

A CORPUS STUDY OF REQUESTS IN NATURALLY OCCURRING SPOKEN
AMERICAN ENGLISH: A CONTEXT ANALYSIS APPROACH

by

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Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;

And He that might the vantage best have took

Found out the remedy.

(Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* II.ii)

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Abstract

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Given the variety of ways that speakers of American English can make requests, relatively little has been discovered on why speakers choose the forms they do. Using data from the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English, this study investigates what requestive forms American speakers use as well as the contextual conditions that occur with these forms. The study identifies categories of requestive forms, including let statements, if statements, modal statements, need/want statements, imperatives and modal interrogatives and the contextual parameters that occur with them, including social distance, social power, contingency, entitlement, sequential positioning, among others. These forms demonstrate patterns of sensitivity to the contextual factors noted within this study. That is, no one group of linguistic forms has an identical pattern of use with another group of linguistic forms. Besides social power, social distance, contingency and entitlement, requestive forms demonstrate sensitivity to contextual elements such as the degree to which speaker and hearer cooperate on activities, initiating new pedagogical moves, responding to offers, maximizing cooperation when it is not expected, interrupting an activity, and distinguishing between primed and non-primed requests.

Implications for the results of this analysis include applications for learners of English as well as for a theoretical paradigm that best accounts for the data. The study

demonstrates that a static view of context is insufficient to explain the variation of forms speakers use in requesting and that for learners of English, gaining pragmatic competence is not as simple as learning a few forms such as past tense modals or *please* that can be tacked onto requestive utterances to make them 'polite'. With high-imposition requests, learners of English need to gain linguistic flexibility, particularly in lexico-syntactic modification within the request sequence.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Figures.....	xi
List of Tables	xii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research Questions and Justification	2
1.1.1 Why Requests?	2
1.1.2 Why Naturally-occurring Corpus Data?.....	5
1.1.3 Why Context-Analysis?	8
1.2 Dissertation Overview	10
Chapter 2 Literature Review	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Major Theories for Analyzing Requests	12
2.2.1 Speech Act Theory	12
2.2.1.1 Austin-Searle speech act theory	12
2.2.1.2 Theories after Searle	14
2.2.1.3 Implications for Searle-Austin speech act theory.....	17
2.2.1.4 Summary.....	22
2.2.2 Politeness Theory.....	23
2.2.3 Conversation Analysis.....	25
2.2.4 Summary	28
2.3 Cross-linguistic Request Analysis	29
2.4 Request Analysis in Corpus Based Studies	33

2.4.1 Introduction and Argument for Corpus-based Analysis of Speech	
Acts	33
2.4.2 Requests in Large Corpus Analysis	37
2.4.3 Limited-focus Corpus Analysis of Requests.....	42
2.5 Summary and Transition	47
Chapter 3 Methodology.....	50
3.1 Introduction.....	50
3.2 Corpora Criteria and Selection	50
3.3 Data Collection	54
3.3.1 Defining Requests	54
3.3.2 Data Extraction	58
3.4 Data Coding and Analysis	64
3.4.1 Coding categories.....	64
3.4.1.1 Context type	66
3.4.1.2 Type of request	68
3.4.1.3 Contingency and entitlement	69
3.4.1.4 Speakers	77
3.4.1.5 Social power.....	78
3.4.1.6 Interaction type	79
3.4.1.7 Position in request	80
3.4.1.8 explicitness.....	80
3.4.1.9 Compliance	82
3.4.1.10 Definiteness of object referenced	83
3.4.1.11 Repeated requests.....	83
3.4.1.12 Summary.....	83

3.4.2 Data Analysis.....	84
3.4.2.1 Qualitative and non-statistical quantitative analysis	84
3.4.2.2 Statistical analysis.....	85
Chapter 4 Results	87
4.1 Introduction	87
4.2 Statement Requests	88
4.2.1 Let Statements	89
4.2.1.1 Contingency and entitlement	89
4.2.1.2 Social power.....	91
4.2.1.3 Social distance	92
4.2.2 If Statements	93
4.2.3 Need/Want Statements	96
4.2.3.1 <i>I need, I want, I wanna</i>	97
4.2.3.2 <i>Would like/prefer/want</i>	100
4.2.3.3 <i>Need/want</i> statement requests with first person plural subjects	102
4.2.4 Modal Statements.....	104
4.2.4.1 Context type	106
4.2.4.2 Contingency and entitlement	107
4.2.4.3 Social power.....	108
4.2.4.4 Sequential positioning	108
4.2.5 Summary of Statement Request Results	110
4.3 Imperatives	111
4.3.1 Introduction.....	111
4.3.2 Results.....	112

4.3.2.1 Context type	112
4.3.2.2 Contingency and entitlement	114
4.3.2.3 Social power.....	121
4.3.3 Summary	122
4.4 Interrogative Requests	122
4.4.1 Introduction.....	122
4.4.2 Results.....	123
4.4.2 Conventional Modal Interrogative Results Overview	126
4.5 Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis	128
4.6 Summary	134
Chapter 5 Analysis	136
5.1 Introduction.....	136
5.2 Statement Requests	136
5.2.1 Let Statements	136
5.2.2 If Statements	144
5.2.3 Need/Want Statements	161
5.2.3.1 Bare stem <i>need/want</i> statements	163
5.2.3.2 <i>Would like/prefer/want</i>	181
5.2.3.3 First-person plural subject <i>need/want</i> statement requests	209
5.2.3.4 Multi-unit request sequences	214
5.2.3.5 <i>Need/want</i> statement request summary	221
5.2.4 Modal Statements.....	223
5.3 Imperatives	235
5.3.1 Summary of Imperatives	244
5.3.2 Overview of Statement Request Forms and Imperatives	245

5.4 Interrogative Requests	248
5.4.1 Resource Interrogative Requests.....	248
5.4.2 Permission Interrogatives	253
5.4.3 Willingness Interrogatives	258
5.4.3.1 <i>Do you wanna</i> and <i>you wanna</i>	259
5.4.3.2 <i>Do you think you want</i> and <i>would you like</i>	267
5.4.4 Conventional Modal Interrogatives.....	271
5.4.4.1 <i>Can you</i>	271
5.4.4.2 <i>Could you</i>	275
5.4.4.3 <i>Will you</i>	277
5.4.4.4 <i>Would you</i>	282
5.4.5 Summary of Modal Interrogative Requests.....	284
5.5 Conclusion	288
Chapter 6 Discussion	290
6.1 Summary	290
6.2 Implications for theory	293
6.3 Practical implications for Language Learners of English	302
6.4 Future Directions for Additional Research.....	315
Appendix A Strategies or phrases that indicate contingency and entitlement in the <i>Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English</i>	317
References.....	323
Biographical Information	332

List of Figures

Figure 3-1 Subclasses of requestives from Tsui (1994:98).	57
Figure 3-2 Sample screenshot of Transcript 1 from the <i>Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English</i>	59
Figure 3-3 Metadata for Transcript 1 of the <i>Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English</i>	60
Figure 3-4 Speaker information and corresponding categories of speaker information for Transcript 1 of the <i>Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English</i>	61
Figure 3-5 Excerpt from notes on requests in the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English.	63
Figure 3-6 Sample Coding Page for <i>Let</i> Statements	66

List of Tables

Table 2-1 Summary of Aijmer (1996:149) Indirect Request Types	40
Table 2-2 Summary of Aijmer (1996) Function Profile for <i>Can/Could/Will/Would You</i> Requests	41
Table 4-1 Distribution of C/E Levels for <i>Let</i> Statements in the SBCSAE	89
Table 4-2 Distribution of Social Power for <i>Let</i> Statements in the SBCSAE.....	91
Table 4-3 Distribution of Context Type (Social Distance) for <i>Let</i> Statements in the SBCSAE.....	92
Table 4-4 Crosstabulation Analysis for Context Type and <i>Let</i> Statements	92
Table 4-5 Distribution of Context Type for <i>If</i> Statements in the SBCSAE	93
Table 4-6 Distribution of C/E Levels for <i>If</i> Statements in the SBCSAE	93
Table 4-7 Distribution of Social Power for <i>If</i> Statements in the SBCSAE.....	93
Table 4-8 <i>If</i> Statements in Transactional Contexts.....	94
Table 4-9 <i>If</i> Statement Requests in Non-transactional Contexts.....	95
Table 4-10 <i>Need/Want</i> Statement Forms in the SBCSAE.....	96
Table 4-11 Distribution of Context Type for <i>I Need, I Want, I Wanna</i> Statement Requests in the SBCSAE	97
Table 4-12 Distribution of Contingency/Entitlement Levels for <i>I Need, I Want, I Wanna</i> Statement Requests in the SBCSAE	97
Table 4-13 Distribution of Social Power for <i>I Need, I Want, I Wanna</i> Statement Requests in the SBCSAE	97
Table 4-14 Crosstabulation for <i>Need/Want</i> Statements and Binary Contingency/Entitlement Levels.....	98
Table 4-15 <i>Need/Want</i> Statement Request Forms with <i>Would</i>	100

Table 4-16 Distribution of Context Type for <i>Need/Want</i> Statements with <i>Would</i> in the SBCSAE.....	101
Table 4-17 Distribution of C/E Levels for <i>Need/Want</i> Statements with <i>Would</i> in the SBCSAE.....	101
Table 4-18 Distribution of Social Power for <i>Need/Want</i> Statements with <i>Would</i> in the SBCSAE.....	101
Table 4-19 <i>Need/want</i> Statements with First Person Plural Subjects	102
Table 4-20 Distribution of Context Type for <i>Need/Want</i> Statement Requests in the SBCSAE with First Person Plural Subjects.....	103
Table 4-21 Distribution of Contingency/Entitlement for <i>Need/Want</i> Statement Requests in the SBCSAE with First Person Plural Subjects.....	103
Table 4-22 Distribution of Social Power for <i>Need/Want</i> Statement Requests in the SBCSAE with First Person Plural Subjects.....	103
Table 4-23 Modal Statement Requests in the SBCSAE.....	106
Table 4-24 Distribution of Social Distance Context Types for Modal Statements	107
Table 4-25 Distribution of C/E Levels for Modal Statement Requests in the SBCSAE..	107
Table 4-26 Distribution of Social Power for Modal Statement Requests in the SBCSAE.....	108
Table 4-27 Crosstabulation of Modal Statements for Position of Requestive Utterance in Discourse	109
Table 4-28 Distribution of Context Type for Imperatives in the SBCSAE.....	112
Table 4-29 Distribution of C/E Levels for Imperatives in the SBCSAE.....	114
Table 4-30 Task-oriented Imperative Utterances in Intimate and Socio-Cultural Contexts	116

Table 4-31 Discourse/Spatially Oriented Imperative Utterances in Intimate and Socio-Cultural Contexts.....	118
Table 4-32 Negative-Action Oriented Imperative Utterances in Intimate and Socio-Cultural Contexts.....	120
Table 4-33 Distribution of Social Power for Imperatives in the SBCSAE	121
Table 4-34 Distribution of Social Power with Context Type for Imperatives in the SBCSAE.....	121
Table 4-35 Linguistic Forms of Modal Interrogatives in the SBCSAE	124
Table 4-36 Distribution of Context Type for Modal Interrogative Requests in the SBCSAE.....	125
Table 4-37 Distribution of C/E Level Requests for Modal Interrogatives in the SBCSAE.....	125
Table 4-38 Distribution of Social Power for Modal Interrogative Requests in the SBCSAE.....	126
Table 4-39 Distribution of Context Type for Conventional Modal Interrogatives in the SBCSAE.....	127
Table 4-40 Distribution of C/E Levels for Conventional Modal Interrogatives in the SBCSAE.....	127
Table 4-41 Distribution of Social Power for Conventional Modal Interrogatives in the SBCSAE.....	128
Table 4-42 Logistic regression Analysis for Low vs. High Contingency/entitlement Level, Close vs. Wide Social Distance and Social Power Relationship Levels.....	130
Table 5-1 Functional Profile of <i>Would Like</i> vs. <i>Want/Wanna</i> in Transactional, Low Contingency/Entitlement Contexts.....	186
Table 5-2 Summary of Statement Request Relevant Contextual Features.....	246

Table 5-3 Distribution for Context Type of <i>can you</i> modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE.....	271
Table 5-4 Distribution of C/E Levels for <i>can you</i> modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE.	271
Table 5-5 Distribution of Social Power for <i>can you</i> modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE.....	272
Table 5-6 Results Summary for Modal Interrogative Requests in the SBCSAE	285

Chapter 1

Introduction

In North American English, there are a variety of linguistic forms that speakers might choose to make requests. They might say, *pass the salt*, *I need the salt*, *If you'd pass the salt please*, *would you mind passing the salt*, *I was wondering if you might be able to pass the salt*, *hey could you please pass the salt*, *salt please*, or even use a non-verbal method such as pointing to the salt. This theoretically infinite number of ways to request provides a challenge to learners of English, for not only must they master the linguistic forms for requesting but also the appropriate contexts in which to use these forms. While a significant number of studies have looked at English language learner requests in interlanguage contexts, as well as in computer mediated communication (email) (e.g., Biesenbach-Lucas 2007, Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011), far fewer have sought to identify the forms native speakers use in naturally-occurring interactional data and the context in which those forms occur. In addition, much of the discussion, until very recently, has been on indirect speech acts and the apparent mismatch between the form of a sentence and its function. That is, how and why do we understand *can you pass the salt?* to be not merely a question of ability but primarily a request for action.

The focus of this study is not on how it is theoretically possible to process a modal Interrogative as a request for an action, nor even on the degree or number of (in)direct speech acts in a given context (e.g. Camiciottoli 2009) but rather on the relationship between the forms speakers use and the context in which those forms occur. In other words, given the range of possible forms for requesting, why do speakers choose the forms they do? By investigating what forms native North American English speakers choose to use and why they choose to use those forms, we can establish a more

accurate framework for teaching learners of English how to achieve pragmatic competence.

1.1 Research Questions and Justification

The goals of this research are to (1) empirically investigate what linguistic forms are being produced in making requests in naturally occurring spoken corpus data of North American English and then (2) what contextual conditions—linguistic, pragmatic, discourse or social—are produced with those forms; and (3) to consider what framework or classification paradigm works best with the data. The first two goals of this proposal involve extracting data from corpora and looking for patterns of the linguistic forms used for requests, noting the context and function of those features in a systematic and detailed way. The third has to do with the implications that speech patterns in use may have on theories of speech act and meaning.

1.1.1 Why Requests?

Though general linguistic patterns have been noted before for requests as well as for other speech acts, no extensive analysis of requests in American English corpora exists. Ervin-Tripp (1976) is the only study to attempt to broadly identify the forms North American English produce in requesting. Most other request studies have been done on alternate English dialects such as British or Australian, or focused on cross-cultural comparison contexts and thus have not explored the full range of requests and their contexts. A much discussed taxonomy of requests is the direct vs. indirect category of requests. And has been noted often (or at the least assumed), indirect requests are much more frequently produced by speakers than direct requests (Searle 1975). Since this is the case, more fine-tuned research on what have been traditionally termed indirect requests is needed. Sadock (2006:71) notes that “most theories of speech acts barely touch on the reasons for which speakers use indirect rather than direct forms, nor do they

seek an explanation for which particular indirect forms will be used under which conditions.” Adolphs (2008) also notes that though particular lexico-grammatical forms have been linked specifically with the production of various speech acts, no systematic analysis has been made about which particular forms tend to occur under which conditions. Sadock (2006) goes on to remark that most speculation about reasons for indirect forms are subsumed under a general politeness motivational factor (see also Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, Tsui 1994). This line of thought has spurred a great deal of speech act/politeness investigations, particularly on a cross-linguistic level. While politeness is, no doubt, an important factor for why indirect forms are used, it may not be the only motivational factor. Or it may be that politeness is subsumed under a larger umbrella of interactional and contextual reasons for which speakers produce the forms they do. And even assuming a politeness motivation for indirect forms, there are a range of linguistic expressions used in requests that are often categorized as purportedly polite, but questions remain about how or why speakers choose between these various supposedly polite forms. For example, Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman raise the issue of requests with *would you* and *could you* (1998:145). Though English speakers acknowledge that *would* or *could* have different meanings, pragmatically there seems to be little difference between the two the requests below :

- (1) Could I talk to you for a minute?
- (2) Would you open the door?

Both requests are ostensibly labeled polite (Brown & Levinson 1987) and both seem likely to be successful, in that a hearer will probably open the door for the speaker unless prevented by some unusual circumstance. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1998:145) call the difference between (1) and (2) “subtle” and hypothesize that “the former seems to ask ‘is this possible?’ whereas the latter seems to query the willingness of the

addressee.” They conclude that “further data-based research ... is needed to show us precisely in what contexts each form is preferred and why” (1998:145).

Some investigations into what contexts are relevant to the ways requests are made have been done. However, a significant number of them have been cross-linguistic comparisons between English and other languages (Greek and American English, Economidou-Kogetsidis 2005; Hebrew and English, Blum-Kulka 1987; German and English, House & Kasper 1981, Schauer 2004; Chinese and English, Lin 2009; Australian English, Blum-Kulka 1989; Japanese and English, Tada 2005, Polish and British English, Zinken & Ogiermann 2013), or have focused on only one or two forms (Curl & Drew 2008, Vine 2009, Fox 2015). Relatively few have investigated the complexities of requesting in American English. Blum-Kulka et al., (1989:12), who compare requesting and apology strategies across six languages, note that “ despite the richness of the subject [of requests] for both sociolinguistics and cross-cultural pragmatics, surprisingly few studies have attempted to empirically document requesting behavior in one particular society, let alone compare it across different speech communities.” Since their purpose was to “establish patterns of request and apology realizations under different social constraints across a number of languages and cultures, including both native and nonnative varieties” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989:12), their data is useful for establishing general comparisons between request strategies of various languages, but a more thorough investigation into the request-making strategies of native English speakers remains to be seen. As Blum-Kulka et al., (1989:11) note, there is a “complexity” in the “relationship between form, meaning, and pragmatic prerequisites involved... and on the other hand,...high social stakes involved for both interlocutors in choice of linguistic options.”. If learners of English are trying to learn these pragmatic clues, a more thorough investigation is needed to see how native speakers of English are linking

particular forms and meaning with contextual factors. More investigation into how English speakers make requests will give language teachers more tools to teach pragmatic competence to their students.

1.1.2 Why Naturally-occurring Corpus Data?

This empirical request data needs to come from naturally occurring, spoken sources in order to validate what has been proposed in laboratory experiments and by intuition. Adolphs (2008) points out that investigations into speech acts and other pragmatic topics have relied largely on constructed examples. Ironically it is pragmatics which purports to explain language-in-use, yet the theoretical apparatus used to explain language in use relies largely on intuition. According to Adolphs, this creates a problem that corpus data can help to solve.

“In speech act theory in particular, the use of invented examples has supported a division between form and function....Rather than concentrating on patterns in language use, traditional speech act theory has focused on finding ways to explain the disparity between linguistic form and meaning in context. Corpus-based analyses of speech acts in use, on the other hand, illustrate that the form-function division might not be borne out in corpus data and cannot be sustained as the main focus of pragmatic investigation.” (2008:19)

Besides invented examples, speech-act forms have also been gathered from laboratory or by experimental methods in which researchers present particular situations and ask subjects to produce the appropriate response. Some of these studies include Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) and Lin (2009) who use Discourse Completion Task (DCT), Clark & Schunk (1980) & Turnbull and Saxton (1997) who use survey and interviews, and House & Kaspar (1981) & Trosborg (1994) who use role play. However, these laboratory production studies in which requests have been generated from native speakers all cite the “caveat” that what native speakers have produced in laboratory environments or surveys might actually be different from what is produced in naturally occurring situations

(Turnbull & Saxton 1997, Lin 2009). Though not completely invented and contextually empty, the data from these studies and others like them are essentially a product of intuition as well. Subjects imagine what they might say given the described circumstance. But what speakers think they will say and what they actually say may turn out to be quite different. Turnbull & Saxton (1997:176) suggest that “intuition may be a very poor predictor of the specific words used to construct [particular speech acts].” Even when asked about intentions, native speakers themselves may be hard-pressed to distinguish their own intentions. As Bach (2002:27) comments in critiquing experiments done by Gibbs & Moise (1997), “they [Gibbs & Moise] assume that what people say about what is said is strongly indicative of what is said. In fact, ... [it] tells us little about what is said, much less about the cognitive processes whereby people understand utterances” (qtd. in Recanati 2004:49).

There is some empirical evidence that natural conversation data produces different kinds of results. Jucker (2009) compares the data collection methods, research questions and results of speech act studies done on compliments and notes an interesting trend: in comparing speech acts across cultures, laboratory methods were normally used, but in examining native speaker patterns in-depth in one language, conversational analysis of naturally occurring data tends to be preferred. In at least one case, Jucker reports that these two methods produce contradictory results citing Schneider & Schneider (2000), who use the DCT method and claim that Americans produce fewer rejections to compliments, while Golato (2005), looking at corpus data, claims that Germans produce fewer rejections (Jucker 2009:1632). Beebe & Cummings (1996:80) compare natural speech data with responses collected from a written questionnaire in order to determine if data gathered in a questionnaire is “an accurate reflection of spoken data or a useful research method.” They examine refusals, gathering

data through the telephone and on a written survey. Overall the telephone responses were much longer than the written ones and included strategies such as “criticism and ‘guilt-tripping.’” These did not occur at all in the written survey data. In one case, a respondent “argued for six minutes that TESOL had been insensitive in the scheduling of state and national events on Jewish holidays” (1996:78). Beebe & Cummings (1996:78) conclude that while the survey method is useful for creating “initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies”, they cannot be depended upon to give “actual wording used in real interaction” or indicate the “length of response” or “repetitions” that may occur or even if the speech act is likely to occur “in a given situation.” They encourage using various methods to gather both laboratory and natural speech data. In the case of requests, no in-depth study of American English requesting (besides Irvin-Tripp 1976), using large amounts of naturally occurring spoken data exists. The kind of complex analysis which this study purports to do is best suited for naturally-occurring data. Also, the results can be compared to previous studies to verify whether DCTs and survey data present reliable results (see also Beaver 2007).

Furthermore, laboratory methods provide contexts that may or may not be representative of actual life situations, or may be very rare. While this enables researchers to control contextual variables in order to make correlations between particular linguistic forms and speech acts being performed (see Blum-Kulka et al 1989), it provides potentially misleading or skewed results. Because researchers construct the probable contextual factors that they are testing, it is possible that some significant factors are overlooked. For example, Rhinier (2007) found in a corpus pilot study that requests with negative propositional content (i.e., requests for the hearer to stop an action) correlated with the form *would you* and that these requests never occurred with *could you* in the corpus studied. Heineman (2006), Curl & Drew (2008), Vine (2009) and

Ogiermann (2015) identify additional factors such as entitlement, contingency, position in the discourse, and dependence vs. autonomy that had effect on the variation of requestive forms in naturally-occurring corpora. Starting with this corpus data allows for discovering these patterns.

1.1.3 Why Context-Analysis?

A third critical element of this proposal is the context analysis approach. Investigation of requests in context is important for clarifying and supporting theories which have claimed to explain how or why speakers of a language produce the forms they do. The term “context analysis” here refers to understanding the use of a requestive form to be a result of all of the relevant realities at play at the moment in time when an utterance is spoken. This may include everything from the socio-pragmatic realities of the surrounding events and relationship between speakers to linguistic and discourse elements such as the immediate sequential context of the utterance. Since “people use language to coordinate activities” (Clark 2006), it is important to look at not only isolated utterances (or even just one or two lines surrounding the utterances) but the larger chunks of context (Tsui 1994, Adolphs 2008). While this study is not done strictly in a conversation analysis (CA) framework, the focus on interactional data is key to both the analysis and results, while the CA principle of sequential relevance underpins the analysis. Clark’s (2006) insight is significant, especially for pragmatic studies, since the field prides itself on focusing not on merely the meanings of utterances, but on how and why they mean what they mean because of the context in which they are uttered. While several frameworks/theories have been proposed for analyzing speech acts (for example, Searle 1975, Gordon & Lakoff 1975, Sadock 1974) determining which of these (or none) are the ideal framework for explaining the variation in requestive forms requires more extensive empirical data to determine what forms are produced by native speakers. Clark

(2006:365) goes on to note that “pragmatics traditionally has focused on the preplanned, non-interactive language of novels, plays and news broadcasts..... But if pragmatics is the study of language in use, it must also account for the spontaneous, interactive language of cafés, classrooms, and offices.” Thus any discussion of pragmatic analysis must always give considerable time to examining the context—who is speaking to whom and why, what forms are they using and why. As Clark (2006:366) argues “spontaneous interactive language has its origins in joint activities.... [People] ...need to coordinate their individual actions” and they do so through “communicative acts”. Requests are by definition a “joint activity” or “communicative acts” and thus need to be studied and defined in terms of speakers, their contexts and the interaction itself.

Furthermore, a comprehensive corpus analysis of speech acts and their contexts is the next logical step to the laboratory studies of request forms already done. Ervin-Tripp (1976) notes that wider context and corpus analysis is needed to verify her conclusions. Clark & Schunk (1980), Blum-Kulka (1989), Lin (2009), among others, all remark in their discussions of why particular forms of requests are used (or not used) that “other contextual factors” may be contributing to the results of the study. Blanket statements about “other contextual factor” are useful for qualifying laboratory-produced results, but eventually they need to be explored. The recent explosion of corpora—particularly corpora that includes much more naturally-occurring data—opens up the possibility of studying pragmatic issues such as speech acts in ways thought impossible before. In addition, Curl & Drew’s (2008) seminal analysis of the requestive forms / *wonder if...* and modal interrogatives in interactive, spoken corpus data has motivated a number of investigations into requestive forms and their contexts (Craven & Potter 2010, Rossi 2012, 2015, Zinken & Ogiermann 2013, Zinken 2015, Ogiermann 2015, Fox 2015).

The current study follows this line of investigation as well as expands on it by examining a broader range of linguistic forms.

1.2 Dissertation Overview

Following this introduction and justification for the goals and research questions of the current study, Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on requesting, specifically within speech act theory, politeness theory, conversational analysis, cross-linguistic comparisons and other corpus-based analyses of requests. This chapter gives a more detailed overview of some of the sources briefly cited in Section 1.1 Research Questions and Justification. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used for the current study, and Chapter 4 describes the results of the study, particularly the six linguistic categories of requestive utterances found in the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English* and their corresponding contextual factors. Chapter 5 presents a broader discussion and analysis of these results. Chapter 6 discusses some of the implications of the results and analysis of the current study on speech act theory, particularly on the theoretical framework that seems best for studying requests. In addition, it provides some practical implications for learners of English in gaining pragmatic competence in requesting. It concludes with a broad overview of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter discusses pivotal or relevant perspectives on requesting in the literature. The discussion begins in Section 2.2 Major Theories for Analyzing Requests with a look at three major theoretical perspectives that have shaped the research on requesting: speech act theory, politeness theory and conversation analysis. First, there is a chronological overview of speech act theory in 2.2.1 Speech Act Theory starting with the seminal works of Austin and Searle which launched speech acts, and requests in particular, into the realm of serious linguistic inquiry. It continues with a short historical overview of the direction speech act theory took in the decades following Austin and Searle and highlights the primary legacy of this theoretical approach: direct vs. indirect speech acts. The review points out how this dichotomy is a powerful analytic tool with serious drawbacks to its use in the literature. With the assumption that direct requests should be speakers' preferred form yet the apparent proliferation of (and apparent preference for) indirect requestive forms, Section 2.2.2 Politeness Theory overviews Brown & Levinson's politeness theory, which seeks to account for this disparity. In their articulation of negative and positive face, Brown & Levinson (1987) highlight requests as inherently face-threatening, frequently occurring speech acts. As a result, Brown & Levinson's politeness theory has provided an impetus for examining requests across many languages, particularly in cross-linguistic comparisons. The overview of theoretical perspectives on requests closes with a brief discussion in 2.2.3 Conversation Analysis of a third major theoretical perspective, conversation analysis (CA) that has contributed to the understanding of requests. This area of linguistics has tended to focus primarily on the sequence of turns involved in requests, providing a clearer

picture of the discourse patterns associated with them. Section 2.3 Cross-linguistic Request Analysis overviews cross-linguistic studies of requests in the literature, their contributions to the understanding of requests, and their shortcomings. Finally, Section 2.4 Request Analysis in Corpus Based Studies highlights especially relevant corpora-based studies of requests, particularly those in naturally-occurring, spoken corpora. These include both large-scale discourse studies where requests form a smaller part of a broader study, as well as more focused studies that look at only two or three requestive forms. Section 2.5 Summary and Transition summarizes the literature review and discusses the place of the current study in the line of previous research on requesting, as well as the additional contributions of the current study.

2.2 Major Theories for Analyzing Requests

2.2.1 *Speech Act Theory*

The review of requests in speech act theory literature begins with a summary of what Austin and Searle formulated. Section 2.2.1.2 Theories after Searle then briefly discusses some of the ideas and theories that came in response to Austin-Searle speech act theory. Section 2.2.1.3 Implications for Searle-Austin speech act theory discusses both the contributions of speech act theory to the understanding of requests as well as some problematic legacies that developed from Searle's speech act theory and solutions which have been proposed for it in the literature, as well as some implications for using Searle's definition of directness. Finally, Section 2.2.1.4 Summary provides a summary.

2.2.1.1 Austin-Searle speech act theory

Any discussion on requests must begin with the theory of speech acts articulated by Austin (1962) in his famous lecture, *How to Do Things with Word*. He proposed that an utterance has not only a meaning but also a force, and that with some kinds of utterance

a speaker goes beyond the act of saying and does other conventionalized acts, such as requesting, warning, command, complimenting, promising, *etc.* Although Austin (1962) admits that there are many ways in which a speaker may perform such speech acts, he suggests that there is a direct or primary force, generally recognized by a trigger that includes a performative verb, as in (3), or the appropriate sentence type for the illocutionary force: imperatives for directives, declaratives for statements and interrogatives for questions, as in (4).

(3) I hereby request your cooperation.

(4) Go to bed.

Austin (1962) classifies (3) and (4) as direct speech acts. Speech acts that do not contain performative verbs or whose illocutionary force does not match up with the appropriate sentence force are classified as indirect speech acts. Thus a request such as (5)

(5) Could you pass the salt?

is labeled indirect because as an interrogative sentence type the force of the statement is a question. However, in practice the hearer generally recognizes that the speaker's intended meaning is not a query about the speaker's ability to pass the salt, but rather a request for the hearer to do so. Austin's (1962) work is seminal in that it first brought the study of requests and other speech acts into the realm of serious linguistic inquiry.

Searle (1969,1975) expands on Austin and proposes a more analytical classification system of five basic kinds of illocutionary actions: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations, under which more specific actions like requesting, commanding, promising, threatening, among others, are subsumed. He also refines Austin's notion of felicity conditions, "a typology of conditions which performatives must meet if they are to succeed or be 'happy'" (Levinson 1983). In order for a speech act to be successful Searle (1975) proposes four basic kinds of "real-world

conditions” that must be in place: a preparatory, propositional, sincerity and essential condition. He uses the felicity condition paradigm to explain how speech acts which do not include the explicit performative verbs are successful. Thus a request (a subset of directives) is felicitous, or successful, when the propositional content of the utterance is a “future action of hearer”; when the preparatory condition—that the “speaker believes the hearer can to the action” and “it is not obvious that the hearer would do the action without being asked”—is fulfilled, when the speaker does indeed want the hearer to do the action [sincerity condition]; and when the utterance spoken actually “counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do the action” [essential condition](Searle 1975:71).

Searle’s (1969, 1975) work to build a more detailed, expansive theory of speech acts on Austin’s philosophical foundations, effectively enshrined some of Austin’s key notions into the literature for decades to come, such as the existence of speech acts and the notions of direct and indirectness defined by illocutionary force. These theoretical constructs shaped the direction and nature of subsequent research into speech acts, and requests in particular. The construct of illocutionary force and the theory that all sentences carry a literal illocutionary force prompted much of the research that followed Searle (1975) to focus on the question of how speech act forms communicate illocutionary force, particularly in the case of indirect speech acts. This theory assumes that speakers must understand the illocutionary force of an utterance in order to comprehend it as a speech act. Whether in agreement or disagreement, nearly all subsequent research on speech acts was a reaction to Austin and Searle.

2.2.1.2 Theories after Searle

Some researchers attempted to modify or adapt the theory. Besides Searle’s classification of speech act theory, additional systems have been proposed which assume the Austin/Searle illocutionary force, though differ in the classification or the

extent to which utterances can be seen as having the force of “doing something.”

Levinson (1983) gives an extended survey of speech act theory since Austin and Searle.

The following section extracts from his summary those theories relevant to this dissertation.

After Searle's seminal 1969 exposition on speech act categories, the literature on speech act theory basically divides into two theoretical strains: first, are theories that assume what Levinson (1983) terms the “literal-force hypothesis (LFH)”: that is they share the premise that all utterances have an illocutionary force (see Lyons 1977, Hancher 1979, Fraser 1973, Bach & Harnish 1979). In general, they seek to explain how speech act forms communicate illocutionary force, often bolstering the theory with philosophical arguments, or offering revised classification systems for the kinds of speech acts possible. For example, Fraser (1973) suggests a slight modification to Searle's (1975) felicity conditions. He argues that only the propositional content (for requests, the “future act of the hearer”) and the essential condition (“X counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do the action”) are absolutely necessary for a request to be successful. Though the preparatory and sincerity conditions may be present, he argues that they may not always need to be there¹. He also attempts to define more precisely what an illocutionary force is and argues that an utterance can have a bundle of “forces” that are independent of their semantic meaning as well as the context. These forces, he says “follow from general principles of conversation, the character of illocutionary acts, and general properties of the sentence; in particular, they do not depend on the details of the context”

¹ Fraser's (1973:293-94) example for why the sincerity condition is not necessary for a request to be successful: “I can utter *Please get me that pad of paper*...without wanting you to get me the paper—perhaps I want you to move out of my line of vision but am embarrassed to say so.” He argues instead that “one normally associates a desire on the part of the speaker to be a part of the notion of requesting” because of “a very general principle of human interaction”.

(1973:301). Grice's (1975) theory of implicature demonstrates support for this line of reasoning: if sentences can have meanings beyond what are in the actual linguistic forms of the sentence and those "implicated" meanings can be systematically explained by Grice's cooperative principle and maxims, then an utterance can carry illocutionary force as well. What is baffling about this line of reasoning is that both Grice's theory of implicature and Searle's felicity conditions depend precisely on "the details of the context" to create the implicated meaning or illocutionary force, it is assumed in the theory that the utterance itself carries the force instead of it being a creation of the context.

A second strain of theories still essentially maintains the LFH, but appeals to various inference or syntactic devices to explain how an interrogative sentence like (5) can communicate a request. Some theories attempt to reduce illocutionary force to semantics and syntax (see Ross 1970, Sadock 1975). In the generative syntax of the time, Ross (1970) proposed that a clause with a performative verb is projected in the deep structure of an utterance although it does not always appear in the surface structure. That is, the warning in (6) has in its deep structure the higher clause in (7).

(6) Get off my land.

(7) I hereby warn you to get off my land.

Other theories seek to explain illocutionary force as a special kind of idiom (Sadock 1974, 1975) or with inference theories (Gordon & Lakoff 1975, Gazdar 1979). Idiom theories essentially argue that "forms like *can you VP* are idioms for 'I request you to VP'" (Levinson 1983). Inference theories—Gricean implicature is one type—essentially argue that the literal or direct illocutionary force of a question like (5) is processed first, but that the secondary illocutionary force—the request meaning—is inferred by conversational rules based on natural logic or implicature (see Gordon & Lakoff 1975, Searle 1975).

2.2.1.3 Implications for Searle-Austin speech act theory

This line of research into speech acts, especially into requests, essentially investigates the theoretical apparatus for comprehending² requests, whether through direct absorption of illocutionary force or more subtle inference strategies like implicature or deep syntactic structure. In essence they ask, how and why do we understand that an utterance is a request for action? While this is a necessary and pertinent research question, it is noteworthy that for native speakers of English, even young children, in terms of production, we have little to no difficulty processing and comprehending requests, whether direct or indirect (Wootton 1981, 2005, Clark 1979). In fact, Gibbs (1979, 2002) demonstrates that in requestive utterances with ostensibly a primary illocutionary force of an interrogative and a secondary illocutionary force as a directive, speakers do not process the primary illocutionary force first and then the second. Instead they immediately process the utterance as a directive. Thus from a processing standpoint, there seems to be little evidence for the contortions that semantic, generative syntax and idiomatic theories have gone through to explain indirect meaning in speech acts.

In the end Levinson (1983) points out significant problems with these theoretical frameworks that presuppose illocutionary force, however those are conceived. For even if “an attempt is made to predict accurately the functions of sentences in context....it soon becomes clear that the contextual sources that give rise to the assignment of function or purpose are of such complexity and of such interest in their own right, that little will be left to the theory of speech acts” (Levinson 1983:278). The current study, then, has chosen to focus, as Levinson suggests, on the “contextual sources” rather than on requestive

² Not necessarily physiological comprehension (though not excluding this), but on a theoretical level.

forms in isolation—on production rather than perception. The interactive context itself that produces such a variety of requestive forms has been relatively little studied, though Tsui (1994) and Adolphs (2008) (see Section 2.4.2 Requests in Large Corpus Analysis) propose a context-analysis model for analyzing speech act data. Furthermore, context analysis of requests happens in corpora based studies like Curl & Drew (2008), Vine (2009) and Ogiermann (2015) which highlight key elements of the context that seem to explain the distribution of some request forms.

A second key legacy of the Austin-Searle speech act theory is the construct of directness. The notions of direct vs. indirect speech acts are so entrenched in the literature that even if the underlying theory which creates these constructs has been repudiated or is ignored, the terms continue to be used. But this concept has been problematic since the beginning. By assuming that utterances have an illocutionary force, indirect speech acts pose a significant empirical problem. Both Austin and Searle note this from the beginning. This problem—called “the alignment problem” by Levinson (1983) because it is a lack of correspondence between form and function—has been discussed extensively in the literature (see Levinson 1983 for a summary of the discussion). The central issue is that the theory predicts that direct speech acts should be preferred, but in fact, most speech acts are indirect rather than direct. Even if indirect speech acts are not preferred forms, the variety of forms available to speakers, especially for requesting, puts a strain on a theory that predicts only one or two preferred forms. The LFH theory posits that the indirect illocutionary force of indirect speech acts must be a kind of derived or inferred force, since the literal force always corresponds to the sentence type. It would seem that a direct, rather than derived force should be preferred by speakers. But as Levinson (1983:273-274) puts it, “Why...do speakers so often prefer the contortions of (9) to the simplicity and directness of (8)?

(8) Please lend me some cash

(9) I don't suppose that you would by any chance be able to lend me some cash,
would you?

However, the assertion that speakers prefer (9) over (8) is in itself a judgment that needs empirical proof, which cannot be obtained without exploring the interactional contexts in which these two forms might appear. It has been argued that the motivation is universal principles of politeness. Speakers try to mitigate the direct force of their requests with hedges, downgraders, and other politeness markers (Brown & Levinson 1987; see Section 2.2.2 Politeness Theory). But even if this is so, and the primary explanation is that (9) is just (8) with "a bundle of ...arbitrary politeness markers", Levinson (1983:274) again points out that this "does nothing to explain why the mitigators do the job they do". The current study takes the position (see Vine 2009, Ogiermann 2015) that the variation in forms has little to do with illocutionary directness or indirectness, but with the context as created by the interaction itself, with all of its contingent linguistic, discourse and social factors.

One radical solution to the indirect speech problem which Levinson (1983:274) suggests "is to reject the fundamental assumption that sentences have literal forces at all.... It will follow that there are no [indirect speech acts] and thus no [indirect speech act] problem." Another less extreme solution might be to redefine what a direct speech act is. And indeed, various definitions of directness have been proposed. Ervin-Tripp's analysis (1976) points out an important distinction between Searle's definition of directness and one which she proposes. She notes that for Austin and Searle, a direct speech act is one in which the sentence force (i.e., declaratory, interrogatory, imperative) matches the speaker's intended illocutionary force; however, Ervin-Tripp defines a direct request as one in which the agent, action, beneficiary and object of action are explicit in the request.

Thus (10), the prototypical indirect request given in the literature—suggested as problematic by Searle (1975: 60)—does not seem to be problematic for Ervin-Tripp.

(10) Can you pass the salt?

According to Searle (1975), (10) is indirect because the illocutionary force of the request is couched in terms of a question rather than an imperative; yet (10) is direct according to Ervin-Tripp's paradigm: the agent (*you*), action (*pass*), beneficiary (*me*) and object of action (*the salt*) are all clearly stated.

Searle's definition of directness leaves us with the empirical problem noted above (see also Austin 1962, Searle 1975, Sadock 2006, Walker, Drew & Local 2011), and leaves us wondering whether or not the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is very useful (Adolphs 2008:4). Tsui (1994) also rejects Searle's characterization of (10) as indirect. She argues that speakers do not have to go through the ten inference steps that Searle lists, but rather that they process (10) immediately and directly as a request. There are indirect requests, however, she says, and gives (11) as an example.

(11) Do you have a stamp?

If (11) is uttered as a request, it is indirect according to Ervin-Tripp's paradigm because neither the action (to give the stamp) nor the beneficiary (the speaker) are explicitly stated in the utterance. Tsui (1994:110-11) suggests that the best way to define (11) is through a conversation analysis approach. It is a "pre-request" in that it "ascertain[s] that the preconditions for getting compliance to a request obtain before the latter is actually performed" (See Section 2.2.3 Conversation Analysis)

Since the concept of directness plays a key role in Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, particularly in their formula for maintaining positive and negative face, the concept needs to be clearly defined. Many responses to Brown & Levinson's

politeness theory, have hinged on the fact that particular utterances used in situations are more or less direct. However, which linguistic forms for requesting constitute a direct or indirect request have been variously and inconsistently defined within the literature and even in subsequent studies on requestive forms whose paradigms and conclusions rely heavily on the concept of directness. For example, *Would you pass the salt?* is categorized as an indirect request in Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) as a query-preparatory request, but as direct in Curl & Drew (2008). In Camiciottoli (2009), *yes/no* questions are considered direct, but for Tsui 1994 they are indirect³. However, if Ervin-Tripp's definition of directness were applied the results might come out far differently and may indicate a less stringent relationship between directness and politeness than what has been assumed in much of the literature.

Even in cross-linguistic studies the connection between indirectness and politeness has been questioned. For example, Blum-Kulka (1987) argues that indirectness does not always correspond to increasing politeness. Ogiermann (2015:72) found that Polish children used "a wide range of request forms...despite the contextual conditions being very similar for all requests", and Rossi (2012) found that imperatives were preferred in Italian requests when the speaker requested an action that benefited both the speaker and the hearer, rather than being used by speakers who had significantly more social power than their hearers, as Brown & Levinson (1987:69) predict. Upadhyay (2003) suggests that for Nepali "politeness does not have to be a function of linguistic indirectness and that the putative link between linguistic indirectness and politeness remains inconclusive." Even in English, Aijmer (1996) notes that most of

³ This is primarily because Camiciottoli is examining requests for information, thus it certainly makes sense to classify *yes/no* questions as direct. However, the point remains, especially in referencing these two studies on request, that the same form is alternately classified as direct and indirect, effectively creating ambiguity in the use of these terms.

the requestive imperatives, i.e., direct requests, were between speakers who were close family or friends. This suggests that direct requests are just as subject to pragmatic and contextual features as indirect requests and that perhaps the distinction between direct and indirect requests is superfluous (Wierzbicka 1991 in Aijmer 1996). Camiciottoli (2009) found that speakers in financial earnings calls preferred indirect forms, despite the fact that the requests were low imposition and between speakers of equal social power, and relatively close social distance.

Since (in)directness and politeness cannot be consistently linked, and the entire motivation for the concept itself seems highly suspect, the current study focuses on linguistic and syntactic descriptions of forms, rather than pragmatic or speech act-based categories. In applying the results of this study---what forms do speakers use in which contexts---it is hoped that focusing on a categorization of specific syntactic forms rather than direct or indirect forms will help learners of English to more efficiently gain pragmatic competence in knowing what forms are appropriate to use in particular contexts (“appropriate” in the descriptive sense—what a native speaker might say—rather than in a prescriptive sense). In addition, the use of direct or indirect categorization as defined by Searle (1975), Brown & Levinson (1987) and Blum-Kulka et al (1989) carries no practical value in the current study, as the purpose is not to determine if direct or indirect forms are used in particular contexts. Rather the goal is to identify the forms themselves and the relevant contextual factors that might produce these forms.

2.2.1.4 Summary

In summary, speech act theory’s most influential articulators, Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) attempt to explain how an utterance can communicate to hearers that the speaker is requesting an action by proposing that all utterances have a literal meaning as well as an illocutionary force. They argue that the illocutionary force for a particular

speech act is triggered by certain linguistic forms or by the existence of certain contextual conditions—felicity conditions. Researchers besides Searle have sought to explain how indirect speech acts work by appealing to several kinds of syntactic, idiomatic or inferential processes, such as natural logic or Grice's conversational principles. Indirect speech acts, particularly requests, pose a problem for these philosophically-oriented approaches, and alternative explanations have been proposed. These include rejecting the locutionary force hypothesis altogether, redefining what a direct speech act is, or using a context-analysis approach, as the current study proposes.

2.2.2 Politeness Theory

As noted above, the classification of direct and indirect speech acts proposed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) has resulted in extensive study into indirect speech acts, particularly requests, as Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory provides an admirable solution to the "alignment problem": since requests are intrinsically face-threatening acts (FTAs)—they threaten a speaker's negative face because they impinge on the hearer's freedom to act—they motivate speakers to engage in linguistic politeness strategies which accounts for the variety of requestive forms available to speakers. Brown & Levinson (1987) proposed that requests are face threatening acts and that speakers employ negative politeness measures to mitigate this threat. Speakers accomplish this mitigation by employing indirect requestive forms (as defined by Searle), they propose, and the greater the hearer's social power, social distance and the imposition of the action requested, the more indirect a speaker will choose to be.

This premise has been investigated in a range of studies, from those that elicit direct politeness ratings and relate them to directness (Clark & Schunk 1980) to cross-linguistic comparisons of the relationship between directness and politeness (Clancy 1986, Blum-Kulka 1987; Blum-Kulka et al 1989, House & Kasper 1983, Lin 2009,

Ogiermann 2009). Many of these studies rely on elicited requests (*e.g.*, Blum-Kulka et al 1989, House & Kasper 1981, Lin 2009) or qualitative judgements from native speakers (*e.g.*, Clark & Schunk 1980, Economidis-Kogetsidis 2011) rather than naturally-occurring conversational data. Those that rely on elicited data show a strong preference by English speakers for conventionally indirect requestive forms (Clark & Schunk 1980, Blum-Kulka et al.1989), as well as illustrate how learners of English often come across as impolite to native speakers due to inappropriate requestive utterances (Economidis-Kogetsidis 2011). However, as Watts (2003) argues, politeness in language is not something fixed *a priori* in particular utterances, and it is not possible to extract an utterance out of context and judge it to be polite or rude (*cf.* Brown & Levinson 1987:135-136). Instead of attempting to lay out a universal theory of politeness, he says

“what we should be doing in our the study of social interaction ...is...showing how our lay notions of social behaviour, as they are struggled over discursively by participants in social interaction, are constitutive of that behavior and of the habitus of a historically situated and socially located *homo interactionalis*, subject to change as the locus of the struggle itself changes. The struggle over politeness thus represents the struggle over the reproduction and reconstruction of the values of socially acceptable and socially unacceptable behaviour” (Watts 2003:11)

The current study attempts to reveal in a small part the “struggle ...[of] reproduction and reconstruction of...socially acceptable and socially unacceptable behaviour” by laying out authentic interactions between native speakers of English, essentially revealing what they do and say in everyday conversations. Only by seeing how speakers interact can we come to any conclusions about what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior in a particular context. In terms of requests, while Brown & Levinson’s theory of politeness has instigated investigations into requestive forms, it fails to fully account for the wide

variety of forms that speakers use or to sufficiently account for the relevant contextual factors that seem to affect the forms speakers use.

2.2.3 Conversation Analysis

A third theoretical framework in which requests have been studied is that of Conversation Analysis (CA). Following Sacks et al. (1974) who laid out a framework for studying conversation data and the mechanisms by which speakers take turns as well as the general principle of adjacency (Schegloff & Sacks 1974), conversation analysis “seeks to describe the underlying social organization...through which orderly and intelligible social interaction is made possible” (Goodwin & Heritage 1990:283). The study of requests in this theoretical strain focuses primarily on the sequence of turn-taking, on mechanisms for turn design and topic management. It brings to the table a focus on “sequential relevance...of talk....This is the notion that conversational turns make sense because they are interpreted in sequence” (Eggins & Slade 1997). It also bases analysis exclusively on recorded, naturally-occurring language data, thus avoiding some of the pitfalls of speech act theory and politeness theory. In terms of requests, much of the research has focused on “sequential management of requests and design turns” (Curl & Drew 2008:134). Requests were early on identified as the first pair part of an adjacency pair (Sacks et al. 1974:716) though much of the succeeding research has focused on the responses to requests and other “sequential...factors that may play a part in the selection of one rather than another form” rather than the “construction of the initial action (the request) itself” (Curl & Drew 2008:134).

However, CA presents an alternative analysis that addresses the indirect speech act problem articulated in 2.2.1.3 Implications for Searle-Austin speech act theory. Schegloff (1988) defines some utterances as pre-sequences which are analyzed as indirect requests in speech act theory. These are “sequences produced to be specifically

preliminary to determine actions, projecting their occurrence, contingent on the response to the pre-sequence initiator" (Schegloff 1988:58). For example, (12) illustrates a pre-request because it prepares the hearer for the request without actually stating it.

(12) Larry: do you have a flashlight on you?

Seth: Sure do. [*gives Larry the flashlight*]

In this instance, Larry's query about whether Seth carries a flashlight with him allows him to "check that conditions for [a] successful [request] obtains" (Levinson 1983:357), and in fact, in doing so Seth grants his request without Larry actually needing to articulate it. In a parallel but slightly different analysis to Brown and Levinson's concept of face-threatening acts, CA identifies preferred and dispreferred sequences, and "request refusals are dispreferred: therefore, by the accompanying rule for production, to be avoided, if possible" (Levinson 1983:357).⁴ Thus, pre-requests are always preferred to requests since they may eliminate the need to make the request, as happens in (12). Pre-sequences, then, explain why so-called indirect speech acts such as (12) happen (see Levinson 1983:356-364 for a more detailed overview of this argument). This has been the standard view in CA on indirect requests until recently. Fox (2015) makes a case for interpreting utterances such as (12) as the core request rather than a pre-request based on interactional data in service encounters.

