to knowledge that the cantor was lacking, but that was all. The priest's very act of making his statement did not imply any further obligations on the cantor that would not have been there anyway.

Statements about the speaker's own future actions

We will now turn to statements about future events whose deontic relevance *pro forma* seems to be *least* obvious. Extract 23 represents a prototypical case, in which the interactional participants simply inform each other about their plans. In this instance, a priest (P) and a cantor (C) are sharing their intentions concerning the program in the upcoming *kinkerit* (for explanation see p. 9).

(23) (K 17:00)

- 01 P: ja tossa alkujohdannossa, (0.2) .hhh mää myös
and that-INE introduction-INE I also
and in that introduction (0.2) .hhh I'll also
- 02 vähän tota nii, #mm# tavallaan otan esille sitä
little PRT PRT in.a.way take-SG1 into.sight SG3-PAR
kind of like, #mm# in a way take up the question
- 03 että, (0.7) että on siis ninku, hhm (0.6) .th olemassa
PRT PRT be PRT PRT being-INE
that (0.7) that I mean there are like, hhm (0.6) .th there are
- 04 (.) paastonaikaa juhla-aikaa ja arkijaksoa ja
lent-GEN+time-PAR feast+time-PAR and ordinary.episode-PAR and
(.) periods of Lent feast and ordinary episodes and
- 05 #mm# miten se sitten näkyy että liturkiset, (0.5)
how SG3 then be.visible PRT liturgical-PL
#mm# how it is then visible that the liturgical, (0.5)
- 06 värit myöski sitte.
color-PL also-CLI then
colors also then.
- 07 C: **mm-m?**
- 08 **(0.4)**
- 09 P: ja,
and,
- 10 **(0.2)**
- 11 C: .mhh ja si- (.) no siinä samassa mää varmaam mainitten
and PRT in.that same-INE I probably mention-SG1
.mhh and i- (.) well in the same section I'll probably mention
- 12 että miten se näkyy musiikissa.
PRT how SG3 be.visible music-INE
how it is visible in music.
- 13 **(0.3)**
- 14 P: nii.
yes.

The mere fact that the priest *informs* the cantor about her intentions (l. 1-6) suggests, of course, that the content of the propositional utterance is *somehow* relevant for the cantor. But in this instance, this relevance appears not to be deontic in nature: The cantor responds to the priest's utterance with the information receipt token *mm-m?* (l. 7) and the priest treats such a response as sufficient (and, l. 9).

Statements about one's own future actions can, of course, function in a way that is comparable to the statement about the speaker – something we dealt with earlier in this paper; the statements can serve as hints concerning the recipient's obligations. This is the situation in Extract 24. Here a priest (P) and a cantor (C) are preparing a Mass to which the veterans of the Finnish Winter War 1939-1940 will be especially invited. Moreover, the veterans are supposed to assist in the realization of the Mass, for example, by reading Bible texts.

Previously, the cantor has mentioned the possibility that the veterans might also want to sing something in the Mass. Just before the fragment, the priest has apologized for not having asked about that when she talked with the representative of the veterans on the telephone earlier.

(24)(VM 32:58)

- 01 C: jos heilt on ninku tulos niin
if they-ABL be PRT coming-INE PRT
if they will perform something so
- 02 kyl se olis hyvä sitten, (0.3) tietää,
PRT SG3 be-COND good then know-INF
it would certainly be good, (0.3) to know about it,
- 03 .hhh
- 04 (.)
- 05 C: <ja sitten toi>,
and then that
<and then>,
- 06 (2.0)
- 07 C: mth (.) mua ei saa perjantaina mistään kiinni ja
I-PAR NEG get Friday-ESS anywhere reached and
tch (.) on Friday I cannot get reached anywhere and
- 08 -> lauantaina mä olen aamulla rippikoulussa
Saturday-ESS I be-SG1 morning-ADE confirmation.school-INE
on Saturday morning I'll be in the Confirmation School
- 09 -> sen jälkeen mä olen, (0.2) myöskin pois
SG3-GEN after I be also-CLI away
after that I'll be, (0.2) also away
- 10 -> paikkakunna^olta^o.
district-ABL
from the dis^otrict^o.
- 11 (1.5)
- 12 C: et se on [huominen päivä (-)]
PRT SG3 be
so that it is [tomorrow (-)]
- 13 P: [jos mä pirautan,] hh
if I ring.up-SG1
[if I'll ring up,] hh
- 14 C: joo.
yea.
- 15 (4.0)