A second important contribution of CA to the understanding of requests is the principle of "sequential relevance" to any interaction (Egins & Slade 1997). This means, according to Schegloff (1988:61), that "parties to real conversations are always talking in some sequential context...not to social contexts like offices, classrooms or families

⁴ Preference in CA is distinct from Brown & Levinson's notion of face-threatening acts. "Preferred turns are those that are facilitated by the sequential organization of interaction. Such turns are typically frequent, immediate and structurally simple. In contrast, dispreferred turns occur only infrequently and are typically delayed, mitigated and structurally more complex (Pomerantz, 1984; Raymond, 2003)" (Heinemann 2006).

(although these may be relevant as well), but sequential contexts formulated in terms of more or less proximately preceding and projectably ensuing talk.” This principle has led to studies on requests which have illuminated aspects of the context that affect the forms speakers use beyond the socio-linguistic factors such as social power and distance, age, etc. For example, Wootton (1981:520) illustrates that children as young as four years old use *I want* to initiate a request sequence when “the child has some basis for supposing that recipient will be unwilling to do precisely that which the request seeks” or as re-requests when the initial request has not been granted. He argues that they mark the child’s “unwillingness to concur with [the] recipient’s [parent’s] position” (Wootton 1981:522). On the other hand, he notes that *can I* requests initiate a sequence that makes the answer “yes or no...possible” and in re-requests they are “formed so as to be more acceptable to recipient, to create the possibility of yes as well as no” (Wootton 1981:522). The differing syntactical properties of these forms, he argues, are strategies used by the child as he or she draws on the local sequential context—what talk has preceded the request—as well as to place “constraints...on the recipient’s next turn” (Wootton 1981:522).

Though Wootton does not formally recognize the child’s awareness of a parent’s willingness or unwillingness to comply as entitlement, the concept is similar to what other CA analysis of requests have proposed as an explanation for variation in requestive forms. Heinemann (2006:1081) notes that in Dutch, positive interrogative requests by a caregiver to elderly patients occurred in contexts where the caregiver “orients her request as one she is not entitled to make” while negative interrogative requests by the patient “orients to her request as one she is entitled to make.” And Curl & Drew (2008), though not strictly CA analysis but still within that tradition, argue that entitlement and contingency account for the usages of *I wonder if* and modal verb requests such as *can*

you (see Sections 2.4.3 Limited-focus Corpus Analysis of Requests and 3.4.1.3 Contingency and entitlement for a more thorough overview of Curl & Drew 2008). For additional exploration of the role entitlement plays in requestive strategies, particularly for children, see Dixon (2015) who examines Australian Aboriginal children in play interactions, Craven & Potter (2010), and Zinken (2015) who examines the local sequential context of requests for an object with *can I have x...?* in British English family contexts.

2.2.4 Summary

In summary, three primary theories have influenced the discussion of requests in the literature. First, speech act theory as articulated by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) provided linguists with a platform for investigating the implications of directness and illocutionary force in requests. Brown & Levinson (1987) drew on speech act theory in their theory on politeness, providing an explanation for the alignment problem. By presenting requests as inherently face-threatening, the various forms speakers use to request could be explained as attempt to mitigate the threat to either speaker or hearer's face. However, both of these theories rest primarily on philosophical underpinnings and linguistic data extracted and isolated from its context. Conversation analysis rejects that speech acts, particularly requests, can be properly understood apart from the interactional context in which they appear in talk. Thus CA focuses on sequential mechanisms such as design turns, pre-sequences and the local sequential context to explain how and why speakers choose the forms they do in requesting. Much of the research in this tradition has been focused on just one or two requestive categories or forms, in very specific interactive contexts. The current study extends and tests the conclusions made in these narrowly-focused studies to a larger data set, to see if they still hold.

2.3 Cross-linguistic Request Analysis

Much of the work done on requests in English has been done in the context of cross-linguistic comparison or native vs. non-native speaker production of requests. In particular, these cross-linguistic studies have mainly focused on comparing the use of direct and indirect forms across different languages. As Brown & Levinson (1987) claimed universality for their theory of politeness, it seemed a natural step to compare categories of direct and indirect request forms in order to test the relationship between indirectness and polite speech act forms. The primary focus of these studies was not on identifying the full range of potential forms speakers used, but rather to test the universality of politeness theory. In the process, however, they have been valuable in identifying some key forms and revealing the multi-faceted perspectives on directness in other languages besides English. The the following section reviews some of the major studies or parts of those studies which include English native speaker production of requests.

One of the most extensively cited cross-cultural speech act studies on requests is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) done by Blum-Kulka, House & Kaspar (1989). This project systematically investigates requests and apologies across four languages: Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French and Argentine Spanish. The researchers collected speech act data on requests and apologies using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) methodology. This method consists of providing participants with a short dialogue and one line missing from that dialogue which the participants fill in. The situation is constructed so that the missing utterance clearly has to be the particular speech act that the researchers are trying to elicit. The following gives an example of one test item (from Blum-kulka et al., 1989:14).

(13) At the University

Ann missed a lecture yesterday and would like to borrow Judith's notes.

Ann: _____

Judith: Sure, but let me have them back before the lecture next week.

Though their method produced laboratory-based results, it did provide some contextual information for the participants to base their responses on, and most importantly, it allowed the results to be compared consistently across various languages. Some of their results for requests confirmed Brown & Levinson's (1978) proposition that the greater the social distance between speakers, the more indirect the request tends to be, and the greater the social power of the speaker over the hearer, the more direct the request tends to be (see also Ervin-Tripp 1976). However the CCSARP data also revealed that indirectness interacts not only with social distance and social power but also several other "situational" factors: "degree of obligation, degree of right, degree of imposition... and likelihood of compliance" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989:145). Much of the work on requests following Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) has been based on their results and classification system of types of requests, or examines in more detail some of the subtypes of requests (see for example Faerch & Kasper 1989, Wiezman 1989, Schauer 2004, Lin 2009).

House and Kasper (1981) compare requests and complaints made by native British English and native German speakers and their directness levels in order to test the value of politeness and its relation to directness across cultures. They categorize requests according to an 8-level scale of directness that ranges from mild hints (least direct) to imperative sentence commands (most direct). Their data is gathered through role play: pairs of native speakers enact situations given to them by the researchers. They report that German speakers seem to prefer forms that are more direct than those used by the English speakers and, in general, the German speakers tend to use fewer downgraders. Though they begin the study with the premise that the more direct the

speech act is, the less polite it is, in their conclusion House & Kasper (1981) do not argue that Germans are less polite than the British. Instead they point out that the cultural norms for politeness are not the same for the two groups, and that a directness level of six in German does not carry the equivalent politeness value of level 6 in English. They also suggest that requests should be studied in the context of a larger discourse setting because “the place of an individual act within the act sequences discourse may be another important factor to be considered in determining an act’s degree of politeness” (1981:183-184).

Economido-Kogetsidis (2005) cross-linguistically compares telephone requests in Greek and English and examines specifically the degree of directness of the requests and how the interlocutors viewed the degree of imposition in the social situation. She found that the Greek speakers used more direct strategies than the English speakers but also viewed the social situation as more of an imposition than the English speakers did. She also notes that Greek speakers used *p/lease* in sentence-initial position while English speakers tended to use it in mid-sentence position more often. Unlike the other studies mentioned in this section of the literature review, Economido-Kogetsidis (2005) uses naturally-occurring data—telephone conversations from an airline reservation center in England—which she was allowed to gather by monitoring the telephone lines of a call center and recording the data in her field notes.⁵ Other cross-cultural studies on requests include Duthler (2006), who looks at non-native and native English speaker requests in email, Tada (2005) who compares how requests and apologies are perceived by Japanese learners of English and native English speakers, and Lin (2009), who uses

⁵ She was not given access to audio recordings of the conversations or allowed to make recordings of her own (Economido-Kogetsidis 2005:258).

the DCT methodology developed by Blum-Kulka et al, for CCSARP and compares requests produced by Chinese native speaker, English native speaker and Chinese learners of English in various situations.

Except for Economido-Kogetsidis (2005) and some more recent CA-based studies like Zinken & Ogiermann (2013), the bulk of cross-linguistic studies on requests involve gathering data in a laboratory or semi-laboratory setting in order to be able to compare speech act strategies across languages. They generally involve short turns of discourse, written or spoken. These studies have generated at the least basic linguistic forms that correspond to some speech acts as well as clear evidence that different cultures employ different socio-cultural systems and norms in their communicative strategies. For example, German requests tend to be more direct than English requests in comparable situations—hence the classic cross-cultural misunderstanding stories. At the same time there does seem to be evidence that languages share, to some degree, general kinds of communication strategies. For example, Blum-Kulka et al., (1989:18) data shows that the six languages compared share at least three general kinds of request strategies: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally direct. However, as the nature of cross-linguistic comparison requires parallel forms and social context, they are limited in the extent to which they can uncover the complex interactive strategies speakers employ in requesting. As is noted in Section 2.4.3 Limited-focus Corpus Analysis of Requests, contextual factors as diverse as age, purpose of activity, level of autonomy, entitlement, discourse setting, as well as social power, social distance and imposition, have been demonstrated as affecting the request forms speakers use. It is impossible for such formalized cross-linguistic studies as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) or Lin (2009) to completely address the complexities of interactional requestive data. In addition, as the majority of these studies involve elicited rather than naturally-occurring

data, they run the risk of suggesting results that reflect what speakers think they say or do in a given context rather than what they actually say or do. While the research from cross-linguistic studies has provided valuable conclusions to learners of English, more descriptive analysis needs to be done on the requestive strategies English speakers use and the contextual factors that influence those strategies in naturally-occurring conversational data.

2.4 Request Analysis in Corpus Based Studies

In contrast to the laboratory and survey methodologies in most of the studies above, the following section looks at a few corpus studies of requests and demonstrates the necessity for doing corpus-based analysis of speech acts, particularly requests. Section 2.4.1 overviews some key arguments for analyzing speech acts in corpora. Section 2.4.2 examines a range of seminal, large-scale, corpus-based studies of requests, demonstrating that despite some progress in understanding the contexts and socio-pragmatic factors that occur with requestives, much work remains to be done. Section 2.4.3 overviews some more recent corpus-based analyses of requests with more narrow focuses and highlights more subtle elements that have been identified in requestive contexts. Section 2.4.4 provides a summary of what has been established in the literature in understanding requests as well as underscores what is still missing in our understanding, particularly of North American English requestive contexts and how the current study adds to this body of research.

2.4.1 Introduction and Argument for Corpus-based Analysis of Speech Acts

The value of large-scale language corpora for empirical linguistic analysis has long been established (See Partington 2003 for an overview). Beaudegrande (1996) argues for using language corpora to essentially do the work of descriptive fieldwork. He champions a functionalist perspective in language study against formalism in linguistics

and says that mainstream linguistics at that time, with its focus on competence and language as a “detached” entity distinct from our knowledge of the world and how speakers use language, would never be successful in thoroughly accounting for itself. For example, he notes that Chomsky’s famous construction

(14) John is easy/eager to please

rarely occurs in actual speech and that in the course of his theorizing, Chomsky builds his case on only 24 constructed examples. While a formalist would not find this at all disconcerting, Beaugrande argues that formalist theories need the empirical support of what speakers are actually doing and that corpus studies may even be the key to bringing formalists and functionalists together to a more unified account of language. He demonstrates a corpus analysis of the verb *warrant*, and in the process illustrates methods for corpus analysis such as frequency and collocation. His analysis reveals some unexpected findings that his native speaker grammaticality judgment would not have discovered on its own, such as that *warrant* collocates with *situation* and that it more often appears in negative situations. Corpora and corpus methodologies have been touted as being important for recognizing patterns that occur in language which elicitation and invented examples do not show.

Building on this argument and the work of corpus linguistics in semantics and syntax, Adolphs (2008) argues strongly for the benefits of using corpora to investigate pragmatic topics, particularly speech acts. She notes that corpus linguistics provide a valuable source for studying speech acts, but that to date few corpus studies have been used to investigate speech acts and speech act theory. She proposes developing a functional profile for speech acts using corpus evidence, particularly naturally occurring spoken data. She cites previous corpus studies which posit “recurring patterns...as evidence for the relationship between form and meaning” (2008:131) She illustrates her

methodology by looking at suggestions in the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE), a 5 million word collection of British English. She lays out both the benefits and some limitations for corpus investigations into speech acts. Corpus investigations, she notes “[allow] us to distinguish between speech act expressions which appear to be functionally synonymous, such as *why don’t you* and *why not* for example, in terms of their contextual distribution, their collocations, and the place where they occur in the on-going discourse” (Adolphs 2008:130). What she discovers is that though both expressions indeed signal suggestions, distinct patterns emerge in the context and in which they occur. Corpora of naturally occurring data allow us to directly correlate particular forms with the contexts in which speakers use them and thus bring to light patterns in ways that discourse completion tasks and other laboratory experiments do not.

However, there are limits to corpus analysis and Adolph points these out as well. Corpus studies traditionally start with the lexico-grammatical phrase as the “point of entry” into the corpus. But because speech acts are typically performed with a variety of lexico-grammatical phrases—theoretically almost any utterance is capable of being a speech act (Levinson 1983:280)—“the extraction of comprehensive lists of individual functions is not easily achieved with such an approach” (Adolphs 2008:131; see also Jucker 2009). In addition, while “attempt[ing] to categorise and analyse different contexts” in which particular forms are used to perform a speech act (requests in this case) is the point of this study, “the more delicate variations in context are impossible to capture systematically” (2008:131). That is, not all pragmatic variation is systematic production: “Speakers and listeners are [not] predictable in the way in which they choose to negotiate pragmatic functions in on-going discourse to the extent that all the possible variations and patterns could be fully described” (Adolphs 2008:131).

While Adolphs is one of the first to seriously propose a methodology for a large corpus investigation of speech acts, a few others have looked at requests with corpus data, mostly in the process of discourse analyses of English conversational data (see also Section 2.4.2 Requests in Large Corpus Analysis discussion of Aijmer 1996). Other discourse investigations that discuss requests in naturally-occurring corpus data include Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) who look at interactions in the classroom, Hymes (1972), Tsui (1994) and Lee (2009). In addition, there has been a more recent interest in tagging corpora for speech acts, though the focus has currently been on automated corpora (e.g., Georgila et al., 2009, Wu, Yan & Lin 2002).

Rhinier (2007) conducted a pilot study of requests on a small internet corpus. The purpose was to tease out contextual differences where the request forms *would you* and *could you* were used. A corpus of transcripts from the situational comedy *Frasier*, which ran for eleven seasons, was analyzed. The data was transcribed by fans of the show and uploaded to a fan website with a built-in search function. The corpus was searched for all occurrences of *would you* and *could you* and the tokens that qualified as requests were selected and extracted along with a larger chunk of the context in which the utterances occurred. Although the data is not technically spontaneous naturally occurring data, the writing is much more conversational than other texts (such as novels) because the script-writers are simulating natural conversation to a degree, including longer passages of turntaking. If it were stilted and unnatural, viewers would recognize this and find it odd⁶. The contextual factors noted about each request were the social

⁶ Though in genre and text-type analyses corpus studies do show that film language is significantly more “predictable” than spontaneous naturally-occurring language, (Taylor 2008, for example), the point of the pilot study was to get some kind of conversational data, not to make any comparisons between spoken data and television data. Also, my intuition is that within the television genre, situational comedies will have more realistic conversation than movies. This may be entirely false, but the pilot study at least provides

distance (+/-intimate), social power (high/low/equal), imposition of the request and compliance, entitlement, and the positive/negative propositional content of the requests. This final factor that emerged from the data was not one that had been discussed in the literature nor did the researcher have intuitions about it as a native speaker. Positive versus negative propositional content refers to whether the action that is being requested is a positive one (e.g., *Could you open the door?*) vs. an action that is negative (e.g., *Would you stop humming?*). It is negative in terms of the action, not the form of the request (cf. positive and negative interrogatives). Negative requests are those in which the speaker asks the hearer to *stop* or *desist* from doing, thinking or being something. An action is being performed already, as in (15) and (16).

(15) Would you take off those stupid goggles?

(16) Niles, please would you stop hovering and please sit down?

This kind of request used the lexical pattern *would you* almost exclusively while the form *could you* was much less frequently used in this context.⁷ Such results show the necessity for corpus analysis in speech acts to point out patterns and contexts which intuition and laboratory methods may not reveal.

2.4.2 Requests in Large Corpus Analysis

Ervin-Tripp (1976) was the first to focus on gathering a naturally-occurring spoken corpus of requests (her study focuses on directives rather than just request), though her dataset is not large by more recent standards (e.g., COCA's 450 million words). It represents, however, the first attempt to gather a larger dataset of requests with corpus methodologies, only limited to pen-and-paper tools because of the era in which it was gathered. Her data consists primarily of utterances gathered by students for

a starting point and some initial findings to compare to the data in larger, naturally occurring data.

⁷ 31 total occurrences of this 'negative' request type, 27 used *would you*, 4 with *could you*

term papers over a period of several years, thus the consistency and the method of data-gathering (mostly pen-and-paper) resulted in what she termed an “exploratory” corpus with “major gaps” (1976:27). Yet, she says, the kinds of requests that students recorded in various family, social and work-related contexts give “different results from the discussion based on hypothetical data” and thus are “worth reporting” (1976:28). She reports six different observed directive forms: *need* statements, imperatives and ellipticals, embedded imperatives, permission directives, question directives, and hints. The focus of her research was on identifying social features of the context that might predict the particular form a requestive might take. The particular forms she identified did correspond with definite contextual and social features, although her analysis is primarily qualitative, with principles stated and then one or two examples given that illustrate the principle, rather than systematic. For example, she found that *need* statements in her corpus occurred “between persons differing in rank”, usually in work settings where “who is to do what is very clear” and in families where “solicitude on the part of the hearer could be assumed” (Ervin-Tripp 1976:29). However, not every one of the six directive forms had such a clearly delineated social profile articulated. And the data in the current study demonstrates that such a profile for *need* statements is too simplistic, as they occur between speakers who are of equal rank as well as unequal rank.

Her exploratory study is seminal in that it lays out additional contextual factors that have been demonstrated in more recent data as key to explaining the forms speakers use (*e.g.* see Curl & Drew 2008). She identifies additional contextual variables for requests that had not been previously identified, including “territoriality, physical distance, the seriousness or cost of the service asked, and whether compliance may be assumed because of the type of service, normal roles, or power relations” (Ervin-Tripp 1976:37). However, the analysis is not systematic and her conclusions are based on a

relatively limited data set which, as she notes, needs “much more detailed data” (Ervin-Tripp 1976:32). Indeed, Weigel & Weigel (1980) tested her predictions on a group of black migrant workers and found that only one of her predictions about the forms speakers choose in particular sociological contexts held in that context. They conclude that Ervin-Tripp’s (1976) study provides a “useful beginning”, but that

the results of the current study on a population of different social class, ethnicity, and social and physical environments indicate the need for taking into account crosscultural and environmental variation in the form of these decision rules. Perhaps with future studies examining these issues in more detail, it will be possible to construct a more general, more inclusive crossculturally and crossenvironmentally valid model of decision making in the use of English directives. (Weigel and Weigel 1980:77)

The current study is, to some degree, such an attempt—to gather more data on the contextual factors that compel speakers to choose the forms they do. Not perhaps, to construct a decision-making model, as Weigel & Weigel (1980) propose, but to present a more “general” and “inclusive” description of the patterns English speakers tend to follow.

Much later, when substantial computer corpora began to be available, Aijmer (1996) examined conversational routines of various speech acts, including requests, in British English corpus data. She examines the speech act of requesting within a pragmatic and discourse framework, using spoken English data from the London-Lund Corpus (LLC), a one million word corpus of British English. Though requests do not make up a significantly large portion of the corpus, she locates a total of 742 requests from face-to-face, telephone, discussion conversations as well as public and prepared speech (such as scripted broadcasting). She describes both the linguistic “forms and patterns” of requests and then their “situational and discourse aspects”, particularly focusing on the forms that “can be viewed as ‘routines’ or fixed patterns” (1996:124). These routine, or conventionalized expressions, such as *can you*, are viewed as linguistic elements with

their own “grammatical and semantic structure, prosody, function, sequentiality, text type, style and situation” (1996:124). Among the conclusions she makes from the requests found in the LLC, she notes 18 “requestive strategies”⁸ or functions of these conventional expressions. In the grammatical analysis she points out distributional features of particular requestive expressions, such as the preverbal distribution of *please*, allowed in requests, but not in other questions. Her examples are noted below:

(17) Can you please pass the salt

(18) *Why do you please pass the salt?

(from Aijmer 1996:144)

Besides the conventionalized indirect forms such as *can you*, *could you*, *will you*, *would you*, she analyzes other indirect requests found in the LLC, summarized in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Summary of Aijmer (1996:149) Indirect Request Types

Request Type	Examples	Aijmer’s description of style or function
Assertion Statements	<i>it would be better, perhaps you could, you can</i>	Authoritative and definitive
Want/Need Statements	<i>I’d like, I need, I want you to</i>	Expresses speaker’s wishes directly, assertive
Mitigated yes-no interrogatives	<i>can/ could/ will /would you</i>	Unmarked, preferred
Permission Questions	<i>let me, may I, can I, could I just</i>	Introduce new arguments, interrupt another speaker, ask for one’s turn, hold the floor

Since the third category of request types—the mitigated yes-no questions—are by far the most frequently used, Aijmer’s description and analysis of the forms in this category are summarized below in Table 2-2.

⁸ Aijmer’s taxonomy combines requests and offers under the speech act category of ‘requestives.’

Table 2-2 Summary of Aijmer (1996) Function Profile for *Can/Could/Will/Would You*

Requests

Form	Function
<i>Can you</i>	"Minor favors in transactional settings"
<i>Could you</i>	"preferred or unmarked way of making requests"
<i>Will you</i>	"fairly direct and assertive"
<i>Would you</i>	Tentative and suggests social distance and formality

These functional profiles in Table 2-1 and Table 2-2 do not appear to be consistent with the data from the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*, indicating that either North American and British English usage diverges significantly in pragmatic rules, or that perhaps the functional descriptions are too broad or simplistic to account for usage.

Besides doing a grammatical and discourse analysis of the forms, Aijmer argues that setting, speaker, and situation matter a great deal in how requests are produced by speakers. In discussing the request type she does give anecdotal commentary about setting, speaker and situation in describing the corpora examples. And she does note that some forms, *may I* and *can you* for example, seem to be "bound to certain situational parameters" (1996:178). She calls these prototypical situations "frames for routines in recurrent situations" (1996:180). However, she acknowledges that for many, if not most requestives there is a "[large] problem" in "constraining the information about the extra-linguistic situation in which a conventionalized indirect request occurs" since there are so many potential situations (1996:178). That is, despite the vital importance of situational features such as setting, speaker relationship, and the propositional content of requests to the success of any request utterance, she concludes that it is difficult, if not impossible to come to any clear conclusions about most request forms and corresponding contexts

in which they occur. She only notes the “situational frame” for three conventional request forms: *can/could you, I would like to/I want to*, and *can/may I*. The situational features she extracts are *setting, participants, and types of requesting* (1996:180).

Aijmer’s analysis of the function, style, and discourse features of requestives (she also discusses mitigation strategies, internal and external modifiers to the basic request stem), is extremely valuable and provides vital insight into British English usage. It is creditable in its use of naturally occurring corpus data, and thus perhaps a better reflection of the forms actually being used by speakers; however it is limited to describing only the results of the LLC corpus, which presents relatively few examples of requests for the size of the corpus. Thus her results point to important tendencies but perhaps make too sweeping generalizations about request forms and their functions and contexts. In addition, the London-Lund Corpus is exclusively British English, and the same detailed analysis of American usage has yet to be explored. The results of the current study suggest differences between Aijmer’s (1996) functional descriptions of *can/could/will/would* in British usage and North American usage. Finally, in terms of the quantity and quality of the spoken corpora gathered, the LLC has been far surpassed by more recent corpora and her generalizations need be tested, verified and perhaps expanded with the additional corpora now available.

2.4.3 Limited-focus Corpus Analysis of Requests

Following on the broader scale descriptions and analyses of requestives discussed in 2.4.2 Requests in Large Corpus Analysis some more current corpus-based investigations into requestives have focused on finely-tuned analysis of smaller corpora. For example, some studies have focused on specific genres or settings in which requests play a significant role. Camiciottoli (2009) analyzes requests for information that happen in question and answer sessions during financial earnings calls, Partington (2003) looks

at requests in White House press briefings, Macaulay (2001) focuses on media interviews. The ease of acquiring transcripts for these high-density request events make them logical starting points for a corpus-based analysis of requests. However, they are very particular speech events (especially the financial earnings calls) that a very small percentage of speakers actually engage in. Thus it is important to also do a close analysis of requests in casual conversations that are part of every-day contexts at work, home and in interactions with friends. Vine (2009) looks at conversations in an office setting in New Zealand, particularly noting the contextual variables that accompany imperatives and modal interrogatives (*can/could/will/would you*). She found that although social power and distance play some role in explaining the variation of forms used, it does not completely account for the variety of linguistic forms. She found that the purpose of interaction (*e.g.*, problem solving, task-allocating) influenced both the forms, as well as the “frequency and density of directives” (Vine 2009:1404). She also found patterns of usage when examining the discourse context, noting that imperatives occurred “(i) at the end of a long discussion...; (ii) when there are multiple tasks...;(iii) when [the request itself was] directly elicited; and (iv) in the case of NOW directives” (*i.e.* request for an immediate action) (Vine 2009:1404). In contrast, “more mitigated forms” (such as modal interrogatives, as well as others) occurred in “isolated (without prior discussion)” contexts, “when there is a high level of imposition...and...when a different approach was being suggested⁹” (Vine 2009:1404).

Her analysis illustrates that it is entirely possible to match requestive forms with the contexts that they are most likely to occur in, despite Aijmer’s (1996) claim to the contrary (see above). In addition, Vine’s (2009) study, as well as others (see below),

⁹ Which seems as if such a context could also be described as a particularly specific high-level imposition task.

illustrates the importance of closely examining contextual features beyond social power and social distance, such as purpose of interactions and the discourse context.

Camiciottoli (2009) also found that purpose of interaction rather than politeness better accounted for the use of indirect requestive forms, such as *just wondering if you could comment on that*, in requests for information during financial earnings calls. She initially expected that according to Brown & Levinson's politeness theory, direct request forms (*wh*-questions and yes/no questions) would be more frequently used in financial earnings calls because these were "routine events organized for the express purpose of disclosing information ... [and] there would not seem to be a particularly strong need even for such 'token bows' of politeness (Brown & Levinson 1987:71)" (Camiciottoli 2009: 667). Instead, she found that purpose of interaction, especially the speaker's purpose, better explained why the indirect requestive forms were used. They functioned as "devices used to achieve specific goals", particularly "to hold the floor....and extract maximum information" (Camiciottoli 2009: 677). This finding echoes Vine's (2009) conclusions about the purpose of the interaction playing a key role in a speaker's choice of requestive forms, rather than any of Brown & Levinson's (1987) "interpersonal variables of social distance, power, [or] degree of imposition" or even Leech's (1983) theory of "politeness based on minimizing costs and maximizing benefits" (Camiciottoli 2009: 665, 667).

She also notes at least one element of the discourse context (though this was not the primary focus of her study) that direct requests for information "rarely occurred when analysts first began their questioning" (Camiciottoli 2009:670; *cf.* Vine 2009). Of course, this is not intended to imply that social power, distance or imposition never play in a role in explaining the distribution of requestive forms speakers choose. In fact, they do, as the current study and others demonstrate (*e.g.*, Ervin-Tripp 1976, Blum-Kulka 1989).

However, studies such as Terkourafi (2004) and Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996)¹⁰ demonstrate that social power, social distance and imposition alone cannot count for the linguistic variation in requesting by native speakers of English in the neat way in which Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory envisions. Thus more detailed analysis of requestive contexts, such as in the current study are needed to illustrate to what extent these and other contextual factors are relevant to the forms speakers choose.

Although imposition has early on been noted as an important factor in the forms speakers choose to request (see Ervin-Tripp 1976, Francik & Clark 1985, Blum-Kulka 1989, Goldschmidt 1998, Brown & Levinson 1987), it is often acknowledged simply to explain why indirect requestive forms are often preferred by speakers, rather than part of a detailed analysis of forms that occur in these high-imposition contexts¹¹. Curl & Drew (2008) demonstrate in a detailed analysis of naturally-occurring requestive utterances how contingency and entitlement can explain the distribution of two distinct forms, requests with modal verbs, such as *can you* and those prefaced by *I wonder if*. Using British English data that includes telephone transcripts of everyday conversations between family and friends and after-hour calls to medical doctors, they suggest that the “distributional pattern is related not so much with the sociolinguistic speech setting but rather with speakers' orientations to known or anticipated contingencies with their requests” (Curl & Drew 2008:129).

Their approach essentially captures the essence of imposition, but is not dependent on follow-up interviews from participants or rating measurement done by the speakers after the speech event has occurred (or even giving participants a hypothetical

¹⁰ Though Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1996) uses written business correspondence rather than spoken data.

¹¹ Especially since many of these studies, particularly, Francik & Clark (1985), Blum-Kulka (1989), Goldschmidt (1998), as well as later ones like Lin (2009) rely on elicited, survey-type responses instead of analyzing naturally-occurring conversation.

context to evaluate such as in Pan 2010). Instead they rely on the linguistic evidence provided by the speakers themselves, noting the degree to which the speaker linguistically orients to potential obstacles or contingencies to the request and to their entitlement to make the request. They argue that “the request forms speakers select embody, or display, their understandings of the contingencies associated with the recipient’s ability to grant the request” (Curl & Drew 2008:129). Curl & Drew’s (2008:134) study asks “why that form now?” They note that “given the alternative constructions...available to make a request, there has been little empirical investigation in the interactional circumstances or environments in which speakers select one form rather than another” (Curl & Drew 2008:134). Even later studies such as Camiciottoli (2009) are generally more focused on whether direct or indirect forms are used and the motivations behind using one or the other rather than on why particular forms might occur in particular interactional contexts (though sometimes that question is partially answered as a result). Curl & Drew (2008:131) argue that because the primary focus of requestive studies, even those based on naturally-occurring data, have been either “on inferencing rules and processes” or on politeness theory, there is “little information about how and why speakers select a particular request form from among the variety of forms that are available, which is the object of our enquiry here.”

Curl & Drew’s (2008) study is singular in that it asks the same question as the current study. However, as it only deals with British English data and just two specific request forms---*I wonder if* and modal verb interrogatives (*e.g., Can you...*), more research is needed into North American English forms as well as a greater variety of requestive forms, to answer why speakers choose the forms they do out of the multitude available to them. The current study hopes to add valuable research that will answer that question for a broader range of forms and contexts in North American English.

2.5 Summary and Transition

In summary, requests are an often-studied topic, primarily through three main theoretical perspectives: speech act theory, politeness theory, and conversation analysis. While speech act theory helped to establish them as proper objects of linguistic enquiry, the theory itself provoked more interest in the question of why we understand purportedly indirect utterances such as *can you pass the salt?* to be requests for action rather than merely for information, despite the fact that it is the ordinary interpretation of such an utterance. Both politeness theory and conversation analysis attempt to address the question of why various linguistic strategies for requesting exist. Politeness Theory centers its argument on the concept of face—since requests are face-threatening acts, the variant forms attempt to mitigate this threat. In conversation analysis, the request as a dispreferred action explains why speakers are more likely to use variant forms, particularly as pre-requests, in order to determine the success of the forthcoming request as well as to determine the sequential design of the proceeding actions. Work in conversation analysis has also identified entitlement as a key operative factor in why speakers design turns the way they do, and the current study draws upon this work, particularly (Curl & Drew 2008), as an integral part of the analysis. In addition, the CA principle of sequential relevance is key to the detailed analysis of the conversational data in this study. Though the current study rests on the foundational concepts of speech act theory, it rejects the notion of directness as articulated by Searle (1975), adopting a purely syntactic categorization method (see Weigel & Weigel 1980). The current study also incorporates Brown & Levinson's (1987) factors of social power, social distance, and imposition as crucial to the context which a requestive form appears, though not

exclusively, testing the degree to which these factors do indeed affect the speaker's choice of form.

In terms of practical investigation in the forms speakers employ for requesting, early work in cross-linguistic comparisons of forms relied primarily on elicited data or, for more recent work, email and written requests, particularly in the academic environment. These studies found that the theoretical concepts of directness as articulated by Searle (1975) and Brown & Levinson (1987) are perceived differently across languages. Comparable requestive forms are not perceived as equally direct or indirect, thus accounting for the difficulty in achieving pragmatic competence in a language, despite a reasonable degree of fluency. These studies provide valuable linguistic insight into the nature of requesting across languages, since a primary application for the key research questions of this study are learners of English. However, they have failed to provide a fine-tuned analysis of requestive forms and their contexts, as most studies are focused on native speaker's judgements of politeness rather than a clear analysis of the contexts in which particular requestive utterances are used by native speakers. If the forms speakers use and the contexts they are used in can be clearly articulated for English, or any language for that matter, then learners of that language have a much better opportunity to achieve pragmatic competence in requesting.

Finally, corpus linguistics provides the empirical backdrop needed to investigate the complex social, linguistic and discourse contexts of requestive utterances. Both large-scale and small scale corpus investigations into requests have revealed contextual factors such as social power, social distance, imposition, age, gender, entitlement, contingency, purpose of interaction, the nature of the activity as a request for information or an object, the degree to which the requested action is within the normal activity of the participants, and the local sequential context among others. These studies have provided

useful analysis on variations of particular forms (*e.g.*, imperatives vs. modal verbs, *I wonder if* vs. modal verbs, *can I have x...?*) as well as attempted a larger-scale overview of the forms used in North American or British English. However, both of these categories of analyses leave us with significant gaps in our understanding of requestive forms and their contexts. The small-scale studies, which primarily look at British, New Zealand and Australian English, need confirmation to see if these patterns hold true in North American English, as well as with a larger set of data. And the generalized conclusions of the large-scale corpus studies, particularly of North American English data, have not always held consistent in the smaller-scale studies. This study hopes to add to this stream of research, first in searching for generalized patterns that prove to be consistent in a both large-corpus and small-corpus analyses, and second, in using conversation analysis methods of careful analysis of the local sequential context as well as environmental and social context factors to identify both the forms North American English speakers use to request as well as the context in which they occur.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. Section 3.2 discusses the corpora from which the data for this study is extracted as well as the criteria for choosing the corpora. Section 3.3 discusses data collection, specifically the criteria for defining requests in this study and then how the requestive utterances were extracted from the corpora and organized for analysis. Section 3.4 explains the methods for coding and analyzing the data.

3.2 Corpora Criteria and Selection

As noted in Sinclair (1991), the nature of the text or spoken language samples that go into a corpus are critical to the linguistic analyses that follow it. Since the scope of this study is to gather a large number of requests in order to identify patterns, it was not feasible to both gather original recordings of conversations and conduct the analysis. This study, then, follows what often happens in corpus linguistics: those who analyze corpora are often not the same ones who design and compile the corpora (Leech 2000). In deciding on corpora to analyze, five corpus criteria were delineated in order to choose corpora that would produce relevant data: interactional, spoken, naturally-occurring, North American English (primarily U.S. speakers), and contemporary. These corpus criteria are part of the design of the corpora chosen for this study. The primary criterion for the corpora chosen for this study is that the data be interactional. That is, since requests are almost exclusively found in conversation (i.e., two-way interaction as opposed to one-way situations such as lectures or news broadcasts), it was essential that the corpora chosen contain significant chunks of conversational data. Second, only corpora with spoken (as opposed to written) language was analyzed. Since the significant

difference between the grammars of written and spoken English has been thoroughly documented (see Leech 2000), this study focuses exclusively on spoken conversational data. Third, spoken data that is naturally-occurring rather than elicited was used for this analysis. Movies and other scripted television were not included, and semi-scripted data such as interviews and news programs, were searched only minimally. Fourth, only spoken language corpora with contemporary data, from no earlier than 1990 have been used in this analysis. Finally, spoken language corpora that include primarily speakers of North American English from the United States has been used for this analysis. While a great deal of excellent spoken corpora data is available from Great Britain (the British National Corpus BNC, CANCODE, among others), this study examines North American English usage, as varied as that is, and does not include British usage. My intuition is that in regards to request forms (especially modal differences) and the contexts that correlate to the forms, British and American usage most likely varies significantly.¹²

The primary source for data in this study is the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English* (SBCSAE), with additional examples coming from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) and the *Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English* (MICASE). The SBCSAE includes 60 conversations recorded between 2000 and 2005, on average 15 minutes long, in a variety of everyday situations, such as “face-to-face conversation,....telephone conversations, card games, food preparation, on-the-job

¹² I have only anecdotal evidence from one source for this, but it may be worth repeating. Several years ago I was relating some of the results of Rhinier (2007) to a friend who had just returned to the U.S. from living in London for several years. I told her that it seemed that easy, conventional requests between strangers (such as asking a passerby on the street for the time) tended to be formed with *could you* and less hedging, fewer downgraders such as *please* and *I'm so sorry to bother you, but would you mind...* and that requests which were high imposition were made with *would you* and much more ‘verbage.’ Her response was that it seemed just the opposite in London (where she worked in retail). Requests which were not at all high imposition were more likely to be made with *would you*, as in *would you mind terribly telling me the time*. Of course her analysis was made purely on intuition and recall.

talk, classroom lectures, sermons, story-telling, town hall meetings, tour-guide spiels, and more” (Du Bois et al. 2000-2005). The data is all spoken, spontaneous, and naturally-occurring, thus it meets all of the corpora criteria for this study. The conversations have been transcribed into text files and include prosodic details like intonation units, transitional continuity, terminal pitch, accent, lengthening, tone, pauses and vocal noises. While the current analysis has not focused on most of these prosodic elements, pauses (especially those that denote clear hesitation) and vocal noises (*e.g.* laughter, exhalations) were noted where they affected the analysis. In addition, the corpus provides important meta-data about the context of the conversation and speaker information, including gender, age, occupation, and relationship with other speaker, and the transcripts are free and available to download from the internet. It has the advantage of including a significant number of intimate and socio-cultural interactions, which is the most difficult of spoken conversational data to obtain (see discussion below on COCA’s spoken data).

This approximately 249,000 word corpus is part of the International Corpus of English (ICE), its design allowing for adequate comparison of its data to other varieties of English. As such, it makes an excellent source for data that might help to establish patterns of usage for requests in contemporary spoken American English, despite its small size. Furthermore, the small size of the SBCSAE makes it manageable for a project of this scope and allows the researcher to extract all of the requests in a reasonable amount of time by reading through the entire corpus. The nature of requests in English makes it difficult to search for all of them in a more traditional manner, such as through a word or lemma search function. Theoretically there are an infinite number of linguistic

forms speakers might use to request, so in order to identify and extract requestive forms, the researcher would need to manually read the entire corpus.¹³

A manageable corpus size was not an initial criterion for selecting a corpus in this study, but it became a practical reality and thus an additional corpus criterion several months into the research. Initially the 450 million word COCA was intended to be used as a data source, but it was too large¹⁴ to be searched manually for requestive tokens as well as lacking enough non-scripted conversational data. The overwhelming quantity and the too limited scope of COCA data made it less than ideal for this study, except for occasional supplemental examples.

The third corpus occasionally consulted for this study is the *Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English*. This provided additional examples of requests in academic contexts, as there were fewer pedagogical conversations recorded in the SBCSAE than those occurring in intimate and socio-cultural contexts. This corpus did not produce additional linguistic forms not found in SBCSAE and as it is limited in scope, including

¹³ This does not mean that all corpus studies on requests require manual reading of the entire corpus. More automated extraction of common forms is possible, once those more common requestive forms have been identified. The purpose of this study is to help identify those forms actually being used by speakers of American English.

¹⁴ An initial KWIC search for requests in COCA with the forms *would you* and *could you*, two of more than 50 forms previously identified, resulted in 1,271 tokens out of 14,792 total occurrences of *would you* in the corpus and 1,173 tokens out of 3,101 total occurrences of *could you*. In order to extract the requestive uses of these two forms out of the thousands of other times they were spoken in non-requestive contexts, each of the 3,101 *could you* tokens and the 14,792 *would you* tokens had to be read manually. To do this process for the other 50 forms, then code each of these tokens manually was unrealistic and outside the timeframe for this study unless automation processes could be applied. In addition, after coding about 100 of each of the *could you* and *would you* tokens from COCA, the initial results revealed absolutely no contextual difference in usage. Furthermore, the majority of the spoken data for COCA comes from radio and television media, including a significant number of interviews, talk shows and other semi-scripted programming. While these kinds of requestive forms are inherently interesting and worth examining, COCA provides a very limited range of contexts for examining requestive forms. As the intent of this study is to examine forms in a range of contexts, including family and friend interactions as well as media and professional contexts, COCA did not provide sufficient requestive data in non-media contexts.

only academic interactions, it was only useful for providing additional tokens that illustrated the same patterns identified in the SBCSAE.

The remaining discussion on methodology will focus on how tokens were extracted and analyzed from the SBCSAE, as this is the primary source for the data in this study. By using this SBCSAE, the study functions as a baseline for identifying major linguistic forms used by American speakers in conversation to request. Despite the theoretically infinite number of request forms possible, only ten distinctive linguistic categories emerged in the data, which if submitted to a larger corpus tagged for speech acts, could reveal even more telling patterns of usage.

3.3 Data Collection

Section 3.3 Data discusses the process for gathering and organizing data from the SBCSAE. The criteria used in this study for defining a request is discussed in 3.3.1 Defining Requests and the process of extracting and preparing the data set for analysis in 3.3.2 Data Extraction.

3.3.1 Defining Requests

A request in this study was defined as an utterance in which a speaker requests an action by the listener that benefits the speaker. This definition follows the speech act categorization system proposed by Tsui (1994) who includes requests, commands, invitations, offers and permissives in her system. Her analysis is based on naturally-occurring spoken data so her definition for a request (only slightly modified here) seems most appropriate for this particular study. She creates a paradigm for several subcategories of speech acts, including requests, based on several parameters:

- a) how it can be rephrased in reported speech
- b) the nature of the response
- c) whether the speaker or hearer (or both) is benefiting from the utterance

- d) whether compliance is optional or not.

These parameters allow utterances to be classified as requests in a uniform way.

Requestives in the current study as well as in Tsui (1994) can be further subdivided between those that are voluntary (requests) and those that are not (commands). Tsui (1994) assumes the “crucial difference” between commands and requests is that requests offer the hearer the option of complying. She attempts to provide criteria for testing whether an utterance is a request or a command by rephrasing the utterance in question as reported speech. Requests can be reported with the verb phrase *ask X to* and commands can be reported with the verb *tell X to*, as noted below, but not vice versa.

(19) *Request distinguished from command by rephrasing as reported speech*

- a) “Would you please remove your glasses?” he asked.
- b) He *asked me to* remove my glasses.

(20) *Command distinguished from request by rephrasing as reported speech*

- a) “Get out of my house,” I told them.
- b) I *told them to* get out of my house.¹⁵

(Tsui 1994: 55-56)

While ideally an investigation into requests would focus on them exclusive of commands, in reality it became impossible to distinguish between requests and commands in the SBCSAE for several reasons. First, identifying whether an action is optional or not is nearly impossible. A speaker may view a request for action as required and not optional, but there is no way that the speaker can absolutely insure that the listener will view the

¹⁵ Though it has been pointed out that both (19)b and (20)b are grammatical with *ask* and *tell*, Tsui seems to be using the prototypical semantics of the verbs as a diagnostic to distinguish requests and commands. That is, if someone reports that “I told them to get out of my house”, the force of the statement is a command not a request.

request in the same way. Furthermore, to consistently identify whether the speaker or listener considers an action optional or non-optional, the researcher would need to be able to read the participants' mind and motivation in a way that is not possible and not even attempted in this study. Thus, for this study, both requests and commands are included in this analysis, and referred to with both the terms requestive or request.

Requests can be distinguished from mere questions or elicitations of information by the fact that in complying with a request, hearers commit themselves to non-verbal action. This is often accompanied with a verbal response as well, but it is not absolutely required. Although questions for information may also be rephrased in reported speech with *ask*, a question requires a verbal (or verbal substitute) response (Tsui 1994). Compare (19) with (21).

(21) *Question speech act and reported question*

- a) "What is the capital of France?" she asked.
- b) She *asked* me what the capital of France is.

Though (21) is also reported with the verb *ask*, it requires a verbal response. In (19) the action of removing glasses and no verbal response would be an acceptable response to the utterance. Thus for purposes of defining a request in this study, one criteria for distinguishing a request from a question for information is the potential verbal or non-verbal nature of the response. An utterance that requires a non-verbal response is a request, but an utterance that requires a verbal response is a question for information.¹⁶

A final diagnostic for defining a request is that the action must be carried out by the listener and benefit the speaker. Tsui (1994) notes that although requests, commands, invitations, offers and permissions are all requests for some kind of action,

¹⁶ This criteria does get fuzzy at times since it is possible to make a request for a person to speak, thus the action being requested is in fact a verbal one (though still an action, as distinguished from information).

the participant who performs the action and the participant who benefits the action varies for each speech act. Her classification system, illustrated in Figure 3-1, is very useful for distinguishing requests from offers, permissions and invitations, as the line between these speech acts can at times be fuzzy.

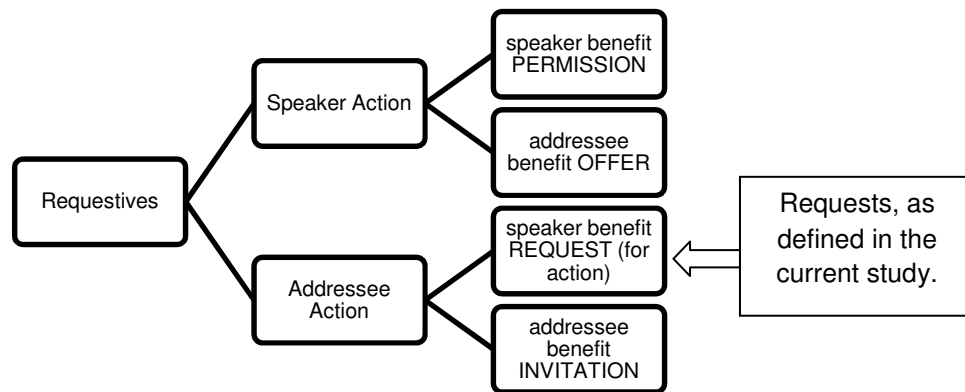


Figure 3-1 Subclasses of requestives from Tsui (1994:98).

Permission requests involve action by the speaker that benefits the speaker, offers involve action by the speaker that benefits the listener, invitations involve action by the listener that benefits the listener and requests (and commands) involve action by the listener that benefits the speaker. This study focuses on the latter, utterances that fall within the category of the box marked with an arrow in Figure 3-1.

Using these criteria, all requests and commands for an action by the listener that benefits the speaker have been extracted from the SBSCAE. This straightforward definition makes it relatively easy to distinguish requests and commands for action from other requestive speech acts. In cases where ambiguity exists, the utterance was included along with a thorough explanation of the reasons for the ambiguity. With a few utterances, it was sometimes unclear whether the speaker or listener benefited from the action, and whether the utterance should be categorized as an invitation or a request. In

some of these cases both the speaker and listener seemed to function as beneficiary.

These utterances are discussed on a case-by-case basis in Chapter 5.

In summary, the primary speech acts being investigated in this corpus are requests or commands for action by the listener that benefits the speaker. This straightforward definition was used for testing and extracting all requestive tokens in the SBCSAE, as well as the other corpora minimally consulted.

3.3.2 Data Extraction

The following section describes the process for manually finding and extracting the requests and commands from the SBCSAE, as well as the process by which the data was put into an appropriately organized format for coding. This process involved three to four thorough readings of the extracted requests and at least one major re-organization and categorization of the data.

The SBCSAE is available online and can be downloaded in four parts. Each part includes a group of transcripts in separate text files, as well as additional text files with metadata and explanations of the transcription formatting used. In addition, each transcript has a distinct title and number, from 1 to 60 and text of the conversation coded with timestamps. This allows each utterance to be identified with a particular transcript number and a timestamp. To illustrate the original formatting of the corpus, Figure 3-2 shows a screenshot of the first few lines of Transcript 0001, titled *Actual Blacksmithing*.

SBC0001.TRN			
1	0.00 9.21	LENORE:	... So you don't need to go ... borrow equipment from anybody,
2	9.21 9.52		to --
3	9.52 14.10		... to do the feet?
4	14.10 15.78		... [Do the hooves]?
5	15.01 16.78	LYNNE:	[(H)=] <YWN Well,
6	16.78 18.32		we're gonna have to find somewhere,
7	18.33 18.85		to get,
8	18.85 20.69		(Hx) ... something (Hx) YWN>.
9	20.69 21.19	DORIS:	.. So,
10	21.19 21.74		[~Mae-] --
11	21.26 22.24	LYNNE:	[I'm gonna] (Hx) --
12	22.24 23.23	DORIS:	[2~Mae ~Lynne XX2]
13	22.28 24.25	LYNNE:	[2(H) We're not2] gonna do the feet today,
14	24.25 25.07		I'm gonna wait till like,
15	25.07 26.14		early in the morning=,
16	26.14 26.62		.. to do those,
17	26.62 26.87		cause y- --
18	26.87 28.37		I mean you get s=o ti=red.
19	28.37 30.10		(H) ... n- you just,
20	30.10 32.36		... it takes % --
21	32.36 32.59		well,
22	32.59 33.90		it takes me longer than most people,
23	33.90 34.22		cause you know,

Figure 3-2 Sample screenshot of Transcript 1 from the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*

Additional information about the general context of the recorded conversation is in a separate text file. The relevant metadata for Transcript 001 is shown in Figure 3-2.

sbc0001	segment_title:	Actual Blacksmithing
sbc0001	date_rec:	19880701
sbc0001	event_dur:	4:00:00
sbc0001	record_dur:	1:34:42
sbc0001	neighborhood:	outskirts of small town
sbc0001	building:	house trailer
sbc0001	room:	living room of house trailer; hot afternoon
sbc0001	event_type:	face to face conversation
sbc0001	event:	mother and daughter catching up after daughter's absence
sbc0001	prior_events:	daughter returned that day from a months vacation in Minnesota
sbc0001	num_spkrs:	3
sbc0001	speaker:	0001
sbc0001	speaker:	0002
sbc0001	speaker:	0003

Figure 3-3 Metadata for Transcript 1 of the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*

This information allows for important socio-linguistic data to be coded in the current speech act analysis as it gives insight into the relationship dynamic of the speakers. As the last three lines of Figure 3-3 only show numbers for the speakers, an additional document gives more information on the speakers. The demographic information for the speakers in Transcript 1 and the accompanying key to that information is shown in Figure 3-4.

```
0001, LENORE, f, 30, Los Angeles, CA, CA, BA, 16, student, white
0002, DORIS, f, 50, Montana, MT, MT, high school, 12, horse ranc, white
0003, LYNNE, f, 19, Montana, MT, , high school, 12, student/ho, white
```

Explanation of information in speaker.tbl

The file speaker.tbl contains information about the speakers in this corpus. There are 51 speakers in Part I of this corpus, and a line for each one appears in speaker.tbl. Each line is comprised of 11 comma separated fields, corresponding to the following information:

1. speaker id
2. name used in transcript
3. gender
4. age
5. dialect of english
6. dialect state
7. current state
8. highest level of education
9. years of education
10. occupation
11. ethnicity

The names indicated in the table are pseudonyms, and correspond to the names in the transcripts.

The data in speaker.tbl was entered from a hardcopy of the UCSB database. Missing or truncated fields in the table reflect the data in this hardcopy.

Figure 3-4 Speaker information and corresponding categories of speaker information for

Transcript 1 of the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*

Although the categories listed in Figure 3-4 are not separate variables in the current analysis, having this information on each speaker allows for a more complete analysis of the speaker-listener relationship, which is crucial for this study.

In order to extract the requests and commands from the SBCSAE, the text files for each transcript were opened in Notebook++. Beginning with Transcript 1 and ending with the final Transcript 60, each conversation was examined carefully. When a request (or potential request) was identified, it was copied and pasted into a Microsoft Word Document, along with sufficient amount of the conversation before and after the request to understand the context. Each request was labeled with the transcript number it occurs

in, along with a letter, beginning with 'a'. For example, the first request occurring in Transcript 3 is labeled '3a', the second request in Transcript 3 is labeled '3b' and the labels continue until all of the requests in a transcript have been identified. Since the transcribed conversations include timestamps, it is easy to find that portion of the conversation within the full transcript. Any additional contextual information relevant to the conversation (such as the metadata in Figure 3-3) was copied and pasted into the Word Document with each request. Since the SBCSAE comes in four parts, four separate Word Documents were initially created listing the requests found in each transcript.

After identifying the potential tokens from each section of the SBCSAE, preliminary notes were made about each token. These notes included initial impressions about the context, whether or not the utterance indeed met the definition for a request or command, and any other striking linguistic or socio-cultural elements of the interaction. In addition, the actual requestive utterance was bolded so that it could be easily identified in any recurring readings. Figure 3-1 shows two excerpts from one of these documents.

TRN 3 –Three adults in the mid-30s, ...at home, preparing a meal. Pete is a guest of Marilyn and Roy. He is helping them prep.

3a

9.51 12.96 ROY: ... In that case I will use a yellow pepper for this evening.
12.96 14.21 MARILYN: ... (H) Oh,
14.21 15.21 ... fabulous.
15.21 16.52 ... (H) [~Peter],
16.26 16.54 ROY: [X]
16.52 19.09 MARILYN: would [2you like to2] ... string the bea=ns?
16.60 17.30 PETE: [2What can I do2].
19.09 19.36 Sure.

Request (in response to an offer). The speaker feels very entitled to make the request since the speaker has just offered to help. There are no contingencies. The request is in line with dinner prep, and fairly easy, expected.

3e

943.25 944.00 MARILYN: & landscape thing.
944.00 945.30 (H) Garbage is underneath.
945.30 946.65 ... If you can save the bag,
946.65 948.10 ... you can .. turn it inside out and save it.
948.10 948.25 PETE: Oh,
948.25 948.50 okay.
948.50 949.00 MARILYN: It's okay,
949.00 949.50 ... but,
949.50 949.95 ... you don't have to.
949.95 950.45 PETE: This is,
950.45 951.62 ... this is --
951.62 953.12 There's already plastic bags in there,
953.12 953.57 [so],
953.12 953.57 MARILYN: [Yeah].

Request with low priority (i.e., if it's possible)...she would like Pete to save the bag by turning it inside out. He is on the verge of not saving it, so she adds the concession that "it's okay, you don't have to" and the request is not fulfilled. Some contingencies (he would need to backtrack on some actions? Not high priority request?). Is this low entitlement? No...the speaker should feel perfectly entitled to make the request. However, the hostess doesn't want the guest to feel bad...so does this affect entitlement? No probably not...I think these are contingencies in action (not wanting the guest to feel bad)

Figure 3-5 Excerpt from notes on requests in the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English.

This excerpt shows the first and fifth request in Transcript 3, as the labels '3a' and '3e' indicate. These initial notes served as a record of the primary investigator's first impressions of the requests and the forms these speakers had used.

After these general notes, the corpus was re-organized according to the linguistic forms for requests and commands. Ten major linguistic categories were identified: *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, modal statements, imperatives, modal interrogatives, reported *need/want* statements, reported imperatives, reported modal interrogatives and hints. All tokens were divided into these ten categories by copying and pasting each token with all of the relevant conversation and notes into ten separate Word Documents. This allowed for examining requests with linguistic similarities and their contexts. As a final step to prepare the data for coding, bookmarks at each of the transcript heading labels were created for each token, so that hyperlinks back to the conversations could be created.

After these steps of extracting the tokens, appropriately labeling them, doing close readings of the text and taking descriptive notes on the context, categorizing the requests by linguistic type and creating bookmarks for each label, the data was ready for coding.

3.4 Data Coding and Analysis

The following section describes the process for coding and analyzing the data from the SBCSAE. Section 3.4.1 Coding categories lists and defines the coding categories chosen as variables for this analysis, as well as the process for choosing them and eliminating others. Section 3.4.2 Data Analysis describes the qualitative and quantitative methods used to analyze the coded data.

3.4.1 Coding categories

In order to identify what forms speakers use to request in particular contexts, elements of the context need to be identified and isolated for each utterance. At least twelve coding categories or features have been posited for this analysis. These coding categories are context type, type of action, contingency level (in both number and text

formats), entitlement level (in both number and text formats), total c/e level (number format only), speakers (e.g., parent/child, teacher/student, friends), social power relationship level, interactional or task-related request, position of request in conversation, explicitness, compliance, definite/indefinite object, and whether the utterance was part of a more extended requestive context that included repetition of the same request. These features are a combination of ones found in earlier request studies (Irvin-Tripp 1976, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, Aijmer 1996, Rhinier 2007, Adolphs 2008, Curl & Drew 2008) and elements that seemed important to isolate as the data was examined. Some features are elements of the context, including sociolinguistic variables like social distance and power, while others are features of the utterance used to make the request, *i.e.*, the propositional content of the request or what is actually stated in the utterance.

These features were coded in a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. A separate sheet for each linguistic category was created and across the top columns were set up for the transcript number, linguistic category, request utterance, pre-request phrases, context type, type of action, contingency level (in both number and text formats), entitlement level (in both number and text formats), total c/e level (number format only), speakers (e.g., parent/child, teacher/student, friends), social power relationship level, interactional or task-related request, position of request in conversation, explicitness, compliance, definite/indefinite object, and whether the utterance was part of a more extended requestive context that included repetition of the same request. For some linguistic categories, a few extra columns were added. For *need/want* statements, a column that identified whether the request was a bare stem request or hedged with *would* and for modal interrogatives, an additional column that identified which modal was used in the request, *can you*, *could you*, *will you* or *would you*. Figure 3-6 is a screenshot of the *let* statements coding sheet with the respective column headings across the top.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1		ling Ty	Let Requests	Pre-request pl	Context	Type of Requi	Cl	Conting	EL	Entitler	Total	Speakers	Social Power	Interaction	Position in Re	Explicitness	Comp	definit	Part of a speed
2	09a	Let	(BURP) Let me see the pencil	bare	SC	action	0 no	0 high	0	teenage boyfriend/girlfriend	neutral	Task-orient	Initial	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def			
3	15c	Let	Let's see all the [2bot2]ies	bare	SC	action	0 no	1 mid	1	friends	neutral	Interaction	3rd iteration	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def	yes		
4	15c	Let	Let's see all the bottles	bare	SC	action	0 no	1 mid	1	friends	neutral	Interaction	4th iteration	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def	yes		
5	15c	Let	Let me see	bare	SC	action	0 no	1 mid	1	friends	neutral	Interaction	initial	b, a	yes	n/a	yes		
6	15c	Let	Let's see how many bottles you go	bare	SC	action	0 no	1 mid	1	friends	neutral	Interaction	2nd iteration	ag, b, a, oa	yes	indef	yes		
7	16b	[Let]	me ask you one other thing	bare	Trans	Permission	1 low	0 high	1	customer / sales person	neutral	Interaction	initial	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def?			
8	27a	Let	okay...well...let's all count together okay, well	Ped	action	0 no	0 high	0 high	0	museum worker / children	High - Low	Task-orient	2nd iteration	ag, b, a, oa	yes	n/a	yes		
9	27c	Let	but let's (H) behave like scientists i but	Ped	action	0 no	0 high	0 high	0	museum worker / children	High - Low	Task-orient	initial	ag, b, a, oa	?	n/a			
10	33b	Let	oh, let's not start	oh	Int	stop action	0 no	0 high	0	Parent / adult child	High - Low	Interaction	initial	b, ag, a	no	n/a	yes		
11	33b	Let	let's not start	bare	Int	stop action	0 no	0 high	0	Parent / adult child	High - Low	Interaction	2nd iteration	b, ag, a	no	n/a	yes		
12	53a	Let	Let me have this pen <X for a minu	bare	Trans	action	1 low	0 high	1	baillif / ?	high - low	Task-orient	initial	b, a, oa	yes	def			
13	53b	Let	2Let me2] see that please	bare	Trans	action	0 no	0 high	0	judge / person in trial	high - low	Task-orient	initial	b, a, oa	yes	def			
14	53c	Let	Let me see that please	bare	Trans	action	0 no	0 high	0	judge / person in trial	high - low	Task-orient	initial	b, a, oa	yes	def			
15	56c	Let	Well let me show you my barn. if y well	SC	action	1 low	0 high	1	acquaintances? Friends?	neutral	Task-orient	initial, follow	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def	yes			
16	57b	Let	Alright...Let's us three get together alright	Ped	action	0 no	1 mid	1	teacher / students	high - low	Task-orient	initial, follow	ag, b, a, oa	yes	n/a	yes			
17	57j	Let	... Tell you what. Martin let's pull ti tell you what	Ped	action	0 no	1 mid	1	teacher / students	high - low	Task-orient	initial, follow	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def	yes			
18	57k	Let	Let's give it a try	bare	Ped	action	0 no	0 high	0	teacher / students	high - low	Task-orient	initial, follow	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def	yes		
19	57k	Let	... Now let's throw it again, and not now	Ped	action	1 low	0 high	1	teacher / students	high - low	Task-orient	initial, follow	ag, b, a, oa	yes	def	yes			

Figure 3-6 Sample Coding Page for *Let* Statements

As Figure 3-6 illustrates, each token is listed in column C and the appropriate information for each category is identified and entered in the additional columns. Because the entire conversation could not be entered into the coding worksheet as that would have been too bulky, the transcript numbers in Column A are hyperlinks that connect to the corresponding request in the corpus that includes the request in its larger interactional context and all previous notes made on it (see Figure 3-5). Thus, if the researcher wants to see the larger context while looking at the coding worksheet, it can be reached immediately by clicking once on the hyperlinked number in Column A.

The following sections define each of the twelve coding categories and explain how the linguistic data was coded.

3.4.1.1 Context type

Each requestive utterance in the SBCSAE was coded for the degree of social distance between the speakers with a category called context type, following Adolphs (2008) and the *Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English* (CANCODE). Adolphs (2008) identifies five situational categories she calls context types that correspond to social distance:

- Intimate
- Socio-cultural

- c) Professional
- d) Pedagogical
- e) Transactional

An utterance in the current study was coded as intimate (int) if the speakers were part of the same nuclear family or very, very close friends who approximate nuclear family members. These typically included parent-children, spouse to spouse, sibling to sibling and sometimes grandparent-grandchild interactions. These are relationships in which the speakers are extremely comfortable with one another and in which their guard is completely down (Adolphs 2008). An utterance was coded as a socio-cultural (SC) when it involved speakers who are friends or acquaintances and are interacting on a social level. An utterance was coded as occurring in a professional (prof) context when it involved conversations between work colleagues. An utterance was coded as a transactional (trans) context when it occurred between participants who are strangers or only know each other because there is an exchange of services, goods or information between them. These utterances include service encounters, both in a place of business as well as in a speaker's home. Finally, utterances were coded as pedagogical (ped) context types when they involved participants in a teacher-student relationship. These five context types represent a continuum from very close social distance in an intimate context type to the widest social distance possible, between strangers, in a transactional context type. Each utterance the request corpus of the SBCSAE is identified as reflecting one of these five categories, allowing the social distance between participants to be coded.

As the definitions above illustrate, social distance was coded with a five-point scale based on the speakers' identities rather than on a more nuanced analysis that identifies additional levels of social distance where the speakers' feelings toward the

other participant(s) in the interaction might indicate a greater or lesser degree of social distance or where the degree of social distance may be intentionally increased or lessened by the participants within a turn at talk. For example, all parent-child relationships were coded as intimate, or close, but obviously not all parent-child relationships are equal. Some parent-child relationships are very close and personal, while other parent-child relationships may be more distant or strained due to particular life circumstances or personalities. While the study recognizes that a more nuanced analysis of social distance in these interactions is possible, for the sake of comparing forms across contexts, this five-point scale analysis was the best choice.

3.4.1.2 Type of request

This coding category identifies five possible parameters for the kind of action being proposed in a request. It identifies if the speaker is requesting an

- a) Action
- b) Stop action
- c) Action/stop action
- d) Delayed action
- e) Information

In an analysis of requests in the scripted television show *Frasier*, Rhinier (2007) found that *would you* occurs (not exclusively) with requests to stop an action, while *could you* never occurs in this context. To see if this pattern holds true in a larger, naturally-occurring spoken corpora, this variable was coded according to whether or not the speaker was requesting the listener to perform an action or to stop performing an action. Each token is coded as either an *action* or *stop action* in the coding worksheet, according to whether the speaker is requesting the hearer to perform an action (action) or stop a particular behavior (stop action). In some cases a speaker joined requests for both in the

same utterance, so this was coded as a joint category of *action/stop action*. Sometimes the action being requested was not a request for immediate action but for an action in the future. This kind of utterance, also identified by Vine (2009) as NOW vs. LATER directives, was tagged as *delayed action*. A final coding category (*information*) was included to identify requests for information.

3.4.1.3 Contingency and entitlement

Early on in request literature, researchers including Ervin-Tripp (1976), Francik & Clark (1985), Blum-Kulka (1989), and Goldschmidt (1998) among others, have acknowledged that the degree to which a speaker is imposing on or inconveniencing a listener affects the linguistic form a speaker chooses when requesting. Most native speakers of North American English recognize this intuitively as well. In fact, Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory on politeness rest strongly on the notion of imposition. At the heart of their politeness theory is the idea that because speakers feel they are imposing on their listeners, they employ politeness strategies to mitigate their face-threatening actions. And Brown & Levinson (1987) also argue that requests are inherently face-threatening actions—to request is to impose on another. Since experimental research, theoretical research and native speaker intuition point strongly to the imposition of a requestive context, it seemed important to code the degree of imposition for requests found in corpora for this study. It was important to evaluate in this data whether degree of imposition is as central to speakers and the linguistic form they choose to make their request with as it seems to be within the theoretical literature.

However, asserting that imposition exists is much simpler than coding the degree of imposition in a request turn in a consistent manner. This difficulty is due to several reasons. First, the degree of imposition in a context is evaluated by both the speaker and the listener, and they do not always share the same conclusion. In order to code the

degree of imposition, the study would need to decide whether to code the speaker's perspective on the degree of imposition, the listener's, or both. Second, it is impossible to completely understand what speakers and/or listeners feel to be the degree of imposition in a particular context since this would require reading the minds and motivations of the participants at the moment the request is uttered. Any other attempt to assert the degree of imposition includes a strong dose of the researcher's bias, since she must essentially imagine what the participants might be feeling based on her assessment of the context. Since one is impossible and the other impossibly inconsistent, the primary investigator was forced to re-think both the concept of imposition and a strategy for coding it.

Instead of coding imposition directly, this study follows Curl & Drew (2008) by positing contingency and entitlement as key factors, replacing the monolithic category of imposition. Curl & Drew (2008:129) argue that "the request forms that speakers select embody, or display, their understandings of the contingencies associated with the recipient's ability to grant the request." In other words, speakers choose forms for requesting based on how difficult or unlikely the action being requested is (contingencies) and how strongly they feel the right to make the request (entitlement). Together, these concepts capture the essence of imposition. Low imposition requests occur in contexts where the speakers feel strongly entitled to make a request and/or perceive little to no obstacles for that request to be fulfilled, and high imposition requests occur where the speakers feel very hesitant or not entitled to request and/or perceive serious obstacles for that request to be fulfilled. According to Curl & Drew (2008:147), contingency is the "conditions necessary for granting [the] request." Contingency is listener-focused, as Craven & Potter (2010) point out—it is the obstacles and conditions that the requester recognizes that the listener faces in order to comply with the request. Curl & Drew (2008:147) define entitlement as the degree to which the speakers "believe themselves

reasonably entitled” to make the request. It is requester-focused because here the speaker focuses on the conditions which give the speaker the right to make the request (Craven & Potter 2010).

Curl & Drew's (2008) definitions seem to capture with more theoretical preciseness Ervin-Tripp's (1976) observation that the difficulty of a task and how normal or expected the activity is in relation to previously established roles is a key variable in requesting. However, Curl & Drew (2008) do not try to read into or analyze what the listeners or speakers perceive as the contingencies or entitlement; rather they examine the linguistic evidence for those contingencies or entitlements. In other words, they count contingency or entitlement in the context only when the speaker says something that relates to one or the other. This focus on the linguistic evidence for contingency and entitlement solves the researcher's bias problem, as it allows the researcher to forego the attempt to imagine herself in the context and then draw conclusions about degrees of imposition based on these conjectures. As with Curl & Drew (2008), this analysis identifies contingency and entitlement in a context based strictly on what the speaker says before during and after the request turn.

Although the current study draws heavily on Curl & Drew's (2008) definition and descriptions of contingency and entitlement, it also attempts to go a step further by not only identifying which requests indicate high or low entitlement and references to contingencies, but also quantifying the entitlement and contingency level. As Curl & Drew (2008) note, contingency and entitlement seem to be in reverse relation to each other. Where speakers feel a strong sense of entitlement, they are unlikely to refer to obstacles or contingencies that the listener faces. But where speakers do not feel a strong sense of entitlement, they are more likely to acknowledge those contingencies and attempt to mitigate them. Since the two are very closely linked, this study seeks a way to quantify

the level of contingency and entitlement both separately and together as a single coding category.

Therefore, a coding system was created with a scale from 0 to 3 for both contingency and entitlement. An utterance is tagged with 0 when the speaker makes no reference to either contingencies the listener faces or no reference to his or her entitlement to make the request. If a speaker uses one linguistic strategy to refer to a contingency or entitlement, an utterance is coded with 1. Two strategies means an utterances is coded with 2, and an utterance is tagged with 3 when the speaker makes three or more references to contingencies or uses at least three linguistic strategies that orient to entitlement (or the lack of it). By adding the two scores together an utterance can have a possible score between 0 and 6, with 0 being a request where the speaker displays very strong entitlement (because he or she makes no reference to it) and displays very low contingency (because he or she makes no references to obstacles the listener faces). A request that has a total score of 6 is one in which the speaker demonstrates low entitlement by employing at least three strategies that would help to demonstrate his or her right to make the request and high contingency because the speaker uses at least three strategies to mitigate obstacles that might prevent the listener from complying. In terms of organizing the data, utterances with a contingency/entitlement level (c/e) of 0-3 are low contingency/high entitlement requests and utterances with a c/e level of 4-6 are high contingency/low entitlement. However, in this paper they will simply be referred to as low c/e level (0-3) and high c/e level (4-6) requests. Like Curl & Drew (2008), this analysis did not attempt to read into the situation or evaluate what the speaker or hearer may or may not be thinking. Rather, this score is based on what the requester actually says, either before, during, or after the request.

The following examples illustrate how this scale is applied to the corpus data.

Example (22) is a high c/e level request.

(22) Transcript 7c

1	MARY:	... (DRINK) (Hx)	
2	ALICE:	... I was gonna ask you and m=om,	E1
3		too,	
4		if you could um,	E2
5		... take care of !Trace for a couple days next week.	
6	MARY:	... (TSK) Oh?	
7		... What you got in mind.	E3
8	ALICE:	... I need to get caught up on my work.	
9	MARY:	... (DRINK) Wednesday I have an appointment	
10		at nine thirty.	
11	ALICE:	... Mom's off,	
12		isn't she?	C1
13	MARY:	... Oh,	
		that's righ=t.	
14			
15		... That's right.	
16	ALICE:	... Yeah I think that'd,	
17		... I think that'd um,	
18		... (TSK) work out,	
19		...like if she had to go shopping or something maybe you could go v her,	C2
20		and help her with him?	
21		... And !Nicky helps her .. with him a lot anyway.\0	C3

Mary and Alice are sisters and the request initiates in lines 2-4. There are three strategies where the speaker orients to contingencies:

- a) Alice offers a solution to Mary's stated contingency (lines 10-11)
- b) Alice orients to Mary's unwillingness to comply by downgrading the amount of time she requests (lines 18-19).
- c) Alice downgrades the request by minimizing the amount of effort it will require from Mary (line 20).

There are also three orientations to entitlement:

- a) the past tense in line 2
- b) the *if* clause in line 4

c) the *I need* statement in line 8

The following paragraph explicates this analysis.

Alice asks Mary in lines 2-4 of Example (22) if she would babysit her child (Trace) the following week: ... *I was gonna ask you and m=om, too, if you could um, ... take care of !Trace for a couple days next week.* Mary's response in lines 6-7 is not an immediate *yes* nor an emphatic *no*, but rather one of hesitancy to commit: *Oh? ... What you got in mind.* This hesitancy demonstrates an unstated contingency to the request—Mary's unwillingness to do what her sister is asking. Instead of directly telling Alice she doesn't want to comply, Mary provides a concrete obstacle in line 9: she has a previously scheduled doctor's appointment during (some of) the time Alice is requesting her babysitting services. Alice responds to both the stated and unstated contingencies with at least three strategies. First, she offers a solution in lines 11-12 to the stated contingency, saying ... *Mom's off, isn't she?* Since Alice has asked both her sister and mother to watch Trace, Alice proposes that their mother watch Trace during the times that Mary cannot. This solution keeps Alice's request viable and also has no contingencies since the mother is not present to object. Second, Alice downgrades the request in lines 19-20 to a suggestion that Mary help for a shorter time frame than the one Alice had originally proposed: ...*like if she had to go shopping or something maybe you could go with her, and help her with him?* No longer is she directly asking *if you could*, but rather she is suggesting *maybe you could*. A suggestion does not require a specific response of compliance or refusal. The preferred response options for a suggestion are much more open-ended. The hearer can comply or refuse, agree or disagree or even choose not to respond at all. In other words, a non-committal response—which is what Mary has given to Alice—is a perfectly acceptable response to a suggestion. By downgrading to a suggestion, Alice is adjusting her expectations to the reality of the interaction and

maintaining social harmony with her sister. She has also decreased the amount of time she is asking Mary to babysit—instead of *a couple days next week* (line 5) she is now only asking for Mary's time when their mother goes shopping. She has also now shifted most of the responsibility for watching the child to their mother. Alice's third strategy that addresses Mary's unwillingness to comply is to suggest that Mary's teenage daughter Nicky will do most of the actual babysitting work. She adds, *And !Nicky helps her .. with him a lot anyway* (line 21). By implication, Mary's unwillingness to help can have no basis: the request is now only for a very limited time period (while they are out shopping) and will require very minimal action by Mary herself because Nicky will do the actual difficult parts of babysitting. Thus because the speaker employs three linguistic strategies to deal with contingencies—offering a solution to a stated contingency, downgrading the request to a suggestion and then offering an additional solution (that Mary's daughter help)—this utterance is coded with a contingency level of 3.

The speaker, Alice, also negotiates the conversation by referencing entitlement. First, she prefaces the request with the past tense utterance in (line 2) *I was gonna ask you*, which places a distance between the speaker and request itself. Second the request itself in lines 4-5 is an *if* statement, *if you could um,...take care of !Trace for a couple days next week*, which displays a hesitancy to ask and an orientation to her lack of entitlement because there may be obstacles to the listener complying to the request. Third, after Mary's first non-committal response, instead of literally answering Mary's question, *what you got in mind?* (line 7) with more details about the request, Alice follows up with a reason statement instead: *I need to get caught up on my work* (line 8). This *need* statement is a strategy for claiming entitlement in a situation where the speaker may not feel confident about it or feels the need to justify the request. In this case, Alice is justifying her request in light of Mary's hesitancy to commit. These three strategies

(hedging the request with past tense and an *if* clause and justifying it with a *need* statement) give this utterance a low entitlement level of 3 and, combined with the contingency score, a total c/e level of 6.

A requester who feels a strong sense of entitlement to make a request has no need to justify the request and thus does not reference contingencies or entitlement at all. Example (22), a high c/e level request contrasts with (23), a low c/e level request, where a teenage boyfriend and girlfriend are studying math together and there are no orientations to either contingency or entitlement.

(23) Transcript 9a

- | | | |
|---|---------|----------------------------------------|
| 1 | NATHAN: | ... You can do it that way? |
| 2 | KATHY: | .. Mhm. |
| 3 | NATHAN: | ... (BURP) Let me see the pencil (Hx). |
| 4 | KATHY: | ... (H) But then, |
| 5 | | I didn't get what she got. |

In (23), Nathan requests a pencil from Kathy, saying *let me see the pencil*. In contrast to (22), there are no references to contingencies or to whether or not Nathan feels entitled to ask for a pencil. It is an easy, uncomplicated and even normal request to make when working on math problems with someone. The conversation immediately before and after his request is unrelated to his request. Because this request has no linguistic reference to contingencies or orientation to entitlement, it is coded with a c/e level of 0.

Every linguistic word, phrase or strategy that was identified as referencing contingency or entitlement as well as the c/e level ultimately assigned to each requestive token was written out below each token in the request corpus. In addition, the contingency and entitlement strategies found in the SBCSAE are collated and summarized in Appendix A. Some of the strategies that orient to contingencies include references to time, ability/willingness/possibility, providing a solution, referencing previous interactions, incentive statements, repetition, downgraders and concession

statements, and euphemisms. Some of the entitlement strategies identified in this corpus include reason statements, references to previous interactions, distancing strategies (e.g., past tense), hesitation strategies, hedging, repetition, concession statements, permission statements, solidarity strategies, and negative queries, among others. Although some categories overlap (such as repetition), each element was carefully identified as to whether the strategy had to do with dealing with obstacles (contingencies) or the speaker's right to request (entitlement). Repetition as a tool for both contingency and entitlement occurred in the corpus, thus some of the general categories for c/e strategies overlap.

Each requestive token in the SBSCSAE was given a contingency level (CL) score and an entitlement level (EL) score according to the linguistic evidence in the conversation, as well as a total c/e level score, from 0-6. For the analysis and discussion of results, only the total c/e level scores were used, unless a particularly unusual case required noting of the CL and EL scores separately.

3.4.1.4 Speakers

For each request in the SBSCSAE, the speaker and hearer were identified and described, primarily according to their role or relationship with each other. These descriptions included family relationships, such as parent/child, spouse/spouse, sibling/sibling, grandmother/grandchild, cousin/cousin, uncle/nephew, to name a few. Other relationships such as friend/friend, employee/employer, contractor/homeowner, tour guide/tour group member, teacher/student, judge/plaintiff also occurred in the corpus. The participants were described with as much accuracy as could be acquired from the meta-data of the corpus. In most cases, these categories were clear. In a few of them, particularly family member conversations, sometimes the participants were labeled as family members, but the specific family relationship was not identified. In these cases

the speakers were simply labeled as family members. Additionally, a distinction was noted between parents speaking to their adult children and parents speaking to their non-adult (under age 18) children. Within the coding document, the participants were listed in the order of speaker/hearer. Thus, a token coded mother/daughter indicates that the request was uttered by the mother to her daughter. This coding category is primarily descriptive and not used directly in the analysis. However, the coding of the next category, social power relationship, was primarily dependent on these descriptions of the speakers; thus this coding indirectly affects the results of the analysis.

3.4.1.5 Social power

The social power relationship between the speakers in a requestive turn was identified by Ervin-Tripp (1976) as having a definite effect on which forms a speaker chose to use in a request. Thus the balance of social power was identified for each of the participants in each token. There are three possible settings for this category:

- a) High – Low
- b) Low – High
- c) Neutral

An utterance was coded as high/low if the speaker was at a higher level of social power than the hearer. These contexts included parent/child, teacher/student, judge/plaintiff, employer/employee relationships. Generally, the social power derived either from the speaker's identity within a family structure or from a particular job that the speaker had and was relevant to the request being made. For example, interactions between a tour guide and his tour group, where the tour guide was indicating to them what direction to walk and where to look was coded as a high/low social power context because the requests fell in line with the speaker's role as a tour guide. An utterance was coded as low/high if the speaker was at a lower level of social power than the higher. These

included requests spoken by students to teachers, children to parents, employees to employers, among others. Finally, an utterance was coded as neutral if the speaker and hearer were at an equal social power level. These utterances included requests between spouses, siblings, cousins and friends, as well as speakers in transactional contexts such as customers and servers at a restaurant or a contractor and homeowner discussing a quote.

It should be noted that coding for this social power relationship category is intentionally simplified and proposes what might be the expected social power relationship rather than what an in-depth analysis of the interaction shows the actual social power relationship between the speakers to be. However, in some cases it seemed likely that particular relationships did not maintain what might be considered the traditional social power balance, and these cases are clearly noted and discussed in the analysis. For example, spouse to spouse requests were coded as neutral (or equal) social power contexts. However, some interactions between spouses seemed to demonstrate that there was a non-equal social power relationship—one spouse clearly carried more social power in the relationship than the other. The implications of this are discussed in the analysis.

3.4.1.6 Interaction type

A contextual feature suggested by Adolphs (2008) as a potential factor in her discussion of corpus analysis of speech acts is the interaction type. She notes two types. First, a **task-oriented context** is one in which speakers are collaborating together on a task. Second **interactional-oriented contexts** are those where speakers are conversing for social purpose, to either establish or maintain a relationship. Utterances were coded according to these two definitions. An utterance was coded as task if the participants were collaborating on a task and as interactional if the request was not functioning as

orienting to a task, but rather to maintaining a social relationship. Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming majority of requests in the SBCSAE occurred in task-oriented conversations. Since nearly all tokens occurred in task-oriented conversations and no linguistic category showed a preference for interactional-oriented requests, this category proved unhelpful in explaining why speakers choose particular linguistic forms for requesting over others and was not significant for the analysis.

3.4.1.7 Position in request

As the analysis of the requestive forms in the SBCSAE progressed and conversational analysis methods proved helpful for decoding individual contextual factors, it seemed important to note at what point in the discourse a particular requestive form occurred. This was especially important when a request was repeated more than once in the course of the conversation. For example, if a form occurred as the first iteration of the request, it was labeled as initial. That is, it was the initial form the speaker chose to make his or her request with. If an utterance was a repetition of a request for action already given in the discourse, it was labeled as 2nd iteration. A third repetition was labeled 3rd iteration and a fourth as 4th iteration, etc. In a few cases, other notable discourse patterns besides order were noted, such as when a request followed an offer by the hearer or when particular linguistic categories of requests occurred in conjunction with each other in certain contexts. This coding category helps to identify higher frequency patterns that might be useful to teach to English language learners.

3.4.1.8 explicitness

As noted in the introduction, the concepts of direct and indirect requests have been ambiguously and inconsistently defined since Searle (1975) first delineated them. In addition, significant problems concerning these categories and the potential definitions of these terms have been often noted (see Ervin-Tripp 1976, Walker, Drew & Local 2011).

Ervin-Tripp (1976) suggests that the degree of explicitness in a request may be a more useful categorization than whether the request is direct or indirect. She identifies four major elements of a requestive that, if present in the utterance, indicate a fully explicit request. These elements are

- a) agent
- b) beneficiary
- c) action
- d) object of action

The agent is the listener as well as the person who is expected to fulfill the request. The beneficiary is the speaker, the one who is making the request of the hearer and who will benefit from the request being fulfilled. The action is what the speaker is requesting the listener to do, and the object of action, if applicable, is an object that undergoes the action or that will be affected by the listener when he or she undertakes the action. For example, in the utterly conventional request,

(24) Can you pass me the salt?

all four of these elements are present. *You* references the agent, *me* references the beneficiary, *pass* is the action being requested and *the salt* is the object of the action.

While classified by Searle (1975) as an indirect request because the illocutionary force of the utterance as a directive does not match the form, that of a question of ability, (24) is immediately recognizable and processed by fluent speakers of English as a request for salt rather than merely a question of the listener's ability to pass the salt shaker. Ervin-Tripp (1976) argues that one reason it is so clearly processed as a request is because it is fully explicit—its agent, beneficiary, action and object of action are all stated in the utterance. Thus, she argues that explicitness, rather than directness (according to Searle's 1975 definition) might be a more useful categorization.

To that end, the explicitness of each requestive utterance in the SBCSAE was identified. If an utterance mentioned the agent, it was marked with *ag*, if it identified the beneficiary, it was marked with *b*, if the action was stated, it was marked with *a*, and if an object of action was stated, it was marked with *oa*. This category, however, turns out to be simply a way to describe the propositional content of the request in very sparse terms. Although it may identify if an action is referred to in the request, it does not identify what kind of action is being requested, nor does it help to identify a particular context in which particular requestive forms are being used. Thus this coding category did not factor into the final analysis or results of the current study.

3.4.1.9 Compliance

For each request token in the SBCSAE, the listener's level of compliance to the requested action was identified. This category did not figure strongly or consistently into the analysis, as the focus of the current investigation is on the speaker's utterance rather than the listener's response. However, at times, noting the listener's response was relevant as it sometimes provided the motivation for a re-phrasing of the request or for identifying an unusual or unconventional interaction. Three possible responses were identified for each request: **yes**, **no** and **unknown**. First, the utterance was coded with *yes* if the listener complied with the request immediately. If the request was for a non-immediate action and the listener verbally assented to perform the action at a later time, the utterance was also marked as *yes*, or complied with. Second, if the listener did not perform the action requested, either verbally refusing to comply or not performing the action despite a verbal assent, the utterance was marked with *no*, indicating this non-compliance. Third, if the transcript did not give enough information to identify whether or not the listener complied with the request, then the token was marked as *unknown* to indicate that the level of compliance is unknown.

3.4.1.10 Definiteness of object referenced

At one point in the analysis, it seemed possible that the definite or indefinite reference of the object of action might provide an interesting point of analysis and perhaps influence what forms a speaker chose to use in a particular context. Thus, an object of action (*e.g.* the *salt* in *Can you pass the salt?*) was identified in an additional coding category as definite if it was preceded by the article *the* or was clearly referencing a pre-identified object or indefinite if it lacked an article, was preceded by *a*, *an* or another indefinite pronoun such as *some*. This coding category, however, proved to be irrelevant to research questions of this study, and nothing further was analyzed in terms of the degree of definiteness of the object of action. In addition, the chi square analysis found this factor to be insignificant.

3.4.1.11 Repeated requests

The final coding category identifies whether a token is part of an extended turn in which the speaker utters more than one version of the request. That is, the speaker (or a series of speakers) utters the same request for action at least twice. An utterance that was part of an extended request turn was marked with *yes*. All other utterances were left blank in this category. This allowed for easy sorting and viewing of which linguistic forms were used when speakers repeated requests, often because of obstacles or initial hesitation of the listener to comply. The forms used in these contexts are particularly interesting, as they illustrate the strategies that speakers often employ while negotiating for compliance.

3.4.1.12 Summary

In summary, all requestive tokens in the SBCSAE were coded according to the categories above. For context type, they were coded as either intimate, socio-cultural, professional, pedagogical or transactional; for type of action, as either action, stop action,

delayed action or information; for contingency levels, a rating from 0 to 3; for entitlement levels, a rating from 0 to 3, plus a total c/e level ranging from 0 to 6. The identity of each speaker was identified based on their role or relationship with each other, the social power relationship was coded as either high-low, low-high or equal. Discourse level factors were coded, including the position of the request as initial or an additional iteration of the same request within the discourse; compliance was indicated as with either yes, no or unknown; and if the token was one of a multi-request sequence it was coded with yes. Besides these contextual factors, any pre-request phrases, if present, were identified, such as discourse markers like *uh*, *ok*, *you know* or direct address. This process of identifying contextual factors and coding them for each utterance prepared the data for analysis.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

This section discusses the general methods employed for analyzing the data. These include both qualitative and quantitative methods. An overview of these methods are discussed in Section 3.4.2.1 Qualitative and non-statistical quantitative analysis and statistical analysis is discussed in Section 3.4.2.2 Statistical analysis.

3.4.2.1 Qualitative and non-statistical quantitative analysis

Qualitative methods of data analysis were used, particularly during the process of preparing the data for analysis and coding it. These methods include close reading of the text, describing the context, and conversation analysis techniques of identifying patterns of action within the discourse, such as identifying linguistic strategies for referencing contingencies and orienting to entitlement (or the lack of it).

Once the data was coded according to the categories described in Section 3.4.1 Coding categories, the primary quantitative method of analysis was used to sort the data according to key contextual factors in order to find patterns that might help to identify

what contexts the linguistic forms for requesting did (or did not) occur in. The primary categories for sorting the data for analysis were context type (*i.e.*, social distance), total contingency/entitlement level and social power relationship. The sorting of the data according to the categories of position of request and repeated requests also helped to identify some minor patterns, particularly for modal statement requests. After sorting, the results for the number of tokens that occurred in each category of context type, c/e level and social power relationship were tabulated. These results appear as tables in Chapter 4. For each linguistic category the relevant contextual categories were identified.

3.4.2.2 Statistical analysis

This investigation and the corpus used as a data source is not intended to act as a comprehensive list of all linguistic forms for requesting, or even all of the most conventional linguistic forms speakers employ for requesting. Nor is it intended to be representational of the entire U.S. population. It only presents what forms a select group of speakers at various points in time used for requesting. This study attempts to identify salient features of the context in which these forms occur in order to suggest the patterns which do occur for these speakers. The small size of the data as well as a number of categories with very small occurrences makes statistical analysis of this data generally unreliable. However, as a way of summarizing the data, the data was crosstabulated and a chi-square score was obtained for each of the contextual factors. Because some categories included values under 5, the results of this chi-square analysis are presented as strongly conditional and not conclusive. However, they did confirm the results given in Chapter 4 as five of the contextual factors had a p value above 0.05. A multinomial logistic regression analysis was also attempted, but no significant results were obtained due to the small sample size and lack of fit for the model. At present, no appropriate model was identified that could be performed on such a small data set and with a high

number of rare event categories.¹⁷ However, in a few instances, some categories were collapsed so that a multinomial logistic regression analysis could be run for one or two independent variables and produce some statistically significant results (though still affected by small sample bias, and thus to be taken as only provisional results until more data is added in future studies).

In summary, the initial coding and organizing of the data was done by primarily qualitative methods of description and text/discourse analysis. Quantitative methods of sorting and tabulation of the contextual features which co-occur in relevant ways with the linguistic forms were the primary methods used in analyzing the data. A few statistical tests were run on the data, including chi-square analysis, though the primary method of analysis of this study was not statistical. These results provide limited support for the reliability of the results as well as affirm that the most relevant coding categories were chosen as the primary contextual factors in the analysis.

The following chapter provides the results of this analysis. It will present the results for each of the linguistic categories of requestive forms, as well as the primary contextual factors relevant to those forms. This includes a description of the utterances used in requesting under each linguistic category, the coding results for some contextual factors including context type, social power and contingency/entitlement. Additional relevant context factors for some forms are discussed, including elements of the discourse context such as the local sequential position of the utterance and multi-form request turns.

¹⁷ While penalized likelihood, also called the Firth method, is often used for logistic regression with small data sets to overcome the small sample bias, this is only available for binary logistic regression (King & Zeng 2001). The current study, with at least six outcome variables, would require multinomial logistic regression and penalized likelihood cannot be applied.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

Since the approach to this analysis of requests in naturally-occurring spoken data is at the outset to shed theoretical categories such as direct vs. indirect, which have been inconsistently defined throughout the literature and begin at an empirical level with simply the data, it made sense to identify a set of linguistic rather than theoretical or pragmatic categories by which to sort and compare the data. In addition, the lack of categorical consistency in previous corpus studies reflects the theoretical or pragmatic assumptions of each analysis and thus by choosing one over another would require building in those theoretical assumptions about the data from the outset. For example, the first major corpus study of requests in American English by Ervin-Tripp (1976) includes data categories of need statements, imperatives, embedded imperatives, permission directives, question directive/non-explicit question directives and hints. In Aijmer's (1996) corpus study of British English requests, she includes just three major categories: imperative, hearer-oriented and permission requests. Since none of these paradigms fit easily with the data in the SBCSAE and include considerable inconsistency (e.g., Ervin-Tripp's imperative category includes constructions as diverse as *you should*, *you can*, and *could you*, as well as the conventional imperative construction like *get me*), straightforward linguistic categories present an empirically objective and hopefully more transparent starting place for the analysis. Out of the 284 requests and commands extracted from the SBCSAE, the first clear linguistic division that emerges between these utterances is syntactic: some utterances are statements and others are interrogatives. Within the requestive statement utterances, five semantic and syntactic sub-categories are delineated: *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, modal statements

and imperatives. The remaining Interrogative requestives constitute a sixth linguistic category, as they all occur with modal or modal phrases. The following discussion of the results and analysis of these forms further distinguishes several sub-groups within the modal Interrogative category. The final category of requestives, hints, is the only category defined pragmatically rather than by syntax or semantics. Furthermore, in this analysis of naturally-occurring spoken requests, utterances that are reporting what another participant said at a particular time in the past are separated from the main linguistic categories. Thus the SBCSAE also includes reported *need/want* statements, reported imperatives and reported modal interrogatives, but these reported requestives, along with hints, are excluded from the current analysis.

For the crosstabulation test that was run, five of the contextual factors demonstrated statistical significance. With $p < 0.05$, context type ($p = .000$), contingency/entitlement ($p = .000$), social power ($p = .003$), type of request ($p = .005$) and position in request ($p = .000$) all had significant chi-square values. The subsequent analysis focuses first on the distribution of requestive forms across primarily context type, contingency/entitlement level and social power. For some forms, the discourse context and the nature of the requested action show relevant patterns that are briefly discussed. The chi-square analysis shows some evidence these results may be significant. However, as mentioned in 3.4.2.2 Statistical analysis, with some categories having values less than 5, the statistical analysis results need additional data to verify their significance.

4.2 Statement Requests

The following section discusses four of the linguistic categories of requests found in the *Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English*. These four linguistic

categories are request statements rather than interrogatives. They are *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, and modal statements.

4.2.1 Let Statements

There are 18 *let* statements in the corpus that are requests or commands from a speaker for an action by the listener. This construction consists of *let* + first person pronoun + [VERB], in two variations: *let's* + [VERB] or *let me* + [VERB]. This particular linguistic construction is not one noted by Irvin-Tripp (1976), though she does include a semantic category of permissive directives which potentially might include *let* statements if they had been present in her corpus. However, Aijmer (1996) notes *let me* as a requestive form in the naturally occurring spoken sections of the London Lund Corpus. The form does not occur in Blum-Kulka's (1989) elicited request constructions. The paucity of *let* statements in previous literature may indicate that they are more conventionally used to make suggestions and offers rather than requests or commands. However, the 18 *let* statement request in the SBCSAE form a homogenous group within the 10 linguistic types found in this corpus—in fact, arguably the most homogenous of all of them. The contextual factors are much more consistent and less varied for these tokens. There are three contextual factors that seem to show a clear pattern for this linguistic type: contingency/entitlement level, social power, and social distance (context type).

4.2.1.1 Contingency and entitlement

The distribution of c/e levels for *let* statements in the SBCSAE is illustrated in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1 Distribution of C/E Levels for *Let* Statements in the SBCSAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
8	10	0	0	0	0	0

Let statements occur with very low contingency/entitlement levels—all 18 have a total score of either 0 or 1. That is, the speakers make little or no reference to either their entitlement to make the request or contingencies that might prevent the hearer from complying. Out of 18 *let* statements, 8 are requests for the hearer to pass a particular object that is in view to the speaker.

- (25) (BURP) Let me see the pencil
- (26) Let me have this pen <X for a minute
- (27) Let's see all the] [2bot2]tles
- (28) Let me see
- (29) Let me see that please
- (30) Martin let's pull this down XXX

Others are requesting a particular action from the hearer that is clearly conventional for the situation and not likely to be difficult or unpleasant for the hearer.

- (31) let's all count together folks
- (32) let's (H) behave like scientists now
- (33) Let's us three get together
- (34) Let's give it a try
- (35) Now let's throw it again, and not have to stop
- (36) Well let me show you my barn. If you're interested?
- (37) Let me ask you one other thing

(30)-(35) all occur in pedagogical contexts introducing a turn in which an instructor or teacher is initiating a pedagogical action for students to take in the learning environment. These actions include counting (31), observing closely (32) and engaging in a karate move (30), (33), (34), (35). Example (36) does not request that the listener hand over an object near at hand, but the object the speaker is referring to is, in fact, close by, as the

participants are at the speaker's horse farm. Presumably the barn is in sight, and as the listener has just bought a horse from the speaker, such a request is not unusual or difficult to comply with. Example (37) does not involve requesting an object near at hand nor does it occur in a pedagogical context, but the speaker is a customer in a store requesting to ask one more question to the sales clerk—a very natural and expected request for someone interested in buying a product in a store.

4.2.1.2 Social power

Second, all of the *let* statements in the SBCSAE are spoken by speakers who are either at the same social power level or at a higher social power status.

Table 4-2 Distribution of Social Power for *Let* Statements in the SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
11	7	0

No *let* statements are uttered by a speaker of a lower social power status to one of a higher social status. This is consistent with the utterances' classification as requests or commands rather than suggestions. A *let* statement spoken by someone of a lower social power status to one at a higher power status might be reasonably tagged as asking permission or suggesting rather than as a request. (26) and (29) both occur in a courtroom and are spoken either by a judge to a defendant (29) or by a court official to an unidentified person (26). As noted above, (30)-(35) are spoken by an instructor to students. The others occur between friends, between a clerk and a customer interacting in a store (37), or by a mother speaking to her adult daughter. In all of these contexts, the balance of social power is either equal or slanted toward the speaker.

4.2.1.3 Social distance

Finally, *let* statements occur minimally in very close social distance contexts.

Table 4-3 illustrates the distribution of context types which essentially measures social distance.

Table 4-3 Distribution of Context Type (Social Distance) for *Let* Statements in the SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
2	6	0	6	4

Out of the 18 tokens, only 2 occur in an intimate context. 6 occur in a socio-cultural context, 6 in a pedagogical context, and 4 in a transactional context. Since intimate context interactions are by far the most frequent in the entire corpus (125 out of 284), this is a significantly lower occurrence. A chi-square analysis of context type carries a p value of .000 ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that these results may be significant. The following table shows the crosstabulation analysis for context type across *let* statements.

Table 4-4 Crosstabulation Analysis for Context Type and *Let* Statements

			Linguistic form
			<i>Let</i> statements
Context Type	Intimate	Count	2
		Expected Count	8.0
		% within Linguistic form	11.1%
	Socio-cultural	Count	6
		Expected Count	3.0
		% within Linguistic form	33.3%
	Professional	Count	0
		Expected Count	.7
		% within Linguistic form	0.0%
	Pedagogical	Count	6
		Expected Count	3.4
		% within Linguistic form	33.3%

Table 4-4—*Continued.*

	Transactional	Count	4
		Expected Count	2.9
		% within Linguistic form	22.2%
Total		Count	18
		Expected Count	18.0
		% within Linguistic form	100.0%

An expected count of 8 and an observed count of only 2 for *let* statements in intimate contexts (as well as high observed than expected counts in socio-cultural, pedagogical and transactional context types) may indicate that speakers prefer this requesting form when there is at least some social distance between the participants and that they may be less likely to use it when speaking to close family members.

4.2.2 If Statements

There are 11 *if* statements in the SBCSAE that function as requests. This linguistic form is a request utterance constructed with *if + you + [verb]*, with optional hedging and modals. The following tables show the distribution of *if* statement requests for context type, c/e levels and social power contexts.

Table 4-5 Distribution of Context Type for *If* Statements in the SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
2	1	1	0	7

Table 4-6 Distribution of C/E Levels for *If* Statements in the SBCSAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
0	3	1	3	2	1	1

Table 4-7 Distribution of Social Power for *If* Statements in the SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low - High
4	6	1

At first glance, these results indicate that *if* statements occur significantly in transactional contexts, across a range of c/e levels and primarily in high – low and neutral social power

context settings. However, by looking at these three categories together, these tokens seem to show a dichotomous pattern between transactional and non-transactional social distance tokens and their contingency/entitlement and social power levels.

Table 4-8 *If* Statements in Transactional Contexts

Request Utterances	Con-Text Type	CL ^a	EL ^b	Total C+E Level	Speakers / Hearer	Social Power Relationship
<i>If you -- if you go over and have a look at the dining room</i>	Trans	0	1	1	contractor/ homeowner	neutral
<i>Okay folks, if you will please, take a look at this picture taken during construction</i>	Trans	1	0	1	tour guide/ tour group	high-low
<i>Okay folks, if you will please, follow me now</i>	Trans	1	0	1	tour guide/ tour group	high-low
<i>.. Okay, if you would , right up this stairway, when you get on the balcony, wait for me on the blue couches on the balcony please.</i>	Trans	2	0	2	tour guide/ tour group	high-low
<i>If you want to let him know and then have him call me back</i>	Trans	1	2	3	vet clerk / client	Neutral
<i>... I'm wondering if=... you don't have a floor plan of the house</i>	Trans	2	1	3	contractor/homeowner	Neutral
<i>So if you will ask your questions clearly, and please don't make them too long, s- --because I might forget,... the= beginning, by the [time I reach the end],</i>	Trans	1	2	3	moderator for a public lecture /audience	high-low

^a CL = Contingency Level

^b EL = Entitlement Level

As Table 4-8 illustrates, the 7 *if* statements that occur in transactional contexts all have low contingency/entitlement levels, from 1-3, as well as high – low and neutral social power contexts. The remaining four *if* statements follow a strikingly different pattern, demonstrated in Table 4-9.

Table 4-9 *If* Statement Requests in Non-transactional Contexts

Request Utterances	Con- text Type	CL ^a	EL ^b	Total C/E Level	Speaker/Hearer	Social Power Relationship
<i>you know maybe if X> we could turn the spider plant around.</i>	Int	2	3	5	wife/husband	Neutral
<i>... I was gonna ask you and m=om,too,if you could um, ... take care of !Trace for a couple days next week</i>	Int	3	3	6	sibling / sibling	Neutral
<i>if we can.. If we can [3go ahead and3] carry on, ... at some point, you and I [I think], 2Because2</i>	Prof	1	3	4	Co-workers	low-high
<i>If you can save the bag, .. you can .. turn it inside out and save it.</i>	SC	2	2	4	hostess / guest & friend	Neutral

^a CL = Contingency Level

^b EL = Entitlement Level

These non-transactional tokens include 2 intimate, 1 socio-cultural and 1 professional context type, and unlike the transactional context requests, these all have higher contingency/entitlement levels, between 4 and 6, with neutral and low – high social power levels. They occur between speakers who have a previously established social relationship, and thus much closer social distance, including a wife speaking to her husband, a request between sisters, two co-workers who are on the board of a community arts program, and a hostess speaking to a guest who is also a close friend.