At the beginning of Extract 24, the cantor asserts that it would be good to know whether the veterans will sing or not (l. 1-2). The priest does not respond to this assertion in any way. In line 5, by prefacing her utterance with *and* (*ja*), the cantor signals the beginning of a new sequence or at least some kind of a progress within the activity at hand (cf. Heritage/Sorjonen

1994: 6). As for its content, however, the following turn is most obviously a continuation of the cantor's preceding talk, a pursuit of response from the priest (Pomerantz 1984b). By describing her plans for the next couple of days (l. 7-10), the cantor underlines her *need* to get the lacking information, not just sometime before the next Sunday's Mass but, before Friday. Due to the lack of priestly uptake (pause, l. 11), however, the cantor starts clarifying the deontic implications of her preceding talk (l. 12), but since the priest finally responds, the cantor does not have to bring her utterance to syntactic closure. In her response, the priest suggests a solution to the cantor's problem: The priest will call the veterans to ask about their intentions as regards their singing in the Mass (l. 13).

Hence, on this occasion, the cantor's statement about her own future actions (*on Saturday morning I'll be in the Confirmation School after that I'll be, (0.2) also away from the district*. l. 8-10) was eventually heard and treated as a request for action: to provide the cantor with the information she needed – as soon as possible. Since the priest had earlier been talking to the veterans, yet neglected the domain of music in these discussions, and just prior to the fragment, acknowledged her failure in this respect, the cantor's deontic status in the matter at hand was strong enough for her to implement her request for action in the form of a declarative statement; it seemed to be the participants' common understanding that it was the duty of the priest to contact the veterans – even though it was the cantor who voiced a need for that.

When a statement about the speaker's own future actions implies obligations for the recipient, the question seems to be about some kind of “fishing”, telling one's own side of the story (cf. Pomerantz, 1980). One way to put it would be to say that, instead of making a request, the speakers are fishing for an *offer* from the recipient (cf. Schegloff 2007: 81-90). What is most important, however, is that, *prima facie*, statements about the speaker's own future actions can be regarded as a “mere” informings. Nonetheless, should the recipient acknowledge his situational obligations towards the speaker, she may interpret even this kind of statement as implementing a request for action – although the question on such occasions is clearly about mitigated requests commonly called “hints” (cf. Ervin-Tripp 1976: 87).

The situation is quite different in Extracts 25 and 26. In these instances, the actualization of the propositional content of the utterance is directly dependent on the very actions that the recipient will perform as a response to the first speaker's utterance.

(25) (Ervin-Tripp, 1976: 29)

(Customer to bartender):
I'll have a Burgie.

(26) (Keisanen and Rauniomaa, in preparation)

01 Pass: what time we will b- well,
02 [I think] we'll -
03 Driver: [oh,]
04 -> wait a sec. I'll speak to her now,
05 I'm at a red light.
06 Pass: okay. ((Passenger gives the phone to the driver.))

Extract 26 is from a driving car.¹ Just a moment earlier, the passenger has answered the driver's cell phone and is talking to it still in lines 1-2. In lines 3-5, the driver moves her hand toward the phone and makes a declarative statement concerning her own future actions (*I'll speak to her now*, l. 4). The passenger, however, treats the driver's utterance as a request for

¹ The extract is drawn from a data corpus “Habitable Cars” collected by Eric Laurier (http://web2.ges.gla.ac.uk/~elaurier/habitable_cars/corpus.html). My thanks to Tiina Keisanen and Mirka Rauniomaa for letting me use this example.

her to act, to give the phone to the driver: the passenger makes first a commitment to grant the request (*okay*. l. 6), and then, actually satisfies the request.

In both Extracts 25 and 26, the realization of the mentioned future event is directly dependent upon the recipient's actions. Because the speakers' utterances, however, exhibit no orientation to this dependency – they treat the recipients' compliance as a matter of course – they embody a rather blunt deontic authority claim in the matter at hand – something that can be equated with the statements about the recipient's actions discussed earlier. Nevertheless, if a person with a low authority formulates his “want to be” authoritative utterances in this way (say a child), the deontic implications of the utterance might not be acknowledged at all. Instead, the person might be corrected for being “wrong”, for being *ignorant* of what is going to happen in his life (A child to his mother: *Tomorrow I will go to Africa*. Mother: *No, you are going to Korkeasaari Zoo with all the other kids from Kindergarten*. The child: *But I WANT to go to Africa!*). Or – even worse – the utterance can be treated as a “mere” informing that, albeit being newsworthy, is without any *deontic* relevance (A child to his mother: *Tomorrow I will go shopping to the mall*. Mother: *Oh really? How are you going to get there?* The child: *YOU are going to take me!*)