These requests exhibit strikingly higher levels of contingency and lack of entitlement. That is, the speakers recognize and orient their language to various obstacles that the hearers face in complying. The speakers also express a less certain sense of entitlement. The social power level of these requests include 3 contexts in which the speakers are at equal power levels and another set of participants with a low-high social power relationship.

4.2.3 Need/Want Statements

The data for *need/want* statements is slightly messier and less conclusive; however, some patterns still emerge. There are 29 *need/want* statement requests in the SBCSAE. The linguistic forms and the number of times the forms occur are shown in Table 4-10 below.¹⁸

Table 4-10 *Need/Want* Statement Forms in the SBCSAE

<i>Need/Want</i> Statements
<i>I want</i> (8)
<i>I need</i> (5)
<i>I wanna</i> (4)
<i>I would like</i> (3)
<i>I'd like</i> (2)
<i>I would prefer</i> (1)
<i>What we'd want</i> (1)
<i>I'm gonna want</i> (1)
<i>We're gonna wanna</i> (2)
<i>We have to</i> (1)
<i>We need</i> (2)
<i>We want</i> (1)
<i>We wanna</i> (2)

As with *if* statements, the distribution of context type, contingency/entitlement and social power for *need/want* statement requests as a whole category does not reveal any striking patterns. However, more significant patterns do appear by looking at the distribution of

¹⁸ Some request tokens include more than one linguistic form for a single request, thus there are 29 tokens but 31 linguistic forms.

these contextual features within two linguistic sub-categories of *need/want* statements: the bare stem forms such as *I need, I want, I wanna* and the forms hedged with *would* such as *I would like/prefer* or occurring in a *what* cleft construction such as *what I would like*. The following two sections discuss the results for these two categories.

4.2.3.1 *I need, I want, I wanna*

There are five *I need*, eight *I want*, and four *I wanna* statements in the corpus, by far some of the more frequent tokens in this linguistic category. The following tables demonstrate the distribution of context type, contingency/entitlement, and social power contextual factors for these three categories.

Table 4-11 Distribution of Context Type for *I Need, I Want, I Wanna* Statement Requests in the SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
9	6	0	1	1

Table 4-12 Distribution of Contingency/Entitlement Levels for *I Need, I Want, I Wanna* Statement Requests in the SBCSAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
0	7	7	2	1	0	0

Table 4-13 Distribution of Social Power for *I Need, I Want, I Wanna* Statement Requests in the SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
5	9	3

As Table 4-11 illustrates, the three forms appear most frequently in intimate and socio-cultural contexts. However, they do also appear in a pedagogical and transactional context. These two uses appear in institutionalized contexts (a restaurant and a classroom) and the requests are very closely tied to key actions that are part of these

contexts. Table 4-12 demonstrates that the forms nearly all occur with low c/e levels of 1, 2 and 3, except for one token with a c/e level of 4. This token appears to be an exceptional occurrence and will be discussed in Chapter 5. Table 4-13 illustrates that *I need*, *I want*, and *I wanna* statement requests occur at all three social power status levels. Out of the contextual factors of social distance, contingency/entitlement and social power, the contingency/entitlement factor seems the most prominent one in the profile of these linguistic forms. However, in running a chi-square analysis for all linguistic forms and contingency/entitlement based on only two levels, low (0-3) and high(4-6), though still significant ($p = .000$), suggests that the distribution of c/e levels for bare stem *need/want* statements may not be significant. Table 4-14 compares the observed and expected scores for c/e levels based on two categories, high and low.

Table 4-14 Crosstabulation for *Need/Want* Statements and Binary

Contingency/Entitlement Levels

			Linguistic form	
			need want bare stem	need want hedged
Contingency/Entitlement Level High or Low	low	Count	17	3
		Expected Count	17.0	8.0
		% within Linguistic form	89.5%	33.3%
	high	Count	2	6
		Expected Count	2.0	1.0
		% within Linguistic form	10.5%	66.7%
Total	Count		19	9
	Expected Count		19.0	9.0
	% within Linguistic form		100.0%	100.0%

For bare stem *need/want* statements, the observed and expected counts for low and high c/e levels is a normal distribution, indicating that perhaps the higher number of low c/e

level requests in this form is due to the generally higher number of low c/e level requests within the request corpus itself. However, for hedged *need/want* statements, the observed and expected counts for low and high c/e level contexts are decidedly unequal, indicating possible significance. This category is discussed in 4.2.3.2 *Would like/prefer/want*. For bare stem *need/want* statements, if the generally low c/e levels are not significant, additional elements of the context may need to be identified that explain the distribution of this form.

A closer look at the contexts in which bare stem *need/want* statement requests occur reveal that for the SBCSAE, these forms seem to occur in interactions where the request being uttered is key to accomplishing the overarching purpose or goal of the event. For example, in Transcript 35, an extended family has gathered for dinner. The speaker, Maureen is doing most of the preparing while the others are sitting around talking. She makes at least three requests with *I need*:

(38) When you're ready, I need my son-in-law to reach that platter.

(39) Stephanie, w- I need you and ~Erika to carry chairs from the front porch, those four little white ones, and they'll stack, you can stack two together, and carry them around.

(40) I need someone to help Mom .. out to the table.

Her requests for her son-in-law to retrieve a platter (38), her nieces to carry chairs (39) and for someone to help mom (an elderly woman) to the table (40) are all clearly necessary for the meal to take place. In addition, the meal itself seems to be a central part of the main purpose for the participants to have gathered together in the first place.

To summarize the first set of forms discussed, *I need*, *I want* and *I wanna* statements occur as independent requests in contexts where the action being requested is crucial to accomplishing the goal of the social event the participants are participating in.

These forms, at least in this corpus, also occur more frequently, though not exclusively, in contexts where the speakers have close social distance and, on the whole, have lower contingency/entitlement levels than the *need/want* statements that include the modal *would*. In addition, Chapter 5 discusses *I need*, *I want* and *I wanna* statements occurring as part of extended multi-sequence requests.

4.2.3.2 *Would like/prefer/want*

The next linguistic category of *need/want* statements are utterances that include the modal *would*, in either the contracted or un-contracted form. These 7 tokens demonstrate an additional syntactic construction besides [pronoun] + *need/want* + x [object/information/desire] discussed in 4.2.3.1 *I need*, *I want*, *I wanna*. The modal *would* also occurs in a clefted-*what* clause construction, as *what* + [pronoun] + *would like/prefer/want* + *be* + x [object/information/desire]. The modal *would*, in the SBSCAE at least, does not occur with *need* statement requests. *Need/want* statement request forms that include the modal *would* are listed below:

Table 4-15 *Need/Want* Statement Request Forms with *Would*

<i>Need/want</i> statement request forms with <i>would</i>
<i>I would like</i> (2)
<i>what I would like</i> (1)
<i>I'd like</i> (1)
<i>what I'd like</i> (1)
<i>I would prefer</i> (1)
<i>what we'd want</i> (1)

As Table 4-15 illustrates, *would* statement requests in this category of the SBSCAE include utterances with three main verb variations, *like*, *prefer* and *want*, three occurrences of a contracted *would*, and three occurrences of the clefted-*what* clause. The following tables illustrate the coding for context type, c/e and social power across these forms.

Table 4-16 Distribution of Context Type for *Need/Want* Statements with *Would* in the
SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
2	0	2	1	2

Table 4-17 Distribution of C/E Levels for *Need/Want* Statements with *Would* in the
SBCSAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
		2		2	2	1

Table 4-18 Distribution of Social Power for *Need/Want* Statements with *Would* in the
SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
3	1	3

Table 4-16 illustrates that five of the seven tokens occur in non-intimate contexts, including pedagogical (1) , professional (2) and transactional (2). Within the data from the SBCSAE, then, it appears that *need/want* statements formed with the modal *would* may be more likely to occur in contexts where there is greater social distance between speakers, in contrast to the bare stem *need/want* statements which occur mostly in intimate and socio-cultural contexts (see Table 4-11). Of course, there are at least two examples where *would* occurs in an intimate context, so the pattern is not exclusively non-intimate contexts. Table 4-17 illustrates that these tokens have generally higher contingency/entitlement levels than the bare stem *need/want* category, ranging from 2 to 6, though more heavily skewed toward the high contingency/entitlement level range. Five of the utterances have a 4 or higher c/e level. Table 4-14 suggests that this distribution may be significant, as the observed and expected counts for low and high c/e level *need/want* statements with the modal *would* are particularly unequal. This contrasts with

the bare stem *need/want* tokens, which have a range of 1 through 3, or low c/e levels, except for one utterance that has a c/e level 4. Finally, Table 4-18 demonstrates that *need/want* statements with the modal *would* occur in all three social power contexts, with as many low – high interactions as high – low.

4.2.3.3 *Need/want* statement requests with first person plural subjects

A subsection of *need/want* statement requests in the SBCSAE occur with a first person plural pronoun, and include the following forms:

Table 4-19 *Need/want* Statements with First Person Plural Subjects

<i>Need/want</i> statements with first person plural subjects
<i>We have to</i> (1)
<i>We need</i> (2)
<i>We want</i> (1)
<i>We wanna</i> (2)
<i>What we'd want</i> (1)

Need/want statement requests with first person plural subjects occur both with bare stem *need/want* requests as well as with statements hedged with the modal *would*. The following tables illustrate the distribution of context type, contingency/entitlement and social power features.

Table 4-20 Distribution of Context Type for *Need/Want* Statement Requests in the SBCSAE with First Person Plural Subjects

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
3	0	1	0	2

Table 4-21 Distribution of Contingency/Entitlement for *Need/Want* Statement Requests in the SBCSAE with First Person Plural Subjects

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
0	1	0	1	2	1	1

Table 4-22 Distribution of Social Power for *Need/Want* Statement Requests in the SBCSAE with First Person Plural Subjects

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
0 ¹⁹	4	1

While Table 4-20 indicates that *need/want* statements with first person plural subjects occur in both very close and very wide social distances, they do seem to follow the trend of *need/want* statements with the modal *would*, occurring in high c/e level contexts. It may be noteworthy that the two low c/e level requests are both intimate context type (though the third intimate context type request occurs with a c/e level of 4). Table 4-13 illustrates that first person plural subject requests occur in neutral and low – high social power contexts. Although with one utterance it is not clear what the social power relationship is between speaker and hearer, the current data indicates that speakers in the SBCSAE prefer this form for neutral and low – high social power contexts. Section 5.2.3.3 First-person plural subject *need/want* statement requests contains a more

¹⁹ In one of these first person plural utterances the exact social power relationship between the speakers is not identifiable.

detailed analysis of these forms and discusses several functions of the first person plural subject that help to explain the lack of tokens in a high – low social power context.

In summary, bare stem *need/want* statements occur in the SBSCAE more frequently in low c/e contexts, while *need/want* statements that include the modal *would*, tend to occur in high c/e level contexts across a range of social distance contexts. In addition, some instances of *need/want* statement requests with first person plural subjects seem more likely to occur in contexts with high C/E levels. The bare stem *need/want* requests in the SBSCAE also pattern more strongly in close social distance contexts (more intimate and socio-cultural contexts than any other). The *need/want* statements hedged with *would*, on the other hand, demonstrate more variety in context type rather than clustering with one or two types.

4.2.4 Modal Statements

Requests that occur as modal statements consist of constructions with a first or second person pronoun + modal. This construction does not appear frequently in the corpus as a request and perhaps most often is better classified as a suggestion rather than a request. However, there seem to be instances where speakers use this construction with the expectation of producing action from the hearer rather than simply suggesting it. For example,

(41) I'll take water.

spoken by a customer at a restaurant to a waitress, is not simply a suggestion that she bring water. If the waitress were to bring iced tea instead of water assuming that the customer would be just as happy with the former as with the latter, the customer would not be satisfied. The second example above,

(42) Okay folks, you can follow me now

(43) Transcript 29

- The modal statement occurs in line 1 of Example (43): ... *And you can just tap right off the plenum with a duct*. However, unlike the *you can* modal statement in (42), (43) is only a suggestion, not a request or command. Seth is a contractor who is preparing a quote for Larry's home, and he suggests to Larry that a particular duct can be put in the room they are discussing, but qualifies that it can be done at a later time (line 5). Larry assents to the information, *that's what we wanna kn- .. wanna know.... Alright* (lines 4, 6), but Seth is in no way pressuring or requiring Larry to put in the duct. The suggestion is not followed up by any corresponding action by the listener, as in (42), where the tour group follows the tour guide. Larry simply assents to the information. In addition, other corpus studies of requests have identified this modal statement structure as being requestive. For example, Aijmer (1996) includes this construction in her discussion of requests found in British English corpora. She lists the forms *you can*, *you can just*, *you could*, *you had*

better, you ought to and *you might* as appearing in the London Lund Corpus and classifies them as imperative request forms. The following section presents the modal statements functioning as requests or commands found in the SBCSAE.

In the SBCSAE, there are only 12 modal statements potentially spoken as requests. The following table lists the forms found in this corpus as well as the number of times each form occurs.

Table 4-23 Modal Statement Requests in the SBCSAE

Modal Statements
<i>I'll have/take</i> (2)
<i>You can</i> (3)
<i>You can just</i> (1)
<i>You could</i> (1)
<i>You gotta</i> (1)
<i>You need</i> (1)
<i>You wanna</i> (1)
<i>You should</i> (2)

Such a small number of tokens limits the observations that can be made or general patterns which might be suggested about these forms. The following section will describe the contextual features associated with each form. As will be noted, no clear pattern seems to emerge and more data is needed to make strong assertions about the contexts in which these forms are used. The distribution of context type, contingency/entitlement and social power relationships will be described in the following section.

4.2.4.1 Context type

First, utterances appear in four context types. Table 4-7 lists the constructions which appear in each context type.

Table 4-24 Distribution of Social Distance Context Types for Modal Statements

Intimate	Socio-Cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
<i>You can just</i> <i>You could</i> <i>You should</i>	<i>I'll have</i>		<i>You can</i> <i>You gotta</i> <i>You need</i> <i>You wanna</i>	<i>I'll take</i> <i>You can</i> <i>You can</i> <i>You should</i>

No clear semantic category of modal statement requests cluster with a particular context type, as Table 4-24 indicates. That is, speakers of close social distance as well as wide social distance demonstrate no pattern or preference for particular constructions of modal statements.

4.2.4.2 Contingency and entitlement

Second, the contingencies of the request and the level of entitlement that speakers make explicit in their requests do not seem to explain the distribution of modal statements in the SBCSAE. Table 4-25 summarizes contingency and entitlement results.

Table 4-25 Distribution of C/E Levels for Modal Statement Requests in the SBCSAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
<i>I'll have</i> <i>I'll take</i>	<i>You gotta</i> <i>You need</i> <i>You can</i>	<i>You should</i> <i>You can</i>	<i>You could</i> <i>You should</i>	<i>You can just</i> <i>You can</i> <i>You wanna</i>		

While the first person subject modal statements do cluster nicely in the lowest c/e level, the others are distributed evenly throughout levels 1-4, again showing no particular semantic clustering with a particular c/e level. The modal statement that occurs most frequently in the SBCSAE, *you can*, occurs at levels 1-2, quite low c/e level requests, as well as in a level 4 request, which is a fairly high c/e level. No modal statement requests occur at levels 5 or 6.

4.2.4.3 Social power

Finally, social power dynamic between speakers shows a similarly equal distribution.

Table 4-26 Distribution of Social Power for Modal Statement Requests in the SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
<i>You gotta</i> <i>You need</i> <i>You wanna</i> <i>You can</i> <i>You can</i> <i>You can just</i> <i>You could</i>	<i>I'll have</i> <i>I'll take</i> <i>You can</i> <i>You should</i>	<i>You should</i>

While no clear distribution pattern emerges in terms of the semantic classification of these modals, high-low and neutral social power interactions are more frequent than modal statements used in low-high social power contexts. The modal statements occurring in pedagogical and transactional contexts all occur within high – low social power contexts. In contrast, the one low – high social power modal statement request occurs in an intimate context.

4.2.4.4 Sequential positioning

Local sequential positioning within the discourse is one feature of the context that may help to explain the distribution of modal statements as requests (Wootton 1997).

Modal statement requestive forms occur as the responding move to an initiating offer or assertion. The following example illustrates this pattern.

(44) Transcript 32

- 1 TUCKER: You guys all --
- 2 All drinking the same thing?
- 3 TOM_3: .. M-m.
- 4 TOM_1: I know ~Tommy['s having] the red wine.
- 5 TOM_3: [No].
- 6 TOM_1: You want some [2more2]?

7 TUCKER: [2~Tom2],
8 [3what do you want3].
9 TOM_3: [3Mhm3].
10 .. [4Yeah I'll4] have a little [5more ~Tuck5].

The initiating offer to refill their drinks is articulated by Tucker in lines 1-2 and reaffirmed in lines 7-8, while the responding move, a request for more drink, happens in line 10 as a modal statement. 7 out of the 12 modal statement requests in the SBCSAE follow this offer– modal statement pattern or a creative variation on it. In a chi-square analysis of contextual features that were significant, the utterance's position within the discourse was one that had a p value of .000 ($p < .05$). Modal statements demonstrate significant distribution between observed and expected counts in a crosstabulation analysis for this context variable. Table 4-27 illustrates this distribution for modal statements and permission modal interrogatives.

Table 4-27 Crosstabulation of Modal Statements for Position of Requestive Utterance in Discourse

			Linguistic form
			modal statements
Position in Request	follows an offer/imperative/question	Count	7
		Expected Count	1.6
		% within Linguistic form	58.3%
	Initial	Count	4
		Expected Count	8.9
		% within Linguistic form	33.3%
	2nd iteration	Count	1
		Expected Count	1.0
		% within Linguistic form	8.3%
	3rd iteration	Count	0
		Expected Count	.3

Table 4-27—*Continued*.

	4th iteration	% within Linguistic form	0.0%
		Count	0
		Expected Count	.1
	7th iteration	% within Linguistic form	0.0%
		Count	0
		Expected Count	.0
Total		% within Linguistic form	0.0%
		Count	12
		Expected Count	12.0
		% within Linguistic form	100.0%

As a random distribution for the SBCSAE for requestives as second pair parts of a preceding first pair part, such as an offer or question, is only 1.5, the observed count of 7 modal statements in this category may be significant. Of the remaining five modal statement requests in the SBCSAE, four of them occur in pedagogical contexts, spoken by an instructor to students in order to elicit a desired learning action and the fifth occurs in a transactional, high – low social power context. Modal statements do not appear in low-high social power contexts unless they are following the offer/assertion – modal statement pattern. Thus the contextual features most relevant to modal statements appear to be the local sequential context, social power and to a lesser degree, social distance.

4.2.5 Summary of Statement Request Results

The preceding section discusses the occurrences of statement requests in the SBCSAE, which include *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, and modal statements. The initial results of the distribution of contextual factors for these categories reveal that social distance, contingency/entitlement levels and social power are more or

less relevant for each linguistic category, and that these three factors alone are not sufficient to explain the distribution of these forms. In addition, some forms occur with specific discourse functions such as introducing a turn or forming the responding move of a offer – request adjacency pair.

4.3 Imperatives

4.3.1 Introduction

For this study, the category of imperatives includes utterances consisting of at a minimum, a bare stem verb with a non-explicit subject. This strictly linguistic definition differs from some earlier corpus investigations of imperatives, particularly Ervin-Tripp's (1976). In her study, one of the categories she identifies is the imperative; however, she includes utterances such as *you should*, *you can*, *you want* and the modal Interrogative *could you...?* in this category, as well as single word hints like *coffee*, *black*. By examining these syntactical patterns separately, we can identify if they truly belong in the same category or not. Though imperatives might be more typically associated with commands rather than request, the extraordinarily high number of imperatives in the SBCSAE makes it impossible to ignore them. Linguists have typically categorized requests and imperatives within the larger speech act category of directives (Searle 1975, Ervin-Tripp 1976, Weigel & Weigel 1985, Vine 2009), while others have examined them as distinct categories (e.g. Craven & Potter 2010). Tsui (1994) distinguishes commands from requests by defining them as requests for action by the listener in which the listener has no choice but to comply. In requests, the speaker gives the listener the freedom to decide whether or not to comply (Tsui 1994). While this provides a very neat paradigm in theory for distinguishing between the two, in reality the messiness of human interaction makes it more difficult to strictly assign an utterance to one or the other of this category in many cases. For example, what constrains a listener to comply with a

speaker's request or command? Is social power relationship the defining factor? That is, if the action is requested by a speaker who has a higher social power status in relation to the listener, is the utterance a command; but if spoken by the lower social power status individual, it is merely a request? If this were the only distinguishing factor between requests and commands, then form would be irrelevant. On the other hand, form alone does not seem to be the distinguishing feature of commands either. It seems possible to think of many hypothetical situations in which a speaker might use the imperative and the utterance might be better understood as a request (or an offer). The following section will describe the linguistic forms and contexts in which imperatives occur in the SBCSAE.

4.3.2 Results

There are 141 imperatives in the SBCSAE. This form is by far the most frequent requestive in the corpus. As imperative forms a much more linguistically homogenous group than *need/want* statements (which is essentially a semantic designation), the results reflect a more coherent functional pattern as well. The following tables illustrate the raw frequency counts for categories in the three most relevant contextual categories: context type, contingency/entitlement level, and social power relationship.

4.3.2.1 Context type

The distribution of context type across imperatives in the SBCSAE is listed below in Table 4-28.

Table 4-28 Distribution of Context Type for Imperatives in the SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
76	17	1	31	16

The distribution of imperatives across social distance context type is clearly weighted in raw scores towards close social distance context types, with 94 of the 141 tokens occurring in intimate or socio-cultural context types. However, a logistic regression

analysis that compares low (intimate and socio-cultural) and wide (professional, pedagogical, and transactional) social distance variables between imperatives and conventional modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE was not significant ($p = .374$, $p < .05$). This may indicate that the high number of imperatives occurring in close social distance contexts is a result of the higher number of intimate and socio-cultural interactions within the corpus rather than as a consequence of the variable itself. There is a relatively high number of imperatives occurring in pedagogical contexts, while in this corpus, only one occurs in a professional context. The low number in professional contexts is due in part to the fact that there are relatively few conversations between co-workers in the SBCSAE compared to the number of conversations between family members and friends. Out of 60 transcripts, 36 are conversations primarily between family members and friends (i.e., intimate or socio-cultural context types). In contrast, there are 4 professional context conversations, 4 pedagogical contexts, and 2 others which have elements of both the professional and pedagogical contexts. (These two are training classes happening in the work environment. Thus they are happening in a professional environment with mostly pedagogical conversations happening, though not exclusively.) The high number of imperatives in pedagogical contexts compared to professional contexts in the SBCSAE appears statistically significant in the chi-square analysis ($p = .000$, pedagogical expected = 26.3, observed = 31, professional expected = 5.6, observed = 1), however it is likely that the results are affected by small sample bias. This difference may be not necessarily because there are a potentially higher number of pedagogical interactions than professional in the corpus. On the contrary, the SBCSAE contains roughly equal numbers of pedagogical and professional conversations. Instead the reason for this discrepancy may be because the relatively few classroom transcripts in the SBCSAE contain a high frequency of imperatives. The 30 imperative requests that occur in a

pedagogical context come from only three transcripts: Transcript 27, a science lecture recorded at a museum in Chicago, contains six imperatives, Transcript 39, a training meeting at an aquarium²⁰, contains one imperative, and Transcript 57, a recording at a judo class in Louisiana, contains 23 imperatives in the first 11 minutes of the class²¹. Additional reasons for the high number of observed imperatives in pedagogical contexts will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3.2.2 Contingency and entitlement

The c/e levels of imperatives are also low, as Table 4-29 illustrates.

Table 4-29 Distribution of C/E Levels for Imperatives in the SBSCAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
64	48	20	7	1	0	1

Out of 141 imperative utterances, only 2 occur in high c/e level contexts. These higher contingency/entitlement contexts are described in 5.3 Imperatives. A multinomial logistic regression analysis comparing low (0-3) and high (4-6) c/e levels across linguistic categories did produce some significant results²², one of which indicates that imperatives are 8.1 times more likely to occur in low c/e levels than bare stem *need/want* statements.²³ The following is an overview of the imperatives that appear in this corpus

²⁰ Transcript 39, as a training meeting in a workplace, could also be considered a professional context. However, the utterances themselves were coded according to the kind of context in which they were occurring. So, where the instructor was talking to students, or vice-versa, the utterance is coded as occurring in a pedagogical context, and where speakers are interacting as co-workers, the utterance is coded as occurring in a professional context. However, the line here is fuzzy and in some of these cases, a strong argument could be made for coding them in both contextual categories.

²¹ Actually, Transcript 57 includes more than 23; however, after gathering that many in just 11 minutes of the 27 minute conversation, it seemed unnecessary to include all of them.

²² Despite a chi-square value of .000 for this analysis ($p < .05$), the results are most likely affected by small sample bias.

²³ Crosstabulation analysis for low vs. high c/e levels indicates that the distribution of this variable is normal for bare stem *need/want* statements. Thus it makes a good reference

as low (0-3) c/e level requests and that occur in conversations between close family members or friends. The requests can be grouped into three general categories: *task-oriented*, *discourse/spatially-oriented*, and *negative-action oriented*. The first group, task-oriented imperatives, are directives that center around getting the hearer to perform a task, such as setting the table, putting something away or pouring a drink. The following table lists the task-oriented imperative utterances in the SBCSAE spoken in an intimate and socio-cultural context.

category for comparing the distribution of low and high c/e levels for other linguistic forms.

Table 4-30 Task-oriented Imperative Utterances in Intimate and Socio-Cultural Contexts

Task Oriented Imperative Utterances – Intimate and Socio-cultural Contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Here finish these up</i> ▪ <i>Cut me a slice there</i> ▪ <i>Bring- - Bring the bottle, and another gla=ss for me. You know I'll have some champagne with ~Tom.</i> ▪ <i>Put it on that railing over there</i> ▪ <i>... Yeah? Take everything to the table.</i> ▪ <i>~Shane, take off the tablecloth.</i> ▪ <i>Put the masa,... and put the ac- --.. ho=jas , ... on the other side of the ta- -- Hojas.</i> ▪ <i>Take off the -- take off the -- / SHANE: ... The towel?</i> ▪ <i>Cover it.</i> ▪ <i>... Get some more.</i> ▪ <i>Check that bill .</i> ▪ <i>... get some money, .. get some milk, and some, ... some of those peppers.</i> ▪ <i>Okay. Put that on the table,</i> ▪ <i>put this in a plastic bag</i> ▪ <i>You bring the plates</i> ▪ <i>... Hand me that ashtray. ... Or your light, I mean... Your light It's behind the sewing machine.</i> ▪ <i>Hey, pour me some more of that, I'm not going anywhere tonight.</i> ▪ <i>Taste it .. ~Shane? Taste it and see if it has enough salt.</i> ▪ <i>... ~Shane? ... Move this thing for her. / JULIA: ... Take this to the table [please].</i> ▪ <i>No=. ... Just put it on the washing machine ... yourself.</i> ▪ <i>Pick that towel off of my, .. my uh, .. my --</i> ▪ <i>... Go ahead and s- and -- ... mix it.</i> ▪ <i>~Kate, come help me with this, and quit talking about his peepee.</i> ▪ <i>... ~Kate, help me,... come here, ... so my fingers won't get so=,</i> ▪ <i>.. just put it in there. Just put the paper in there.</i> ▪ <i>... Take this back.I gotta take my sock off. ... Be right back.</i> ▪ <i>Le- leave a little water in there ~Shane, JULIA: ... Just a little wa-.</i> ▪ <i>... Go ahead, put salt in the masa.</i> ▪ <i>... Go ahead. Put salt in the masa.</i> ▪ <i>.. Just take em out and</i> ▪ <i>... Just pick it up. .. Don't fuss about it. .. Just pick it up.</i> ▪ <i>... Well pick it u=p. .. Oh, it's gone ~Sabrina.</i> ▪ <i>Okay, open= this one. This is the one I want you to open now.</i> ▪ <i>.. Gimme [Asking for a baby bottle to give to a baby]</i> ▪ <i>Yeah- --bring the bottles.</i> ▪ <i>Turn off the heater</i>

Table 4-30—*Continued.*

- *Here ~Da=n. Open this, ... From .. ~Judy.*
- *... Open this one. From the gel- -- uh the= .. elves,*
- *pull your horse in h- You= wouldn't believe how good he felt,when I took him out to grass this morning? ...*
- *Give him a drink.*
- *... Just stick em over here.*

These imperatives, for the most part, center around everyday tasks that close friends and family members are involved in. Many of them revolve around the task of preparing for meals and eating and drinking (e.g., *Cut me a slice there, Bring- - Bring the bottle, and another gla=ss for me, Take everything to the table, ... get some money, .. get some milk, and some, ... some of those peppers, You bring the plates, ... Go ahead, put salt in the masa*), as well as maintaining a home (e.g., *Check that bill, No=. ... Just put it on the washing machine ... yourself, Pick that towel off of my, .. my uh, .. my --, Turn off the heater*). Often these imperatives involve requests for moving or delivering concrete physical items, such as bottles, drinks, plates, money, etc. These are low contingency/entitlement requests between speakers with close relationships with each other. The utterances include initial bare-stem verbs (such as *Give him a drink*), as well as some hedged with a few short phrases or discourse markers including direct address (*Shane, take off the tablecloth*), *here, okay, yeah, hey, go ahead, well* and *just*. Some of these are transitional devices and conversational turn devices that acknowledge previous information. Others serve as slight hedges. They are imperatives, however, with minimal verbal introduction and little to no softening or hedging.

The second group of low contingency/entitlement imperatives between speakers of close social distance are discourse or body-oriented requests. These involve requests for particular rhetorical movements in a conversation or for the listener to move his or her body.

Table 4-31 Discourse/Spatially Oriented Imperative Utterances in Intimate and Socio-Cultural Contexts

Discourse/Body Orientated Imperative Utterances – Intimate and Socio-cultural Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Come here.</i> ▪ <i>Chew it out.</i>[chew to get a piece of lettuce out of her teeth] ▪ <i>.. Teach them to me.</i> ▪ <i>... Take your ti=me,</i> ▪ <i>Say when.</i> ▪ <i>Oh=, that's so sweet, come here,</i> ▪ <i>Come over here and look. And --</i> ▪ <i>... Look. Put on the glasses. .. Look.</i> ▪ <i>... Mom look. Look at my shoes.</i> ▪ <i>: .. Alright. Hang on just a second honey.</i> ▪ <i>... Okay. ... So come here, what do you want me to put on your pizza. ... ~Steve.</i> ▪ <i>Hey ~Steven? Come on over here, I want you to grate this cheese for me. Okay?</i> ▪ <i>Talk to Melanie's mom . Her mom would know. ... I'll have Melanie call you.</i> ▪ <i>.. Come here, I wanna show you. ... Please come here.</i> ▪ <i>Explain it ~Marie</i> ▪ <i>Come on. Tell me about it.</i> ▪ <i>Give her a hug for me.</i> ▪ <i>Yes doctor ~Kevin, tell us.</i> ▪ <i>... Look up. ... Look up babe. .. Wait.</i> ▪ <i>Well, ... give me the highlights. Condense it down to .. a minute.</i>

These more abstract imperatives involve discourse focused requests, such as requests to teach, explain, pass on a greeting or summarize (e.g., *Teach it to me*, *Explain it, Marie*, *Come on. Tell me about it*, *Talk to Melanie's mom*, *Give her a hug for me*, *Well,...give me the highlights. Condenses it down to..a minute*). Body oriented imperatives refers to physical action; they are requests to perform an action with the hearer's own body. *Come here*, and variations of it are frequent imperative form requests in this category. Other requests require the hearer to move particular parts of his or her body, such as his eyes (e.g., *Mom, look. Look. Put on the glasses...Look., Look up*) or mouth (e.g., *Chew it out*). These are less overtly tied to a specific task, though they may in fact be part of a task-

oriented activity. They are expressions of what rhetorical or bodily actions the speaker would like the hearer to take.

A final group of low contingency/entitlement imperatives occurring in conversations between close family and friends are negative-action oriented imperatives, or prohibitive requests. These are directives in which the speaker asks the hearer to desist or stop an action that he or she has been doing. These are often highly emotional imperatives, likely to occur when conflict, frustration or irritation is being experienced by at least one of the interlocutors.

Table 4-32 Negative-Action Oriented Imperative Utterances in Intimate and Socio-Cultural Contexts

Negative-action Orientated Imperative Utterances – Intimate and Socio-cultural Contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Shut your eyeballs</i> ▪ <i>But don't make fun of me</i> ▪ <i>Don't ever open your mouth again,</i> ▪ <i>Don't move it Mom.</i> ▪ <i>Turn off the TV and help us roll some tamales,</i> ▪ <i>... Do=n't talk about that .. ~Katrina.</i> ▪ <i>.. That's enou=gh, .. go away.</i> ▪ <i>stop it. Don't make fun of me.</i> ▪ <i>!Kevin just don't open your mouth again.</i> ▪ <i>Don't stall out on us</i> ▪ <i>don't holler like that. I'm gonna throw the masa on the floor.</i> ▪ <i>Kate, leave this kitchen with your,....Please,</i> ▪ <i>... Get your feet off of there. ... Get your feet .. off of there.</i> ▪ <i>... Don't bother with her, she'll just get angry .</i> ▪ <i>... Don't tell a great man what to do.</i> ▪ <i>... N- no Mom,d- don't go all the way ov- o- -- Just take the whole thi=ng, and don't --</i> ▪ <i>.. Don't touch anything yellow. .. Okay? .. Not with your gloves or anything. ... Find something else to pick it up with.</i> ▪ <i><YELL Hey, stay out of it you're not involved in this YELL></i> ▪ <i>YELL Hey, ... don't start on me=. .. And I said s=tay out of it, it's none of your concern YELL>.</i> ▪ <i>Don't ~Steven. Please. I know it's tempting.</i> ▪ <i>... Don't put that on the floor. Try to take it to a wastebasket, cause there's so much, okay?</i> ▪ <i>~Kendra, .. just let it go.</i> ▪ <i>You stop pushing those pills .</i> ▪ <i>Don't freak out</i> ▪ <i>... And don't elbow me in the face.</i> ▪ <i>Don't do that you guy=s (later) I know, but don't do that, cause you scare him more.</i>

These have even fewer hedges or discourse markers, most frequently beginning with the negative bare stem verb *don't* + [verb], though sometimes first punctuated for emphasis with *hey* or the interlocutor's first name (e.g., *Kate, leave this kitchen*).

4.3.2.3 Social power

As might be expected, a majority of Imperatives in this corpus occur in either high-low or neutral social power contexts, as Table 4-33 indicates.

Table 4-33 Distribution of Social Power for Imperatives in the SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
79	44	15

Imperatives occur between participants in all social power contexts, with the greatest number occurring, unsurprisingly, in a high – low context. However, it is helpful to observe the distribution of social power within context type.

Table 4-34 Distribution of Social Power with Context Type for Imperatives in the SBCSAE

	Intimate	Socio-Cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
High – Low	38	0	0	28	14
Neutral	21	17	1	3	2
Low - High	14	0	0	0	0

In the intimate context type, participants at all social power levels use imperatives. However, this is the only context where imperatives occur in a low – high social power context. For context types besides intimate, the raw counts show that each context type tends to favor a particular social-power relationship. For imperatives in socio-cultural contexts, Table 4-34 indicates that only equal power interactions occur. The one professional interaction in the SBCSAE occurs between speakers on the same social power level. Unsurprisingly, the large number of imperatives used in a pedagogical context are nearly all spoken by the teacher, professor or trainer to the students or attendees. Of the 31 imperatives occurring in pedagogical contexts, 28 of them are spoken by the instructor to the student, and none are used by students to speak to their instructors. The three neutral social power interactions in a pedagogical context occur when students use imperatives to speak to their peers. Imperatives in transactional

contexts also seem to follow the pattern of being spoken by participants who have higher social power than their listeners, but not the reverse. These contexts include institutional settings where a lawyer speaks to clients and doctors to patients, as well as more consumer-oriented settings where a tour guide speaks to a tour group and a moderator at a public lecture to the audience.

4.3.3 Summary

Imperatives in the SBCSAE, as the most numerous requestive, show a predilection for occurring in nearly all context types, though most frequently among speakers with close social distance. Imperatives also occur extensively in pedagogical contexts and in some transactional contexts as well. However, the most defining feature of the contexts in which these imperatives occur is the contingency/entitlement level. Imperatives occur most often in low c/e level contexts, where there are little or no contingencies operative and where the speaker considers himself or herself to have a strong right to make the request. Social power relationships between speaker and hearer do seem to play a secondary role in relation to social distance. Intimate context type utterances occur with all three social power relationships, while imperatives in socio-cultural, pedagogical and transactional contexts occurred in only high – low or neutral social power contexts.

4.4 Interrogative Requests

4.4.1 Introduction

This section discusses requestive constructions formed as interrogatives rather than statements. This construction generally follows the pattern of [modal] + [pro] + [verb], including variations such as *can you give*, *will you play...?*, *do you want...?*, *would you like...?*, as well as some with first person pronoun subjects such as *can I have...?* and *could I call..?* As with statement requests, these utterances are all instances where a

speaker is requesting an object or action from the hearer which will benefit the speaker. There are 42 utterances in the SBSCAE that are modal interrogatives. This category has been called embedded imperatives (Ervin-Tripp 1976), mitigated yes-no interrogatives (Sato 2008), permissive questions (Aijmer 1996), as well as conventionally indirect requests (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) or simply indirect requests (Wichmann 2004), all pragmatic rather than syntactic descriptions. This study follows Aijmer's (1996) classification method more closely, as it distinguishes statements from questions, while Ervin-Tripp (1976) includes both syntactical forms in one larger category. While the general syntactic category of modal Interrogative distinguishes these requests from statement requests, like *need/want* statements and modal statements, modal Interrogative requests include a range of semantic designations. The categories that appear in the SBSCAE are resource interrogatives, permission interrogatives, willingness interrogatives and conventional modal interrogatives. Chapter 5 will discuss these categories in detail. The following section will include a general overview of the results in the entire Interrogative request category and then an overview of the results for conventional modal interrogatives (*can you/will you/could you/would you*) in the SBSCAE.

4.4.2 Results

The following section will summarize the general results of the modal Interrogative requests, including forms, frequency, context type, contingency/entitlement, and social power results. Table 4-35 lists the linguistic forms for modal Interrogative requests in the SBSCAE as well as the frequency which they occur.

Table 4-35 Linguistic Forms of Modal Interrogatives in the SBCSAE

Modal Interrogative Request Forms	
<i>Can I</i> (8)	<i>I wonder if I can</i> (1)
<i>Can you</i> (7)	<i>Will you</i> (5)
<i>Can you just</i> (1)	<i>Would you</i> (5)
<i>Could I</i> (1)	<i>Would you like</i> (1)
<i>Could you</i> (1)	<i>Would you mind</i> (1)
<i>Do you have</i> (3)	<i>You wanna</i> (3)
<i>Do you wanna/want</i> (5)	

The most frequent forms in the SBCSAE are *can I*, *can you*, *will you*, *would you*, and *do you wanna/want*. Three of those—*can you*, *will you*, *would you*—are the forms usually recognized as the conventional request forms for North American English speakers (Clark 1979, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). In addition, while the numbers of modal interrogatives within the SBCSAE cannot be assumed to reflect the actual ratio of requestive forms used by speakers (i.e., we can't assume because there's only one instance of *could you* in the corpus that North American speakers use *could you* much less frequently than *can you*), it is striking that in a corpus with nearly 300 requests, only one *could you* occurs. Aijmer (1996) labels this as the “unmarked” or “preferred” request form, and considering evidence merely at an anecdotal level it seems that *could you* should be the preferred form, and thus the more frequently used form in a corpus of this size. When speakers are asked to produce invented examples of a request, often the first form they suggest is *could you* (see Searle 1975, Clark 1979, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989).

The distribution of social distance contexts for modal Interrogative requests is described in Table 4-36.

Table 4-36 Distribution of Context Type for Modal Interrogative Requests in the SBSCAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
17	11	5	3	6

While the number of requests in the intimate context type is the highest, as has nearly consistently been true with most of the linguistics categories, modal interrogatives are more evenly distributed across the other four categories than imperatives.

Next, Table 4-37 shows the distribution of the contingency/entitlement contextual features for modal interrogatives.

Table 4-37 Distribution of C/E Level Requests for Modal Interrogatives in the SBSCAE

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – High	5 – High	6 – High
0	12	13	6	6	4	1

Modal interrogatives are used in requests at nearly all c/e levels, though more robustly in the mid-range level than at either extreme. However, the lack of any 0 c/e level modal Interrogative requests that demonstrate no linguistic orientation to either contingencies or entitlement is partly due to the nature of the linguistic construction. A modal interrogative by definition contains a modal, most frequently *can*, *could*, *will*, and *would*, which orients to either possibility or willingness and thus counts as a linguistic strategy the speaker uses to orient to contingency or entitlement (Fraser 2010). While the aim of this study is certainly not to assert that when using these forms a speaker is consciously doubting either the possibility of compliance or the willingness of the speaker or to explain from a cognitive or psycholinguistic perspective why a speaker chooses to use these forms, I have chosen to consistently count the elements of the request construction as all possible linguistic evidence for orientation to contingency or entitlement because they are produced by the speakers in those contexts. If I were to say that they do not count toward indicating entitlement or contingency, then I could not count any modal constructions as

evidence. Furthermore, indirect speech acts have been consistently treated as performative hedges (see Fraser 2010), so it would be inconsistent to not treat them the same way here.

Finally, Table 4-41 illustrates the third general category of results for the distribution of modal interrogatives in social power contexts.

Table 4-38 Distribution of Social Power for Modal Interrogative Requests in the SBCSAE²⁴

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
8	24	9

The distribution of modal interrogatives in the social power context shows the strongest pattern out of the three key contextual features. While modal interrogatives are used in all three social power contexts, there are more modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE between speakers of equal power than has been seen in any of the previous requestive forms. The results also show modal interrogatives being used in more low – high social power contexts than high – low.

4.4.2 Conventional Modal Interrogative Results Overview

As with many of the requests in the SBCSAE, conventional modal interrogative requests (*can you, could you, will you, would you*) occur more frequently in the intimate and socio-cultural context categories than the others. The following table shows the distribution of context types for conventional modal interrogatives.

²⁴ In one modal interrogative utterance, the social power context is unknown.

Table 4-39 Distribution of Context Type for Conventional Modal Interrogatives in the
SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
12	4	2	1	0 ²⁵

This higher number of conventional modal interrogatives in close social distance contexts follows the pattern seen with imperatives as well. However, a multinomial logistic regression analysis comparing imperatives and conventional modal interrogatives that occur in close (1-2) vs. wide (3-5) social distance contexts does not produce significant results ($p = .374$ where $p < .05$). The low number of conventional modal interrogatives in wide social distance contexts like transactional may be the result of the small data set rather than speaker preference for them in close rather than wide social distances. However, the distribution of c/e levels is more evenly spread across the spectrum.

Table 4-40 Distribution of C/E Levels for Conventional Modal Interrogatives in the
SBCSAE

0 – low	1 – low	2 - low	3 – low	4 - high	5 – high	6 - high
0	5	8	1	3	1	1

Out of 19 utterances 5 of them occur in high c/e contexts, while 14 occur in low c/e contexts, more of those occurring in the higher range of the low c/e contexts (2-3) rather than in the 0-1 range. A multinomial logistic analysis of low c/e level and high c/e level utterances gives a significant result—conventional modal interrogatives 23.16 times more likely than imperatives to occur in high c/e level contexts ($p = .000$ with $p < 0.05$), though as noted before, the validity of the model fit is uncertain. Finally, the forms are used across all social power contexts as well.

²⁵ It could be argued that the one pedagogical modal query might be also coded as a occurring in a transactional context. It occurs during a public lecture, which includes the student/teacher paradigm as well as occurring between participants who are strangers and have no previous social connection to each other.

Table 4-41 Distribution of Social Power for Conventional Modal Interrogatives in the
SBCSAE

High – low	Neutral	Low – high
5	8	6

The distribution of social power contexts is perhaps the most even of all. Conventional modal Interrogative requests are, in fact, used more frequently in the SBCSAE corpus in neutral and low – high contexts than in high – low contexts. A multinomial logistic regression analysis indicates that conventional modal interrogatives are 5.7 times more likely to occur in low-high social power interactions than imperatives ($p = .007$, $p < 0.05$).

In summary, conventional modal interrogatives, *can you*, *could you*, *will you*, *would you* occur more frequently in close social distance contexts rather than wider social distance contexts, as other Interrogative request forms do. They also appear as a request form available for speakers at all three social power contexts, though more significantly in low – high and neutral social power contexts (as opposed to imperatives, which are preferred forms for high – low social power interactions). While a possible functional difference for *can you* and *could you* requests has been suggested, no clear, discrete patterns for these four request forms emerges.

4.5 Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis

Multinomial logistic regression analysis tests run for each of the three primary contextual factors, social distance, contingency/entitlement and social power, identifies contingency/entitlement as the most powerful predictor of form within this data set. Table 4-42 shows these results, with the significant values in bold. Eight of the ten linguistic forms for requestives had significant p values. For social power, four of the ten linguistic categories had significant p values, and for close vs. wide social distance, only one

linguistic category had a significant p value. The reference value (or comparative category) is imperatives.

Table 4-42 Logistic regression Analysis for Low vs. High Contingency/entitlement Level, Close vs. Wide Social Distance and Social Power Relationship Levels

		Parameter Estimates						95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
Linguistic form ^a		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
let statements	Intercept	-16.596	.393	1785.102	1	.000			
	[ce_level2=1]	15.133	.000	.	1	.	3734820.001	3734820.001	3734820.001
	[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_distance1=1]	-.988	.514	3.691	1	.055	.372	.136	1.020
	[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_pow=1]	-14.591	997.669	.000	1	.988	4.604E-7	.000	. ^c
	[social_pow=2]	.277	.528	.274	1	.600	1.319	.468	3.713
	[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
if statements	Intercept	1.395	1.059	1.736	1	.188			
	[ce_level2=1]	-3.976	1.013	15.420	1	.000	.019	.003	.136
	[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_distance1=1]	-2.309	.823	7.880	1	.005	.099	.020	.498
	[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_pow=1]	-.126	1.227	.011	1	.918	.881	.080	9.765
	[social_pow=2]	1.301	.754	2.981	1	.084	3.673	.839	16.089
	[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
need want bare stem	Intercept	-.506	1.156	.191	1	.662			

Table 4-42—Continued

131	need want hedged	[ce_level2=1]	-1.937	1.047	3.422	1	.064	.144	.018	1.122
		[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
		[social_distance1=1]	-.690	.521	1.757	1	.185	.501	.181	1.391
		[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
		[social_pow=1]	1.373	.740	3.440	1	.064	3.948	.925	16.851
		[social_pow=2]	1.317	.591	4.968	1	.026	3.731	1.172	11.875
		[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	need want hedged	Intercept	.672	1.184	.322	1	.570			
		[ce_level2=1]	-5.001	1.048	22.777	1	.000	.007	.001	.052
		[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
		[social_distance1=1]	.782	.956	.668	1	.414	2.185	.335	14.235
		[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
		[social_pow=1]	.989	.984	1.011	1	.315	2.689	.391	18.484
		[social_pow=2]	-1.011	1.055	.918	1	.338	.364	.046	2.878
		[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	modal statements	Intercept	1.026	1.054	.947	1	.330			
		[ce_level2=1]	-3.234	.993	10.594	1	.001	.039	.006	.276
		[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
		[social_distance1=1]	-.801	.641	1.561	1	.212	.449	.128	1.577
		[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
		[social_pow=1]	-.480	1.136	.178	1	.673	.619	.067	5.734
		[social_pow=2]	-.041	.696	.003	1	.953	.960	.246	3.752
		[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

Table 4-42—Continued

permission modal	Intercept	-28.889	936.259	.001	1	.975			
interrogatives	[ce_level2=1]	-2.238	1.104	4.113	1	.043	.107	.012	.928
	[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_distance1=1]	14.192	676.552	.000	1	.983	1457584.107	.000	. ^c
	[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_pow=1]	14.837	647.192	.001	1	.982	2778410.305	.000	. ^c
	[social_pow=2]	15.290	647.191	.001	1	.981	4368693.306	.000	. ^c
	[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
resource modal	Intercept	-18.589	1.064	305.163	1	.000			
interrogatives	[ce_level2=1]	14.930	.000	.	1	.	3046583.277	3046583.277	3046583.277
	[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_distance1=1]	-1.601	1.252	1.634	1	.201	.202	.017	2.348
	[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_pow=1]	-13.863	2222.697	.000	1	.995	9.532E-7	.000	. ^c
	[social_pow=2]	1.492	1.253	1.417	1	.234	4.445	.381	51.845
	[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
willingness modal	Intercept	-1.702	1.539	1.223	1	.269			
interrogatives	[ce_level2=1]	-2.639	1.098	5.773	1	.016	.071	.008	.615
	[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_distance1=1]	-.245	.785	.098	1	.755	.782	.168	3.642
	[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_pow=1]	2.293	1.271	3.256	1	.071	9.906	.821	119.549
	[social_pow=2]	2.268	1.112	4.160	1	.041	9.656	1.093	85.331

Table 4-42—Continued

	[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
conventional modal	Intercept	.558	.999	.312	1	.577			
interrogatives	[ce_level2=1]	-3.004	.898	11.199	1	.001	.050	.009	.288
	[ce_level2=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_distance1=1]	-.529	.528	1.006	1	.316	.589	.209	1.657
	[social_distance1=2]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[social_pow=1]	1.525	.671	5.174	1	.023	4.597	1.235	17.112
	[social_pow=2]	.772	.599	1.659	1	.198	2.164	.669	7.002
	[social_pow=3]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is: imperative.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

c. Floating point overflow occurred while computing this statistic. Its value is therefore set to system missing.

Key:

ce_level = contingency/entitlement level

1 = low c/e level

2 = high c/e level

social distance

1 = close

2 = wide

social power

1 = low – high

2 = equal

3 = high – low

While the small data set limits the reliability of this test, it does point to Curl & Drew's (2008) analysis in British English corpus data that contingency and entitlement are the factors that explain variation of requesting forms. The statistic analysis shows that *if* statements are .019 times less likely to occur in low c/e level contexts than imperatives and .099 times less likely than imperatives to occur in close (intimate & socio-cultural) social distance contexts. *Need/want* bare stem statement requests are 3.73 times more likely than imperatives to occur in equal social power contexts than high – low contexts. Hedged *need/want* statement requests are .007 times less likely than imperatives to occur in low c/e level contexts, and modal statements are .039 times less likely than imperatives to occur in low c/e level contexts. Permission modals also show a slightly lower odds ratio to imperatives. They are .107 times less likely than imperatives to occur in low c/e level contexts. Willingness modal interrogatives are .071 times less likely than imperatives to be in low c/e level requests and 9.65 times more likely than imperatives to be in equal rather than high – low social power contexts. Finally, conventional modal interrogatives are .05 times less likely than imperatives to occur in low c/e level contexts. Since the comparison category for this test is imperatives, the general conclusions this analysis demonstrates is that with requests in the SBCSAE taken as a sample, *if* statements, hedged *need/want* statements, modal statements, and permission, willingness and conventional modal interrogatives are occurring more often in contexts where speakers orient to contingencies and reference entitlement. In contrast, imperatives, *need/want* bare stem statements and *let* statements occur in contexts with fewer references to contingencies and entitlement.

4.6 Summary

Chapter 4 has described the raw frequencies of six linguistic categories of requestives, *let* statements, *if* statements, modal statements, *need/want* statements,

imperatives and modal interrogatives. Additional subcategories for *need/want* statements, (bare stem and hedged) and modal interrogatives (conventional modal interrogatives consisting of *can you*, *could you*, *will you* and *would you* constructions) were noted. For each of these linguistic categories, the coding categories of context type, contingency/entitlement level and social power were described. These three variables provide a satisfactory explanation for the distribution of *let* statements and *if* statements (though not a complete picture of the context in which these forms appear in). For *need/want* statements, modal statements, imperatives and modal interrogatives, more detailed analysis of the context is needed to provide an adequate description of the contexts in which these forms occur in the SBCSAE. The statistical analysis of contextual factors and forms identified contingency/entitlement as the strongest factor for predicting the forms speakers use, as 8 out of 10 linguistic categories had significant p values for low vs. high c/e level values in a multinomial logistic regression. Chapter 5 will elaborate on the results presented here, providing a more fine-tuned picture of the contexts in which these forms occur.

Chapter 5

Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter will present a more thorough analysis and discussion of the six linguistic categories, *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, modal statements, imperatives and modal interrogatives. Though nearly twelve coding categories were set up and coded for each of the tokens in the SBCSAE, three key contextual factors will be the focus of this analysis: context type (social distance), contingency/entitlement and social power. However, as the results in Chapter 4 demonstrate, these three factors alone are not sufficient to explain the distribution of the requestive forms found in the corpus. Thus additional functional and discourse patterns will be noted for the appropriate forms. For some categories, the patterns noted in Chapter 4 will be demonstrated with interactional data. For other categories, such as imperatives, the analysis will focus on discussing exceptions to the patterns noted in the previous chapter.

5.2 Statement Requests

The following section analyzes and discusses in more detail the initial results given for the four linguistic categories of statement requests in the SBCSAE. Section 5.2.1 *Let* Statements will discuss *let* statements, Section 5.2.2 *If* Statements will discuss *if* statements, Section 5.2.3 *Need/Want* Statements *need/want* statements, and Section 5.2.4 Modal Statements modal statement requests.

5.2.1 Let Statements

As noted in Chapter 4, *let* statements in the SBCSAE occur exclusively in high – low social power and very low c/e level contexts, with total c/e levels of only 0 or 1. That is, speakers use *let* statements when they feel a very strong sense of entitlement to make

a request. One such context is a pedagogical setting, where teachers demonstrate an orientation to entitlement by directing their hearers to take relevant pedagogical actions. By examining the position of these *let* statements in the discourse, it appears that they do not occur randomly, but follow a specific discourse pattern. Teachers use *let* statements for introducing a new concept or activity in a classroom. Aijmer (1996:149) notes that *let* statements appear as requests in British English corpora, functioning as strategies to “introduce new arguments,” and they may have a similar function in American English. The 6 *let* statement tokens which occur in pedagogical contexts actually represent only two recorded transcripts in the SBCSAE. Examples (30),(33),(34) and (35) occur in a karate class and (31) and (32) take place in a public science museum where an employee is giving a science demonstration to a group of children. Both the karate instructor and the museum worker use *let* statement requests for introducing a new turn. The following section will illustrate this pattern.

Example (45) comes from a transcript that records a karate class where the instructor and four students are all males between the ages of 18 and 30. The instructor, Nick, uses the *let* statement fairly consistently to introduce a new move and then follows it with a succession of imperatives that guide the students through the move.

(45) Transcript 57

1	NICK:	... Tell you what.
2		... ~Martin let's pull this down XXX.
3		... Okay.
4		... Alright?
5		... ~Lug (Hx),
6		... Give a more upward,
7		... round pull.
8		... From here.
9		... Watch.
10		I get s- (Hx) --
11	.	.. best- .. best way to do it is to feel it I guess.
12		... Bend over.

13 ... Alright,
14 I'm gonna come to here,

(46) Transcript 57

1 NICK: ... and get the outside of his legs,
2 ... and I can make that a pretty throw.
3 ... Alright (Hx)?...
4 ... Let's give it a try.
5 ... Throw .. throw ~Bill again.
6 X: ... (Hx) ... (THROAT)
7 NICK: ... Now,
8 spring the hip.
9 BILL: ... (GRUNT)
10 ((FALL))
11 NICK: .. That's better,
12 JED: <P Yeah P>.

In (45) and (46) the instructor begins a new sequence or instructional module with a *let* statement. In (45) the instructor's initial turn constructional unit (TCU) begins in lines 2, with *Martin let's pull this down*. The item he references is a mat or piece of equipment. The XXX in the transcript indicates a sound that cannot be transcribed—more than likely the sound of them moving the object he has just requested. Following this initiating move, the instructor gives a short succession of imperatives that guide the student through the move: *lug* (line 5), *give a more upward, round pull* (lines 6-7), and *watch* (line 9). In (46) the initiating move occurs in line 4, *let's give it a try*, followed by two imperatives, *throw Bill again* (line 5) and *spring the hip* (line 8). This pattern is repeated at least 7 times throughout Transcript 57.

Although a science demonstration might not be considered a traditional educational setting where the instructor has had regular contact with the students, the museum worker in (47) also uses a similar pattern in his demonstration:

(47) Transcript 27

1 PHIL: (H) you think,

2 .. well,
 3 ... okay,
 4 %w= th- th-
 5 (H) I'm glad I never saw d- Citizen Kane with you,
 6 ... <VOX Rosebud is a sled VOX>.
 7 (H) Okay.
 8 Well,
 9 @@
 10 (H) let's all count together folks,
 11 that wa=s,
 12 AUD1: ... One.
 13 AUD2: [One].
 14 PHIL: [(H) very] good.
 15 One balloon going into the (H) little container here.
 16 And this would be,
 17 MANY: Two.
 18 PHIL: (H) two.
 19 Ve=ry good counting there.
 20 Two.
 21 Excellent.

(48) Transcript 27

1 PHIL: [(H) And we can get] a better idea of what's happening to the balloons,
 2 if we go back and look at the water again.
 3 <VOX No I did not pop them VOX>.
 4 (H) You're --
 5 What- y- what --
 6 .. Y- --
 7 Do you heckle every scientific person.
 8 .. This is really terrible.
 9 (H) I'm gonna take some of this hot (H) water here,
 10 and pour it into this (H) flask here.
 11 ... (SWALLOW) And put a balloon over the top .. of the flask.
 12 (H) ... <VOX Ah= VOX>.
 13 ... (H) Alright?
 14 And now,
 15 I will heat up this water.
 16 Using,
 17 ... (H) <VOX my Bunsen (H) burner VOX>.
 18 ... (Hx)= ... (H) Does it use real Bunsen?
 19 Is that what you're asking me?
 20 (H) Alright here we go=.
 21 ... The=re we go=.

22 (H) ... Alright,
 23 I'm using the fire now to heat up the water,
 24 but let's (H) behave like scientists now,
 25 .. and .. watch,
 26 and observe,
 27 and take note of what we see.
 28 (H) Okay?
 29 (TSK) (H) Now.

In example (47) the instructor's turn begins with him responding to comments from the audience that are unrelated to his teaching topic: *you think, .. well, ... okay, %w= th- th-, I'm glad I never saw d- Citizen Cane [sic] with you* (lines 1-5) He then uses a *let* statement in line 10 saying, *let's all count together folks* to initiate a pedagogical action (counting) and trying to turn the focus of the students away from the unrelated material they were discussing. Throughout the transcript this instructor clearly struggles to keep the crowd in control. In example (48), this is evident in the linguistic strategies the instructor uses to acknowledge these interruptions: *No I did not pop them* (line 3), *Do you heckle every scientific person, .. This is really terrible* (lines 7-8), and *Does it use real Bunsen? Is that what you're asking me?* (lines 18-19). In each case, these acknowledgements are followed by attempts to re-focus the audience on the pedagogical activity: *I'm gonna take some of this hot water here* (line 9) and *alright here we go* (line 20). The instructor then uses a *let* statement (line 24) to both introduce the new activity (*behave like a scientist* line 24) and try to re-assert his control over the audience. The *let* statement positively focuses the audience on the action he wants them to take—to *behave like scientists now* (line 24) as opposed to behaving like uncooperative children. As in the karate class context of (45) and (46), this *let* statement is followed up with a short succession of imperatives that will guide the children into behaving like a scientist, specifically by watching (line 25), observing (line 26) and taking note of what they see (line 27). Example (47) varies this pattern slightly, as, Phil follows up his *let* statement

with repetition and affirmation. He repeats the numbers they say (*one* line 13, *two* line 18) and then praises the audience's counting skills with *very good* (line 14), *very good counting there* (line 19) and *excellent* (line 21). Since the audience already knows how to comply with his request to count, he does not need to guide them through the move with imperatives as the karate instructor does.

Although both of these settings are tagged as pedagogical contexts, the social distance between the instructor and students are quite different in these two interactions. In (47) and (48) Phil does not have any previous social relationship with the children and when the demonstration is finished, it is unlikely that Phil will ever be a teacher to that same group of children again. However, this not the case for examples (45) and (46), where the karate instructor is a regular instructor to his students. Thus the social distance between the karate instructor and his students is closer than it is for the museum worker. Despite this difference in social distance between the two pedagogical contexts, the fact that similar patterns occur in both pedagogical contexts seems to indicate that the discourse pattern of *let* statement – imperative to introduce a new activity sequence and then guide the students through it is an available pedagogical discourse technique, no matter the social distance.

It is also possible that this pattern of *let* statement – imperative to introduce and facilitate a new activity sequence in a pedagogical context holds true in other high – low social power contexts, such as in parent – children interactions or even activity sequences between equals where one participant is assuming or attempting to assume control over another's subsequent actions (see Sidnell 2011), though more data is needed to confirm this. It may, in fact, be a bid to gain control as well as to initiate a "joint project between requester and recipient" (Rossi 2012:428). The use of imperatives following the *let* statement would authorize continued control over the hearer's

subsequent actions within a specified domain. The follow-up imperatives here give some evidence for this analysis. They follow a discourse pattern noted by Rossi (2012) in Italian requests as well as by Vine (2009) for requests in New Zealand office interactions. In both these cases, imperatives were used after either one or both participants had initiated an activity or requested an activity. Neither of these initiating turns involved a *let* statement, but they were noted as places in the discourse where imperatives did not occur. Instead the imperative requestives were spoken subsequently, as a way to forward the activity.

Besides occurring in very low c/e level contexts, *let* statements in the SBSCAE occur more frequently in socio-cultural, pedagogical and transactional contexts rather than intimate contexts. That is, in SBSCAE speakers are less likely to use this form in very close social distance contexts between immediate family members. However, as Table 4-3 indicates, two tokens in the SBSCAE do occur in an intimate context. The following section examines these two tokens to see if they are anomalies or if they can be explained in terms of the contextual factors already demonstrated as more likely to co-occur with *let* statements.

The two *let* statement utterances that occur in an intimate context are from Transcript 33 and are actually the same exact phrase, repeated twice by the same speaker. The utterance is given below in (49).

(49) Let's not start.

The phrase is spoken by a mother to her adult daughter while they are in the heat of an argument over how a particular past event unfolded, arguing about what they both said and did at the time. The daughter starts to refer to the event and her mother quickly interrupts her with (49). In terms of the action, unlike the other *let* statements, this is a request to desist from an action. The daughter ignores her mother's directive and

continues to reference the event; thus several moments later the mother repeats the directive of (49). Eventually, the mother's directive to *not start* is ignored completely and the situation is fully discussed by everyone in the family.

Since a mother is typically at a higher social power status than her daughter, the choice of a *let* statement by the speaker is consistent with the pattern seen in the other *let* statement utterances, though in this case the daughter's age and refusal to comply may indicate that the actual balance of power between the two is closer to being equal than the mother would perhaps like it to be. Aijmer (1996:149) notes that in British English an additional function for request forms such as *let me*, *may I*, *can I*, and *could I just* is to "interrupt another speaker." In this case, though the form used includes *let* with a first person plural object rather than the first person singular which Aijmer (1996) lists, it is clear that the utterance in (49) functions in the discourse as an interruption to the daughter's desire to relate a particular story. Besides functioning in the discourse as an interruption, perhaps the mother recognizes that in this situation she is losing power (her desire to not discuss the topic) and reverts to a technique that is more likely to be used by a teacher or someone with higher social power as a strategy for initiating a sequence in a way that asserts power. Since the requested activity is prohibitive (i.e., stop talking), follow-up imperatives to facilitate the successful completion of the requested action are not relevant here. Rather, the speaker co-opts a sequence-initiating strategy to abort an undesired activity. It is, ultimately, an unsuccessful strategy; however, it demonstrates the creativity of language users to subvert conventional uses of language (such as the use of *let* statements in a pedagogical context) in order to achieve their goals. It also demonstrates the extent to which language users tap into conventionalized pragmatic knowledge and adapt it to a context that is constantly changing. As speakers interact with one another, the immediate relevant contextual factors are constantly changing, and

speakers adapt to these changes with lightning speed. Language users can respond to these changes not only with conventionalized pragmatic and semantic knowledge but also by creatively subverting and substituting conventions to achieve their goals.

In summary, *let* statements in the SBCSAE occur when speakers feel a strong sense of entitlement and consider the hearer to have few obstacles or contingencies that would prevent him or her from complying with the request. The speaker's sense of entitlement may come from the fact that the speaker is in a higher social power position than the listener, as demonstrated by a judge speaking to a defendant at a civil court or a teacher speaking to her students. The speaker may also consider the request to have few or no contingencies if she is requesting an object that is either close at hand (such as a pen or a document) or an appropriate and expected action for the context (such as requesting a group of children to count). It also is used to initiate activity sequences in pedagogical settings. In this setting it is spoken by the participant who has more social power. *Let* statements in the SBCSAE occur less frequently than other requesting forms between participants who are close family. Instead it is a phrase more likely to be used in settings where speakers feel at least some sense of social distance. In the only case of *let* statements occurring in an intimate context, the speaker's use of the form appears to be a linguistic strategy to appropriate a typically high – low pedagogical technique in order to re-gain control in a context where it is slipping away.

5.2.2 If Statements

As noted in Chapter 4, *if* statements in the SBCSAE show a dichotomous pattern between two key contextual factors: social distance and contingency/entitlement levels. 7 of the *if* statements occur in transactional contexts. These 7 all have c/e levels from 1-3. The remaining 4 tokens include 2 intimate, 1 socio-cultural and 1 professional context

type, and unlike the transactional context requests, these all have c/e levels between 4-6.

The following section will demonstrate this pattern.

The tokens that occur in transactional contexts include a tour guide speaking to his tour group, a receptionist on the phone, a moderator at a public lecture and a contractor and homeowner speaking to each other as the former is doing a quote for the latter. The actions they are requesting of their hearers are easy, ordinary and expected for the contexts in which they appear.

(50) Okay folks, if you will please, take a look at this picture taken during construction

(51) Okay folks, if you will please, follow me now

(52) Okay, if you would, right up this stairway, when you get on the balcony, wait for me on the blue couches on the balcony please.

In (50),(51)and (52) the speaker is tour guide asking his group to do typical tour activities: look at objects of interest (50), follow him (51), walk in a specific direction and wait in a specific place while on the tour (52). Though these *if* statement requests do pattern with imperative forms (the *take a look* and *follow me now* phrases could arguably be considered distinct units from the *if you will* phrases), there is a recurring, almost rhythmic pattern of *if you will/would* phrases that prompt the tour group to take the next appropriate action in the tour. In addition, *if* statements to direct a tour group also appears in the *Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English (MICASE)*.

(53) MICASE Transcript T0U999MX062, "Art Museum Tour"

a) so um, we can start in the, next room here if you wanna follow me

b) uh we're going up to the head of the stairs here if you wanna follow me

Though the *if* statement utterances in (53) follow statements about where the tour group will be going next (*in the next room, up to the head of the stairs*), the actual action requested, to *follow*, is presented in an *if* statement. Additional transactional settings

where speakers use the *if* statement for low c/e level requests include a receptionist on the phone and a moderator at a public lecture:

(54) If you want to let him know and then have him call me back

(55) So if you will ask your questions clearly, and please don't make them too long, s-
--because I might forget,... the= beginning, by the [time I reach the end],

In (54) a receptionist at a veterinarian practice is speaking to a person who is related to a customer and asking that person to pass on the information she has given about the customer's cat and then to call her back. In (55) a moderator is introducing a Q&A time during a public lecture. Both of these requested actions are unexceptional given the circumstances in which they are spoken. A receptionist can reasonably ask someone to pass on a phone message and a moderator at a public event might reasonably ask that the questions from the audience be clear and brief. The following two *if* statement tokens occur in yet another kind of transactional setting:

(56) I'm wondering if=,.. you don't have a floor plan of the house

(57) If you -- if you go over and have a look at the dining room

In example (56) the speaker is a contractor, Seth, who appears to be doing a quote for installing air conditioning in a private home, and in (57), the speaker is the homeowner, Larry. In (56) Seth asks Larry for a floor plan, though he demonstrates that it is not absolutely essential for the quote, but rather something that would be helpful. The negative verb, *I'm wondering if you don't have*, seems to be Seth's way of signaling low entitlement and his expectation that Larry may not be able to produce the desired object—in other words, he would like to have it, but he does not expect Larry to go to great lengths to get it if it's not easily, immediately available. In (57), Larry asks Seth to look at his dining room. Again, in terms of the purpose for Seth's visit—to advise how an

air-conditioning system might be installed—it is very natural to ask Seth to examine the dining room.

In these transactional context *if* statements (50)-(57), the speakers seem to be using *if* statements as a way of hedging---showing politeness and respect as they make their requests. Fraser (2010:15) defines hedging as a “rhetorical strategy that attenuates [reduces the force, effect or value of] either the full semantic value of a particular expression...or the full force of a speech act.” Fraser (2010:24) includes conditional *if* clauses as an example of an English hedge, noting that they typically “refer to the condition under which the speaker makes the utterance.” This analysis fits with Vine (2004, 2009) who notes that *if* statements are “associated with a high degree of politeness” (2009:1402). However, the utterances in (50)-(57) do not for the most part refer to an actual condition in the way that the example below does:

(58) If you’re going my way, I need a lift back. (Fraser 2010:24)

If clauses can function as hedges in English, but they are not by definition hedges, as Fraser (2010) points out. He argues that “an expression is usually only recognized as a hedge when it is used in hedging” (Fraser 2010:23, see also Clemen 1997). The question is, then, are the *if* statements in (50)-(57) still functioning as hedges?

By couching the request in an *if* clause without specifically stating the condition for the action does reduce the force of the speech act. First, these utterances occur between participants who have wide social distance between them. The speakers have essentially no previously established social relationship with each other, and thus they are less likely to be abrupt in their requests. The conditional clause prefaces and softens the action they are requesting by allowing the speaker to allude to an unspoken but possible condition for complying with the request. Although the speaker may not feel there really is a condition (*i.e.*, the tour guide in (51) and (52) would undoubtedly take

serious action if a tourist refused to follow him and tried to strike out on his or her own), he or she creates the illusion for the listener that there might be one that would give incentive to the listener to comply to a total stranger's request. Second, in most of these transactional contexts, *if* statements are spoken by a speaker who, within the immediate context, holds information or a status that gives them the ability to shape the recipient's immediate experience: the tour guide, moderator and receptionist all have vital information that the customer and/or listener needs to experience a satisfactory transaction with the speakers. This advantage gives the speaker a kind of social collateral or power within the immediate environment. Even in the homeowner and contractor interaction, one participant over the other has information or power the other needs, though whether it is Seth or Larry varies at different points during the interaction.. Since they are both in the home that belongs to the homeowner Larry, he has the prerogative for what parts of the home the contractor has access to. Thus, Larry invites the contractor in (57) to look at a particular section of his home. The contractor, Seth, has specialized technical knowledge that the homeowner does not (hence the purpose of the interaction itself), giving him social power collateral in conversations relating to what can and should be done in the home (and what tools are needed). Thus in (56), a question about a tool that will be helpful in his job, Seth may have a slightly higher power status in terms of that request. Although the speakers in all of these *if* statement utterances are the participants with slightly higher social power, who might consider their right to request as unconditional, they still reference the listener's right to decline or comply with the request by framing their directives with *if* . By referencing the listener's willingness to comply, the *if* statement functions as a hedge, allowing the speaker to indeed reduce the force of the speech act without calling into question his or her right to make the request. Thus the combination of greater social distance between speakers, a low contingency

request and a speaker's strong sense of entitlement to make the request because of a slightly higher, often temporary, social status creates a context where an *if* statements are used to request.

The remaining four *if* statements in the SBCSAE follow a strikingly different pattern. They all occur between speakers who have a previously established social relationship and thus much closer social distance. These requests exhibit orientation to higher levels of contingency and to the speakers' lack of entitlement. That is, the speakers recognize and orient their language to various obstacles that the hearers face in granting the request. Sometimes the obstacle is simply the fact that the hearer does not want to comply for unexpressed reasons or that there are contextual factors that make that compliance difficult or impossible. The speakers also express a less certain sense of entitlement. The social power level of these requests include 3 contexts in which the speakers are at equal power levels and another set of participants with a low-high social power relationship.

The request with the highest level of contingency/entitlement is given in (59). The participants are sisters having a chat in which they discuss various topics and mutual acquaintances. During the course of the conversation, Alice asks her sister Mary to babysit her child, Trace. The request and its larger context is below.

(59) Transcript 7

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | MARY: ... (DRINK) (Hx) | |
| 2 | ALICE: ... I was gonna ask you and m=om, | E1 |
| 3 | too, | E2 |
| 4 | if you could um, | |
| 5 | ... take care of !Trace for a couple days next week. | |
| 6 | MARY: ... (TSK) Oh? | |
| 7 | ... What you got in mind. | |
| 8 | ALICE: ... I need to get caught up on my work. | E3 |
| 9 | MARY: ... (DRINK) Wednesday I have an appointment at nine thirty. | |
| 10 | ALICE: ... Mom's off, | C1 |

11	isn't she?	
12	MARY: ... Oh,	
13	that's righ=t.	
14	... That's right.	
15	ALICE: ... Yeah I think that'd,	
16	... I think that'd um,	
17	... (TSK) work out,	
18	... like if she had to go shopping or something maybe you could	
	go with her,	C2
19	and help her with him?	
20	... And !Nicky helps her .. with him a lot anyway.\0	C3

Specifically, Alice introduces the request to Mary in lines 2-5 saying, ... *I was gonna ask you and m=om,too,if you could um, ... take care of !Trace for a couple days next week.* She expresses lack of entitlement through several linguistic strategies. First, she uses the past tense, *I was gonna ask you* (line 2) which places a distance between the speaker and the request itself. Second she hedges with the phrase *if you could* (line 4), displaying her awareness that there may be possible obstacles to her sister complying with the request. Unlike the *if* statement requests in transactional contexts, such as (50), where it does not seem likely that the speaker is expecting the hearers to be unable to do the particular action he or she is asking them to do, Alice's hesitancy is in fact justified, as several obstacles come to light. The biggest unstated contingency is Mary's unwillingness to comply. This is indicated by her noncommittal response. Instead of responding with a yes or no, she answers with an *oh...what you got in mind?* (line 6). The speaker responds to this noncommittal (and unstated unwillingness) with a *need* statement, ... *I need to get caught up on my work* (line 8), justifying her entitlement to make the request. Reason statements are a speaker's strategy for making his or her claim stronger. By making her reason explicit, she adds force to her request. Thus through the speaker's use of past tense, hedging and an explicit reason statement, she displays awareness to her lack of strong entitlement.

She also displays awareness of the obstacles the hearer faces in complying with the request, and she responds to those with three strategies which attempt to eliminate these contingencies: she offers a solution, downgrades the amount of time she is asking from the hearer, and then downgrades the amount of effort she is asking for. Besides the unstated contingency of unwillingness, the hearer states another obstacle explicitly: *Wednesday I have an appointment at nine-thirty* (line 9). She has a conflicting and previously scheduled activity during the time period in which her sister wants her to care for her child. Of course, this contingency has some obvious loopholes which the requester immediately recognizes and proposes a solution to. Mary has said that she is busy only during a limited time out of the entire proposed babysitting. Alice has asked for babysitting *a couple of days next week* (line 5), and Mary responds that she cannot on Wednesday at nine-thirty. It seems that Mary may be trying to covertly signal to Alice that she does not want to comply with the request; however, she does not ever explicitly refuse to comply during the conversation. Alice responds to Mary's excuse saying, *Mom's off, isn't she* (lines 10-11). Since Alice asks both her sister and mother to watch Trace, Alice proposes that their mother watch Trace during the times that Mary cannot. This solution keeps Alice's request viable and also has no contingencies since the mother is not present to object. Alice's second strategy for dealing with Mary's lack of committal and apparent unwillingness is to downgrade her original request to a suggestion to help for a shorter timeframe: *... like if she had to go shopping or something maybe you could go with her* (line 18). No longer is she directly asking *if you could*, but rather she is suggesting *maybe you could*. A suggestion does not require a specific response of compliance or refusal. The felicitous response options for a suggestion are much more open-ended. The hearer can comply or refuse, agree or disagree or even choose not to respond at all. In other words, a non-committal response---which is what Mary is giving to

Alice---is a perfectly acceptable response to a suggestion. By downgrading to a suggestion, Alice is adjusting her expectations to the reality of the interaction and maintaining social harmony with her sister. Since their social power status is equal, Alice does not try to assert top-down power and demand compliance from her sister. Instead, she uses linguistic strategies that appear to release Mary from the pressure of compliance. Alice's final releasing strategy is to suggest that Mary's teenage daughter Nicky will do most of the actual babysitting work. She adds, *And !Nicky helps her .. with him a lot anyway* (line 20). By implication, Mary's unwillingness to help can have no basis: the request is now only for a very limited time period (while they are out shopping) and will require very minimal action by Mary herself because Nicky will do the actual difficult parts of babysitting. The conversation then moves on to a different topic. It is notable here that while Alice's strategies of providing solutions to schedule conflicts and downgrading the time and energy required of the hearer may seem to minimize the request and take pressure off of the hearer, the actual purpose of these strategies is to pressure Mary into complying. Because there are 3 linguistic evidences of orientation to entitlement and 3 strategies that attempt to remove contingencies, this request has a total contingency/entitlement level of 6.

The second *if* statement that occurs in an intimate context type is a request between a wife and husband. Though the request itself in (60) seems simple and straightforward, the context reveals this is not the case. The request is

(60) you know maybe if we could turn the spider plant around

However, the interaction that follows the request indicates that more is at stake than a simple request to move an object. The speaker employs hedging, an *if* statement and a justification statement to orient to her lack of entitlement, and counters the obstacles proposed by the hearer with two strategies: reference to a previously made decision and

an incentive statement. These 3 references to her lack of entitlement and 2 orientations to contingencies give this utterance a c/e level score of 5. The full context of the conversation is below:

(61) Transcript 34e

1	KAREN:	[Oh= well that's good].	
2		.. Oh=,	
		... <X you know maybe if X> we could turn	E1 E2
3		the spider plant around.	
4	SCOTT:	... Which one.	
5	KAREN:	... The one that just looks kinda decrepit.	E3
6	SCOTT:	... That one.	
7	KAREN:	.. Yeah.	
8	SCOTT:	... Maybe we could --	
9		I think it,	
10		... would probably do better,	
11		if it got its babies trimmed off.	
12	KAREN:	<P<X I mean can it wait X>P>?	
13		... I think we thought about doing that	C1
		in the springtime,	
14		... then I thought we'd replant them.	C2
15	SCOTT:	... Yeah,	
16		but [I] think there's more babies than ... we need.	
17	KAREN:	[Would] --	
18		... Yeah.	
19		... And we've got three new babies that I could replant,	
20		but I haven't,	
21		... [already].	
22	SCOTT:	[Unhunh].	
23		.. And that --	
24		.. Yeah the --	
25	KAREN:	(COUGH) (COUGH)	
26	SCOTT:	The other plant over there is,	
27		... has lots of babies,	
28	KAREN:	... (Hx)=	
29		... Oh=,	

The wife, Karen, makes the request in (61) to her husband, Scott. She demonstrates a lack of entitlement by hedging it with *you know* and *maybe*, as well as using *if we could*

(line 3) (rather than an interrogative, e.g., *could you*). These modifiers allow the speaker to demonstrate that she is aware of possible contingencies. As in (59), the hearer's immediate response is noncommittal. He responds, *which one* (line 4), rather than with a yes or no, or simply getting up and moving the plant. It is interesting to note that the phrase is transcribed as a statement and not a question. Karen responds to his statement with the specific information he is asking for, telling him ... *The one that just looks kinda decrepit* (line 5) . However, in her reply there is an implied reason statement and thus an orientation to her entitlement to make the request. This reason or justification is communicated through the adjective she uses to describe the object of action. She describes the specific object she is referring to as a *decrepit* plant (line 5), essentially saying that the reason that particular spider plant needs to be turned around is because it is decrepit and ugly, and she does not want it to be visible either to her or possible guests. Her strategies are soft power plays, rather than overt. Her husband's response is somewhat positive, but still not committed: *Maybe we could* (line 8). But he immediately presents a contingency:--*I think it, ... would probably do better, if it got its babies trimmed off* (line 9-11). Rather than fixing the ugliness temporarily by moving the plant, he would like to fix it permanently by cutting off the scraggly baby plants that are hanging on to the adult stems. Karen then responds to this contingency by offering a compromise— *I mean can it wait?* (line 12)—and a reference to a previously discussed mutual agreement about the plant: *I think we thought about doing that in the springtime* (line 13). She agrees that his solution would fix the problem, but would prefer to wait until the spring before they trim the plant. Her query in line 12 asking him to wait indicates that she was already aware that the plant needed trimming, but that she would prefer that to be done at a later time. Even as Karen responds to the contingencies her husband presents, she does so with additional hedging. The utterances in lines 12 -14 are hedged with *I mean* (line 12)

and *I think* (line 13). Her final statement, *then I thought we'd replant them* (line 14), is both a concession and another implied justification statement. She concedes that they should trim the plant, but justifies her desire to wait so that the trimmed baby spider plants can be immediately replanted. The implication is that since it is not springtime currently, they will not be able to plant the babies; thus, the need for a temporary solution such as turning the pot a different direction. Scott counters her reason statement with an additional contingency, .. *Yeah. but [I] think there's more babies than ... we need* (lines 15-16), essentially arguing that there's no need to wait until spring to trim the plant because there will be babies in the spring to plant, even if they cut them off now). Unlike (59), the requester does not follow-up with another strategy nor does she simply change the topic of conversation. Instead, Karen concedes to her husband's solution and essentially withdraws the request. She agrees with his statement that they have more baby spiders than they need saying, *yeah* (line 18) and then offering additional evidence for this: *And we've got three new babies that I could replant, but I haven't already* (line 19-21). However, the linguistic choices made during request itself, with its hedging, two implied justification statements and concessions, demonstrate the speaker's awareness of contingencies and her less than strong sense of entitlement to make the request.

Though this utterance is tagged as an equal social power context, it is possible that the wife finds herself at a lower social power level compared to her husband. Her hedging and eventual capitulation on a seemingly insignificant topic (potted plants) makes one suspect that this might be so. If this is the case, then it reinforces the relevant contextual profile that seems to accompany *if* statements: in addition to it occurring in intimate & socio-cultural contexts with high contingency/entitlement levels, they also may be a strategy employed by speakers of a lower social power status speaking to someone

at a higher level. The following interaction is a clear demonstration of how *if* statement requestive forms are used in a low-high social power context.

The following token illustrates an *if* statement request with a high c/e level that occurs in a clearly low – high social power context. In this context the requester is Phil, a graphic designer in an arts foundation, speaking to the president of the foundation, Brad. Here, Phil wants Brad to commit to discussing the current topic of conversation at a later time since Brad has indicated several times that he needs to leave. Here the speaker orients to his lack of entitlement with four strategies: a release statement, *if* statement, uncompleted *because* (reason) statement and extensive hedging with *I think*. He uses just one strategy to orient to contingency, the phrase *at some point*, in his request for a particular time to talk. These strategies are explicated below.

(62) Transcript 10

- | | | | |
|----|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | PHIL: | [And we'll contin]ue [2this2]. | |
| 2 | BRAD: | [2Well2], | |
| 3 | | .. yeah. | |
| 4 | | [There] – | |
| 5 | PHIL: | [In some] manner, | |
| 6 | | but we don't have to talk about it at lunch if you don't want. | E1 |
| 7 | | But I [think, | |
| 8 | BRAD: | [No, | |
| 9 | | that's fine]. | |
| 10 | PHIL: | if we can], | |
| 11 | | .. [2(H)2] | |
| 12 | BRAD: | [2That's fine2]. | |
| 13 | PHIL: | .. If we can [3go ahead and3] carry on, | E2 |
| 14 | BRAD: | [3Um3], | |
| 15 | PHIL: | ... at some point, | C1 |
| 16 | | you and I [I think], | E3 |
| 17 | BRAD: | [Yeah]. | |
| 18 | PHIL: | (H)= [2Because2] – | E4 |

Since Phil is at a lower social power level than Brad at least in the context of this interaction where they are discussing the arts organization, the extent that he hedges and

generalizes his request allows him to maintain social harmony and show respect while still attempting to get his way. Throughout the entire transcript, Phil is the dominant talker, while Brad spends much of the conversation simply responding with short acknowledgments such as *uh huh* and *yeah*. Phil's key requesting phrase in (62) begins in line 7 with *but I think*, then continues on in lines 10, 13, 15, and 16, *if we can, if we can go ahead and carry on...at some point, you and I, I think*. However, this is the second iteration of the action he would like from Brad. Several moments before, Phil's first iteration of the action he is requesting is actually an assertion in lines 1 and 5, *And we'll continue this.... In some manner*. This utterance does not seem to be a statement request, but rather an outright assertion. As Phil is the person with lower social standing in this relationship, such a forthright statement seems surprising. Yet he immediately softens this statement with a string of concessions and restatements. In the next few lines, Phil employs several strategies that illustrate his awareness of low entitlement (or at least of his lower social power status). First, he makes a release statement: *but we don't have to talk about it at lunch if you don't want* (line 6). Previous to this, Phil has invited Brad to eat lunch with him. Thus for Phil to follow up that invitation with a request to continue this work discussion, it would make it seem as if Phil were calling the shots. But this overt statement that this is not Phil asking his boss to a working lunch demonstrates lack of entitlement. Second, the *if we can* statement shows Phil is aware there may be possible contingencies to Brad complying. Third, Phil hedges the *if* statement request in lines 7, 10, 13, 15, and 16 with an *I think* hedge both at the beginning (line 7) and end of the statement (line 16). Finally, Phil attempts to follow up the request with more justification for it by discussing the reasons why they need to continue to talk. He begins a *because* statement but is interrupted by Brad and never gets a chance to finish stating his reasons. Unlike (59), where the sisters deal in very

specific details about the contingencies the hearer faces in complying with the request, Phil does not address any contingencies in specific detail. Rather he keeps the conditions for complying open and non-specific, asking Brad to comply *at some point* (line 15). This expression is intentionally vague and euphemistic. By not pinpointing Brad on a specific time and place, Phil makes the request contingent on the time and place that is convenient for Brad, his social superior. By deferring to Brad's schedule, Phil maintains just enough respect and appropriate behavior as Brad's subordinate. The strategies of a release statement, an *if* statement, hedging phrases, an aborted *because* statement and euphemism/intentional vagueness are strategies the speaker uses to demonstrate lack of entitlement and orient to contingencies.

The final *if* statement request that occurs between speakers of low social distance and with high contingency/entitlement issues is from Transcript 3. In this context, a couple, Marilyn and Roy have invited their friend Pete over for dinner. They are all helping to prepare the dinner. Earlier in the conversation Pete has offered to help prepare and Marilyn has given him some green beans to snap. When finished, Pete asks if the green bean ends he has just snapped should go into a compost pile. Marilyn tells him they go in the trash, presumably because she doesn't have a compost pile. Pete responds with a query, *which is where*, and she answers, saying,

(63) Garbage is underneath. If you can save the bag,...you can..turn it inside out and save it.

Ironically, the speakers, who live in California, have just been discussing environmental issues, which may be why the speaker in (63) follows up the directions for putting green bean ends in the trash can instead of a compost pile with a request for the hearer to save the bag that the green beans came in. The following exchange then occurs.

(64) Transcript 3

1	MARILYN:	& landscape thing.	
2		(H).. Garbage is underneath.	
3		.. If you can save the bag,	E1
4		.. you can .. turn it inside out and save it.	E2
5	PETE:	Oh,	
6		okay.	
7	MARILYN:	It's okay,	
8		.. but,	C1
9		... you don't have to.	
10	PETE:	This is,	
11		... this is --	
12		There's already plastic bags in there,	
13		[so],	
14	MARILYN:	[Yeah].	C2

This interaction includes two orientations to contingencies: a concession statement and an acknowledgment of the obstacle—as well as two orientations to lack of entitlement: an *if* statement construction and a follow up suggestion statement. The interaction begins with Pete immediately assenting verbally to Marilyn's request to save the bag with *oh okay* (line 3), but Marilyn follows up his assent with an interesting concession: *It's okay, but...you don't have to* (lines 7-9). What appears to have happened is that Pete had already thrown the bag in the trash before Marilyn had time to give her amended instructions. This concession statement is the requester's strategy for acknowledging a serious obstacle and releasing the hearer from feeling guilty about not being able to comply. When the hearer verbalizes a reasonable explanation for not complying with the request, saying *There's already plastic bags in there, so...* (line 12), the requester affirms that the listener's explanation is reasonable, thus releasing him completely from an obligation to comply. The fact the speaker concedes so easily is an indication that she does not feel a strong sense of entitlement to make the request. Linguistically, this is reflected in the initial form of the request as an *if you can* statement. The requester

recognizes the action is only a possibility and thus that she is not claiming a strong entitlement. The suggestion statement that follows the *if* statement, *you can...turn it inside out and save it*, is also an orientation to her lack of entitlement. It is an explanation of how the hearer might complete the task, but the fact that it is phrased as a suggestion statement rather than an interrogative or imperative seems to be an additional hedging strategy.

Thus in these four high c/e level requests, the participants all have a previously established relationship. None of the contexts indicate that there is clear, straightforward compliance. In (61) and (63) the listener does not comply and the requester's response in both these utterances is to essentially withdraw the request. In (59) and (62) the listener acknowledges the request but neither assents nor declines to comply, and it is unknown whether in the end they finally do comply. Like the transactional utterances, speakers in (59) - (63) do not overtly state any conditions that will apply if the listener would grant the request, but the speakers are still using the *if* clause as a way to hedge their request. In these cases, there seems to be very serious obstacles that would prevent the listeners from complying and the speakers seem to feel this strongly by resorting to strategies that demonstrate their entitlement to make the request. Thus the speakers seem to be tapping into the semantic content of the *if* clause in a way that the speakers in the transactional contexts do not seem to be doing. In these high c/e level requests, the speakers are indeed unsure if the listener will comply and thus present their requests with this conditional preface.

In summary, *if* statements in this corpus demonstrate two mutually exclusive patterns. First, they occur in transactional contexts, high-low or equal social power contexts, and with low contingency/entitlement level requests. In this group, the form itself seems to be a way for the speakers to hedge their conventional and easy requests.

It may, in this case, be strictly a kind of pragmatic politeness marker that marks the wide social distance between the participants, a kind of “token bow” as suggested by Brown & Levinson (1987). The second group occurs in non-transactional contexts, low-high or equal social power contexts, and with high contingency/entitlement levels. In this case, the *if* statement itself is a hedging technique where the speakers seem to be directly tapping into the semantic meaning of the phrase in a way that is distinct from the tokens that occur in transactional contexts.

5.2.3 Need/Want Statements

In terms of traditional speech act theory, a *need/want* statement may be seen as making explicit the sincerity condition that “S wants H to do A” (Searle 1975:71). A speaker asserts his or her desire for the hearer to perform an action as a strategy as an indirect method of requesting. Sometimes the *need/want* statements are, by themselves, the entire request, as in (65):

(65) When you're ready, I need my son-in-law to reach that platter.

Because *need/want* statements are essentially a statement of the speaker's need or desire for a particular action or object, they are not only a way to indirectly request, but also a strategy for a speaker to justify why he or she is making the request. In some cases, *need/want* statements are part of an extended request sequence, in which they are one of several linguistic strategies the speaker uses request. It is also a strategy for a speaker to justify why he or she is making the request—because the speaker needs or wants the action accomplished. In these cases, *need/want* statements occur in conjunction with other request forms, sometimes following or preceding *let* statements, *if* statements, imperatives or modal interrogatives. Since often an initial version of the request has already been made, it is likely that the speaker hopes that by explicitly stating the action as a need or desire, this will add force to the request and result in

compliance. (66) illustrates a request initially made with an imperative, but then followed up with an *I want* statement that elaborates on and justifies the request.

(66) Hey ~Steven? Come on over here, I want you to grate this cheese for me.

Okay?

In (66), the first iteration of the request the mother gives her son is to *come on over here*, an imperative. But she follows that up immediately with a reason statement: *I want you to grate this cheese for me*. As a mother, she is entitled to require particular actions from her son—in this case, the action of leaving the place where he is and going to the place she is. Her use of the imperative, for the initial request taps into the reality of this social context. In addition, asking her son to *come on over here* is not an inherently difficult or unreasonable request. However, by following up this imperative with an explanation of why she has told him to *come on over here* gives him additional motivation for complying. He sees that her request is not haphazard or irrational, but that she has a specific task she wants him to do which will enable them to eventually eat dinner---an end result which benefits both him and his mother. Thus the *want* statement justifies the initial request as well as makes explicit an additional action that she is requesting, but in a way that helps to favorably predispose him to comply. The final query of *okay?* softens what is initially a very direct command.

The question is, then, why do speakers choose to express their requests as *need/want* statements? What contexts are they more likely to appear in? The following section looks at the some linguistic variations of *need/want* statements that appear in the SBCSAE as independent requests (i.e., where the *need/want* statement stands in as the request itself) and the contextual factors that seem to be relevant for those particular forms. Then it will look at conversations in which *need/want* statements are part of extended request sequences, where the *need/want* statement is one of several, repeated

iterations of a request, and examine the relevant features of this function of *need/want* statements.

5.2.3.1 Bare stem *need/want* statements

As noted in Section 4.2.3.1 *I need, I want, I wanna*, the request forms *I need, I want*, and *I wanna*, tend to occur in low contingency/entitlement contexts, where the speaker refers to relatively few obstacles and generally feels the request is appropriate. However, other request forms, such as *let* statements also appear in low c/e level contexts so this alone does not isolate a particular context in which these forms might be more likely to appear. Bare stem *need/want* statements in the SBCSAE also seem to fulfill an additional functional role. They appear when the action being requested is clearly related to a shared goal that is part of the motivating factor or event for the conversation between the participants. Because these requests are so central to fulfilling the participants' interactional goals, the social power relationship or social distance contextual factors are not as relevant for the speakers. The speakers only need to establish that what they are asking is necessary to accomplishing the shared goal.

Besides the illustration of this in Chapter 4 with examples (38), (39) and (40), (67) illustrates the interactional context of bare stem *need/want* statements in the SBCSAE.

(67) Transcript 24

- | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | JENNIFER: | We need a -- |
| 2 | | .. (H) .. Do you have any sharp objects on you? |
| 3 | DAN: | ... %No. |
| 4 | | ... (Hx) Keys? |
| 5 | JENNIFER: | ... No I need like a little pin or something. |
| 6 | | ... You have [a pencil]? |
| 7 | DAN: | [You have anything] in your hair? |
| 8 | JENNIFER: | ... No. |

In (67) a husband and wife are playing video games together and a machine has stopped functioning correctly. The wife, Jennifer, is trying to fix it. Thus their shared activity goal is to get the machine working again. The unfinished beginning of the request, *we need a—* with a first person plural subject demonstrates her awareness that this request is actually shared by both the speaker and hearer. In this case, the hearer does not have the kind of object that is needed to accomplish the goal, but they are able to eventually fix the problem without it. Bare stem *need/want* statements appear in other contexts in which participants share event goals, such as institutional settings like a restaurant. For example, in (68)

(68) But I wanna salad with it.

the speaker is a customer at a restaurant giving her order to a server. Ordering food at a restaurant is a social act that all of the participants are familiar with. It is also central to the purpose of the participants being at a restaurant. They are there to eat food prepared by other people who are being paid to prepare and serve the food. Thus, the customer does not need to ask the server to bring her food, she merely needs to state what specific foods she wants—and in this case, she states the particular side dish that she wants with her main order. The shared cultural knowledge about the purpose and goal of the restaurant experience allows the participants to focus on just the aspects of the context which are variables---in this case, not what kind of action being requested or whether the hearer is able or willing to comply, but rather what item the speaker wants to eat.

Another social ritual that carries with it cultural conventions and involves participants in shared goals is gift-giving. *I want* statements appear in these contexts as well, spoken not only by those giving gifts, but also by those expecting gifts. In Transcript 48, a family is opening Christmas gifts. As they distribute the gifts, participants illustrate that they want to see their gifts to one another appreciated, and they seek to direct the

order in which the gifts are given by using bare stem *need/want* statements as well as an imperative.

(69) Okay, open= this one.... % .. This is the one I want you to o[pen now].

(70) ... And, this is the one I want you to open. ... Right here.

(71) Ah=. (H) Here,I want you to open this one.

In (69),(70) and (71), the speaker is a woman in her 40s, handing out presents to her husband, daughter and daughter's boyfriend. The act of directing someone to open a gift might intuitively be thought of as an offer or invitation—inviting the hearer to do an action that benefits the hearer—rather than a request, which has been defined in this study as an action done by the hearer benefiting the listener. However, this is not merely an invitation to open a gift, but rather a directive to open a particular gift at a particular moment in time out of many possible gifts that the hearer could chose to open. In (69) the requester specifies the time, saying *this is the one I want you to open now*, and she specifies the particular gifts she wants opened in all three utterances with the deictic expressions, *this is the one* (69), *right here* (70) and *this one* (71). The actual invitation to open gifts has already been established by the broader cultural context of it being Christmas morning in the United States of America. The family is gathered together for the express purpose of opening gifts that they have bought or made for each other. Opening gifts is the central purpose for a family gathering together and interacting on this particular day of the calendar year. Thus a bare stem *I want* statement request occurs when the participant is focusing on the aspect of the context that includes variables—in this case, it is deciding what order the gifts will be opened in. Like the restaurant context, these *I want* statements direct someone to take an action that is key to the success of social event.

In (45), the context still involves gift-giving, but the bare stem *need/want* statement is spoken by the receiver rather than the giver of a gift. Rather than Christmas, the setting occurs during the speaker's birthday celebration.

(72) Transcript 13

1 KENDRA: [<VOX What are we doing] here VOX> <<THUMP +.
 2 ... ++++[2++2] THUMP>>
 3 WENDY: [2Does somebody want2] some presents?
 4 MARCI: We're=,
 5 .. We're= t- .. sitting here?
 6 WENDY: ... I think she wants some presents.
 7 MARCI: .. That [would do].
 8 KENDRA: [I want some c]ards,
 9 or some[2thing,
 10 MARCI: [2That would do2].
 11 KENDRA: man2].
 12 WENDY: .. O[3kay,
 13 MARCI: [3Let's get some presents3].
 14 WENDY: <X should X> we start with this3] one?
 15 KEVIN: .. <<CLAP +[4++++ ++ +++ ++++++ CLAP>>4]
 16 MARCI: [4Shall we start with the p=- -
 17 .. % .. You gonna bring=,
 18 .. our present4]?

Kendra is celebrating her birthday, Marci is Kendra's mother and Kevin is her brother. Wendy is Kevin's wife. Kendra's initial question, *What are we doing here* (line 1) and the ensuing thumping noise *VOX> <<THUMP +.... ++++[2++2] THUMP>>* (line 2) is her way of asking her family to begin the celebration of her birthday---specifically, to begin giving her presents. This *wh*-question is a hint. The family members easily recognize that Kendra is essentially asking for her presents, but they tease her by pretending that they do not understand what she is asking. Her mother, Marci, answers her question literally in lines 4-5 with *we're sitting here*. There is no follow-up or acknowledgment of this response because in this case since Kendra recognizes the ironic intent of her mother's answer. Wendy, her sister-in-law hints at the meaning of Kendra's utterance by

identifying the object and action being requested, responding with *Does somebody want some presents?* (line 3), but feigns ignorance about the agent, wondering if *somebody* wants presents. Of course Wendy knows that Kendra wants them, but she uses the pronoun *somebody*, to poke fun at Kendra. Wendy does not hold out long, because she immediately answers her own question saying, *I think she wants some presents* (line 6). The referent for *she* does not need to be stated explicitly since everyone knows that Wendy is referring to Kendra. Wendy knows Kendra is eager to start an event that she knows is inevitable, that will result in clear benefit to Kendra and that she has a right to expect, not only because of the cultural expectation of receiving gifts from family members on a birthday, but because that is clearly the reason for the family gathering.