Statements about the speaker's and the recipient's joint future actions

As a final point, we will consider statements about the speaker's and the recipient's joint future actions – utterances that are often regarded as manipulative (see, Fairclough 1989: 15). This idea is understandable given the fact that these utterances presuppose that the speaker and the recipient have common interests, and that the speaker is, therefore, enabled to tell the recipient what to do by masking her request for action as an expression of the speaker's and the recipient's common interests. In other words, the use of the personal pronoun “we” provides the speakers with a way to make statements about matters that otherwise would be outside the domain of their deontic rights. Of course, the use of the first-person plural pronoun “we” is ambiguous in that it can be interpreted as inclusive-of-addressee or exclusive-of-addressee; in the latter case, the speaker talks about herself and some third party. Thus, from the point of view of the relative distribution of the participants' deontic rights, only the *former* kinds of (inclusive-of-addressee) statements are relevant.

Let us first look at an example in which the participants have, at least from the practical point of view, already agreed upon their joint future action (discussing the details of their mother's upcoming birthday party on the telephone) before one of the participants (Laura) makes a statement in which she explicates this action.

(27) (Farmhouse)

19 Laura: I talked to Jane about this this morning.
 20 I've got some ideas.
 21 Michelle: Maybe you should call me. I've got some ideas too.
 22 Laura: Ok.
 23 Michelle: (I'm gonna just ki[nda)
 24 Laura: -> [We'll discuss this matter.
 25 Michelle: We will.

In this case of perfect agreement Michelle responds to Laura's statement with an utterance (*we will*. l. 25) that embodies Michelle's commitment for the future action announced by Laura. This is only expectable, given Michelle's earlier request for Laura to call her with respect to the matter at hand. Laura's assumption about her and Michelle having common interests in this matter was thus not particularly daring.

The situation is completely different in the following fragment from a church workplace meeting. On this occasion, a priest (P) and a cantor (C) are planning a confirmation school. Sometime earlier in the episode, the cantor has criticized the priest's plan of getting the

parents of the confirmation kids to come to the church, together with their children; the cantor found the idea too unrealistic. In Extract 28, the priest asserts the “common” plan once more.

(28) (RKS1 3:53)

- 01 P: ja van[hemm]at kutsuttas
and parent-PL invite-PASS-COND
and the p[aren]ts would be invited
- 02 C: [nii.]
[yea.]
- 03 P: siihen (.) siihem messuun kanssa
to.that to.that mass-ILL too
to the (.) to the Mass too
- 04 -> että .hh me edellytetään sit et joka
PRT we demand-PASS then PRT every
'cause .hh we'll demand that every
- 05 -> (0.3) kaikki (0.3) korostetaan sitä:
all emphasize-PASS SG3-PAR
(0.3) all of us (0.3) will emphasize that
- 06 että <te käytte nuortenne kanssa>.
that you come-IMP-PL2 youth-POSS-PL2 with
that <you are coming with your youth>.
- 07 **(1.0) ((C is browsing her calendar.))**
- 08 C: joo ja kesä kolmosen .hhh musiikkitunnit
PRT and summer three-GEN music.lesson-PL
yea and the music lessons .hhh of Summer Three²
- 09 on nyt sit täytyy sopia ja urkuopetus?
be now then must agree-INF and organ.lesson
are now then must be agreed upon and the organ lesson?

In her statement, the priest (P) uses to the pronoun *we* inclusively, referring both to herself and to the cantor (*we'll demand that every all of us will emphasize*, l. 4-5). Her statement thus presupposes that “all” of the (two) church workers involved in the teaching would comply with her idea. Thereby it involves a strong claim of deontic rights relative to the recipient; the question is about a request for action, the satisfaction of which is taken for granted. Besides, given the fact that the cantor has earlier expressed her reservations concerning the idea and thus implied having some deontic rights in the matter, too, the priest’s move is courageous. To take such a strong deontic stance in a situation in which the recipient might not take the corresponding deontic status for granted is something that can be sanctioned.

Sanctioning is indeed what follows; the priest’s turn at talk is met with silence (l. 7) and the cantor’s initiation of a completely new topic (l. 8-9). Even though the cantor’s subsequent turn starts with an acknowledgement token (*yea*, l. 8), it can be heard rather as implicative of topic closure than as any display of agreement (cf. Sorjonen 2001). Thereby, the cantor treats the priest’s statement as something that does not require any commitment for future action from her side – even though the deontic relevance of the priest’s statement with regard to the cantor has been rather obvious. From this point of view, the situation is similar to what has been found about those medical encounters in which the patients resist the physicians’ deci-

² “Summer Three” refers to a confirmation camp.

sions concerning their treatment – something that is certainly consequential for the patient. As Stivers (2006) has pointed out, on those occasions in which the patients do not respond to treatment decisions the question is often about some disagreement between the physician and the patient.