The events of their evening follow a previously determined script: they open presents, then give Kendra a cake, blow out candles, and eat the cake. However, despite Kendra's strong expectation and knowledge that these events will occur, Kendra does not overtly ask for them to begin. This is because in gift-giving exchanges, it is the giver rather than the receiver that typically initiates the exchange (as in (69)-(71)). Instead Kendra first employs an indirect method of alerting them that she is aware of what activity should come next (line 1) and thus hopes to persuade them to begin it. Second, when confronted with Wendy's direct statement, *I think she wants some presents* (line 6), about what Kendra has been trying to do (begin the gift-giving event), she downplays it. She says, *I want some cards, or something* (lines 8-9). Kendra acknowledges that there is *something* (line 9) she wants, only overtly saying she wants *cards* (line 8). Both the speaker and hearers know that she will get more than cards, and Kendra opens the door for this by adding after a short pause, *or something*. Again, as the receiver, it is not socially acceptable to demand gifts and her sensitivity shows that she understands their teasing. They are trying to get her to explicitly ask for the gifts, while Kendra is trying to

get the family to explicitly offer gifts. It is in this context that she uses the *I want* statement. Only after another family member has explicitly acknowledged her right to *want* (line 6) does she admit that she wants *cards, or something*. Although this utterance contrasts with the *want* statements in (69)-(71), in that the speaker demonstrates more hesitancy to explicitly state her request, both requests are integral to accomplishing the goal of the social event— to successfully exchange gifts—whether the speaker is asking someone else to open a particular present or asking to open presents herself. Though in (72) Kendra has to be goaded into using the *I want* statement, the point is that similar to other *I want/I need* contexts, the form is used by the speaker to facilitate (or in this case initiate) the primary goal of the social event.

In some cases, the speaker and hearer may disagree on what the goal of the interaction or activity is, or they may, in fact, have two completely different goals. However, if the speaker feels the action or object is needed—even if the listener does not— the request may take the form of a *need/want* statement. In (73), a mother, Kitty, is very upset with her teenage daughter, Kendra²⁶, who she accuses of not coming home the night before. Because of this, the mother has grounded the daughter. Kendra has been denying that she stayed out all night, giving all kinds of protests, excuses and proofs. She and her mother have been arguing about it for quite some time. Kendra's conversational goal is to convince her mother that she did not stay out all night and to get out of her punishment of being grounded. Her mother's conversational goal is to not be persuaded by Kendra and to maintain the punishment that she has issued. In (73), we see a maneuver by Kendra to achieve her own goal and her mother's blocking of it.

²⁶ This Kendra is not the same person as the Kendra in Transcript 13. In Transcript 13, Kendra's mother is Marci, in Transcript 42, Kendra's mother is Kitty.

(73) Transcript 42

1 KENDRA: ... <X What if we are awake X>.
2 .. I was tired this morning.
3 ... So much fun.
4 .. My hair looks like a <X mess X>.
5 ... I left it in a ponytail,
6 I didn't even have time to take a shower.
7 ... I think if I spent the night I would've took a shower.
8 ... All I need is your signature so I can .. play the
volleyball.
9 On [the volleyball] team.
10 KITTY: [No].
11 .. No.
12 KENDRA: (H) <F<VOX Why=
13 .. It's just volleyba=ll VOX>F>.
14 ... It's f- like .. on Saturdays and Wednesdays.
15 ... It's for church.
16 ... It's fun.
17 KITTY: ... <MRC You have practice every Wednesday MRC>.
18 KENDRA: Yeah but,
19 .. not %at- %uh --
20 This is at six thirty.
21 KITTY: .. [<MRC I don't care MRC>].
22 KENDRA: [And Susan's going to it] too.

Kendra begins by giving an additional proof that she did not stay out all night, saying *My hair looks like a mess...I left it in a ponytail, I didn't even have time to take a shower. I think if I spent the night I would've took a shower* (lines 4-7). Three seconds later she says, *All I need is your signature so I can.. play the volleyball. On the volleyball team* (lines 8-9). There are several things unusual about this juxtaposition of topics. First, the request for a signature so she can play on the volleyball team is not (ostensibly) related to any of the previous subjects: hair, showering, spending the night. In addition, the request is not simply stated as *I need*, but with the qualifying phrase, *all I need is [x]*. This quantifier *all*, like *just*, is a way for the speaker to signal a simple, easy action. That is, the speaker is trying to communicate that the request is limited to just one easy action,

with little or no obstacles that would prevent the hearer from complying. However, the fact that the speaker is pointing out that the request has a limited scope rather than a broader one, indicates that she anticipates some contingency and is trying to either compensate for it or minimize it. In this case, there is a strong contingency that provides previously established grounds for refusal: Kitty has grounded her daughter. Presumably, then, she is not allowed to go out with her friends. If, however, Kendra can manage to add sanctioned group activities to her schedule, she may be able to minimize or circumvent her grounding. Since this seems to be Kendra's conversational goal, and since her argument about not showering (and other excuses and proofs) have not been successful at changing her mother's mind, she is trying a different tactic. However, her mother sees through her ruse and immediately refuses with two short, decisive, *no's* (lines 10-11), and a few seconds later, *I don't care* (line 21) that dismiss Kendra's additional arguments about why her mother should comply. In the end, the mother's conversational goals trump her daughter's and Kendra does not succeed in eliminating or reducing her punishment.

This strategy of a child expressing a request as an *I need* statement when she is aware that her parent is not likely to grant it seems to reflect follow a pattern pointed out by Wootton (1981). He notes that for four-year-olds, "*I want* may be used as a way of making an initial request where the child has some basis for supposing that recipient will be unwilling to do precisely that which the request seeks (Wootton 1981:520). Although the current instance is an *I need* statement rather than an *I want* statement, the forms are essentially syntactically and semantically equal except that *I need* projects a stronger sense of entitlement by the speaker and thus a slightly stronger coerciveness. As the speaker in (73) is in her teens, as opposed to being a toddler, it makes sense that her coercive strategies would be more sophisticated. Wootton (1981) notes that the power of

an *I want* statement (and by application here, *I need* as well), is that unlike modal interrogative such as *can you x*, the *need/want* statement does not provide the hearer with the discursive opportunity to respond with *yes* or *no*. Thus the speaker is attempting to design the next turn in a way that might prevent the hearer from refusing her request. However, in interactions between children and parents, Craven and Potter (2010) demonstrate that parents often refuse to orient to contingencies presented by their children when giving directives. They purposely ignore or interrupt the normal turn-taking procedure and assert their entitlement to control their children's behavior by repeating strong and more empathic directives.

While (73) is not a parent-initiated request, a similar pattern can be seen. The mother refuses to follow the turn design presented to her by her daughter and instead answers with an emphatic *no*. Pulled from its context, it might be labeled an infelicitous interaction, violating the principle of sequential relevance:

(74) A: I need x....

*B: No

Instead, one might expect B to respond with an expression of lack of ability: *I don't have/can't do x*. However, because this is a parent/child interaction it does in fact follow patterns identified in Craven & Potter (2010), where parents refuse to accommodate their children's negotiating strategies. The bare stem *need/want* statement here can perhaps be better analyzed as an attempt by a child to subvert the restrictions set by a parent. This subversion strategy, however, is based on the primary function of bare stem *need/want* statements illustrated in (67) - (72), as well as (38) - (40). Speakers state their need or want for actions that are within an event context that authorizes that action. Thus the form of the request does not need to refer to ability or willingness, since the co-participation of the recipient in the event has already established both ability and

willingness. It is not necessary, then, for the speaker to provide the hearer with the discursive opportunity to respond with *yes* or *no*. If the speaker does question the possibility of the request being granted, he may follow it up with a query that directly asks for that information, as happens in (67). There, the speaker aborts her *need* statement request in line 1 (*We need a --*) and inserts a question about the availability of the object in line 2 (*Do you have any sharp objects on you?*, which does invite the speaker to respond with *yes* or *no*. This pattern is repeated in lines 5 and 6. Thus in an adult interaction where the speakers have a shared event goal, the *need/want* statement functions as a way to request items within the scope of successfully fulfilling that goal. (73), on the other hand, illustrates how the discursive expectations for *need/want* statements set up the possibility that they can be used when the interactional context does not call for it, thus creating a strategy speaker can use to request an action in a context where she is reasonably sure it will not be granted. The patterns in (67) - (72) and (38) - (40) help to explain why children might use these forms in the contexts noted by Wootton (1981) and seen in (73).

It may be argued that any request or command, not just *need/want* statements, occurs because the action being requested is inherently relevant to the speaker's goal in the context which it is being given. If it were not relevant, then the speaker would not be asking for the action. While this is most likely true on a philosophical level (a discussion not within the scope of this dissertation), this is not exactly what the analysis is trying to claim. In addition, it is true that *I need* and *I want* statements are not used exclusively for facilitating actions that are inherent to the primary goals of the social event. Imperatives (69), *Let* statements (104), and even hints (72) occur in several of these contexts directly before some of the *I want* statements (though not the *I need* statements in this corpus). However, what this analysis is attempting to distinguish is the difference between an *I*

need request that is inherently tied to accomplishing the social event and a request that is part of that social event, but is not by definition necessary to it. Compare the request in (29), repeated here as (75), with (39), repeated here as (76).

(75) Let me see that please

(76) Stephanie, w- I] need you and ~Erika to carry chairs from the front porch, those four little white ones, and they'll stack, you can stack two to[gether, and] [2carry them around2]. ... A=nd, I'll put this out, and we're [ready to eat],

In (75), a judge is asking to see a document that is pertinent to the civil case that he is involved in at the moment. Of course the request is relevant to him eventually deciding what the verdict is, but handing over a document is not intrinsically necessary to deciding a court case. In other words, asking for a document does not by definition have to occur in every court setting for the event to be successful. In contrast, having chairs to sit on is intrinsically necessary to eating at a table, and the fact that apparently there are not chairs (or at least enough chairs) for the family to sit on and the fact that the point of the family gathering is to come together and eat, perhaps lends itself to the speaker choosing the *I need* form for requesting the girls to carry chairs to the table. In (76) the speaker in this case overtly connects this requested action to the primary goal of the event, by adding *And, I'll put this out, and we're ready to eat*. In other words, the chairs are necessary for eating. In (75) no overt connection is made between the action and the overall goal of the event.

Thus one motivation for the forms of *I need/want/wanna* seems to be when the requested action contributes clearly to accomplishing the goal of the social event or activity the participants are engaged in. One token, however, does not seem to follow this pattern clearly. It has a higher c/e level of 4, including 3 orientations to entitlement: an acknowledgement of a move as a reason for the request, an *I want* statement, and an

assertation of prior claim on the object being requested. One orientation to contingencies occurs when the speaker asserts that no one denied or affirmed her prior claim, thus leaving open the possibility that it is valid. This token occurs in Transcript 13, the same conversation as example (72). The following selection includes the times, as relevant parts of the conversation happen across several minutes and not always consecutively, as there are many conversations between participants happening simultaneously (ellipses represent sections of the transcript that have been removed). The *need/want* statement request occurs in lines 9-10:

(77) Transcript 13

1	831.13 832.73	WENDY:	[3So are3] [4you moving in4] the beginning of November?	
2	832.73 833.95	KENDRA:	... Yup.	E1
.....				
3	855.43 856.81	KEN:	... You got a food processor,	
4	856.81 857.31		and everything.	
.....				
5	870.91 872.27	KENDRA:	... [3I got that little hand mixer3].	
6	871.31 872.21	KEN:	[3Oh it's okay=3].	
7	872.25 875.64	MARCI:	S=tuff isn't ... [4electrically4] sou=nd.	
8	873.95 874.70	WENDY:	[4Try it4].	
9	874.15 874.80	KENDRA:	[4I want that4] ____	
10	875.64 877.95		.. I want [5that .. che=st upstai5]=rs.	E2
11	876.09 877.79	WENDY:	[5@= Get a little extra jolt5].	
12	877.95 879.20	KENDRA:	That wooden chest?	
13	879.20 880.37		... Da=ng.	
14	880.37 881.05		[Ow=].	
15	880.37 881.55	MARCI:	[Which wooden] chest.	
16	881.55 882.06	KENDRA:	[2(H) I don't know,	
17	881.55 882.21	KEN:	[2What wooden chest2].	
18	882.06 884.01	KENDRA:	!K2]jelly said she %= ... a=sked for it,	
19	884.01 884.55		and I was like,	
20	884.55 886.00		.. <Q I= saw it before she= did Q>,	E3
21	886.00 887.52		and I asked a long time ago.	
22	887.52 888.40		and nobody said anything.	C1
23	888.40 888.55		And,	
24	888.55 890.17		(H) <Q well we'll find out what it i=s Q>.	

25 890.17 891.65 KEVIN: That's because you didn't say mother
 may I.

.....

26 893.11 893.64 KENDRA: .. In the h_4] ____

27 893.95 894.26 KEN: [5Or what5].

28 893.96 894.26 KENDRA: [5Yeah5].

29 893.96 894.81 MARCI: [5@5]@ [6(H)6]

30 894.36 894.82 KENDRA: [6Upstairs6].

31 894.82 895.76 MARCI: @@@@

32 895.76 897.05 KENDRA: ... There's a chest,

33 897.05 897.41 It's like,

34 897.41 897.61 It I ____

35 897.61 898.91 It's [either] like a cedar=,

36 897.78 898.03 KEN: [(TSK)]

37 898.91 899.51 KENDRA: or something,

38 899.51 900.76 I [mean it's] swee=t.

39 899.61 900.01 KEN: [Mm=].

40 900.76 902.36 KENDRA: ... A hope chest.

41 902.36 902.96 KEN: ... Hmm.

42 902.96 904.36 WENDY: ... <P I didn't know if it was ____

43 904.36 905.30 .. if something was [on] P>.

44 904.83 905.30 KEN: [Hm].

45 905.30 905.85 MARCI: .. Oh.

46 905.85 907.31 ... Hm.

47 907.31 908.45 WENDY: So you want a hope chest [2!Kendie?

48 908.24 909.13 MARCI: [2Well happy birthday,

49 908.45 910.08 WENDY: I thought you already had a hope
 che2]st.

50 909.13 909.58 MARCI: !Kendie2].

51 910.08 911.43 ... Happy happy.

52 911.43 912.12 KENDRA: .. <VOX Yeah we=ll,

53 912.12 912.68 anyway.

54 912.68 915.78 ... Quit talking about my chest,

55 915.78 916.43 thank you VOX>.

The conversation here is a continuation of (72), where the family is celebrating Kendra's birthday. She has been opening presents for a few minutes now, and these gifts have all been household items (*e.g.*, baking sheets, measuring spoons, spatulas). The reason is that Kendra, a young woman in her early 20s is about to move to her own

apartment in the near future. This is indicated in line 1 of (77), where her sister-in-law, Wendy, asks her, *So are you moving in the beginning of November?* The conversation then focuses on what household items she does and does not have. Her father, Ken, confirms that *You got a food processor* (line 3) and Kendra corrects him in line 5, saying, *I got that little hand mixer*. A few seconds later Kendra then appears to request another household item for her new apartment: *I want that ___.. I want that .. che=st upstai=rs* (lines 9-10). While this *I want* statement is consistent with most of the other bare stem *need/want* statement requests in the SBCSAE by occurring in an intimate context type, the request itself is not inherently tied to facilitating the primary, or even a secondary shared goal the way asking to open presents at a birthday party or asking for food at a restaurant is. It is not even tied to a participant's key conversational goal, as in (73). The conversation here is mostly interactional rather than task-orientated, and it meanders through various topics and teasing between family members.

This utterance also differs from the other bare stem *I need/I want* statements in its contingency/entitlement levels. In the others, the speakers all demonstrate high entitlement and do not reference very many contingencies in their utterances. In fact, out of the seventeen *I need/I want* statements, only three have a c/e level above 2. Two have a c/e level of 3 and the current utterance, (77), has a c/e level of 4. The higher c/e level is due to Kendra's additional justifications for why she should have this object she has requested. Besides asserting her desire for it in the *need/want* statement itself, she argues that she has a stronger claim to the item because she asked for it previously (line 18-21) and leverages the previous ambiguous response to strengthen her claim (line 22). No direct denial was given after the first request, but rather *nobody said anything* (line 22). Since the previous request was neither denied nor complied with, Kendra hopes to

leverage the negative evidence: since her parents did not say they would not give it away, the only other logical position is that they must be willing to part with it.

So what is going on with this request, its context and its form? Though this utterance seems at first glance to fit the request paradigm that has been defined for this study—a request for an action by the listener that benefits the speaker—one possible analysis for this utterance is that it functions as pre-request rather than a request. As consistent with the definition of a pre-request, Kendra does not explicitly ask that her parents give her the object she wants. Instead she states her desire for it, perhaps testing the waters to see if her parents might offer the item to her. This fulfills the classic definition and function of a pre-request (Levinson 1983). On the other hand, it could be analyzed as a delayed action request (see Vine 2009, LATER vs. NOW requests), as it seems clear that she is not asking her parents to walk upstairs and bring the wooden chest to her immediately. Although a crosstabulation analysis of request types, including requests for action, delayed action, stop action produced a significant chi-square value of .005 ($p < 0.05$), there is not sufficient data to produce significant results in a logistic regression analysis, which might help to indicate if *need/want* statements are more likely to occur when the action being requested is a delayed action. Vine (2009) notes that in New Zealand workplace interactions, speakers prefer imperatives for immediate action requests rather than delayed ones. Additional data is needed to determine if the type of action, immediate vs. delayed, is a predictive variable for this form. A third possible analysis for this utterance is that it is a permission speech act rather than a request. Evidence for this lies in the response of her hearers. Part of the definition of requests, as defined by Tsui (1994) is that they require a nonverbal response while a verbal response is optional (see Section 3.3.1 Defining Requests). Questions, permissions, offers, invitations and other similar speech acts require a verbal response. In this case, Kendra's

mother and father respond to her *want* statement with four non-committal *hm*'s and an *oh*, as seen in (78).

(78) Transcript 13

- 1 899.61 900.01 KEN: [Mm=].
2 900.76 902.36 KENDRA: ... A hope chest.
3 902.36 902.96 KEN: ... Hmm.
.....
4 904.83 905.30 KEN: [Hm].
5 905.30 905.85 MARCI: .. Oh.
6 905.85 907.31 ... Hm.

Kendra's parents, Ken and Marci, treat their daughter's utterance as an assertion which needs simply to be acknowledged, rather than a request that should be complied with. Thus it may be argued that Kendra is seeking permission rather than requesting an action. Perhaps the response she was hoping for was a reciprocal assertion from her parents giving her permission to have the chest. Permission speech acts, as defined by Tsui (1994), are requests for an action by the speaker that benefits the speaker. This utterance more neatly fits this definition. In asserting that she wants the wooden chest, Kendra is the clear beneficiary, and though it is not explicitly stated (hence the ambiguity of classifying this utterance), she probably expects to be the one to facilitate the moving of it to her apartment (either by doing it herself or by getting someone else to do it). Even if this is not the case, she will need to make a specific request asking her mother and father to move it for her (the other half of the adjacency pair that would be combined with the pre-request).

Additional evidence that this utterance is a permission speech act comes from the fact that the immediate discussion following Kendra's utterance is not about the unstated action (of giving her the chest), but rather of clarifying her deictic expression,

that chest upstairs (line 10). Her audience does not immediately identify which specific object she is referring to. This section of conversation is repeated below:

(79) Transcript 13

1 880.37 881.55 MARCI: [Which wooden] chest.
 2 881.55 882.06 KENDRA: [2(H) I don't know,
 3 881.55 882.21 KEN: [2What wooden chest2].
 4 882.06 884.01 KENDRA: !K2]elly said she %= ... a=sked for it,
 5 884.01 884.55 and I was like,
 6 884.55 886.00 .. <Q I= saw it before she= did Q>,
 7 886.00 887.52 and I asked a long time ago.
 8 887.52 888.40 and nobody said anything.
 9 888.40 888.55 And,
 10 888.55 890.17 (H) <Q well we'll find out what it i=s Q>.

 11 894.36 894.82 KENDRA: [6Upstairs6].
 12 894.82 895.76 MARCI: @@@@
 13 895.76 897.05 KENDRA: ... There's a chest,
 14 897.05 897.41 It's like,
 15 897.41 897.61 It I ____
 16 897.61 898.91 It's [either] like a cedar=,
 17 897.78 898.03 KEN: [(TSK)]
 18 898.91 899.51 KENDRA: or something,
 19 899.51 900.76 I [mean it's] swee=t.
 20 899.61 900.01 KEN: [Mm=].
 21 900.76 902.36 KENDRA: ... A hope chest.

Kendra's mother's first question, *which wooden chest* (line 1), and Kendra's response is striking: though Kendra is the one asking for the item, she initially responds to her mother's request for clarification by saying she doesn't know (line 2). Perhaps this is a strategy for detaching her utterance from the illocutionary force of requesting, or at least minimizing or distracting her audience from such an interpretation of the utterance, as she seems to immediately indicate that she does not have specific knowledge about the object that her utterance could ostensibly be interpreted as a request for. And if the speaker herself does not know which specific object she is asking for, then this ambiguity might indicate that the utterance is not functioning as a pre-request investigating the

conditions that would make the request possible, as it would make it difficult (though not impossible) for the hearer to comply. Though Kendra's denial of specific knowledge about the identity of the object of action does not directly negate any of the felicity conditions proposed by Searle (1975), it focuses the conversation on describing and identifying the object rather than on compliance strategies.

Kendra repairs her denial by identifying it in line 4 as first, the wooden chest that Kelly asked for—*Kelly said she asked for it* (line 4); second, she identifies the location—*upstairs* (line 11); and finally she describes its possible composition—made out of cedar or a similar sweet-smelling wood: *It's [either] like a cedar or something, I [mean it's] sweet*. (lines 14-16, 18-19). After identifying the object, however, the conversation never returns to the requesting action (give) implied by the *I want* statement. This lack of return focus on the implied action by the speaker suggests that the utterance may not be best analyzed as a request. Since (77) seems to not follow the general patterns seen in the other bare stem *need/want* statements, such as requesting an action crucial to the participants' primary event goal and generally low c/e levels, this may indicate that this utterance might be better analyzed as an assertion rather than a request, or at the most an aborted request, with the speaker attempting to repair the utterance to an assertion. Since no other similar *need/want* statements occur in this corpus, more investigation into *need/want* statements may help to establish if this linguistic form is more likely to be used in this kind of context, or if it is better analyzed as an alternate phenomena.

To summarize the first set of forms discussed, *I need*, *I want* and *I wanna* statements occur as independent requests in contexts where the action being requested is crucial to accomplishing the goal of the social event the participants are participating in. These forms, at least in this corpus, also occur more frequently, though not exclusively, in contexts where the speakers have close social distance and, on the whole, have lower

contingency/entitlement levels than the *need/want* statements that include the modal *would*, which are discussed in the following section. However, this higher frequency of bare stem *need/want* statements in close social distance contexts could not be established as a statistically significant pattern due to the small data set. The discussion above does not include all of the *I need*, *I want* and *I wanna* tokens, as Section 5.2.3.4 Multi-unit request will discuss *I need*, *I want* and *I wanna* statements occurring as part of multi-sequence requests and Section 5.2.3.3 First-person plural subject *need/want* statement requests will discuss bare stem *need/want* statements with first person plural subjects.

5.2.3.2 *Would like/prefer/want*

The following section discusses *need/want* statements that include the modal *would* and which typically occur with the verbs *like*, *prefer* and *want*. As noted in Section 4.2.3.2 *Would like/prefer/want*, *need/want* statements with *would* occur more frequently in non-intimate contexts and with a greater variety of c/e levels, including more at the higher end. In addition *would* statements in the SBSCAE do not occur with *need*, which strengthens the principle that *would* is occurring in utterances where the speaker includes more hedging devices with the request. Asserting that the speaker *needs* something is more compelling and presents fewer options to the hearer for objecting, hence the lower c/e levels in the utterances where a speaker uses *I need*²⁷. The following section examines the 7 *would* statement requests in the SBSCAE tokens.

First, the construction *I would like* occurs twice in the SBSCAE. These utterances are low c/e level requests and occur in pedagogical (80) and transactional contexts (81).

²⁷ The construction *what we need* does occur once in the corpus and will be discussed in section 5.2.3.3 First-person plural subject *need/want* statement requests.

(80) Transcript 27

- 1 I would like you people in the audience to,
- 2 (H) examine the balls.
- 3 ... To let me know if,
- 4 .. (H) they are in fact,
- 5 ... average normal everyday balls.

(81) Transcript 55

- 1 I would like to=,
- 2 .. hear something about,
- 3 how she] came to be called,
- 4 ... the Mother of Dada.

Examples (80) and (81) are the only low *c/e* level *would* statement requests within the *need/want* statement request category. The *I would like* utterance in (80) is spoken by a museum worker (Phil) who is giving a teaching demonstration to children visiting a science museum. Since this interaction is between participants in a teacher-student relationship, it has been tagged as a pedagogical context. However, in terms of social distance, the relationship between the participants could perhaps be more accurately analyzed as transactional. In a teacher-student relationship where the participants meet daily or weekly, the participants get to know each other to some degree. In contrast, these participants will only be in this pedagogical context for a short period—less than an hour—and will most likely not meet again in this setting. Thus in terms of social distance, there is no previous social relationship between the participants. Example (81) also occurs in a transactional (or possibly pedagogical) context. In this case, the request is spoken by an audience member who is attending a public lecture. The speaker has finished and the moderator has opened up the floor for questions from the audience. Like (80), there is a kind of teacher-student hierarchy created by the audience members choosing to attend the lecture, but it is a purely transactional context in terms of social distance—the speakers have no previous social relationship and will most likely not

create one going forward. In both of these kinds of public, institutional learning settings, requests using *I would like x* appear. In (80) the instructor uses this form to request the action of *examining* from an audience volunteer. He is about to demonstrate a scientific principle and wants to make sure the children understand that he is using normal (as opposed to magical) balls so that they will understand the scientific principle the experiment will illustrate. In (81), the speaker's request to know particular information about the guest lecturer is in response to an offer, and part of the Q&A—a mutually acknowledged and accepted element of the experience of attending a public lecture.

These requests seem to share the key contextual feature of requesting an action that is tied quite strongly to the overarching social goal of the setting, as discussed in Section 5.2.3.1 Bare stem *need/want* statements. Like requesting food at a restaurant or giving gifts at a birthday party, the museum worker's request to the children is integral to illustrating the scientific principle, which is the entire motivation for the participants to be in that setting. Without a demonstration, the museum worker would have no audience, and without the demonstration, the children would not have gathered together in the space. Similarly, the audience member asking a question after being invited to by the moderator, participating in a culturally sanctioned activity of questioning, is a request inherently tied to the identity of the event. Without questions, a Q&A does not happen. Because the requests in (80) and (81) are essentially tied to the participants' shared social goals, the speakers are licensed to request in way that leads them to acknowledge that licensing, by expressing their desire to have the action accomplished or the information delivered through a statement of they're desire.

Though (80) and (81) share the key element of a request that is inherently tied to the social goals of the participants and setting, the speakers, as noted previously, are essentially strangers, with no previously established social relationship. In this context of

wide social distance, the speakers use the modal phrase *would like*, rather than single word *want*, a linguistic variation found more commonly in settings where speakers share close social distance. This slight hedging corresponds to Brown & Levinson (1987) who say that speakers use more qualifiers in contexts where they want to be more polite. In this instance where very strong entitlement is licensed by the setting, where the request is straightforward with relatively few obstacles or contingencies (or at least the speaker feels no need to address contingencies), and where the social distance between participants is wide, (*i.e.*, they are strangers), speakers choose to hedge their requests, with at least one strategy that orients to contingencies or lack entitlement—in this case, using *I would like* instead of *I want*. In terms of describing and defining politeness, this is a much more concrete and precise way of defining it in action. While we can speculate about the internal motivations of a speaker, whether he or she feels likely to lose face (or not) in performing the speech act, this analysis provides an empirical linguistic and contextual profile for the utterance *I would like* used as a request. This profile, however, can be contrasted with an *I wanna* utterance in example (68) and repeated here:

(82) But I wanna salad with it.

The utterance in (82) is spoken by a customer at a restaurant to a server. It occurs, like (80) and (81) in a transactional setting. It also shares with those utterance the feature of a request crucially tied to the event goal, and carries a very strong entitlement and low contingency. So why is there no additional hedging strategy in (82)? Though more data looking specifically at these two forms in transactional contexts is needed, one possible reason is the social power relationship. In (82) the speakers have an equal power relationship, but in (80) and (81), the speakers can be considered to be in unequal (though temporary) social power relationships. Since (80) is spoken by a museum worker giving a science demonstration to children visiting a museum, the speaker clearly holds a

position of social power over the children, though that power is temporary and granted voluntarily by the children's decision to attend (or at least because of their guardians', parents' or teachers' decision). The setting in (81) also occurs in a quasi-pedagogical yet transactional context, at a public lecture. This time, the speaker is an audience member, speaking to the moderator. Like (80), the speaker has voluntarily and temporarily placed him or herself in a student-teacher-like setting by choosing to attend the lecture. The utterance has been coded as a low-high social power interaction because, like the museum worker, the moderator has the option to accept or dismiss the audience member's question and the invited guest holds the power to choose to answer or not answer the question. In contrast, the audience member does not have the power to challenge the moderator's decision directly and openly (at least to challenge and stay civil).

The server-customer relationship in (82), however, seems to involve a kind of balance of power spread more equally between the participants (see Fox 2015). This allows the participants to demand certain things and gives them leverage to negotiate. A paying customer has the right to ask for food at a restaurant and leverages the server's desire to retain the paying customer's business. However, the server holds the balance of power in terms of expert knowledge about what food is available to order and a finite number of options that the customer can ask for. When the customer's requests or demands become unreasonable or out of the scope of possibility, the server has the power to deny the request. So when participants in a transactional setting are requesting actions or items that fall within the scope of their power and the realm of possibility, it may be that the unhedged forms of *I need* or *I want* are more likely to occur. However, when participants in a setting have an unequal social power relationship—whether high-low or low-high—they are more likely to slightly hedge their low contingency/high

entitlement requests, using the form *I would like*. To summarize, although *need/want* statements formed with the modal *would* tend to have higher contingency/entitlement levels than requests formed with *I need/want*, these two apparent exceptions are more clearly explained as alternate forms of the bare stem *need/want* statement request forms when both wide social distance and unequal social power levels occur in low contingency/entitlement contexts. The relevant contextual features of the form *would like* in contrast with *I want/wanna* as found in the SBCSAE is illustrated in the table below.

Table 5-1 Functional Profile of *Would Like* vs. *Want/Wanna* in Transactional, Low Contingency/Entitlement Contexts.

Requesting Verb	Social Distance	Contingency/Entitlement Level	Social Power	Central to event goal?
<i>want/wanna</i>	Wide	Low	Equal	Yes
<i>would like</i>	Wide	Low	Unequal	Yes

Thus two forms used in transactional contexts involving requests that are central to the participants' shared event goal and occurring with low c/e level contexts differ seem to be sensitive to the social power context. When there is an equal social power context between the participants, they choose the bare stem *need/want* statement form, and when there is an unequal social power relationship (both high – low and low – high), they choose the *would like* statement form. Since the SBCSAE includes only three examples of these forms, this pattern needs to be examined with more corpus data.

As a hedging device, a *need/want* statement that asks for a favor from the listener appeals to the goodwill of that participant. The speaker feels that stating the desired action as a personal preference will be sufficient to count as the request for action and will influence the listener to comply. If the *need/want* statement is not the only expression of the request, but rather one of several strategies, it appears that the speaker uses this statement of personal preference in hopes that it will persuade or

compel the listener to comply. It attempts to invoke the goodwill of the other, instead of (or in addition to) out-right demanding compliance. Sometimes it precedes more direct and coercive forms of requesting, such as an imperative; other times it simply follows the imperative, softening its edges. This function of *need/want* statements is seen most clearly in the majority of tokens within the SBCSAE that include the modal *would*. Except for the two transactional and low contingency *I would like* utterances, discussed above, the forms involving *would* all have high contingency/entitlement levels. That is, the speakers orient strongly to their right to make the request and in the process, whether overtly or not, imply that they recognize serious obstacles to their request. The five high c/e level requests are listed below.

- (83) Well what did you guys do with that one I made. ... I'd like to have it back..... I'd [like to just keep] that card.
- (84) What I'd like you to do is put those cans away please
- (85) And what we will do (Hx), is I think, .. what we're gonna probably wanna do, or what I would like to do, is I would like to take a day.
- (86) Uh I would prefer that WRITING>>,that you were there % on one hand,because I think that it would be most expedient. ... (TSK) I don't really f=- find it to be, .. you know, .. a= ... confrontation, by any means,but, [I just] think, .. they wanna be able to just kind of....
- (87) Now what we'd want you to do,in this case..is maybe --....See this this -- The end of this room might be modified. ... So, ... all we wanna know is, ... is that we can eventually be able to do this.... Alright. ... To to get % .. get this= ... duct work done, when we do -- when we do the modification to [the] --

Within this subcategory of *would* statement requests, the social distance settings for the speakers range from very close, or intimate (83), (84) to the widest social distance,

transactional (87). The middle range is represented too—(85) and (86) occur in a professional context. Here the speakers are business associates in a community organization. Clearly they have an already established relationship, but they are not as comfortable with each other as immediate family members or close friends would be. This suggests that social distance is not relevant to the contexts in which speakers use this form. Contingency and entitlement, however, are. All of the requests have a level 4 c/e or higher. These higher c/e levels are indicated by the fact that the *need/want* form is part of a longer, extended request sequence, where the request itself is extensively hedged and/or repeated. In many cases where a speaker references contingencies or entitlement, the request is repeated with linguistic variation. That is, *need/want* statement requests with *would* are only one of several linguistic forms the speaker uses to couch the request. Repetition in these cases appears to be either in response to hesitation from the listener to comply to the speaker's request. In all but (87), there is clearly hesitation or procrastination by the listener to comply, leading the speaker to reiterate the request. In (87), the speaker's sense of low entitlement seems to originate from uncertainty about whether his request is possible rather than any overt signals from the listener that he may not be willing or able to comply. The following section examines examples (83)-(87) in detail, outlining both the similarities and differences in the contextual factors of these tokens.

In (83), the speaker, Kitty, is talking to her daughter, Sabrina. They are discussing a card that Kitty made to be sent to "Country Gentlemen". It is not clear from the context exactly what "Country Gentlemen" is—perhaps a magazine?—or what kind of card Kitty made or why she wanted it sent. However, what is clear from the conversation, related below in (88), is that her daughters did not send in the card that Kitty had made. Sabrina says it was because they *had already given like three..to them already* (line 14).

This explanation then prompts Kitty to request that the card be returned to her: *Well, what did you guys do with that one I made....I'd like to have it back* (lines 16-17). She follows up with four entitlement strategies—2 reason statement, 2 repeated *want* statements with past tense hedging—and one orientation to contingencies, an imperative that overrides the listener's explanation and excuse for why the action cannot be done. The entire conversation appears below:

(88) Transcript 42

1 KITTY: ... Um,
2 .. ~Sabrina,
3 did you ever give that,
4 .. that card to um,
5 .. Country Gen[tleman]?
6 GEMINI: [XX]X=,
7 SABRINA: ... No,
8 but we got a new one,
9 that we gave <X there X>.
10 KITTY: ... You mean that one that I made,
11 didn't,
12 wasn't good enough?
13 SABRINA: ... No %.
14 .. We had already given like three .. to them already.
15 ... Three ... [cards],
16 KITTY: [Well what did you g]uys do with that one I made.
17 ... I'd like to have it back.
18 SABRINA: ... Okay.
19 ... I'll try- see if I can find it.
20 <X Wonder X> where I put it.
21 KITTY: ... Hunh?
22 ... I'd [like to just keep] that card. E1
23 SABRINA: [Ooh=].
24 ... I [2left it2] at the carwash.
25 KITTY: [2(SWALLOW)2]
26 SABRINA: So they c- --
27 The girls could sign it.
28 ... If the carwash was that .. little party we saw,
29 I bet you they .. <P<X threw .. a[way X>P>].
30 KITTY: [%N-] %n-
31 %It's probably outside and ended up getting trashed. E2

32	... I wanted to keep that.	
33	If you guys weren't gonna use it.	E3
34	.. %I should've just done it myself.	
35	SABRINA: ... Hey you never know,	
36	%it might have gotten XX.	
37	... (SIGH)=	
38	KITTY: ... (TSK) Ask ~Kendra.	C1
39	... She might have done something [with it.	
40	SABRINA: [I'll ask .. X].	
41	KITTY: Y- you know],	
42	.. I --	
43	I --	
44	You know,	
45	it took me a while to make that thing.	E4
46	SABRINA: Well,	
47	I know,	
48	KITTY: ... You guys just --	
49	... Yeah=,	
50	... I don't know why I bother sometimes.	

Kitty's request is somewhat unique in that if her daughters had done what she had wanted, Kitty would never have ended up making this request for the card to be returned to her. Second, it is not a request for an object in any way related to a particular function of the participants' purpose or any overarching cultural context. The topic of conversation is, randomly introduced by Kitty's question, ... *Um, .. ~Sabrina, did you ever give that, that card to um, .. Country Gen[tleman]? (lines 1-5)*. The request which follows is prompted by the unexpected and unsatisfactory negative answer to her question. In some sense, this conversation, and thus the request, occurs at the whim of the speaker, Kitty, who chooses this moment to bring up the topic, so there is nothing in the moment itself, the setting or larger context inherently tied to the topic of making a card for *Country Gentleman*. This contrasts with the bare stem *I need/want* statement requests discussed in (69) - (71) in Section 5.2.3.1 Bare stem *need/want* statements since it would be unusual for a mother to ask her daughter to open a gift outside of a setting where they

are not exchanging gifts (*i.e.*, not a holiday or birthday). However, the request in (88) can happen anytime the mother decides to ask her daughter about the card and not be considered inappropriate (unless, of course, it were a setting where general social conversation would not be appropriate, such as in the middle of a funeral). Thus there is no contextual background that might contribute to creating entitlement for the speaker. Kitty must explicitly justify her request in order for it to be appropriate. Third, there is a negative social value to the kind of action she is requesting, to return a gift or item previously given away. Thus she needs to demonstrate strong entitlement to justify this unusual social action.

The speaker establishes this first by presenting herself as the injured party: *You mean that one that I made, didn't, wasn't good enough?* (lines 10-12). This utterance precedes the explicit statement of the request, and essentially invites her daughter Sabrina to repeat and elaborate on her failure to use the item her mother provided for this particular task. Her daughter confirms that, ... *No* (line 13) the cards were not good enough and gives an additional reason for not complying: .. *We had already given like three .. to them already. ... Three ... [cards]*, (lines 14-15). Since Sabrina has, with no remorse, rejected the original item, Kitty now makes her request: *[Well what did you g]uys do with that one I made. ... I'd like to have it back* (lines 16-17). Because she has established that Sabrina does not want the card in the first place, Kitty feels entitled to ask for its return. The request itself as a *need/want* statement is an orientation to entitlement. She predicates asking for the card on the premise that she simply wants it, which has now been fully justified due to the fact that her daughters do not want it.

Second, she further asserts her entitlement to the card by giving two additional reasons for getting it back: future use (keeping it for later),... *I wanted to keep that. If you guys weren't gonna use it* (lines 32-33), and time and energy expended in making it, Y-

you know] .. I --, I -- You know, it took me a while to make that thing (lines 41-45). In each of these additional claims to entitlement, she is responding to hesitation or uncertainty from the listener about the possibility of the request being granted. For when Kitty first asserts that she wants to keep the card, Sabrina responds immediately with a positive assent (*okay*, line 18), followed by a contingency, ... *I'll try- see if I can find it. <X Wonder X> where I put it* (lines 19-20). Though Sabrina verbally assents, she clearly means to indicate to her mother that she doesn't remember where it is, highlighting the possibility that the item her mother wants has been lost. Kitty, interestingly, does not directly address this contingency with strategies that might mitigate or attempt to overcome this obstacle (*cf.* (59)); instead, she simply asserts more strongly her entitlement to receive the item: she wants to keep it for later because her daughters do not want it (lines 32-33). This repetition of entitlement, still based on wanting the object with the added pressure of wanting it for a purpose (i.e., to keep it), does elicit a more elaborate explanation from Sabrina, followed by a further contingency: *[Ooh=]... I [2left it2] at the carwash. ... So they c- -- The girls could sign it. If the carwash was that .. little party we saw, I bet you they .. <P<X threw .. a[way X>P>]* (lines 23-29). Kitty's repeated assertion of entitlement in lines 32-33 has forced Sabrina to address the contingency: it either gives Sabrina enough time to remember where the car is or forces her to admit that she does remember what she did with the card.

However, Sabrina's reflection now brings up a new contingency: the card was probably thrown away at the carwash (line 29). Though not the primary point here, it is telling that Sabrina places the blame of losing the card on a nameless, faceless *they* (line 29), thus exonerating herself from any wrong-doing. Kitty addresses this second contingency with a similar strategy to her first. She acknowledges that the nameless, faceless *they* is responsible by using passive voice—*It's probably outside and ended up*

getting trashed (line 31)—but immediately re-asserts her entitlement by asserting her desire for the object a third time: *I wanted to keep that. If you guys weren't gonna use it....I should've just done it myself* (lines 32-34). These three *need/want* statements in lines 17, 22 and 32 force the listener (her daughter Sabrina) rather than the speaker to address the obstacles or contingencies.

Similar to the *would like* utterances in (80) and (81), the linguistic form used to assert this entitlement, *would like*, contracted to *I'd like* in (88), reflects an unequal social power context. However, (88) contrasts with the utterances in transactional contexts in occurring with strategies that reference the high contingencies surrounding the request and strong entitlement the mother demonstrates. Despite the fact that the longer the conversation goes on the more unlikely it appears that Kitty will get her card back, she does not back down in terms of expressing strong entitlement through the repetition of *I'd like*, and *I wanted*. In fact, her sense of strong entitlement increases, as she follows up the third *want* statement with an imperative, *Ask Kendra.... She might have done something with it* (lines 38-39). This imperative essentially ignores or overrides the excuse Sabrina has given about losing the card at a carwash. Kitty does not take this explanation of the obstacle (the card no longer exists) at face value, but now tells Sabrina continue looking for the object by asking her sister, Kendra, if she knows where the card might be. Kitty's final, and strongest claim to entitlement follows this imperative: *Y- you know], .. I -- I -- You know, it took me a while to make that thing* (lines 41-45). Kitty feels that the personal time and care she put into creating this item should have motivated her daughters to place a higher value on it than they do.

In summary, the request *I'd like*, spoken by a mother to her daughter, requesting an item, is found in a context where the speaker uses assertions of desire at first to request an object, then to establish strong entitlement and compel her hearer to struggle

and deal with the contingencies of the request. This expression of entitlement culminates in an additional imperative command to produce the object, despite the strong possibility that it does not exist anymore. The need to explicitly orient to and assert entitlement comes from the lack of an external setting that would justify the request and the negative social value of a request to return a gift to the giver. The fact that the speaker refuses to address contingencies but forces the listener to do that probably flows both from fact that as a mother, she carries the social power in the relationship with her teenage daughter (see Craven & Potter 2010) and her sense of injured pride. The deliberate repetition of *I'd like* and *I wanted* in this context, seems to carry with it a strong sense of asserting desire, regardless of the possible contingencies in a situation. That is, '*I would like X*', whether or not the listener is capable or willing to comply with the request and whether or not the possibility of compliance even exists.

Example (84), repeated here as (89) with additional context, demonstrates the same two contextual factors of high contingency/strong entitlement and unequal high – low social power context also occurring in an extended request sequence. Entitlement is demonstrated with four reason statements and a cleft construction *I want* statement; contingency is oriented to by the speaker acknowledging her son's tendency to get distracted. The *need/want* statement request does not occur until line 31.

(89) Transcript 58

1	SHERI:	.. (H) ~Steven.
2		You know what you could do,
3		that would be just .. really helpful?
4	STEVEN:	... Say it.
5	SHERI: .. @	
6		You could p- take these Coke cans,
7		... and put them in the bag full of Coke cans that are in your bedroom,
8		... and then we can do can squish.
9		And squish em.

10		For the recycling bin.	
11		... Ok[ay]?	
12	STEVEN:	[Tomorrow] please,	
13		my feet [2are hurting2].	
14	SHERI:	[2Tomorrow2]?	
15		... (H) Well can you just put em in the bag,	
16		... in there for now,	
17		okay?	
18	STEVEN:	... Ok[ay].	
19	SHERI:	[Cause] I gotta clean up in here,	E1
20		this .. place is just totally trashed,	
21		.. cause I've done nothing this week but,	E2
22		... study and be sick.	
23		... I've got a really bad dental problem.	E3
24		Or something with my mouth.	
25	STEVEN:	... [Poor Mom].	
26	SHERI:	[Think I've got a .. sin]us infection or something.	E4
27		Don't ~Steven.	
28	STEVEN:	... Mm=kay.	
29	SHERI:	Please.	
30		%I know it's tempting.	C1
31		... (H) What I'd like you to do is put those cans away	E5
		please.	
32	STEVEN:	... Where- --	
33		.. Where % --	
34		.. Oh there they are.	
35	SHERI:	Yeah,	
36		there they are.	

Like (88), this conversation happens between a parent and her child. This time, the speaker is a single mother, Sheri, and the listener is her eleven-year-old son, Steven. The topic of conversation is again introduced by an exploratory question that will lead to an explicit request for an action: ~Steven. *You know what you could do, that would be just .. really helpful?* (lines 2-3). Although in this example the initial question appears more directly linked to the request than the initial question in (88), it is possible that Kitty was aware that her daughters had not sent the card she had made and that the informational query in line 1 was merely a preparatory strategy to introduce her request

for the card to be returned. Either way, the responses of the children in both cases invite the mothers to make their request. The specific action in (89) that Sheri requests is for her son Steven to complete a household chore, specifically to crush some aluminum cans to prepare them for recycling: *You could p- take these Coke cans, and put them in the bag full of Coke cans that are in your bedroom, ... and then we can do can squish. And squish em. For the recycling bin. ... Ok[ay]?* (lines 6-11). The initial form of this request is a modal statement, which will be discussed in Section 5.2.4 Modal Statements. Of note here is that this conversation follows the pattern in (88), in that the initial request is met with a contingency by the listener, then repeated by the parent two more times, with increasing orientation to entitlement, a pattern noted in Craven & Potter (2010) during interactions between British parents and children. The second form of the request is a modal interrogative, Well, *can you just put em in the bag...in there for now, Okay?* (lines 15-17). Unlike (88), Sheri acknowledges and addresses her son's contingency, that his feet hurt (lines 12-13), by modifying the request from squishing the cans (which would be using his feet) to simply putting the cans in a bag. Steven verbally assents, saying *okay* (line 18) but then appears to take no action towards compliance. This parallels Sabrina's response in lines 18-20 of example (88) where she verbally assents to her mother's request with *okay*, but then raises a serious obstacle to compliance by saying she doesn't remember where the object is. Though Steven's resistance is non-verbal, it nonetheless contradicts his verbal assent.

While Steven is delaying, his mother Sheri begins to build a strong case for her entitlement to request the action by presenting herself as the injured party, not quite in the sense of (88) since her son has not directly contributed to her unenviable position, but still as a person with so much to do and in so much pain, that her listener should feel sorry for her. She lists six reasons that she wants Steven to help her with this one chore:

[Cause] I gotta clean up in here (line 19), *this .. place is just totally trashed* (line 20) .. *cause I've done nothing this week but, ... study and be sick* (lines 21-22), *I've got a really bad dental problem* (line 23), *Or something with my mouth* (line 24), *[Think I've got a .. sin]us infection or something* (line 26). This litany of woes succeeds in eliciting pity from the listener, as Steven responds with *Poor Mom* (line 25). But again, despite Steven's verbal assent of pity, he has clearly not begun to comply; rather he is doing some other undesired activity, as his mother's pointed imperative, *Don't Steven* (line 27) indicates. The third and last iteration of Sheri's request is a *need/want* statement, *what I'd like you to do is put those cans away please* (line 31). It claims strong entitlement, again based on the speaker's desire for the action. It also illustrates how speakers choose requestive forms in order to provide options or to limit the discursive forms available to recipients for the response. Sheri's first iterations of the request invite the hearer select a *yes* or *no* response. *You could....okay?* (line 6-11) and *Can you* (line 15-17) invite Steven to answer *yes* or *no*, which he in fact does. However, the final iteration of the request after he has refused to comply twice is a cleft-construction *need/want* statement, a form, as Wootton (1981) notes, that does not provide the option for the hearer to answer *yes* or *no*. Thus the form is a bid by the parent to limit negotiations on contingencies and orient to entitlement in order to press for compliance

In summary, this *need/want* statement request, not only constructed with *would like*, but also in a cleft construction, *what I'd like you to do is...* denotes high entitlement. It follows at least one other orientation to entitlement based on how the listener can help the speaker—the initial invitation to Steven to help his mother (lines 1-3)—as well as a compelling list of reasons that presents the speaker as a kind of martyr deserving help (lines 19-26). These strong orientations to entitlement, along with acknowledgments of the contingencies (amending the action requested (lines 15-16), and acknowledging the

unpleasantness of the task in lines 29-30 with *Please, I know it's tempting* are the context in which this *need/want* statement request is uttered. The form, *what I'd like*, shares the contracted modal phrase used in (88), *I'd like* though it differs from the requesting form of (88) because it occurs in a cleft construction. In addition, the use of *what I'd like* in this instance, following two previous iterations of the request that invite a *yes* or *no* response, deliberately selects a response from the listener which limits his options.

Despite the slightly different topics of conversation and different nature of the requests in (88) and (89), it is notable that the parents in each of these examples do not claim entitlement directly because of their higher social power position. Instead they both overtly justify their entitlement through statements of need or want and through presenting themselves as the injured party and thus deserving the desired action from their children. It is clear that the unequal social power levels of the parents and children do influence the strategies and linguistic forms the parents use (Craven & Potter 2010). These *need/want* statements are used in contexts where strong contingencies exist and parents participate in overtly building a case for their entitlement to request the action from their children.

The next two examples of high c/e level *would* statement requests, *what I would like* (85) and *I would prefer* (86), both come from the same conversation between Phil a graphic designer for an arts organization and Brad, the president of the organization, discussed in (62). Here, the speaker demonstrates extensive orientation to lack of entitlement through 2 *need/want* statements, a reason statement, 7 follow-up justification statements hedged with *I think*, hesitation and other hedging expressions like *in my opinion*. The speaker orients to only one contingency by trying to minimize a possible obstacle. The request in (86) is repeated below with more context:

(90) Transcript 10

1 BRAD: (H) Uh,
2 PHIL: ... (TSK) Uh I would prefer that WRITING>>, E1
3 that you were there % on one hand,
4 because I think that it would be most expedient. E2
5 But I think, E3
6 (H) .. what was .. f=elt,
7 was that at this point,
8 rather than ha- --
9 than create (H) --
10 ... (TSK) I don't really f=- find it to be, C1
11 .. you know,
12 .. a= ... confrontation,
13 by any means,
14 but,
15 .. (H)
16 BRAD: [Mhm]. E4
17 PHIL: [I just] think,
18 .. they wanna be able to just kind of .. % ... figure out, E5
19 I think our board eh,
20 ... quite frankly we have more ... problems to resolve interior,
21 than we do .. (H) (TSK) outside of it.
22 BRAD: .. [Hm].
23 PHIL: [I think] most of it is just attitudes. E6
24 BRAD: [2Hm2].
25 PHIL: [2(H)=2] .. I think, E7
26 % ... you know,
27 like I said, E8
28 what we need to do,
29 is this board has to realize, E9
30 ... in my opinion that,
31 .. that they have to come to grips with,
32 (H) the fact that they are responsible,
33 ... for basically what they've created.
34 BRAD: [Mhm].
35

As members of a professional organization, Brad and Phil have a previously established relationship. Phil, the junior officer in the organization, requests that Brad, the president of the organization, attend a particular meeting. The form Phil chooses to use for this

request is *I would prefer* (line 2), followed by several elaborate reasons for Brad to comply: *because I think it would be most expedient* (line 4) and an unfinished reference to events both participants are aware of, *But I think...what was felt... was that at this point...rather than ha- --....than create....*(lines 5-9). What is most significant about the second orientation to entitlement is that the incomplete utterance begins at 14.09 seconds into the transcript and ends at 20.72 seconds. That is, Phil takes 7 seconds on this incomplete attempt to give a reason for Brad to comply with his request.