The above-suggested idea, that the cantor’s choice of (non-)response has to do, precisely, with the deontic implications of the priest’s utterance, gets support from the fact that, at the beginning of Extract 28, the cantor gazes at the priest quite intensively. However, from line 4 onwards, when the deontic nature of the priest’s turn is revealed (*we’ll demand that*), the cantor withdraws her gaze from the priest and starts browsing her calendar.

As a point of comparison, let us look at the following instance drawn from the same episode as the previous case. At this point of the meeting, the priest (P) and the cantor (C) are browsing their calendars trying to set the date for the first meeting of the confirmation class. Just before the fragment, the cantor has proposed a certain date. Now, however, the cantor withdraws her proposal. She is examining a paper in which the church workers’ work shifts are listed, and finds problems regarding the date in question.

(29) (RKS1 2:39)

- 01 C: hei sillon on kuule Niittymaan vuorot.
 hey then be PRT PlaceName-GEN shift-PL
 hey then there are the shifts in Niittymaa
- 02 .hh sekä sinulla että minulla
 both you-ADE and I-ADE
 .hh both you and I have
- 03 me ei voidas sitä (.) sillon. (0.4)
 we NEG can SG3-PAR then
 we can’t do it (.) then. (0.4)
- 04 -> me lähdetään Niittymaalles suoraan
 we leave-PASS PlaceName-ALL directly
 we are leaving to Niittymaa directly
- 05 -> [Kantakylältä.]
 PlaceName-ABL
 [from Kantakylä.]
- 06 P: [voi harmi sitten.]
 PRT pity then
 [what a pity then.]
- 07 C: no millos meil ois seuraava.
 PRT when-CLI we-ADE be-COND next
 well when would we have the next.

In this case, the participants seem to orient to the cantor’s statement about the speaker’s and the recipient’s joint future actions (*we’ll leave to Niittymaa directly from Kantakylä*. l. 4-5) as an “innocent” informing about how the work tasks have been allocated in the congregation in question. This is obvious in two points: First, even though the actualization of the propositional content of the cantor’s statement is very much dependent on the priest’s future actions, she does not display any commitment to future action. Instead, she orients to the “truthfulness” of this particular “future fact” as something that is outside the domain of the deontic rights of *both* of the participants; she expresses her *frustration* with the state of affairs (*what a pity then*. l. 6), but does not attempt to change it in any way. Second, the cantor initiates a new

topic right after the priest's frustration display. In this way, she makes clear that she expects no other (more deontic) response from the priest.

Even though, in Extracts 28 and 29, the statements about the speaker's and the recipient's joint future actions were very similar when it comes to the syntactic form of the utterances, the question in these cases was about slightly different actions: In Extract 28, both of the participants obviously knew that it was up to *them* to decide what things to "emphasize" while talking to the parents of the confirmation kids. It is from this very perspective that the priest's statement could be heard as imposing. By *announcing a decision*, the priest implied that the deontic rights in the matter in question are not distributed equally between the participants. In Extract 29, then again, it was the participants' shared knowledge about the cantor having absolutely no rights concerning the priest's work schedule that guided the priest to treat the utterance as a "mere" *informing*; in effect, in this case, neither the cantor nor the priest seemed to have any deontic rights in the domain in question.

The idea that deontic announcements calling for recipient action and "innocent" informings can be performed by similar declarative statements is something that interactional participants can make use of as a powerful resource (Stevanovic/Peräkylä, submitted). Let us consider Extract 30, drawn a bit earlier from the same conversation as Extract 27, in which the question was about planning a birthday party.

(30) (Farmhouse)

01 Laura: -> We're gonna throw a big birthday bash.
 02 November, December are just gonna be party months
 03 at our house.
 04 Donna: Is that right?
 05 Laura: Two big birthdays... (Laughter)
 06 Mom: -> No, that's not right. We're letting it go by very quietly,
 07 sneak right through.
 08 Laura: Let me run this by you - She gave her best friend and her
 09 husband a surprise birthday party for their birthday, 50th
 10 -> birthdays and she wants us to just forget about hers. Do you
 11 think that's gonna happen? (Laughter)
 12 Mom: (Nods)

At the beginning of Extract 30, Laura makes a statement about what is going to happen in her family (l. 1-3). This is treated as an informing by Donna, a guest who is not part of the family. Then again, Mom – the "birthday hero" – might have acknowledged the utterance as more than an informing. This is not the case, however. Instead, *also Mom* treats Laura's statement as an informing, but, curiously, as an informing that is not "correct" (*No, that's not right*. l. 6). However, when it comes to organizing birthday (surprise) parties in families, the question is hardly whose information about the upcoming party is "correct". The question is rather about a benevolent power struggle between whose opinions are going to win; who determines how to celebrate the day – the birthday hero or the other members of the family?

Hence, Mom seems to ignore the deontic implications of Laura's utterance. In this way, she closes her eyes to Laura's possible plans and intentions – something that is only thoughtful and considerate, given the idiosyncratic logic of birthday party planning. Also the latter part of Mom's utterance would allow for such an interpretation (*We're letting it go by very quietly, sneak right through*. l. 6-7). Ostensibly, Mom only provides Donna with the "correct" information, which Laura was "unable" to do. It is, however, Laura's subsequent turn that makes apparent the deontic significance of the whole sequence: Mom does not *want* to have a big party, but the children, on the other hand, are *not going to* forget about it (l. 10-11). Thus, we realize how the possibility to *ignore* the deontic layer of meaning of a statement about the

speaker's and the recipient's joint future actions, can be used strategically to achieve certain interactional ends (cf. Stevanovic/Peräkylä, submitted).

When it comes to “deferred actions” (Lindström 1999), recipients' orientations to first speakers' deontic rights are commonly displayed in the ways recipients display commitment for the future actions in question (Huisman 2001: 70; see also Schegloff 2007: 6-7). On the other hand, those actions that are supposed to be performed immediately in the interaction, then and there, are different in this respect. In these instances, the recipient can confirm the speaker's deontic rights by simply performing the very action requested by the first speaker. This is true also when it comes to those requests for action that are implemented by statements about the speakers' and recipients' joint actions. Such statements can be used, for example, to manage the agenda, to announce transition from one topic to another. Extract 30 is a prototypical case. The priest's announcement is met with silence but, by the word *sermon* (*saarnaan*), the cantor changes her bodily orientation and starts writing, displaying thus an orientation to some kind of a progress in the agenda. More importantly, it seems that the priest does not seem interpret the cantor's silence as indicative of any problems, such as resistance. Instead, she goes on to pursue the new topic.

(31) (KM2 25:28)

- 01 (0.8)
- 02 P: -> niin sit me päästään ↑evankeliumiin. (0.3)
 PRT then we get-PASS evangelium-ILL
so then we'll get to the Evangelium. (0.3)
- 03 saarnaan, (2.3) ja, (0.3) ↑mites me nyt sit
 sermon-ILL and how-CLI we now then
the Sermon, (2.3) and, (0.3) now ↑how shall we then
- 04 tehdään tää, (0.9) .mthhhhhhhhh et onko saarnan
 do-PASS this PRT be-Q sermon-GEN
do this, (0.9) .tchhhhhhhhh will there be then
- 05 jälkeen sitten, hhhhhhhhhhh (0.8)
 after then
after the Sermon, hhhhhhhhhhh (0.8)

Extract 32 demonstrates, however, that there is – in principle – an option for the recipient to ignore the deontic layer of meaning even in this kind of an agenda-related statement.

(32) (VM 16:01)

- 01 C: ja sit päästään ehtoolliseen.
 and then get-PASS eucharist
and then we'll get to the Eucharist.
- 02 (1.0)
- 03 P: \$e:n u:sko\$?
 NEG-I believe
\$I: don't beli:eve\$?
- 04 (0.8)
- 05 P: \$millon ei näy\$,
 when NEG be.visible
\$if I don't see\$

- 06 C: ai meinaaksää ilmottaa et tänään
 PRT intend-SG2-CLI+you announce-INF PRT today
oh do you intend to make an announcement that today
- 07 ei olekkaan ehtoollista.
 NEG be-CLI eucharist-PAR
there will be no Eucharist.
- 08 P: heh (0.6) .hhhhhh \$no
heh (0.6) .hhhhhh \$well
- 09 olkoon? nyt sit\$°te° h[hhh]hhhh
 be-IMP-SG3 now then
let it be th\$°en° h[hhh]hhhh
- 10 C: [heh]

In this case, the cantor announces the next point in the agenda (*and then we'll get to the Eucharist*. l. 1) in a way that, at least in the church workplace meetings, is to be considered as most prototypical (cf. Extract 31). However, similar to Extract 30 (the case with the birthday party) the recipient ignores the deontic dimension of the utterance. By quoting the well-known Bible story about “doubting Thomas”,³ the priest implicates – in a humorous way (note the smiley voice) – that the transition to the next point in the agenda would be a question of *belief* (l. 3, 5). A question of belief, then again, is *a priori* not a question of compliance or non-compliance (Lukes 1978). Through this kind of magical twist, the priest manages simply to look away from the cantor’s previously claimed primary deontic rights in the domain of meeting agenda management.