Most of Brad's contributions to this conversation, here and throughout the transcript, are short fillers like *Mhm* (line 16) that seem to indicate his unwillingness to commit to Phil's many suggestions and requests. Phil clearly reads Brad's noncommittal responses as evidence of a contingency, unwillingness. So he interrupts his listing of reasons to address that unstated contingency in lines 10-12: *I don't really f=- find it to be, you, ..a= ...confrontation, by any means*. Phil interprets Brad's silence as unwillingness to come to the meeting because it would be a confrontation, and presumably (at least in Phil's estimation) Brad does not like confrontation. Obviously there is no way of knowing for sure if or what Brad's reluctance may be based on, but the point in analyzing the precise forms speakers use to request is that it does not matter. What Phil perceives and responds to is the contextual reality in which the utterance must be examined. Further on in the conversation Phil gives additional reason statements, some of them unfinished, that he hopes will add urgency and emphasis to his request: *I just think...they wanna be able to just kind of.. ...figure out* (lines 17-18), *I think our board eh,...quite frankly we have more... problems to resolve interior, than we do. (TSK) outside of it* (lines 19-21) and *I think most of it is just attitudes* (lines 23). With these statements, it appears Phil is trying to minimize the problems so that hater-of-conflict Brad will be motivated to come to the meeting; however, at the same time, Phil must balance this with the fact that he

thinks Brad coming to the meeting is a solution to these problems. And if the problems don't really exist, there is no point in Brad coming. The extensive hedging with *I think* and the many incomplete ideas and false starts indicate the high contingencies that Phil faces in getting Brad to comply. Phil's final strategy to orient to his entitlement to request is a *need/want* statement in lines 28-33: *what we need to do, is this board has to realize,...in my opinion that..they have to come to grips with, (H) the fact that they are responsible, ...for basically what they've created*. This final *need/want* statement seems to function both as repetition of the request in lines 2-3 as well as a final strategy for orienting to his entitlement to request Brad's presence at this meeting, i.e., Phil prefers that Brad attend because this is what they need to accomplish. The clefted-*what* clause adds emphasis and urgency to the claim as well as reduces the degree of compliance requested. No longer is Phil asking Brad on his own to get the board to accept responsibility, but Phil includes himself in the task, implying that he will help Brad: *I would prefer you* (lines 2-3) becomes *what we need to do* (line 28). This subtle shift is risky for Phil since Brad is his superior, but Brad is clearly not responding in an overtly affirming way to Phil's request, so Phil's strategy is to reduce the amount of imposition or inconvenience to Brad as much as he can while still requesting.

The same relational and contextual dynamic continues throughout the entire conversation, and the *need/want* statement request in example (85), *what I would like*, occurs several minutes later with extensive hedging and repetition. In this request, Phil asks Brad to field questions and explain a difficult issue at a board meeting. Phil's actual turn lasts nearly 34 seconds—an exceptionally long request turn. The first 7.49 seconds are the initial formulation, or preparatory modal phrases that come before the actual explicit statement of the action being requested. Here Phil uses a series of 4 cleft construction *need/want* statements, hedging utterances, hesitation and fillers to indicate

his lack of entitlement and two strategies that deal with specific contingencies: one that gives a condition for the action and another that spreads out the responsibility for the action to a group of people rather than just the listener. The request and its full context is given in (91):

(91) Transcript 10

1	267.30 269.60	PHIL:	(H)2] ... And what we will do (Hx),	E1
2	269.60 270.15		is I think,	E2
3	270.15 271.45		.. what we're gonna probably wanna do,	E3
4	271.45 272.39		or what I would like to do,	E4
5	272.39 274.09		is I would like to take a day.	E5
6	274.09 274.79	BRAD:	M[hm].	
7	274.44 276.96	PHIL:	[(H)]= ... %d=- during the week,	
8	276.96 278.11		and we'll just take a whole day.	
9	278.11 278.61		.. That day.	
10	278.61 279.57		An=d myself,	
11	279.57 280.75		(H) uh,	
12	280.75 283.06		if we have a uh= facilitator ,	C1
13	283.06 283.56	BRAD:	.. Mhm.	
14	283.56 284.94	PHIL:	(H)= U=m,	
15	284.94 285.69		that that person,	
16	285.69 288.47		you and !Patricia and .. %!D= !Donna,	C2
17	288.47 289.02	BRAD:	.. Mhm,	
18	289.02 289.97	PHIL:	and maybe one other,	
19	289.97 291.37		or two other board members would,	
20	291.37 293.02		.. actually spend that day and just say okay,	
21	293.02 294.47		this is what went on at that [retreat].	
22	294.09 294.39	BRAD:	[Mhm].	
23	294.47 296.17	PHIL:	(H)= These <X are the X> con[2cer=ns2],	
24	295.74 296.21	BRAD:	[2Yeah2].	
25	296.17 297.62	PHIL:	(H) .. These were comments,	
26	297.62 299.72		.. %= these are the ones that we feel we can address.	
27	299.72 301.17		.. [These are the ones that] pertain to you.	
28	299.84 300.14	BRAD:	[Unhunh],	
29	301.17 301.62		... [2Yeah.	
30	301.39 301.96	PHIL:	[2(H)= %=2]	
31	301.96 303.71	BRAD:	(H)2] I- I am concerned ~Phil that,	
32	303.71 305.41		(H)= ... you mentioned it yesterday.	

33	305.41 308.06	That ... that there @may be .. a number of questions,
34	308.06 310.16	.. that ... just cannot be answered.
35	310.16 313.99	.. Without ... [me] ... being there.
36	312.57 312.86	PHIL: [Yeah],

The request begins in line 5, with the utterance *I would like to take a day* and finally ends almost 29 seconds later in line 27. However, preceding line 5 there are three cleft *what* clauses in lines 1-4 that appear to be three aborted and then re-stated hedges that show a clear progression from asserting strong entitlement to gradually expressing less of it. Line 1 is a clefted-*what* clause with a first-person plural subject, in which Phil tells Brad *what we will do* (line 1). Although the cleft *what* statement is a hedged construction (Fraser 2010), the utterance is still a strong assertion: *we will do X*. However, Phil immediately begins to soften this asserted entitlement, first with the hedging phrase *I think* (line 2), then with a second assertion, *what we're probably gonna wanna do* (line 3), softened with *probably* and the assertive modal *will do* in line 1 replaced with the future construction, *we're gonna wanna*. The pronoun remains first person plural in this second iteration, so Phil is still essentially claiming to speak (and think) for Brad by asserting that he knows what Brad will do and what Brad wants to do. However, this second iteration adds epistemic uncertainty (*probably*) and additional hedging with the *be + going to* modal replacing the more assertive *will* and *wanna do* replacing the bare stem verb *do*. The third iteration of the requesting stem removes the assertion element completely and *be + do* now reduces to *what I would like to do* (line 4). It finally reduces the request to a *need/want* statement—the ensuing statement is simply what Phil wants, and thus finally, an indirect request that Brad concur and act with him, rather than an assertion of what Brad will or might want to do.

This striking progression, from asserting strong entitlement to a *need/want* statement request could be Phil's method for subverting Brad's position of power by initially claiming that he is speaking for both of them, then gradually admitting the possibility of error until finally simply stating the action as one that Phil would like. Since Phil's professional position in this setting is below Brad's it would be costly for Phil to initially ask Brad to comply with a certain action and when Brad refused, to continue asking for his compliance. Phil's initial cleft construction with a first person plural subject, *what we will do*, makes the claim that Brad is in agreement with Phil. Ensuing repetitions back off on this strong initial statement, but it avoids an initial, overt refusal by Brad by selecting and limiting the response options.

Considering Phil's lower social position in this professional context and his extensive hedging and hesitation, it is clear that Phil is aware of serious contingencies from the beginning. Though most of his expressions orient to his lack of entitlement, he does orient to contingencies in lines 12 and 13—*if we have a facilitator*—and lines 15-18. In both of these cases he provides a condition for the event occurring (only if they have a facilitator) and spreads out the responsibility for the action to more than just the hearer. Brad and others are being asked to act instead of just Brad. It is clear, both from Phil's extensive hedging and Brad's non-committal answers (he essentially ignores Phil's request and never agrees to comply nor does he assert non-compliance) that Phil expects resistance from Brad, and in fact is very aware of serious obstacles—presumably Brad's unwillingness—and his own lack of entitlement to request. The *need/want* statement request forms *would like* and *what I would like* appear to be carefully crafted utterances that Phil uses in this very high c/e context to avoid a refusal in a very high stakes environment.

The final *would* statement in this category occurs during a conversation between a homeowner, Larry, and contractor, Seth, who is giving Larry a quote on putting air conditioning and/or heating ducts in his home. They have been walking through the rooms of the house discussing what Larry would like, what Seth is able to do and what is possible given the realities of the construction of the house. In (92), they are discussing one particular room:

(92) Transcript 29

- 1 SETH: .. Or you could do it,
2 ... you know,
3 you could put like one on this wall,
4 and one on that wall.
5 LARRY: .. Okay,
6 on the two .. two out[side- --
7 SETH: [And then I'd] probably tie em both together,
8 LARRY: Yeah].
9 SETH: ... into one Y-branch,
10 .. you know like the room,
11 LARRY: ... Mhm.
12 SETH: ... the room is shaped somewhat like this.
13 ... <X I could X> put like one there,
14 ... one there,

Seth makes a suggestion in lines 1-4 about where some duct work could go: *Or you could do it, ...you know, you could put like one on this wall, and one on that wall.* This suggestion essentially continues to lines 12-13 where Seth tells Larry, *the room is shaped somewhat like this. I could put like on there,...one there.* In other words, Seth is using the current shape and dimensions of the room to suggest where Larry should have ducts put in. But Larry has additional information that will change the reality. It appears he is planning to renovate the room they are discussing sometime in the future. Thus he does not want Seth to install duct work here (which would then need to be removed or modified when the later renovations are done); rather he simply wants to know that the

duct work will be able to go in once the renovations begin. So Larry follows up Seth's suggestions in lines 1-4 of example (92) with an alternate request that involves three entitlement strategies—two *need/want* statements and hedging—and two contingency strategies: a limiting condition and a timing condition.

(93) Transcript 29

1	LARRY:	Now what we'd want you to do,	E1
2		in this case,	C1
3		is maybe --	E2
4	SETH:	.. tie those together like that.	
5	LARRY:	.. See this this --	
6		The end of this room might be modified.	C2
7		... So,	
8		... all we wanna know is,	E3
9		... is that we can eventually be able to do this.	
10		... Alright.	
11		... To to get % .. get this= ... duct work done,	
12		when we do --	
13		when we do the modification to [the] --	
14	SETH:	[Oh],	
15		so you may not do the duct work at this point?	
16	LARRY:	[Not .. not in this room.	
17	SETH:	[X .. XX .. do it in the future].	
18	LARRY:	We m-] --	
19		.. Yeah.	
20		.. [Uh I I hate] to see us do it,	
21	SETH:	[<X Where are gonna be your X>] --	
22	LARRY:	(H) although if we do it in the [2sidewalls2],	
23	SETH:	[2Well what would 2] the modification be.	

Two *need/want* statement request forms occur in (93): *what we'd want* (line 1) and *all we wanna know* (line 8). Like (91), these utterances are repeated preparatory sequences for a single requested action which is not mentioned until after the second *need/want* statement. Larry initiates this request sequence to Seth with *what we'd want* (line 1), a first-person plural subject clefted-*what* construction also seen in line 28 of (90) and line 4 of (91). In (90) and (91) the contexts are clearly ones where the speaker is aware of and

is addressing strong contingencies and where the *need/want* statements operates as a strategy for demonstrating entitlement. The question is, are there strong contingencies and/or a need to demonstrate entitlement in this context? If Seth has been called in to a quote on ductwork, the implication and motivation for Seth doing this service to Larry, is that Larry may eventually hire him to do the work. In this case, however, Larry recognizes that he is asking for Seth's expertise opinion in a space that Seth will not get the opportunity to work in, and thus not receive payment in exchange for giving his knowledgeable opinion. Hence, Larry's request is significantly hedged, first as a displaced *what* statement, *Now what we'd²⁸ want you to do..in this case* (lines 1-2), and then with the hedged phrase *maybe* (line 3).

Then Larry interrupts the request sequence with an explanation statement that addresses a possible contingency: *See this this - The end of this room might be modified* (lines 5-6). He seems to be saying that the room will be changed at a later time as opposed to at the time the contractor might come to do the work they are discussing now. A few lines later Seth confirms that indeed Larry is saying this by asking *[Oh]...So you might not do the duct work at this point* (lines 14-15). Here, Seth is processing this contingency; he is now doing a quote for work he will not be paid to do, at least not in the immediate future. Larry repeats the request in lines 7-13 now referencing this contingency (i.e., the modification happening at a later time, line 13), but attempting to mitigate this contingency with the phrase *all we wanna know is... is that we can eventually be able to do this* (lines 7-9)²⁹. In other words, Larry recognizes the strong

²⁸ The first person plural *we*, in this case is not a strategy of assertion as in (91); rather Larry uses *we* because he seems to be speaking for himself as well as his family—the other residents and co-owners of the space.

²⁹ While the *all I need* requesting phrase in (73) is coded as a fairly low c/e level request (3) and the *all we wanna know* phrase in (92) is coded as a high c/e level request (6), this is because the phrase occurs in (92) with additional hedging and contingency/entitlement

incentive Seth has now to not comply (he will not get paid for this work) and tries to present the action as an easy one, requiring very little energy from Seth. That is, *all* he wants to know is if the duct work can be done in the future, when the room is modified. In this case, Seth is very accommodating; he signals that he is willing to continue giving his expert opinion on the subject by asking *well, what would the modification be* (line 23).

There seems to be a strong predilection for *need/want* statement requests that use the modal *would* in cleft constructions to occur in high c/e level contexts. That is, in contexts where the speaker is negotiating with strong contingencies and attempting to establish entitlement, the speaker may be more likely to express desire using a hedged *need/want* statement form that includes the modal *would*, rather than the bare stem, *I want/wanna*. The discourse pattern of requesting an action relevant to the goal of the social event the speaker and hearer are participating in does not seem to be relevant for the *need/want* statement requests hedged with cleft constructions and modals, except for the low c/e level *would like* requests in (80) and (81) occurring in transactional contexts.

In summary, *need/want* statements that include the modal *would*, which in this corpus include the forms *I would like*, *I'd like*, *what I'd like*, *I would prefer* and *what we'd want*, tend to occur in conjunction with other hedging and requesting strategies, in high c/e level contexts. Additional hedged *need/want* statement forms that occur in high c/e level contexts include *what we're gonna probably wanna do*, *all we wanna know*. In addition, speakers in these high c/e level contexts use multiple *need/want* statement forms to hedge a single request. Five cleft-*what* constructions all occur in high c/e level contexts within the entire range of social distance levels (intimate, professional and transactional) and in contexts with unequal social power relationships. This may indicate

phrases that increase the overall contingency/entitlement level of the context. The utterance *all I need/want* on its own does reference a low contingency request (or at least a speaker's attempt to present an action as easy/low contingency).

that when the contingencies of a situation are strong and the speaker feels the need assert or prove his or her entitlement to request that social distance does not affect the particular forms a speaker chooses. However in low c/e level contexts, a speaker chooses forms based on social distance and possibly social power: *I need/want/wanna* for wide social distance contexts and equal social power relationships and *I would* for wide social distance contexts and unequal social power relationships.

5.2.3.3 First-person plural subject *need/want* statement requests

A third *need/want* statement request construction that appears in the corpus are those that occur with first person plural subjects. These constructions are listed below:

- (94) We need a --- (H) .. Do you have any sharp objects on you?
- (95) .. I think ,% ... you know, like I said, what we need to do, is this board has to realize,... in my opinion that,.. that they have to come to grips with, (H) the fact that they are responsible,... for basically what they've created.
- (96) ... So,... all we wanna know is,... is that we can eventually be able to do this.
- (97) [6Ma=6], [7we have to hear7] [8this8] –
- (98) [What hap- -- We wanna know
- (99) Well, ... (H) no but, .. what- what we --.. we want to p- you to .. kinda give us an idea,on a- w- what your [thoughts are].

Several of these constructions have been discussed earlier. Example (94), also discussed in (67) is spoken by a wife to her husband while they are both trying to fix some electronic equipment in their home. The first-person plural pronoun in (94), *we need*, is a literal statement of the participants' needs, with the first person plural used because both husband and wife are actively working towards the same goal of fixing the equipment. As a bare-stem *need/want* statement, it follows the pattern of the first-person singular forms in occurring in a low c/e context between participants with close social

distance. In example (95), the first-person plural subject has been discussed in (90) as part of coercive strategies on the part of the speaker who is speaking in a very high contingency context where, due to his social position, he does not have a strong entitlement to request. As noted with other clefted-*what* clause constructions, this token occurs in a very high c/e level context. Example (96) comes from the exchange between homeowner Larry and contractor Seth, which is discussed in detail in (93). The first person plural subject of the utterance *all we wanna know* may be used for both because it reflects a deictic reality as well as a strategy to hedge a high c/e level request. Most likely the speaker refers to *we* because the homeowner Larry is speaking not just for himself, but for other members of his family. However, the other members of the family who might share his desire are not actually present, so it may be that the first person plural pronoun also functions as a slight mitigating strategy or hedge, as he makes a request for services that go beyond what the contractor might be expected to provide. Example (99) occurs earlier in this same conversation. The homeowner Larry, in his requests to Seth, demonstrates lack of entitlement through hesitancy and stammering, a cleft-construction *need/want* statement and hedging with *kinda*; he demonstrates orientation to contingency by using the euphemistic phrase, *on what your thoughts are* to reference the object of action rather than a more specific reference. The extended context of (99) is given below:

(100) Transcript 29

1	SETH:	... So there's probably three back there?		
2		(H) and a- --		
3		and any over on this side?		
4	LARRY:	... Well,		
5		... (H) no but,	E1	
6		.. what- what we --		
7		.. we want to p- you to .. kinda give us an idea,	E2	E3
8		on a- w- what your [thoughts are].	C1	

9 SETH: [You wanna add a c-] --
 10 .. add a few more?
 11 LARRY: Add a couple.
 12 Yeah.
 13 ... Back,
 14 ee way back there?
 15 .. Is that one way back?
 16 ... <X Can't see it X>.
 17 SETH: ... XX .. [get this thing],

Larry's request begins in line 6 of (100) with *what- what we*, the beginnings of a cleft construction, followed by another false start, *..we want to p-*, and finally after hesitation and several false starts, the requested action. However, speaker states both the action and the object of action in very general terms: he asks Seth to *kinda give us an idea, on a- w-what your thoughts are* (lines 7-8). Despite this this very vague, generalized statement, Seth is able to identify exactly what Larry is asking for—Larry wants his expert opinion about what can be done in the space referenced in line 3 (*this side*). Larry does not just want *kinda...an idea* (line 7) on Seth's *general thoughts* (line 8); rather he wants to know if it is possible to add the missing elements discussed in lines 1-3. Seth responds with a specific question in order to confirm Larry's vague request: *You wanna add a c- -- ..add a few more?* (lines 9-10). Larry confirms that Seth has understood his utterance by repeating the objects being requested then affirming it: *add a couple. Yeah.* (lines 11-12). This hesitance to directly specify the object being requested may be a strategy for acknowledging possible contingencies. By not overtly stating what is needed in the situation, Larry protects himself from asking something foolish or something unlikely to be granted. Seth is forced to specify the action being requested and then Larry can confirm that is what he had intended to ask for. Larry also demonstrates a fairly strong sense of uncertainty and lack of entitlement. The requesting form itself is first a clefted *what* clause, *what- what we--..we want to p- you* (71f-g), with extensive hesitation and

stammering. Larry also modifies the action requested with *kinda* (line 7), which minimizes the scope of the request, another strategy for acknowledging a lack of entitlement. It is possible then, that like (95), Larry uses the first person plural *we* in lines 6-7 as an additional hedge that signals to the listener that the speaker alone isn't asking for the action, and is therefore not requesting the action based on his own standing or entitlement, but that he is merely a spokesman for a larger group, who together share the responsibility for and create a kind of community-engendered entitlement (see Fraser 2010). The first-person plural subject of the request allows the speaker to base his right to request on what others (whether real or not) in addition to himself are asking for.

The final two first person plural subject requests, (97) and (98) occur within the same transcript. In this conversation, a group of family members have a lively debate. This context is also described in the discussion of example (49). As noted in 5.2.1 *Let Statements*, the family members are discussing an incident in the past that one of the participants does not want to bring up. However, she is forced to by the repeated requests and cajoling of the various members of the family. The participants of the conversation have established that they all mutually want to hear the story. Thus, the first person plural does seem to be a literal semantic reference of the multiple speakers in the room rather than a hedging strategy. However, it is possible that the first person plural could be part of a coercive strategy, as the members of the group exert peer pressure on Lisbeth to share the story she does not want to. The utterances of (97) and (98) are illustrated in their context in example (101). The transcript times have been included to illustrate the times in the conversation where the two utterances occur.

(101) Transcript 33

1	404.541	404.990	DON: [6Ma=6],
2	404.990	405.856	[7we have to hear7] [8this8] –
		
3	420.619	421.499	JENN: ... (H) What,
4	421.499	422.879	what about the checkout counter [then.
5	422.522	423.874	LEANNE: [<HI But that's responsibility HI>].
6	422.879	423.477	JENN: You were about to,
7	423.477	425.032	you were about to] correct my m[2other,
8	424.798	425.254	LEANNE: [2So,
9	425.254	425.615	so2],
10	425.032	426.179	JENN: on something a2][2bout the checkout-2].
11	425.615	426.179	LAURA: [3Well I3],
12	426.179	427.252	I think there is a --
13	427.252	427.900	%Uh you see,
14	427.900	429.410	DON: What happened at the [checkout counter].
15	428.669	429.048	BILL: [What hap- --
16	429.048	429.550	We wanna know][2=2].
17	429.410	431.000	JENN: [2Mo2]=m [3says3] [4I pounced4] on her,

The women, Jenn and Laura (and possibly Leanne) are aware of *what happened at the checkout counter* (line 14) and are using this reference to try to make a point in a debate. Since both Don and Bill do not know the details of this event, they are requesting Lisbeth to allow the others to tell the story. Don makes this request first in lines 1-2: *Ma, we have to hear this*, and about ten seconds later, Bill repeats this request: *What hap—We wanna know* (lines 15-16). The first person plural *we* clearly references, at a minimum, the two participants, Bill and Don, who are requesting the action. However, by repeating their requests with *we*, rather than as individuals (e.g., Don saying *I want to hear this* and Bill

responding, *Me too*) the speakers use peer pressure to coerce Lisbeth to tell the story—which she eventually concedes to.

In summary, these *need/want* statements where speakers use the first person plural pronoun *we* to reference the beneficiary of the action (i.e., requester), represent a variety of meanings and functions. In (94), it simply reflects the reality that more than one person is requesting and the speaker recognizes and speaks for the other participants, sometimes present, other times not. However, in (95) it functions as a hedge, a way to downplay a speaker's entitlement to make a request, with the hope that the listener will not impute the speaker for being the sole requester but rather answer favorably since the speaker is a spokesperson for a larger group. Or it may function as a coercive device to exert peer pressure or to subvert the authority of the listener by allowing the speaker to imply that he or she has the right to speak for the listener's desires. In (96), (97), (98), and (99) it seems to possibly function as both a literal reflection of the number of beneficiaries as well as a hedge or coercive device. In addition, the forms for these first person plural subjects follow the pattern established in Sections 4.2.3.1 *I need, I want, I wanna* and 4.2.3.2 *Would like/prefer/want*: bare stem *I need/want* statements with first person plural subjects occur in low c/e level, close social distance contexts while *need/want* statement requests with additional hedging occur in higher c/e level contexts.

5.2.3.4 Multi-unit request sequences

As noted in the introduction to *need/want* statements, they occur in requests as both the sole utterance of the request itself or as one of several utterances that repeat the same request. Examples (83), (84), (85), (86), and (87) demonstrate contexts in which *need/want* statements function as one of several utterances used to request an action from a listener. In addition, these contexts are all high c/e level contexts; that is, the speakers face serious contingencies or obstacles to their entitlement which need to

be overcome. However, *need/want* statements occurring as one of several utterances in a longer request sequences also occur in low c/e contexts. For example, in the SBCSAE, *need/want* statement requests immediately follow imperatives in low c/e level and close social distance contexts:

(102) ... (H) Okay, open= this one.... % .. This is the one I want you to o[pen now].

(103) Hey ~Steven? Come on over here, I want you to grate this cheese for me.

Okay?

Both utterances are spoken by immediate family members. In (102) (discussed at length in (69)), the family are exchanging Christmas gifts and the mother is directing her children to open specific gifts, first with an imperative, followed by a *need/want* statement which gives her desire for the action as a reason for the listener to comply. Similarly, (103) is spoken by a single mother to her eleven-year-old son during a conversation they are having after she has gotten home from work. She initiates her request with an imperative: *Hey Steven? Come on over here*, and then follows it up with a *need/want* statement that both elaborates on the action she wants from him, as well as presenting an orientation to entitlement. Both of these requested actions are low contingency requests—easy to comply with and expected in the context since the listeners are asked to either open a gift during a Christmas exchange or assist in preparing a meal where the speaker is already engaging in this action. However, this pattern of imperative – *need/want* statement request, though involving some degree of repetition, fails to demonstrate the same kind of repetition seen in high c/e level requests. First, they do not occur over an extended period of time. As noted in examples such as (88), (89), (90), and (91), these high c/e level request turns take sometimes up to 40 seconds to deliver. Second, they occur with little to no hedging. Third, speakers in high c/e level request turns tend to repeat the

request with at least three different constructions ((89), (90), and (91)), whereas (102) and (103) include only two distinct forms with one immediately following the other.

However, there is one example in the SBCSAE of an extended sequence of repeated *need/want* statement requests over a longer period of time, where the action being requested appears to be in low c/e level context, despite the repetitions. The request has eight iterations over nearly two minutes of conversation, four of which occur near the beginning and four more which occur near the end of the request turn. These forms are listed below in (75) and include the time (in seconds) where they occur in the conversation:

(104) Transcript 15

1	492.013	492.502	Let me see
2	492.502	493.717	I want you to pull them all out.
3	493.717	495.463	I want you to pull every bottle out,
4	495.861	496.805	I wanna see every d- --

5	589.880	591.250	Let's see how many bottles you got.
6	591.250	592.315	Let's see all the bottles.
7	600.520	601.615	let's see all the bottles.
8	601.615	602.780	I wanna see all the bottles.

The participants in this setting are not working together to accomplish a particular task, nor is there a mutual goal or purpose beyond socialization for which the participants are conversing. Instead, speakers discuss a range of topics merely for the purpose of socializing and interacting with each other. The speakers are very close friends (socio-cultural context), and the topics of conversation wander from traveling, to politics, to medical issues. As they discuss medical issues, however, the conversation instigates one of the participants to ask about all of the medicine and vitamin supplements that another participant has in her home. This leads directly to an activity, in which the participants pull out and discuss various medicines. In this task, however, the purpose for looking at the

bottles does not carry any utilitarian or pragmatic motivation; it appears to be merely a device for more conversation and socialization between the participants. This is reflected in what happens as the listener begins to pull out the bottles of medicines: the participants laugh, tease and make jokes about the supplements. A few seconds after the second set of requests in (104), the conversation drifts away to other topics and the activity of pulling out and looking at supplements appears to be over.

The following section examines this extended request sequence in more detail. Ken and Joanne are a husband and wife, and Lenore is described in the transcript notes as a very good friend. They appear to be at Lenore's house. The following example shows the conversation leading up to the initial request:

(105) Transcript 15

1 JOANNE: [2Rea=I depressed2] immune system.
2 Rea=I bad.
3 He [gets sick] rea=I easily.
4 KEN: [Yeah].
5 JOANNE: ... all the t- --
6 all his life he's been like that.
7 it's [really] horrible.
8 KEN: [Yeah].
9 LENORE: .. Would you like a supplement?
10 JOANNE: <@ You stop [pushing those] pills @>.
11 KEN: [<@ XXX @>]?
12 LENORE: [2@@@2][3@@ (H)3]
13 JOANNE: [2(H)2] [3XXXX3]X[4XX what do you,
14 KEN: [3@=3]
15 [4I take,
16 JOANNE: What i- --
17 KEN: already about four hundred X- --
18 JOANNE: what is it,
19 you've got a d- medicine cabinet,
20 KEN: (H) looks like it,
21 JOANNE: a medica- 4] --
22 KEN: look at that4].
23 JOANNE: (H) I can't bel- --
24 how many different types of [pills do you have] in there.

25 KEN: [What's that].

The conversation turns to medical issues and Joanne comments in line 1 of (105) that her husband Ken has *a real depressed immune system*. This, in turn, prompts Lenore to offer Ken a supplement, *would you like a supplement?* (line 9), which Joanne immediately scolds her for, saying, *you stop pushing those pills* (line 10). Lenore has a large collection of medicine and supplements that Ken and Joanne find both interesting and comical. As they laugh (line 12) and tease her about it, Joanne says, *I can't bel- -- how many different types of [pills do you have] in there*. (line 23-24), a cross between exclaiming about how many she has and actually asking for the information. This utterance by Joanne sets up the first set of request iterations:

(106) Transcript 15

1 JOANNE: Let me see.
2 I want you to pull them all out.
3 (H) I want you to pull every [bottle out,
4 KEN: [oh my God].
5 JOANNE: ~Lenore].
6 I [2wanna see every2] d- --
7 LENORE: [2Oops=2].
8 JOANNE: [3(H)3]
9 KEN: [3What's that3] [4big flat one.
10 LENORE: [3XXX3]
11 [4Actually,
12 KEN: it look-4] --
13 LENORE: I forgot to take4] [5these5].
14 KEN: [5it looks5] [6like the host.
15 JOANNE: [5@5] [6@that- looks like,
16 (H) no no no,
17 KEN: It looks like <X when I go into X> church6].

The requesting forms are an initial *let* statement, *let me see* (line 1), followed by three *I want* statements, *I want you to pull them all out* (line 2), *I want you to pull every bottle out* (line 3) and *I wanna see ever d- --* (line 6). The phonetic variation of *I want* and

I wanna in exactly the same context, in nearly the same breath and repeating nearly the same request seems to indicate that this variation is phonologically motivated. This first set of four requests (1 *let* statements and 3 *I want* statements) is followed by additional conversation discussing the various medicines they are taking out of the cabinet, interspersed with light-hearted jokes about what some of the medicines look like (e.g. Necco wafers, line 14). Joanne repeats the original request in (105) to see all of the bottles several minutes later, but this time with three *let* statements, *let's see how many bottles you got* (line 11), *let's see all the bottles* (line 15), *let's see all the bottles* (line 29), followed by a final *want* statement, *I wanna see all the bottles* (line 31).

(107) Transcript 15

1 KEN: [3what are those3].
2 LENORE: [4It's4] .. for your immune system.
3 KEN: .. What are they.
4 LENORE: .. Oh,
5 they have (THROAT) gla=nd,
6 KEN: .. [Gla][2=nds2]?
7 LENORE: [Gla][2=nd2],
8 JOANNE: [2Don't2] take that,
9 ~Ken
10 (Hx) @@
11 (H) Let's see how many bottles [you got].
12 LENORE: [Actually,
13 KEN: [It wouldn't hur=t you].
14 LENORE: .. this] [2is2],
15 JOANNE: Let's see all the] [2bot2]tles.
16 LENORE: this is uh,
17 I wanna know what .. to- .. taurine,
18 .. taur[ine is.
19 KEN: [(TSK) I have no idea.
20 LENORE: This --
21 %(Hx) I actually,
22 I a=sked her,
23 KEN: .. That's the one that sounds like cow's balls]?
24 LENORE: and she said] something,
25 and she was walking out of the room,
26 and I didn't [catch it.

27 JOANNE: [(H) Let's,
 28 LENORE: so],
 29 JOANNE: w-] let's see all the [2bottles.
 30 LENORE: [2@Cow's @ba-2].
 31 JOANNE: I wanna2] see all [3the bottles3].
 32 KEN: [3What do you take,
 33 you take3] one of these at a time- --
 34 one of these a day,
 35 or <@ five of these a [day @> or something]?

Here, the same speaker (Joanne) repeats the same request in nearly identical forms, first with three *let* statements in line 13 *Let's see how many bottles you got*, line 15 *Let's see all the [2bot2]tles*, and line 29 *let's see all the [2bottles* and then with a final *need/want* statement in line 31, *I wanna2] see all [3the bottles*. Unlike the repetition in (91), the speaker is not adding hedges, nor does she appear to be changing the linguistic form as a strategy to promote compliance as in (89) (she is varying between two forms—*let* statements and *need/want* statements, but this has been demonstrated as a low c/e level context pattern rather than a high c/e level pattern). The action she is requesting is being performed, as the jokes and conversations about the medicine indicate. If Lenore were reluctant to show her medicine bottles to her friends, this hesitancy would be clear in the conversation. No such hesitancy is occurring. The only part of Joanne's request that is not completely fulfilled is her repeated request to see *all* or *every* one of the bottles (lines 15, 29). However, seeing all of the bottles is not a task that can be fulfilled immediately; rather it will take time for Lenore to show Joanne all of her bottles. Thus, the repetition of the request in nearly the same form—*let* statement + *need/want* statements in both (106) and (107) is a kind of holding device. Joanne repeats the request, not because she needs to convince Lenore to comply, but rather because she is complying and as the action extends over several minutes, Joanne wants to reinforce the request.

The *need/want* statements in this interaction function as entitlement strategies for Joanne, much like Sheri's request for her son to help with dinner in (103). The speaker provides no references to contingencies or obstacles. Instead, the participants' immediate and enthusiastic compliance indicates the low c/e level of this request and the repetition seems to be a function merely of the time it will take to finish the activity rather than an indication of possible obstacles.

5.2.3.5 *Need/want* statement request summary

To summarize, *need/want* statements that occur with more extensive modifiers and hedging devices, such as with the modal *would*, with repeated variations of the request, some instances of first person plural subjects, hesitations, and in cleft clauses occur in contexts with high c/e levels (*I'd like, what I'd like, what I would like, we're gonna wanna, we have to, what we need, what we'd want, all we wanna know, what we want*); on the other hand, bare stemmed *need/want* statements (the simple *I need, I want*) tend to occur with lower c/e levels where the requested action contributes to the shared goals of the event in which both requester and requestee are willing participants. Where extensive repetition occurs with a bare stemmed *need/want* statement, the reason for the repetition seems to be the extended length of time required to complete the action rather than in response to unwillingness to comply or external obstacles. Within these categories, social distance does not play a defining role, except in low c/e level requests. The bare stem *need/want* requests in the SBSCAE occur in close social distance contexts (more intimate and socio-cultural contexts than any other). In these cases, transactional contexts where highly institutionalized and appropriate-to-the-setting action is being requested, speakers add the modal *would* to what might be a bare stem request as a token bow of politeness. This seems to follow the pattern noted with *if* statements, that where speakers have no previous relationship, they tend employ

at least one or two hedging strategies with their requests. The hedged *need/want* statements on the other hand, demonstrate more variety in context type rather than clustering with one or two types. This distribution of *need/want* statement in social distance categories could not be statistically validated and more data is needed to determine if these trends persist.

The distribution of *need/want* statement requests across social distance may, however, be influenced by the discourse context. That is, speakers in intimate and socio-cultural context types may be more likely to use *need/want* statements alone for low c/e level requests than for high level c/e requests. If they do occur in high c/e request contexts, they are accompanied by additional requesting strategies, and the *need/want* statement is more likely to be functioning as a demonstration of entitlement rather than as the initial iteration of the request.

The grammatical construction of *need/want* statements can help to explain why the distribution of forms might occur across low vs. high c/e levels and why only in low c/e contexts do they seem to occur for requests that are tied to the event goals. As noted earlier, Wootton's (1981) explanation for why the pattern between *I want* and *can you* requests noted in small children's discourse is based on the options for responses which the forms provide. For *can you* requests, the speaker provides the hearer with the opportunity to respond with *yes* or *no*, while with *I want* requests, no such option is provided for in next turn (though, as noted in (73), a parent might override the options presented to her by younger children's choice of utterance as a way to refuse to negotiate contingencies and assert entitlement). This grammatical feature of *need/want* statements—providing no *yes/no* option for the speaker to select in the next turn—explains the existence *need/want* statements in both low c/e level contexts essential to event goals and in high c/e level contexts. *Need/want* statement requests in low

contingency and high entitlement contexts exist because there is no need to provide speakers with an option to comply or refuse the action. Their existence and participation in the event---such as at family meal, at a restaurant, exchanging gifts or in agreement to play video games---assumes that they share the speaker's desire to see the event successfully carried out, and by extension, then, that they want (or see the necessity) of the requested action as clearly as the speaker does. In other words, the consensual participation in an event and the implicit acknowledgment that an action will lead to the successful outcome of that event is the basis for entitlement in this context. The speaker does not need to present the hearer with a *yes/no* option as the next slot in the discourse because she assumes the *yes* has already been obtained. However, in some cases, particularly parent-child interactions, speakers may turn this expectation of *yes* in a context where she expects a *no* as a strategy to either resist the refusal or persuade the parent to comply (e.g. (73)). In high c/e level contexts, this lack of a *yes/no* response option which *need/want* statements select for the next speaker can be used as a strategy to avoid conflict or to leave the hearer with the opportunity to avoid a direct refusal, which in adult interactions has been labeled a dispreferred response (Levinson 1983). Because the motivation for using a *need/want* statement in a high c/e level context is not based on any entitlement authorized by the context, there is no reason for *need/want* statement requests to occur with actions that might affect the success or failure of an event the interactants are participating in.

5.2.4 Modal Statements

As discussed in Section 4.2.4 Modal Statements, modal statement requests in the SBSCAE do not display any significant patterns in relation to context type, c/e levels or social power. They occur in both close and wide social distance contexts as well as in both low and high c/e level contexts. They also occur in all three social power contexts,

though 11 of the modal statements occur in high – low or neutral social power contexts while only 1 occurs in a low – high social power context. This trend follows the over-all pattern in the SBCSAE of there being fewer requests in low-high social power contexts than high-low or neutral contexts. Since requests have been classified as dispreferred speech acts (see Levinson 1983, Fox 2015) or in Brown & Levinson's (1987) paradigm, face-threatening acts, it is unsurprising that fewer requests in this corpus originate from lower social power interlocutors and more originate from high social power participants.

So beyond the three major contextual features there are possible discourse patterns for modal statements that may provide more explanatory power. That is, at least five modal statement requests (and possibly two others) follow up on an offer or assertion made by the other participant. In these cases, the immediate discourse context appears to affect the syntactic category of the requestive utterance. The local sequential positioning of the requestive utterance as an explanation for the forms speakers choose has been suggested by Wootton (1981) in the case of *I need* vs. modal interrogative requests spoken by children and by Vine (2009) for modal interrogatives vs. imperatives in workplace interactions. Here, the immediately preceding offer creates a context which requires a response that is a request for the object being offered. This pattern is illustrated in (44) and repeated here:

(108) Yeah I'll have a little more ~Tuck.

Example (109) at a restaurant follows a similar pattern:

(109) Transcript 31

1	JAMIE:	I'll be your waitress,
2		you need anything,
3		.. let me know,
4		o[kay]?
5	ROSEMARY:	[Do you] guy[2s want any2]thing to drink.
6	SHERRY:	[2Okay2].
7		No,

The waitress, Jamie, offers, if *you need anything, ..let me know, okay?* (lines 1-4), thus authorizing the hearers to express what they would like to order, as Sherry does in the modal statement request in line 8, *I'll take water*. Besides contexts of offering food and drink, this offer – modal statement pattern appears at least twice in the interaction between Seth and Larry, a contractor and homeowner.

(110) Transcript 29

- | | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | SETH: | [What abou=t], |
| 2 | | .. uh=, |
| 3 | | .. what about above this section of the house. |
| 4 | LARRY: | ... Well, |
| 5 | . | .. let me show you that. |
| 6 | | And you can give -- |
| 7 | | you can give me some idea about that as [well]. |

In (110) the offer – request pattern is quite clear. Larry's request to have more information on how A/C ductwork might be installed in a particular section of his house is prompted by Seth asking, *What about..uh..what about above this section of the house* (lines 1-3). Since the entire purpose of Seth's visit is to both give Larry information about installing ductwork in his house as well as a quote on the cost, Seth does not need to explicitly offer (e.g., *Would you like me to give you more information and a quote on putting ductwork in the section of the house?*). His question, *what about above this section of the house?* (line 1-3) communicates clearly to Larry that he is offering to examine that section. Thus Larry follows up with a modal statement request in lines 6-7, *And you can give – you can give me some idea about that as well*. The second modal statement request in this conversation is perhaps slightly less obvious, but still fits the general pattern.

(111) Transcript 29

1 LARRY: .. Alright.
2 (H) [But maybe t-] --
3 SETH: [That can be done at] .. [2at any time.
4 LARRY: [2maybe for the sake of2] your quotation,
5 SETH: Really2].
6 LARRY: you should ... say,
7 this is what it's gonna cost you to put in ... a duct here,
8 ... all these ducts,
9 ... at [this] time.
10 SETH: [Yeah].
11 [2Okay2].
12 LARRY: [2Now I don't2] know if --
13 (H) if we can price em out individually,
14 Or not.
15 SETH: .. Sure.

The conversation immediately preceding this one appears in (110). There Seth confirms that ductwork in a particular room (the kitchen/utility room) could be done either currently or at a later time. Seth then reiterates the option he has discussed, that the kitchen ductwork *can be done at..at any time* (line 3). By stating the possibility that such work can be done, Larry understands Seth to be implying that he is willing to do the work at either the current or a later time. Larry then requests that Seth include the cost of that duct in the current price quote: *maybe for the sake of your quotation...you should...say, this is what it's gonna cost you to put in..a duct here, ..all these ducts, ..at this time* (lines 4, 6-9). While Larry hedges this request more significantly than the participants in (108) and (109) do theirs by expressing out loud a possible contingency to his request (*Now I don't know if – if we can price m out individually* (lines 12-13), it still follows the sequential pattern of offer – modal statement request.

A fifth modal statement utterance presents a variation of the offer – modal statement pattern: an assertion – modal statement sequence.

(112) Transcript 48f

1 LEA: ... (H) I'm gonna open this now.
2 JUDY: ... No no,
3 you [should o]pen,
4 LEA: [(H)]
5 JUDY: you should open that one <X next X>,
6 Cause that's from=,
7 LEA: [Oh=,
8 okay=].

Here, Judy and Lea are part of a family Christmas gathering, giving and opening presents from each other. Lea (Judy's mother) asserts that she is going to open a particular present, *I'm gonna open this now* (line1). While this assertion is not an offer like those in examples (108) - (111), it does announce her intention to begin an activity in which her family, especially the giver of that particular present, feels a strong sense of interest and social collateral (see discussion of examples (69) - (71) for how giving gifts relates to requesting). Just as an offer, in a sense, authorizes a participant to request the item being offered, so too does Lea's announcement of immediate future activity authorize or invite her family to re-direct her action in a way that benefits them. Her daughter Judy does this by requesting her to open the present from her rather than the gift Lea references in line1: *No, no, you should open...you should open that one next, Cause that's from=* (lines 2,3, 5,6). Lea immediately agrees, *Oh=, okay* (lines7-8), even overlapping Judy's request and preventing her from finishing the statement (later conversation indicates that present is indeed from the speaker, Judy).

While this assertion – modal statement sequence only exists once in this corpus, the fact that other modal statements demonstrate a similar pattern may indicate that speakers tend to use modal statements in these discourse contexts. It might be argued that Judy could just have easily responded to Lea's assertion with an imperative such as

No, open that one next, but the fact remains that she does not use an imperative in this instance---she responds with a modal statement, *No you should open that one next*, instead. While many grammatically and even pragmatically appropriate linguistic forms are available in this context, the forms which a speaker actually produces in a particular context are what this study seeks to highlight. In addition, the exchange in (112) is the only time in this conversation where a modal statement is used to request a participant to open a gift, even though there are six other instances during the entire transcript when participants request that someone open a gift. These six requests include three imperatives and three *need/want* statements, but in no other instance do they follow an assertion or offer as in (112). Instead they initiate a new gift-giving turn:

(113) Imperative and need/want gift-giving requests

- a) Okay, open this one....This is the one I want you to open.
- b) ...And, this is the one I want you to open.
- c) Here Dan. Open this,...From Judy.
- d) Well- --...Open this one. From the gel- - uh the=..elves
- e) Here, I want you to open this one.

The turn-initial positions of these imperatives are emphasized by the discourse markers *okay, and, here* [name], and *well* that precede each request:. In contrast, the modal statement request in (112) to open a gift occurs mid-turn. Alternately, it is possible that idiolect rather than a feature of discourse is responsible for the variation in forms, since the speaker of the modal statement request in (112) is not the same as the speaker in (113). Additional data is needed to confirm if this is a pattern that can be generalized over a broader number of North American English speakers.

However, supposing for now that the offer/assertion – modal statement pattern holds, there are two more modal statements that do not appear to follow the offer –

modal statement pattern, but on closer examination reveal a creative manipulation of the offer – modal statement pattern which enables the language users to achieve their communicative goals. Both examples involve parent/children or children/parent interactions and both involve hearers who display reluctance to comply. In each case, the speaker uses the modal statement as one of several strategies for requesting. The first occurs in (114) where the speaker, Alice is a mother, 49 years old, and Annette is her 24-year-old adult daughter. Annette is visiting her mother.

(114) Transcript 43

- 1 ALICE: (H) Is that some2] ginger ale?
- 2 ANNETTE: ... No it's Squirt.
- 3 ALICE: ... Would you just get me a small glass of ging- --
- 4 ANNETTE: %(Hx)
- 5 ALICE: (H) % .. There's a b=ig bottle of it,
- 6 .. down,
- 7 ... in that ... bottle rack [thing]?
- 8 ANNETTE: [Yeah]?
- 9 ALICE: .. That's th- already open,
- 10 and I drank out of it,
- 11 so you can just give me that.
- 12 ANNETTE: .. The whole thing?
- 13 ALICE: .. Yep.
- 14 ANNETTE: ... <VOX Jee=z VOX>.
- 15 ALICE: Please.
- 16 ANNETTE: XXX
- 17 .. (SNIFF)
- 18 ALICE: (SNIFF)
- 19 ... <X Not gonna pour it X>,
- 20 cause I'm not a waitress.
- 21 (SNIFF)

The mother, Alice's first iteration of her request is a modal interrogative, *Would you just get me a small glass of ging- --* (line 3), after a possible (unsuccessful) hint in line 1, *Is that some ginger ale?*. Her daughter's only response is a glottal stop (%) and an exhalation (Hx) in line 4, a sound that indicates perhaps disapproval of the request.

However, Alice's follow-up deals directly with contingencies which involve finding the appropriate object. Background sounds in the recording of this interaction indicate that Annette has moved towards complying with request, despite the sarcastic utterance she responds with initially. Alice makes the request easier by next pointing out the specific bottle she is requesting—one *That's th- already open* (line 9) and one that she has a right to because of a prior event, *and I drank out of it* (line 10). As a result of her prior claim on the bottle, Alice repeats the request, now as a modal statement rather than an interrogative: *so you can just give me that* (line 11). While the hearer, Annette, has not made any prior offer to give her the bottle, Alice's orientations to her entitlement to the object (because she has already drunk directly from the bottle and presumably now no one else will want the bottle) function similarly to an offer made by the other participant. An offer authorizes the requester to ask, and in this case the requester has self-authorized the request. Thus, she follows up with a more specific variation of the original request, now re-framed as a pre-authorized request through the use of the modal statement. The exchange demonstrates a strategy where the modal statement functions as an utterance that attempts to re-frame the request as pre-authorized by a previous offer or condition, even though the hearer has not actually participated in this offer or condition. As noted in the discussion of example (91) where the speaker uses a first person plural subject as a coercive strategy, this self-authorization of an offer is another example of a coercive strategies that flouts a communication norm in order to achieve a communicative goal.

A second interaction between a mother and child, this time between a mother and her 10-year-old son, demonstrates a similar subversion of the offer-modal statement pattern. The hearer is reluctant to comply and the speaker uses several requestive forms throughout the interaction in an attempt to produce compliance.

(115) Transcript 58b

1 SHERI: .. (H) ~Steven.
2 You know what you could do,
3 that would be just .. really helpful?
4 STEVEN: ... Say it.
5 SHERI: .. @
6 You could p- take these Coke cans,
7 ... and put them in the bag full of Coke cans that are in
 your bedroom,
8 ... and then we can do can squish.
9 And squish em.
10 For the recycling bin.
11 ... Ok[ay]?
12 STEVEN: [Tomorrow] please,
13 my feet [2are hurting2].
14 SHERI: [2Tomorrow2]?
15 ... (H) Well can you just put em in the bag,
16 ... in there for now,
17 okay?
18 STEVEN: ... Ok[ay].
.....
19 SHERI: [Think I've got a .. sin]us infection or something.
20 Don't ~Steven.
21 STEVEN: ... Mm=kay.
22 SHERI: Please.
23 %I know it's tempting.
24 ... (H) What I'd like you to do is put those cans away
 please.

Analysis of this conversation appears in Section 5.2.3.4 Multi-unit request as this is a request with multiple iterations. However, here the discussion will focus on the modal statement that occurs as the first iteration of the request in lines 6-11. As noted previously, the mother, Sheri, uses first a modal statement (lines 6-11), then a modal interrogative (lines 15-17) and finally, in increasing frustration at her son's noncompliance, a *what*-clefted *need/want* statement (line 24). While the significance of the progression of these forms will not be discussed here, it is important to note, that like (114), the modal statement forms one of several requestive strategies. While in this case

the listener, Steven, does not initiate an offer to do the action his mother would like him to do, she frames the initial request as if he had offered. Her prompt in lines 1-3, ~*Steven. You know what you could do, that would be just .. really helpful?*, requires Steven to answer either positively that he does want to know what he could do to be helpful or negatively that he does not want to know. Since Steven replies that he does want to know the information she is going to give him, saying *say it* (line 4), his mother has now successfully re-framed the request she is about to give as in response to his offer to hear what she wants him to do. While the hearer has certainly not directly assented to comply (he only has assented to hear the request), this creative reframing of the request is an attempt to coerce or persuade the hearer to take on the responsibility of offering to comply as well as to hear. Unlike the normative uses of modal statements in examples (108), (109), (110) and (111), (114) and (115) illustrate how language users intentionally insert a normative pattern into a context which does not include the appropriate contextual features for that pattern in order to try to appropriate the communicative implications of that norm. This intentional ignoring (or flouting) of a conventional pattern is a coercive or persuasive strategy that speakers use to achieve their communicative goals.