In her subsequent response, the cantor underlines the self-evidence of her rights to announce the Eucharist as the next topic. Given the fact that the participants are preparing a *Mass* – a church event, in which the Eucharist is what matters the most – the cantor’s question (*oh do you intend to make an announcement that today there will be no Eucharist*. l. 6-7) can, by no means, be heard as serious; the Eucharist is a “must”. What the cantor leaves unmentioned is, of course, the fact that it is a different matter to *have* the Eucharist in the next Sunday’s Mass than to *discuss* it at the current point in the current church workplace meeting. Thereby, she circumvents the awkward implication of the priest’s utterance – the fact that not all participants have equal (deontic) rights to determine the interactional agenda.

In this case, we can once more observe the general vulnerability of the declarative requests for action: Even in the case of this kind of a routine announcement – an implicit request for the recipient to move to the next point in the agenda, along with the speaker – the deontic significance of the utterance could easily be undermined.

In this section, we have discussed declarative statements in which the speaker makes a statement about an action that someone is going to perform, either instantly in the interaction, then and there, or sometime after the interaction. These utterances can sometimes be understood as implementing requests for action in the form of “hints”. However, in cases in which the actualization of the propositional content of a statement is directly contingent on the recipient’s actions, such statements can be used to implement exceptionally straightforward requests for action. In my analysis of such instances, I have shown how recipients are very much alive to this matter, and, in general, orient to the normative expectation that each participant has primary deontic rights in the domain of his *own* future actions. Nevertheless, also this kind of statements can sometimes be used for other

³ Thomas was the only disciple of Christ who did not believe in the resurrection without seeing him with his own eyes first.

interactional purposes. Therefore, similar to the statements about the speaker, analyzed earlier in this paper, the question what makes a statement about a future action recognizable as a request for recipient action, is something that calls us to consider the speaker's deontic status relative to the recipient. When the participants' relationship in the domain in question is permeated with speaker-tilted deontic asymmetry, such utterances can easily be heard as requests for action – irrespective of whether the “actor” of the statement is the recipient (*you*), the speaker (*I*), or both (*we*). On the other hand, in cases, in which neither of the participants has power to decide about the future action in question, the recipients may treat such statements as “innocent” informings – about states of affairs which certainly might *de facto* have implications on their own future actions. Importantly, however, these actions are not caused by the *speaker* having made a request for recipient action.

5 SUMMARY

As has been pointed out throughout this paper, interactional participants constantly make judgments concerning their deontic rights relative to one another and use these judgments as a resource for action formation. It is exactly due to these judgments that it is a risky endeavor to use declarative statements to implement a request for action. When the speaker makes a statement about her needs and desires, inclinations, and deficiencies, her statements can be heard as a request for action only in situations in which the speaker has a high deontic status relative to the recipient. This is also true when it comes to statements about future events. Even though participants' capacity to choose between personal pronouns *you*, *I* and *we*, is a resource through which they can increase or decrease the likelihood of a deontic hearing of their statement, even this resource can be “trumped” (cf. Heritage, forthcoming) by the participants' judgments about their deontic rights relative to one another.

In the analysis of the data extracts of this paper, we could see how this general vulnerability of declarative requests for action makes them an interesting locus of power struggle: There are several simple ways in which participants can – strategically or innocently – “misinterpret” such utterances. In this paper, I have exhibited some of these ways. Besides, I have shown how, in cases of “successful” interpretation, the speakers design their utterances with respect to their deontic rights.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have talked about the deontic rights of a person as a capacity that allows him to determine future actions – to make decisions on how the world *will be*. The general idea of participants' deontic rights is related to issues that have been discussed in the conversation analytic literature revolving around the notion of “entitlement”. Heinemann (2006), for example, has paid attention to the ways senior-citizens orient to their entitlement to have different kinds of services from home help providers: With a positive interrogative, the care recipient orients to her request as one she is *not* entitled to make. In contrast, with a negative interrogative, the care recipient displays her entitlement to have service. In a similar vein, Curl/Drew (2008) have shown how the request forms that speakers select reflect their understandings of the contingencies associated with the recipient's ability to grant the request, and thereby also their entitlement to make the request: By prefacing a request with a modal verb (e.g., *Can you...*), speakers orient to “grant-ability” of the request, while, by choosing some other request formats (e.g., *I wonder if...*), they display an orientation to known or anticipated contingencies associated with their request.

As long as the speaker's entitlement to make some kind of a request of a certain recipient is encoded in the linguistic design of the speaker's turns at talk, the question is, by and large, about the same phenomenon that, in this paper, has been captured by the notion of

participants' "deontic rights". By the distinction between "deontic status" and "deontic stance", we may, however, talk about the deontic status of a person in a certain domain as a "real world" feature that is not only displayed in the concrete performance of actions in interaction but also used as a resource for action formation. With the help of the notion of deontic stance, again, we may account also for those situations in which people deploy their deontic stance to appear more or less authoritative than their deontic status would suggest.

From this point of view, we may perceive some of the "emancipatory" potential of the present considerations. Even though there have been some important contributions in this area (e.g., Ohara/Saft 2003, Speer 2005; Kitzinger/Frith 1999), empowerment and social critique have never played central roles in the mainstream of conversation analysis (for debates, see Schegloff 1997; Billig 1999 a, b; Schegloff 1999 a, b; Schegloff 1998; Wetherell 1998). Instead, conversation analysts have been faithful to the ethnomethodological policy of "indifference" (Garfinkel/Sacks 1970: 345) – a policy that prioritizes the participants' own ways of doing and seeing over the themes, theories and methods of social science. However, in light of present considerations, it seems possible to comply entirely with the rigorous principles of conversation analytic methodology and yet to pay attention to phenomena that might be interesting from the point of view of emancipation. Namely, while a highly authoritative speaker may assume that his deontic status alone is enough for the recipient to attribute deontic consequentiality to the speaker's utterance, we may observe also such situations in which a person's deontic status is *not* acknowledged as a component of action formation in the way that the speaker herself seems to have expected. From this point of view, again, we may consider what kind of power relations are maintained by the following kinds of recommendations to be found in the most celebrated marriage guides, such as John Gray's (1992) *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*.

"Women often think they are asking for support when they are not. When she needs support, a woman may present the problem but not directly ask for his support. She expects him to offer his support and neglects directly to ask for it." (Gray 1992: 165)

From the point of view of this paper, we can see how urging people to claim an explicit deontic stance is a most effective way for their companion to avoid acknowledging their deontic status. And I believe it is exactly for this reason that "asking directly" can sometimes be so "difficult": The speakers do not avoid imposition *only* because they do not want to hurt recipients through their impoliteness (Brown/Levinson 1987) but, quite the other way around, speakers do not want to "hurt" themselves in terms of their deontic status; they want to have a feeling of *having* deontic rights without always needing to *claim* them. Hence, when speakers produce "my side" descriptions (Pomerantz 1980), and hope for the appropriate actions to be performed voluntarily by the recipients, the question is essentially about "who we are to each other" (cf. Stivers/Rossano 2010a: 24) and thus about a matter we deeply care about; if our deontic status does not get acknowledged by our companion, this can be regarded as instructive of the (lack of) quality of our mutual relationship.

While the deontic status of a person is something that people can – with more or less success – use as a resource for formatting "deontically" consequential actions, such as requests for recipient action, we may briefly mention the other resources that speakers can use for the same purpose. First of all, there is the possibility to choose between different syntactic structures; instead of using declaratives, a person may use interrogatives or imperatives, to implement a request for action. Besides, if the speaker chooses to make a declarative statement about future facts, he may use personal pronouns *we* and *you*, instead of *I*, to underline the deontic nature of his utterance (a parallel idea, according to which shifts from the personal pronoun *I* to *you* are sometimes possible without having to change the status of an utterance

as an action, is to be found in Stivers/Rossano 2010a: 21). Moreover, some of the data extracts analyzed in this paper suggest that prosody (Extracts 18 and 19), embodiment (Extract 25), and gaze (Extract 20) may play significant roles in this respect, too. It might even be that in a sequential location in which an utterance appears ambiguous as to its deontic implications, very simple resources, such as emphasis on a certain word, hand movement toward the object of discussion, or eye contact with the recipient, can help the recipient to recognize the deontic implications of the utterance.

How are these different resources then to be weighed? Should we assume, for example, that verbal features are the strongest ones, visual and prosodic features somewhat less significant, and the “real world” features such as the speaker’s deontic status relative to the recipient worth mentioning only in situations in which there are absolutely no other cues for the recipient to recognize the deontic implications of the first speakers’ utterances? To my mind, there is no reason to take this view for granted *a priori*. Instead, much work will be required to explore the relative weight of the different features out of which different actions are constructed.

In this paper, the scope of the study was limited to specific kinds of declarative requests for action: statements about the speaker and statements about future facts. However, this is not to be taken to mean that the relevance of participants’ deontic right as a feature of action formation would be limited to these actions only. An interesting question, for example, would be to consider declaratives with a modal verb, such as *you can*, and reflect on the circumstances, in which such utterances are heard and treated as requests for action and not as offers. When we turn to other syntactic structures, there are mysteries one after another. For example, interrogative constructions, such as the ones prefaced by *Can I* or *Can we*, prompt the question when these are interpreted as requests for permission and when as announcements (cf. Schegloff 2007: 6-7). Proposals, then again, can be implemented by both declaratives and interrogatives, but what makes them identifiable as proposals? I am convinced that we need to take the relative distribution of participants’ deontic rights into account to be able to respond to all these questions.

The “real world” features, such as participants’ deontic rights, are matters that conversation analysts have commonly referred to by the notion of “context”. However, as Schegloff (2010) has asserted, the aim of conversation analysis – in its purest form – is to illuminate “organizations of practice that underwrite *all* interaction” (p. 40). In other words, the question is about *generic* properties of talk and social action that contribute to the constitution of social reality. For this reason, everyday conversations have been regarded as ideal research data (see e.g. Local/Walker 2008: 724). While other conversation analysts have directed their research at disclosing interactional practices through which specific *institutions* are “talked to being” (Heritage 1984: 290), they have been warned against arbitrary appeal to a myriad of possible context features (e.g., Schegloff, 1987, 1997).

In this paper, I have taken a slightly different perspective on this discussion. Taking the present considerations together with the findings of Heritage (forthcoming), the conclusion is that *participants need to be constantly aware of both their epistemic and deontic rights relative to one another to be able to interpret each other’s actions*. In this respect, everyday talk is just as “institutional” as any institutional interaction. In both cases, participants’ positions in terms of their epistemic and deontic rights vary from domain to domain. In both cases, asymmetries are constantly shifting, but they are always there. Thus, to summarize: there exists no social vacuum in which no other “institution” than the “enabling institution” of the generic interaction order (Schegloff 1987: 208) would be present. With this I do not mean only the common “everyday institutions”, such as parenthood, friendship or marriage, but also the participants’ normative expectations concerning the relative distribution of their epistemic and deontic rights (for example the idea that people have primary epistemic and deontic rights

concerning their own thoughts and intentions and subordinate rights concerning other people's thoughts and intentions), which can be regarded as outcomes of important institutionalization processes (cf. Berger/Luckmann 1967).

Hence, it is first and foremost the recent overall theorizing on action formation that calls us to question the fruitfulness of the distinction between everyday talk and institutional interaction. Since "real world" features, such as the context of ongoing activities, the larger institutional framework and the participants' social roles, are to be regarded as important elements of action formation (Levinson (forthcoming)), conversation analytically informed theorizing on action formation should try to figure out ways to take these contextual features of interaction *systematically into account* when explicating the ways participants ascribe actions to each other's turns at talk. It is exactly in this respect that the notions of participants' epistemic and deontic rights might be helpful. By this I mean, in no way, that different contextual configurations in their abundance of detail could be somehow reduced to the mentioned elements alone. Nevertheless, I believe that, with the help of the notions of participants' epistemic and deontic rights, we might be able to deal with those features of the complex contextual configurations that are most important from the point of view of action formation.

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8 Transcription conventions

.	pitch fall
?	pitch rise
,	level pitch
↑↓	marked pitch movement
<u>underlining</u>	emphasis
-	truncation
[]	overlap
=	latching of turns
(0.5)	pause (length in tenths of a second)
(.)	micropause
:	lengthening of a sound
hhh	audible out-breath
.hhh	audible in-breath
(h)	within-speech aspiration, usually indicating laughter
#	creaky voice quality
\$	smiley voice quality
°	whisper
@	other change in voice quality
mt, tch, krh	vocal noises
<word>	slow speech rate
>word<	fast speech rate

9 Glossing abbreviations

SG	singular
PL	plural

1, 2, 3	person
GEN	genetive
PAR	partitive
ESS	essive
TRA	translative
INE	inessive
ELA	elative
ILL	illative
ADE	adessive
ABL	ablative
ALL	allative
ACC	accusative
COMP	comparative
INF	infinitive
COND	conditional
IMP	imperative
CLI	clitic
Q	question clitic
NEG	negation
PST	past tense
PASS	passive
PPC	past participle
PPPC	passive past participle
POSS	possessive suffix

Nominative, active and present tense are forms that have been considered unmarked. These have not been glossed.