Local sequential positioning within the discourse is one feature of the context that appears to describe some uses of modal statements as request, either in an offer/assertion – modal statement pattern or as one strategy that language users employ in a high c/e level, multi-form request turns. However, Table 4-26 also demonstrates that though modal statements occur at all three social power contexts, 7 of the 12 occur in a high – low social power context. The previously discussed examples, (114) and (115), are two that occur in high – low social power contexts, and of the remaining five modal statement requests in the SBCSAE, four of them occur in pedagogical contexts, spoken

by an instructor to students in order to elicit a desired learning action. These are listed below.

(116) Modal Statement requests in pedagogical contexts

- a) You need to let him have a chance to slap.
- b) Now you gotta let go with the right hand ~Bill.
- c) You wanna say <Q radar service terminated, frequency change approved... Report back inbound Q>.
- d) U=m, ... first of all, maybe you guys, .. can tell me=, ... we talked a little bit about it, last time you were here?

The utterances in (116) (a) and (b) occur during a karate lesson where the karate instructor is directing his students on actions they need to take (or not take). The utterance in (c) occurs during an air traffic controller training session and (d) occurs in a training workshop at an aquarium. These utterances are all spoken by the instructors to their students. Pedagogical contexts are high producing request contexts and within the SBCSAE instructors request action from their students with *let* statements, *need/want* statements, imperatives as well as these modal statements. Unlike *let* statements, the modal statement tokens in pedagogical contexts occur both in sequence-initial (b,c, d) and mid-sequence positions (a). Neither do they seem to follow the offer – modal statement pattern noted for (108) - (115). The degree to which the surrounding discourse might explain the speaker's choice of modals in pedagogical contexts is unclear and needs more data to determine.

The final modal statement request in the SBCSAE is in a high-low social power transactional context, previously stated in (42), but repeated here.

(117) Transcript 38

1 BEN: .. (H) Okay folks,
2 you can follow me now,
3 I'm gonna lead us out of here.
4 ... (THROAT)
5 ... O=kay,
6 here we go folks.

The speaker is a tour guide, directing his tour group members to follow him, with the utterance in lines 1-2, *Okay folks, you can follow me now*. During this tour, (117) represents the only time when the tour guide directs his group with a modal statement. Out of the fifteen utterances that are requests for the group to walk in a particular direction, look at something, or face in a particular direction, the tour guide uses imperatives 11 times, an *if* statement 3 times (immediately followed by an imperative) and the modal statement in (117) once. Ben's reference to leading the group out of *here* (line 3) refers to the fact that previously in the transcript, Ben tells the tour group where they are:

(118) Transcript 38

1 BEN: Okay folks,
2 let's find out where we are.
3 ... We got on the elevator right here,
4 .. came down and stood on the balcony overlooking the power
plant,
5 ... (H) down that stairway,
6 out on the power plant ramp about that far,
7 (H) then right at that yellow line.
8 (H) And you're now standing over the second-largest water pipe
in the world,

The group has traveled on an elevator, to the edge of a balcony, down a stairway and then out onto a power plant ramp (line 6) until they are standing over the second-largest water pipe in the world (line 8). Thus his qualification in (117), *I'm gonna lead us out of*

here (line 3) references the fact that he is going to lead them away from standing over the water pipe. In this specific, enclosed space, Ben uses the modal statement form instead of an *if* statement form for his request that they follow him. In the second and only other time that Ben gives instructions to the group to follow him, he uses an *if* statement construction. Like the *if* statement, perhaps the modal statement request in conjunction with an explicit statement of benefit for the listeners (line 3) is an additional hedging and politeness strategy that speakers use in transactional contexts to for low contingency requests. As discussed in Section 5.2.2 *If* Statements, participants in wide social distance contexts, especially transactional contexts where there is not previously established relationship between the participants, show a tendency to include at least one or two linguistic hedges for requests that they are strongly entitled to make and which are expected and easy for the listeners to comply with. Modal statements may function as one of these forms.

While the limited number of modal statement requests in the SBCSAE requires that the generalizations suggested above be tested with more data, two general patterns emerge. First, modal statement requests appear to follow offers or assertions that authorize the speaker to request an action or item. Second, they appear in high-low social power contexts in both pedagogical and transactional interactions. Modal statements do not appear in low-high social power contexts unless they are following the offer/assertion – modal statement pattern. Thus the contextual features most relevant to modal statements appear to be their position in discourse, social power and to a lesser degree, social distance.

5.3 Imperatives

Imperatives in the SBCSAE are the most frequently appearing linguistic constructions for requests or commands. As noted in Section 4.3.2 Results, though they

occur in both close and wide social distance contexts, imperatives are the most frequently occurring request forms in intimate context types. As the previous chapter also notes, in the intimate context type, participants at all social power levels use imperatives. This includes parents speaking to children and children speaking to parents. While it is not surprising that parents use imperatives when speaking to their children (Craven & Potter 2010), it is perhaps slightly more surprising that the form is used by children speaking to their parents³⁰. While in some cases the children are adults (over 18), not all cases of low-high social power interactions between family members occur with adult children speaking to their parents. Some include teenagers and children as young as ten years old. However, this is consistent with previous research, including Wootton (1981, 2005) who demonstrates that imperatives, along with *need/want* statements are among the requestive forms that children as young as two and three employ. Within the SBCSAE, the following utterances illustrate imperatives spoken by children to their parents.

(119) Younger children to parent imperative utterances

- a) Come over here and look. And -- /
- b) ... Mom look. Look at my shoes.
- c) Talk to Melanie's mom . Her mom would know. ... I'll have Melanie call you.

In (119)a-b, the speaker is a 10-year-old boy and in (119)c, the speaker is a 15-year-old girl. They represent two contrasting relationships with the parent. In (119)a-b, the young boy, Steven, is clearly on good terms with his mother and enjoying a positive social interaction with her as they are both doing general chores around the home, such as

³⁰ Parent/child and child / parent are the only kinds of unequal power relationships between speakers who used imperatives in this corpus, and indeed the most prevalent kind of unequal family power relationship in our culture.

preparing dinner. On the other hand, in (119)c, the teenage daughter Kendra is fighting with her mother. The conversation includes highly antagonistic exchanges and frequent yelling. This also occurs as the family is doing general chores around the house on a Saturday morning. In both positive and negative interactions, children who feel high entitlement to their requests and refuse to acknowledge obstacles (even though there may be some, as in (119)c and even, to some extent in (119)a-b, use imperatives with their parents although they are clearly not in a position of power. For interactions where adult children use imperatives with their parents, the following examples illustrate two categories.

(120) Older children to parent imperative utterances

- a) .. just put it in there. Just put the paper in there.
- b) Okay, open= this one. This is the one I want you to open now.
- c) Say when.
- d) Cover it.
- e) Don't move it Mom.
- f) ... Look. Put on the glasses. .. Look.
- g) ... N- no Mom,d- don't go all the way ov- o- -- Just take the whole thi=ng, and don't –
- h) ... Take your ti=me,

First, in (120)a-d the imperatives are task-related objectives very closely bound to the social purpose of the gathering. Examples (a)-(b) occur during a gift-giving exchange, which is discussed in Section 5.2.3.1 Bare stem *need/want* statements. (120)(c)-(d) are spoken by a 26-year old son to his mother and grandmother as they are making tamales together. The actions he is requesting, such as indicating when he should stop pouring (c) and or covering a pot (d), are ones that must happen quickly in order for them to be

successful in making tamales. These task-related imperatives occur in interactions, like making tamales or exchanging gifts, where both speaker and hearer have claimed co-ownership over the activity, and the imperatives request actions that will lead to accomplishing this jointly owned project. The imperative used in these contexts parallels Rossi (2012:428) who found that in Italian the imperative was used in low imposition and close social distance contexts “to request actions that are integral to an already established joint project between requester and recipient.” However, the requests in (e) and (g), while occurring in the equivalent or same interactions as (a) – (d), are not integral to the task of making tamales in the same way. They involve asking the hearer to stop moving a pot or to not carry something heavy. These seem less integral to the cooking task as they are to caring for the health and safety of the hearer, as the speaker tells his mother not to pick up something heavy. These kinds of requests also happen in (120)(f) and (h), which involve adult children speaking to elderly parents, around 70 or 80 years of age, asking them take their time in walking (h) and to put on glasses (f). Clearly (c)-(h) are related to helping them accomplish a task that has been made more difficult with advanced age. By directing their parents to take these cautions as they perform tasks, the adult children are showing care and respect for their parents. Thus for imperative requests spoken by children to their parents, younger children tend to show no inhibitions for using imperatives, while adult children seem to use them strategically for task-related requests or to demonstrate care for their safety³¹.

As noted in Section 4.3.2.2 Contingency and entitlement, most of the imperatives in the SBCSAE are low c/e level requests—considered easy to comply with and not unexpected or unusual for the context. However, two imperatives do occur in high C/E level contexts. These two exceptions will be examined more closely in the following

³¹ More research is needed to test this hypothesis.

section. They represent two very different contexts which appear to be exceptions to the general pattern seen in most of the imperatives in the SBCSAE. In one, the hearer has serious ethical concerns for not complying, which leads the speaker to use coaxing strategies in an attempt to persuade her to ignore them. In the other, there are potential harmful consequences if the hearer does not comply, and the speaker uses forceful repetition of imperatives to communicate this danger.

The first high c/e level imperative occurs between a boyfriend and girlfriend. The initial request is

(121) Transcript 28

- 1 JEFF: ... Okay now,
- 2 tell me the stuff that (H) she doesn't want ... you to tell me.
- 3 JILL: @@@@[@@]
- 4 JEFF: [Now that] she's gone.

Jeff and Jill are early-twenties college students having a telephone conversation, and a mutual friend of Jeff and Jill's has just left the room. Jeff's request to hear all *the stuff that she doesn't want...you to tell me* (line 2) seems quite presumptuous—and in fact it is. However, (121) is preceded by Jeff making serious inquiry about how this friend (also named Jill, but designated "Jill_s" in the transcript) is doing, as illustrated in lines 1-2, *How does um,... How's Jill*, of the following section of the conversation:

(122) Transcript 28

- 1 JEFF: How does um,
- 2 ... (H)= How's Jill.
- 3 (Hx) How's her state of mind.
- 4 .. [Does she] seem (H) ... at peace with herself?
- 5 JILL: [(H)]
- 6 JEFF: .. She happy?
- 7 JILL: .. Unhunh=.
- 8 .. Oh yeah=.
- 9 JEFF: [Yeah]?
- 10 JILL: [She seems] really good.

11 JEFF: .. [2Yeah2]?
 12 JILL: [2(H)2] Unhunh.
 13 JEFF: ... Okay now,
 14 tell me the stuff that (H) she doesn't want ... you to tell
 me.

Before the listener can respond, he repeats his query, with several variations: *how's her state of mind* (line 3) .. *[Does she] seem (H) ... at peace with herself?* (line 4), and when the Jill hesitates in line 5, he prompts her with a fourth variation on his original query, *She happy?* (line 6). The questions seem to indicate that Jill_s has gone through some difficult experiences and Jeff is very curious to know more details. The listener, Jill, however, seems reluctant to give the information he is requesting. She responds with silence (line 5) and finally a few assents: *unhunh..Oh yeah* (lines 7-8) and then a confirmation: *She seems really good* (line 10). The initial silence perhaps indicates that Jill is not anxious to talk in detail about her friend (who has just left the room) and the affirmative responses following Jeff's persistent questioning seem to be a strategy to satisfy Jeff without divulging more details. Whatever the motivations, Jill clearly does not want to have an extended conversation about her friend, while Jeff does. When he is unsuccessful at getting the details he wants through hinting and questioning, he then directly requests the information with an imperative: *tell me the stuff that (H) she doesn't want ... you to tell me* (line 13-14). Besides the imperative here (*tell me...*), Jeff states what he believes to be the obstacle to his request being fulfilled: the fact that Jill_s specifically told her friend not to share details with him. By stating this explicitly, he challenges Jill to ignore her friend's desires and makes light of this obstacle. The imperative in (122) is then followed up with nearly a dozen strategies to persuade the listener to comply.

(123) Transcript 28

1 JEFF: ... Okay now,
2 tell me the stuff that (H) she doesn't want ... you to tell me. C1
3 JILL: @@@@[@@]
4 JEFF: [Now that] she's gone. C3
5 JILL: (H) Now's the chance.
6 JEFF: Yeah because, E1
7 y- remember,
8 ... you're my .. girlfriend,
9 before you're her friend.
10 JILL: @@@@[@Jeff.
11 JEFF: [@@ (H)]
12 JILL: (H)]
13 JEFF: @@[2@2]
14 JILL: [2@@2]@@ Oh.
15 JEFF: [3(H)3]
16 JILL: [3(H)3] .. Oh swee[4tie. E2
17 JEFF: [4(H) Remember4],
18 JILL: .. @@@4]
19 JEFF: .. you're gonna spend the rest of your life with m=e. E3
20 JILL: @@@@
21 JEFF: (Hx) .. [(H)] I='m your partner [2<X honey X>2]. E4
22 JILL: [(H)]
23 [2@Oh2] @Jeff. C4
24 JEFF: I know there's stuff that she,
25 (H) .. [that you won't tell me.
26 JILL: [(H) .. @@@@[@@@@ (H)]
27 JEFF: .. And,
28 @@@@ .. (H)]
29 JILL: .. Oh= Jeff.
30 (H)[3=
31 JEFF: [3go ahead. C5
32 JILL: No3],
33 JEFF: XXX3]
34 JILL: nothing.
35 [There's] --
36 JEFF: [Then] let it out [2honey2]. C6 E2
37 JILL: [2@=2]@@@@
38 JEFF: .. (H) <VOX Come on swee[3tie, C7 E2
39 JILL: [3@@@3] C8 E2
40 JEFF: Come3] on honey.
41 JILL: .. [4@@4] C9

42 JEFF: [4(H)4] Let it out [5like a good girl5].
43 JILL: [5(H) @@5]@@@[6@6]
44 JEFF: [6Like a6] g=ood g=irl VOX>. C10
45 JILL: (H)[7=7]
46 JEFF: [7@@@7]
47 JILL: @Jeff,
48 JEFF: (H)[=]
49 JILL: [(H)] oh=,
50 ... no [2I won't2].
51 JEFF: [2You're such2] a little giggly monster.
52 JILL: .. @@@ [3(H)3]
53 JEFF: [3@@@@3] (H)

Jeff spends nearly a minute trying to persuade Jill to give in to his request. He follows up the initial imperative (line 2) with at least ten strategies to eliminate contingencies (two references to obstacles and eight coaxing phrases and four orientations to entitlement (3 reason statements and addressing her with endearments like *honey* and *sweetie* over and over to emphasize her identity as his girlfriend and thus obligated to share the information). In eliminating contingencies, he tries to first point out that the most obvious obstacle for sharing this illicit information is gone---Jill_s has left the room. Thus, in line 4 he follows up his request to *tell me everything* with the time contingency, *Now that she's gone*. That is, Jill is free to share since the person she is talking about is gone. He then resorts to extensive coaxing—six coaxing utterances: *go ahead* (line 31), *Then let it out honey* (line 36), *Come on sweetie* (line 38), *Come on honey* (line 40), *Let it out like a good girl* (line 42), *Like a g=ood g=irl* (line 44). While none of these phrases directly address a particular obstacle in a rational way, they attempt to remove the moral obstacle of betraying a friend through emotional and sympathetic reinforcement. He hopes that by coaxing her enough she will be persuaded to relent. He does offer one further reference to a hypothetical obstacle. Jill could simply respond that there isn't any information of interest worth telling, so he preempts this possible excuse by telling her in lines 24-25 / *know there's stuff that she, that you won't tell me*.

In addition to weakly addressing some obstacles (although not the real ethical principle which complying would violate), Jeff also asserts entitlement to the knowledge three times with reason statements. He asserts that his relationship to Jill as boyfriend has priority over her friendship: *Because remember you're my girlfriend before you're her friend* (line 6-9), *You're gonna spend the rest of your life with me* (line 19), and *I'm your partner honey* (line 21). In addition he repeatedly addresses her with endearments like *honey* (lines 21, 36 and 40) and *sweetie* (lines 16 and 38) in order to emphasize her identity as a girlfriend who is obligated to share the information with her boyfriend. These coaxing and reason statement strategies show that Jeff is attempting to leverage the rights for requesting that typically an imperative spoken between participants with close social distance has. He represents the request initially as if it were going to be a low contingency/entitlement level request as part of his strategy to gain the information he wants. This contrasts nicely with another simple *tell me* request that occurs at a book club. Here a woman recalls a lecture that she attended about a particular topic, and another book club members asks her for more information on the topic:

(124) Come on. Tell me about it.

The hearer then proceeds to give the requested information, with no coaxing or subversive entitlement strategies necessary since the information is not personal or restricted. By mimicking this straightforward pattern, Jeff hopes to prompt his hearer to respond favorably. Though ultimately not successful, Jeff's strategies in (123) again show the systematic creativity which speakers use to achieve their conversational goals. This exceptional use of imperatives in a high c/e level context where the speakers are ostensibly at the same social power level may also speak to the dynamic of this particular boyfriend/girlfriend relationship, perhaps indicating that the boyfriend does hold more power in the relationship or at least perceives himself entitled to direct his girlfriend.

5.3.1 Summary of Imperatives

Imperatives in the SBCSAE, as the most numerous requestive, show a predilection for occurring in nearly all context types, though most frequently among speakers with close social distance. This finding echoes Aijmer (1996), who found the same to be true in British English Corpora. However, a logistic regression analysis comparing imperatives and bare stem *need/want* statements did not produce a statistically significant value for close vs. wide social distance, indicating that it may not be a predictive variable of these forms. Imperatives also occur extensively in pedagogical contexts and in some transactional contexts as well.

However, the most defining feature of the contexts in which these imperatives occur is the contingency/entitlement level. Imperatives occur most often in low c/e level contexts. That is, they occur in contexts where there are little or no contingencies operative and where the speaker considers himself or herself to have a strong right to make the request. Thus imperatives are often accompanied by minimal hedging and explanations, as speakers depend on strongly accepted social and interactional norms to provide the necessary explanation and context for their requests. Though the imperative is the traditional command form, this corpus demonstrates that not all imperatives are used in contexts in which speakers have the right to command or in which the listener has no choice but to comply. They occur in low – high social power contexts, where younger children and teenagers use the form to request action from their parents. In addition, the forms occurring in socio-cultural and neutral social power contexts illustrate that speakers use the form even when they do not have a strong socially constructed reason to command the hearers to do a particular action. In addition, if a command is a request for an action by the listener in which the listener must comply (see Tsui 1994),

then it is noteworthy that not all imperatives in this corpus are complied with. At least 14 utterances are not complied with and the results of several more are unknown.

Social power relationships between speaker and hearer do seem to play a secondary role in relation to social distance. Intimate context type utterances occur with all three social power relationships, while imperatives in socio-cultural, pedagogical and transactional contexts occur in only high – low or neutral social power contexts.

5.3.2 Overview of Statement Request Forms and Imperatives

The five constructions discussed so far, *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, modal statements and imperatives demonstrate that speakers often request using forms beyond the more conventionally expected modal interrogatives, such as *can you / will you / could you /would you*. Table 5-2 summarizes the general patterns of statement requests in the SBCSAE.

Table 5-2 Summary of Statement Request Relevant Contextual Features

Requesting Forms	Social Distance	C/E Level	Social Power	Discourse Function
<i>Let</i> Statements		Low c/e Levels (0-1)	High - Low, Neutral	Request visible object, Introduce activity sequence in ped context
<i>If</i> Statements	Close Social Distance → or Wide Social Distance →	High c/e Levels (4-6) or Low c/e Levels (1-3)		
<i>Need/want</i> Statements Bare stem	Close Social Distance →	Low c/e Levels (1-3)		Essential to event goal
<i>Would/clefted</i> or <i>hedged</i>	Wide Social Distance →	Low c/e Levels (2) High c/e Levels (4-6)		Essential to event goal
Modal statements	Wide Social Distance →		High - Low	Response to an offer/assertion
Imperatives	Close Social Distance Wide Social Distance →	Low c/e Levels (0-1)	High - Low, Neutral	Task-oriented, discourse/spatially oriented, negative actions (all close SD)

Arrow (→) = occurs with

Table 5-2 represents major generalizations about the contexts in which these linguistic constructions occur in naturally-occurring spoken conversation. First, *let* statements occur in low c/e level contexts, where speakers feel a strong sense of entitlement to make the request and very few obstacles to compliance exist. The form is also used only in high – low or neutral social power contexts. In addition, *let* statements occur in the specific discourse settings of requesting a visible, physical object and as a strategy in pedagogical contexts to introduce a new topic or activity. *If* statements occur in two mutually exclusive environments: in close social distance contexts, speakers use them for high c/e level requests, while in wide social distance contexts speakers use them for low c/e level requests. *Need/want* statements demonstrate sensitivity to both social distance and contingency/entitlement levels. First, *need/want* statements constructed with the modal *would* as well as with a clefted-*what* construction all tend to occur in high c/e level requests. These often come with extensive hedging as well and occur in both close and wide social distance contexts. Bare stem *need/want* statements, however, occur more frequently in close social distance contexts, requesting an action that is central to the event goal. A few *need/want* statements with the modal *would*, but no other c/e strategy, occur in wide social distance contexts for low c/e level requests. These requests also reference actions essential to the event goal. The grammatical construction of *need/want* statements as an utterance which does not select a *yes/no* option of the speaker helps to explain the distribution of these forms. Modal statement requests demonstrate sensitivity to their positioning in the discourse, often following an offer or assertion. Others occur in wide social distance and high – low social power contexts. Finally, imperatives most frequently occur in close social distance contexts for low c/e level requests. Only in the closest social distance contexts (intimate) do they occur in a low – high social power context or in an occasional high c/e level context. Imperatives in socio-cultural,

professional, pedagogical and transactional contexts only occur in high – low or neutral social power contexts.

5.4 Interrogative Requests

As noted in Section 4.4 Interrogative Requests, modal interrogative requests in the SBCSAE represent a range of forms, and demonstrate a more even distribution across context type, c/e levels and social power. Modal interrogative requests are more highly represented in equal social power contexts than statement request forms and imperatives (except for *if* statements). In addition, the second most frequent context is low – high social power. These forms also demonstrate a center range of c/e levels, as Table 4-37 illustrates, occurring between levels 2 – 5 in more significant numbers than any other form. This identifies these forms as the ones chosen when some negotiating or hedging is necessary. This section will include a discussion of the forms organized into four subcategories: resource interrogatives, permission interrogatives, willingness interrogatives, and finally, the conventional modal interrogatives, *can you/will you/could you/would you*.

5.4.1 Resource Interrogative Requests

The resource interrogative category of modal interrogatives are those in which requests for an action from the listener are uttered with a *do you have X* construction³². In these cases, the speaker asks if the listener has the resources to accomplish the desired action. The three utterances in the SBCSAE are *do you have a flashlight on you?*, *do you have enough time to br- -- run me by the vet clinic before we go pick up my truck*, and *do*

³² Though this construction, by strict definition does not contain a modal, it is a query that fits all of the other classification requirements of a request. Since there are only two in this corpus, it seemed appropriate to discuss them in the category that includes all of the interrogatives.

you have any sharp objects on you. The conversations are listed below in (125), (126), and (127).

(125) Transcript 29

1 LARRY: .. do you have a flashlight on you?
2 SETH: Sure do.

(126) Transcript 56

1 JULIE: [Yeah.]
2 (H) .. Is it --
3 Do you have enough time to br- --
4 % run me by the vet clinic,
5 before we go pick up my truck,
6 because .. they close at [five thirty].
7 JACKIE: [I'm fine].
8 JULIE: ... Okay.
9 JACKIE: As long as [I can] --
10 JULIE: [And I've got]ta pick up,
11 I've got to give uh Shiba her shots.
12 And .. he ordered the vaccine and it's in,
13 ... (Hx)=
....
14 JACKIE: [<X Come on X>].

(127) Transcript 24a

1 JENNIFER: We need a --
2 .. (H) .. Do you have any sharp objects on you?
3 DAN: ... %No.
4 ... (Hx) Keys?
5 JENNIFER: ... No I need like a little pin or something.
6 ... You have [a pencil]?
7 DAN: [You have anything] in your hair?
8 JENNIFER: ... No.

In (125) the resource the speaker asks for is a flashlight (line 1) and the action requested, though unstated, is that the speaker give him the object. In (126) the resource Julie, the owner of a horse ranch asks for is her employee's time (line 3) and the action she is

requesting is stated explicitly: *to run me by the bet clinic before we go pick up my truck* (line 4-5). In (127), the speaker begins the request as a *need/want* statement (line 1), but then stops and rephrases it as a query, *do you have any sharp objects on you?* (line 2). The speaker only returns to the *need/want* statement in line 5 (*No, I need like a little pin or something*) in order to explain why the listener's counter offer of *Keys* (line 4) will not work. She returns to an elliptical version of the resource interrogative construction in line 6 (*...you have a pencil?*). This switch from a *need* statement request to a *do you have* utterance is explained in Section 5.2.3.5 *Need/want* statement request summary.

In addition to occurring in both compliant and non-compliant contexts, all three resource interrogatives occur across the contextual categories of social distance, social power and contingency/entitlement: Example (125) occurs in a transactional context, in an equal social power context and a low c/e level of 2; (126) occurs in a professional context, in a high – low social power context with a higher c/e level of 4; and (127) occurs in an intimate context, equal social power context and a c/e level of 3. It is worthwhile to note, that for (126), the high c/e level occurs because, while the speaker does make one reference to contingency by querying if the listener has the appropriate resource (*i.e.*, time) to comply, the force of the request comes through a list of reason statements, explaining why the speaker is entitled to ask for this additional stop: *because they close at five-thirty* (line 6), *and I've gotta pick up, I've got to give uh Shiba her shots* (lines 10-11), *and.. he ordered the vaccine and it's in* (line 12). Perhaps the speaker feels that the urgency of the request outweighs any strong limitations Jackie might have on her time. It is also striking that Julie continues to orient to her reasons for requesting even after Jackie appears, in line 7 *I'm fine*, to have agreed to the request. The compliance is confirmed by Jackie a second time in line 14, when she tells Julie, *come on*. In contrast to the compliance of (125) and (126), example (127) provides an example of a resource

interrogative which is not complied with because the listener does not have the requested item. Like (125), the request is a fairly low c/e request.

Although all three resource interrogatives differ in the previously discussed primary contextual features of social distance, power and contingency/entitlement levels, the construction does seem to occur when the speaker genuinely does not know if the listener has the resource to comply. That is, to frame it in Searle's (1975:71) speech act terms, the preparatory condition that "S believes H can do A" is not completely satisfied. The speakers in (125)-(127) do not know for sure if their listeners have the resources to be able to comply, thus they query the listeners' ability to comply. Fox (2015:47) notes that construction *do you have X* occurs during service encounters in the U.S. and that "it is used to ask for items which the Customer treats as potentially not available in the store." A similar parameter seems to apply to the instances of this construction in the SBCSAE. This is demonstrated clearly in (127), as Jennifer starts out her request as a *need/want* statement, which, as discussed in Section 5.2.3.1 Bare stem *need/want* statements, is often used to request an object near at hand or to request an action central to accomplishing a primary event goal. This would seem to be an appropriate form since the husband and wife are working together to fix a piece of electronics that is not working properly. Asking for a tool that would help to fix the equipment is central to that event goal. However, she does not know if Dan has the tool that she needs, so she aborts her *need/want* construction and re-starts the request as a *do you have X* construction. For resource interrogatives that are positively satisfied by the listener with verbal utterances, *Sure do*, (125), line 1, *Come on* (126), line 14, the listener understands the utterance *do you have X* to be not only a query of ability, but also a request for action. While other constructions, such as *can you X*, literally query the possibility or ability of the listener to to comply with the request, rarely is the speaker genuinely unsure if the listener has the

ability or resources to comply. Fox (2015:55) found that in service encounters, while *do you have X* was used when the customer was not sure if the item was available, *can I get x* was used for requesting “items that require the Seller’s help, such as tobacco products, gas, and lottery tickets.” This function, she argues, “demonstrates that the Customer believes the item to be available in the shop” (Fox 2015:55). A similar contrast with *do you have X* and *can you* interrogative requests for an item can be found in the SBCSAE. In (128), a *can you* modal interrogative is used to request an object.

(128) Dad, can you give me a toothpick? from ... down there?

Much like the oft-cited hypothetical example, *Can you pass the salt?*, (128) requests an action that is contextually appropriate (the participants are sitting at the kitchen table), with no great obstacles or difficulties (the father is not disabled and he appears to be sitting closest to the desired object) and the speaker is not asking for anything unusual (someone has just pointed out to the speaker that she has lettuce in her teeth, so asking for a toothpick is a natural request in this instance). Like the instances in Fox (2015), the speaker is requesting an item in a low imposition context in which she is aware of its existence but simply needs help in obtaining it.

The examples of *do you have X* in the SBCSAE broaden the potential pattern. While Fox (2015) identifies this pattern in only transactional (specifically service) encounters, these forms occur across close and wide social distance contexts in the SBCSAE, indicating that the use of *do you have* inquiries as requesting an item when the speaker is not sure it is available may occur beyond just transactional contexts. While there are only three resource interrogatives in the SBCSAE, the analysis of these utterances seems to indicate that the more conventional context categories of social distance, social power and contingency/entitlement, or even compliance, play no factor in

their distribution. Rather, the resource interrogative is used as a request for an object or action when the speaker is genuinely unsure if the listener is able to comply.

5.4.2 *Permission Interrogatives*

Permission Interrogatives in the SBCSAE include constructions *can I (just) + [verb]*, *could I + [verb]*, *will you let*, and *I wonder if I can + [verb]*. These constructions are distinguished from the conventional modal requests by the use of the first person pronoun subject rather than a second person pronoun. However, even though the beneficiary is referred to in the subject position of the request, the utterance still requires an action from the listener which will benefit the speaker. This distinguishes permission requests from requests for permission, which are utterances in which the speaker is requesting permission to do an action (see also Ervin-Trip 1976). These two are contrasted in the examples below:

(129) Permission Request vs. Request for Permission

- a) Can I have clam chowder for my soup?
- b) Can I just have a little bit of that soup, just to try it?

In both examples, the speaker is requesting an object—soup— which will benefit the speaker. However, in (129)(a), the speaker, a customer at a restaurant, is requesting that the server bring her the soup, while in (b), the speaker, Annette is asking her mother permission to try some soup that is on the stove. In the first, the speaker is requesting the listener to act (i.e., to bring); in the second, the speaker is requesting permission to act herself (i.e., eat). The conversation immediately following (129)(b) indicates that Annette's father has made the soup, and although her mother gives her permission to try some, she later scolds Annette for eating too much and not leaving enough for her father. It is also noteworthy that the item being requested in (b), the soup, in some sense belongs to another person (her father), and thus she needs authorization from someone

to take action. The soup in (a) is not the unique property of the listener, but an item offered on the restaurant menu for the public. Sometimes, however, it is not entirely clear which category—permission request or request for permission—an utterance belongs to. There are at least two such ambiguous tokens in the SBCSAE.

(130) Transcript 45c

- | | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | PATRICK: | Can I see your Marlboro case for a second? |
| 2 | | ... Just keep talking. |
| 3 | CORINNA: | .. And uh, |
| 4 | | ... anyway, |
| 5 | | ... she uh, |
| 6 | | ... they ran out of Marlboro Lights= at work, |
| 7 | | so I had to .. go to Marlboros. |
| 8 | PATRICK: | .. And then I'll t- show you something about these. |
| 9 | CORINNA: | ... Okay. |

In line 1 of (130), Patrick asks his friend Corinna, *can I see your Marlboro case for a second?* His tag in line 2, *just keep talking*, may indicate that he is going to do the action of taking the case from her so she does not need to stop talking and give it to him, or it means that as she pauses to give him the case, he wants to encourage her to ignore his interruption and continue telling her story. In this case, then, it is not clear from the transcript whether the speaker or the listener is performing the action. If he performs the action then the utterance is a request for permission. Additional evidence that this might be a request for permission rather than a permission request is that the item he requests belongs to the listener, Corinna, similar to (129)(b).

The second slightly ambiguous utterance occurs in a professional setting where employee training is going on. One employee interrupts the class in order to ask a newcomer,

(131) Can I see your ID. I don't [think ~Dar]ren put anything on it.

This request seems at the same time both permission to hold an object that belongs to the listener, while at the same time, a request for the listener to hand over an object to the speaker. In this case it seems more likely that the listener will perform the action of handing over her ID, making this a permission request, as the object is most likely on the listener's person. In contrast, the cigarette case in (130) may have been near the listener but not necessarily on her person. While both (130) and (131) request an item that belongs to the listener, they do not permanently request that item. They only ask to *see* it, presumably to use it for a short time in a way that will not damage or reduce the value of the item to the listener. In (130) this is indicated by Patrick's explanation in line 8, .. *And then I'll t- show you something about these*. Apparently he wants the case to demonstrate perhaps a trick or something of note, but it does not appear that he wants to smoke all of Corinne's cigarettes. In (131), though not explicitly stated, the speaker's explanation that she wants to see the ID because *I don't think Darren put anything on it*, implies that when she puts what is necessary on the ID, she will give it back to the owner. In contrast, Annette's request in (129)(b) to eat soup is a request for an item that will not be returned to the original owner. Whether the items are returned or not, however, all of the *can I* requests above involve a speaker requesting something the listener has in their possession (or has sole control of, as in the case of a server at a restaurant). This finding parallels Zinken (2015:37) who notes that in British children's usage of *can I have x*, "requesters...index that the other person is obligated to provide the relevant object simply because they currently have it."

This category's function as permission interrogatives is further evidenced by the lack of high-low social power contexts. Out of the 10 permission interrogatives in the SBCSAE, 8 occur in an equal social power context, one occurs in a low – high power context and for one utterance it is not completely clear what the social power context is

(however, all of the participants are either immediate or close extended family members, all adults and based on the way in which the participants interact it is likely that the utterance could be coded as an equal social power context). None of these utterances are spoken by participants in a high-low social power context. This contrasts significantly with most of the requestive forms in the SBCSAE, as most of them do occur in high-low social power contexts.

Besides occurring in only equal and low-high social power contexts and in contexts where the object being requested is visible and only temporarily requested, several additional functional categories for permissive requests appear in the SBCSAE. First, *can I* requests occur in the context of ordering at a restaurant:

(132) Can I just get salad, ... like ... green salad or whatever.

(133) Actually can I have some tea? .. Hot tea.

(134) I wonder if I can get salad and half a sandwich, instead of soup and half a sandwich.

As noted in Sections 5.2.3.1 Bare stem *need/want* statements and 5.2.4 Modal Statements, *need/want* statements and modal statements also occur in the context of ordering at a restaurant. And if the pattern noted by Fox (2015) in service encounters holds, we might predict *can I have/get X* to occur when the speaker knows an item is available but needs help in retrieving it. A restaurant context makes such an outcome difficult to determine since unlike a gas station or shop all items that a customer comes to the establishment for must be obtained with the help of a server (except for buffet restaurants, of course). More data from restaurant interactions is needed to determine how these forms pattern with additional requestive forms like *need/want* statements, modal statements and other modal interrogatives in this context.

Second, permission requests are used in conversations for discourse functions such as interrupting another speaker, asking for a turn or trying to hold the floor (or perhaps more accurately, trying to control the floor). Aijmer (1996) includes these functions for permission modal interrogatives in her description of the function and style of requestive forms in British English corpora, and they appear to have similar functions in North American English. Examples (135) - (137) illustrate these functions.

(135) Can I just interrupt for one minute?

(136) Can I say something?

(137) Will you³³ let Leanne finish?

(138) Can I hear you say that?

Examples (135) and (136) occur with the *can I* construction, which is used in 7 out of the 10 permission request interrogatives in the SBCSAE (see also examples (129)(a), (130), (131), (132) and (133)). These utterances function by allowing a speaker to ask for a turn. The action the speaker requests in both (135) and (136) is that the other participants stop talking and give the floor to her. In (137) and (138), permission modal interrogative constructions are used to request that another participant or group of participants take a turn. Both (136) and (137) occur in the same conversation, where a group of family members are having a heated discussion and one participant, Jenn, is quite aggressive in trying to talk over others to tell her side of the story. The other family members attempt at least seven times to interrupt her and give other participants a chance to speak before they are successful in ending Jenn's turn. In this exchange, besides modal interrogatives,

³³ Though the *will you* construction used in (137) is categorized as a conventional modal interrogative form in most cases rather than a permission interrogative. However, in this context it is clearly a permission interrogative and probably more accurate to identify the form as a *will you let* construction rather than *will you* construction. None of the other non-permission modal requests with *will you* occur with the verb *let*.

the participants use imperatives and *need/want* statements to achieve their communicative goal.

In summary, permission interrogatives show a wide range of functions as well as sensitivity to the social power relationship between participants. In the SBCSAE they do not occur in high – low social power contexts, and most frequently in equal social power contexts. Since the construction used most often for permission interrogatives, *can/could I*, sets the speaker up immediately as a tentative requester rather than one who feels no need to justify his or her claim, it is not surprising that this form does not occur in a high – low social power context. Additional functions for permission interrogatives in the SBCSAE include ordering in a restaurant, accomplishing discourse goals such as interrupting and asking for a turn, and requesting to see an object that belongs to the listener.

5.4.3 Willingness Interrogatives

Willingness interrogatives are those in which a speaker makes a request by directly querying the listener's desire to do the action. These constructions include *do you wanna*, *do you think you want*, *you wanna?*³⁴, and *would you like*. These linguistic forms are more often associated with offers, which in contrast to requests, involves a speaker offering to complete an action which will benefit the listener, as the following hypothetical example contrasting with one from the SBCSAE illustrates.

(139) *Would you like* as an offer vs, a request

- a) Would you like me to serve you a piece of cake?
- b) Would you like to string the beans?

³⁴ This construction is distinct from the modal statement form *you wanna* in that the utterance is a question rather than a statement. This is indicated by a question mark at the end of the phrase in the transcript.

In (139)(a), the speaker is offering to give the listener a piece of cake, with the normal interpretation of that offer as being an action that would benefit the listener. In (139)(b) the speaker is a hostess in her home preparing a meal with her husband and a guest, and the utterance is spoken by her to the guest. Although she frames it with the same construction as (a), the action under consideration is clearly one that must be undertaken by the listener, and the benefit is principally for the speaker (though the guest of course derives benefit since he, as well as his hosts, will be eating the food that he is preparing).

As with resource interrogatives, the contextual categories of social distance, social power and contingency/entitlement level show a range of distribution for this construction in the SBCSAE. Willingness interrogatives occur in intimate, socio-cultural, pedagogical and transactional contexts, in all three social power contexts and with c/e levels ranging from 1 to 5. Unlike resource or permission interrogatives, no strong functional patterns for these forms emerge with the tokens in the SBCSAE. The following section will describe the general contextual features and functions of these utterances and propose several possible patterns that will need more data to confirm.

5.4.3.1 *Do you wanna* and *you wanna*

The forms *do you wanna* and *you wanna* make up 7 of the 9 willingness interrogatives in the SBCSAE. The elliptical interrogative construction *you wanna* is marked as a question by rising intonation and a question mark in the transcript. The form *you wanna* occurs in a socio-cultural context— that is between close friends and family members— but two instances of *do you wanna* also occur in an intimate and socio-cultural context, thus it is unlikely that the *do* is uniformly dropped in informal contexts. The following examples show the distribution of these forms.

(140) Transcript 13

1 KENDRA: ... I shouldn't blow this out.
2 .. Dad,
3 do you wanna try <X it X> for me?
4 ... (SNORT)
5 KEVIN: <VOX<@ Oh[=,
6 MARCI: [<VOX Oh=.
7 KEVIN: gro=ss,
8 that's nasty @>VOX>].
9 MARCI: Gro][2=2]ss VOX>.
10 KEVIN: [2@2]
11 WENDY: [2What2].
12 KEVIN: Cause she has a co=ld.
13 [She's gonna] b=low it all [2over the2] cake.

In (140), Kendra, who is celebrating a birthday, asks her father to blow out her birthday cake candles for her in line 3, *do you wanna try it for me?* This is an intimate context request, spoken by a daughter to her father, thus a low – high social power context. The contingency/entitlement level is fairly high (4), since this is an unusual request. Typically the person who is celebrating her birthday will blow out the candles. However, she gives several strong reasons for not following the normal pattern. She snorts loudly in line 4, while her family members (excluding her father, however) react quite strongly, describing her action as *gross* (lines 7,9), and *that's nasty* (line 8). Presumably Kendra has done this extreme snort to demonstrate why she should not be the one to blow out the candles. Her brother Kevin explains, *Cause she has a cold. She's gonna blow it all over the cake* (line 12-13) to his wife, Wendy. Kendra's father does not respond to her request, and the rest of the family offers to blow out the candles together, which they do. In the moments following her request, Kendra focuses on demonstrating the extreme nature of her cold which will support her case for entitlement to make such an unusual request.

(141) Transcript 45

1 PATRICK: Dumbass.
2 ... So,
3 ... u=m,
4 .. like what are we doing,
5 we='re gonna grab some movies a=nd,
6 CORINNA: .. Yeah.
7 ... [<X looks like X>],
8 PATRICK: [drink],
9 .. cause it's still early.
10 .. Cause you're too sober for me.
11 CORINNA: ... [Well do] you wanna grab me a beer?
12 PATRICK: [@]
13 .. . <X Guess X>.
14 CORINNA: ... Please?
15 PATRICK: ... (SIGH)=

Example (141) is an instance where the speaker uses the willingness interrogative in line 11, *Well do you wanna grab me a beer?*, for sarcasm and humor. She knows that the recipient, Patrick, does not, in fact, want to get a beer for her. Patrick has not offered to get Corinna something to drink, neither does Corinna provide any justifications or reasons for her request, as Kendra does in (140). Instead, Corinna takes Patrick's assertion and even judgment of her, *we're gonna...drink..cause you're too sober for me* (lines 5,8,10), as if the utterance hinted that he wants to get her something to drink, even though she knows that is not his meaning. Ervin-Tripp (1976:44) notes in her discussion of hints that when participants are in "high solidarity, closed networks of communication," they are likely to exhibit "novel or humorous directives resting on shared knowledge about norms, beliefs, habits, events, and personal motives." This appears to be an example of such a "novel or humorous" directive. Corinna and Patrick are close friends, so Corinna knows that when she asks Patrick, *well, do you wanna grab me a beer?* (line 11), that he does not really want to. This is confirmed by Patrick's pause in line 12 and response in line 13, *Guess*. Patrick here reacts to the literal meaning of Corinna's

question, as if she were asking him a *yes/no* information question. He asks her to *guess* whether he would like to grab her a beer or not. Ervin-Tripp (1976:53) also points out this phenomenon, noting that “pragmatic puns pretend a failure to recognize obvious directive intent.” Here Patrick pretends not to understand the directive intent of Corinna’s utterance in line 11. His laugh in line 12 and exaggerated sigh in line 15 helps to confirm that he is teasing her. In addition, the fact that Corinna ignores this intentional misinterpretation of her question and follows up with a *please?* (line 14) indicates that she recognizes the pragmatic pun. That Patrick finally gives in to both acknowledging Corinna’s request and complying is indicated by his loud sigh in line 15. Thus Patrick must accept his punishment for the teasing insult he gives in line 10. Since (141) appears to be an example of an anomalous usage of the *do you wanna* construction, it may be that *do you wanna* constructions are used in contexts when the speaker is unsure that the hearer is willing to comply, just as *do you have X* constructions query the availability of the item being requested. However, more data is needed to determine this as well as to establish what the typical context for this construction as request is.

The final two *do you wanna* constructions occur in contexts with more social distance and both seem to carry stronger assertive force. That is, the speakers of both of these utterances have a strong sense of entitlement to make their requests, the requests themselves are appropriate to the contexts and the listeners comply immediately and without hesitancy. It seems less likely in these utterances that the speakers are querying the hearer’s willingness to comply because they are unsure about it. These utterances are given below:

(142) Do you wanna help me make kiss sounds, ... Okay, here we go. ...

(143) Do you wanna just write on here, that I've paid that fifty [dollars now].

Example (142) occurs at a public storytelling event for children where the speaker is a professional storyteller. Thus it is in some sense both a transactional as well as a pedagogical interactional context. The speaker is telling a version of the frog prince story, and here requests the children to engage with her in the story by making the sound of a kiss as the princess kisses the frog. In another instance of requesting the audience to participate, she uses the modal interrogative, *can I hear you say that?* (see (138) and discussion). With both of these utterances, the form is a strategy the storyteller uses to invite participation and engagement from the audience, giving them a turn in the discourse. It could be, however, that since the *do you wanna* form is potentially a form that can perform the speech act of offering or inviting, the speaker hopes to orient the audience to the sense that she is offering them the opportunity to participate even as she is requesting them to participate.

This strategy of tapping into more than one conventionalized meaning of a phrase as a strategy for achieving compliance has been seen in with example (49) in *let* statements and in (115) in modal statements. The second transactional context willingness modal interrogative request is example (143) which occurs between participants who are involved in a buying/selling transaction.

(144) Do you wanna just write on here that I've paid that fifty dollars now

The speaker has just bought a horse from the hearer, and she asks him to confirm that she paid the appropriate amount by telling him *to write on here, that I've paid that fifty dollars now*. In this case, the speaker has strong reasons for requesting, yet she hedges it by framing it as a *do you wanna* request. Like (142), this is the only hedging or framing strategy used, and the listener immediately complies. Though the participants are completing a transaction, they do seem to have some kind of previously established social relationship (clearly they are both interested in horses), as the speaker then offers

to show the listener around her barn. It may be that for both (142) and (143), the speakers with more social distance between them use *do you wanna* as a token bow to politeness, as noted for *I would like* or *if* statement requests in transactional contexts. It is possible that this usage contrasts with imperatives, where if there is strong entitlement and strong expectancy that the listeners will comply and speakers have a close, established family relationship, they would be more likely to use imperatives for this kind of low c/e context request. If this is the case, more data is needed to see how *if* statements, *would like* statements and *do you wanna* interrogative requests pattern in a conversation.

The elliptical form, *you wanna* occurs three times in the SBCSAE, all in socio-cultural contexts and with low c/e level requests. They occur in both neutral and low-high social power contexts. Despite these similarities, they show two distinct functional patterns. First,

(145) .. you wanna put em in a .. colander, and then .. wash em?

(146) you wanna butter these?

two tokens are spoken by a hostess to a guest. The participants are all helping to prepare for the meal. Earlier in the conversation the guest offers to help simultaneously with the hostess' request that he would help. In (145), the guest has just finished preparing the string beans and asks the hostess where he should put them. She responds by saying, *you wanna put em in a ..colander, and then..wash em?* Her second request to the guest, *you wanna butter these* (146), does not occur as directly a result of a question or offer as in (145), but could be seen as already authorized by the guest's first offer and acquiescence to her request for help. Helping a host prepare a meal is a socially acceptable and even expected activity for guests, particularly if the guest and host already have an established relationship. Thus, unlike (140), the speaker does not need

to justify her request with reasons for her asking. In the third *you wanna* request, the speaker demonstrates a similar level of entitlement and makes no effort to strongly justify his request or remove obstacles, but the results are far different—the listener does not comply with his request. In this case, a group of extended family members have gathered together for a birthday party. Most of the transcript involves the adults talking about various family members and mutual acquaintances. The 15-year-old Dave interrupts this adult conversation to ask his uncle, Dan, to play football with him:

(147) ~Danny, you wanna play football?

In contrast to (145) and (146), Dan has not made any explicit offer to play football with his nephew. In fact, as Dan has been a principle participant in the adult conversation, and his nephew's request is interrupting this activity, it would seem that Dave's request should not carry the same low c/e levels that (145) and (146) do. However, c/e level refers to the references or strategies that the speaker makes to contingencies or entitlement, regardless of what the listener might perceive those contingencies or entitlements to be. In other words, a speaker might make no effort to reduce or eliminate contingencies or make no orientations to his right to make the request while at the same time the listener perceives or knows of contingencies and feels that the speaker does not have a strong entitlement to make the request. A speaker might intentionally ignore contingencies or entitlement in order to make a joke, insult or even as coercive strategy. Other times—and (147) seems to be one of these—the speaker may be unintentionally clueless, missing or even misreading important communicative and social context clues. If the normative pattern for *you wanna* and *do you wanna* forms is low c/e level contexts, then it may be that Dave does not view Dan's participation in the adult conversation as a likely contingency. As a teenager who loves football, if he had to choose between talking and

playing football, football would be the obviously preferred activity. Dave may then be projecting his views onto his uncle.

This, in fact, may be why he uses the phrase *do you wanna* – he may be both offering Dan a chance to do (Dave assumes) a favorite activity as well as asking for the benefit of getting someone to play football with him. It is clear that Dan is interested in football, as throughout the conversation he occasionally stops to ask Dave about the score or a particular play of a football game that is on television. It appears that Dan is both participating in the adult conversation and keeping tabs on the football game. It is also very likely that in previous family gatherings, Dan has played football with Dave, which might give Dave a stronger sense of entitlement to ask this time. Thus, while in this case Dave's evaluation of the contingencies and entitlement do not reflect the reality of the context, his use of the form *you wanna* shows this viewpoint of reality.

The limited examples of this form and the seemingly wide distribution of the construction across various contexts makes it difficult to make strong predictions about the contexts in which it is likely to occur. However, a few possible patterns emerge that need further testing. One function of *do you wanna* and *you wanna* may be that they are likely to occur in low c/e level contexts, both in close and wide social distance environments. In the two high c/e level contexts where this construction occurs, the participants provide evidence that the use of this form is an exception. In (140), the speaker provides strong entitlement for why she is making this unusual request, but the request in itself is still relatively simple and straightforward to accomplish and in some sense could perhaps be viewed as an offer to benefit or honor the listener since blowing out birthday candles is an activity typically restricted to just the birthday person. In (141) the speakers "rel[y] on the contrast between what is expected and what occurs" as a strategy for communicating sarcasm and humor (Ervin-Tripp 1976:64). Both of these

exceptional uses occur with speakers who are very close friends and family where it is perhaps more likely for unconventional requests and teasing to occur (see Ervin-Tripp 1976:44).

5.4.3.2 *Do you think you want* and *would you like*

The final willingness interrogative forms occur only once in the SBCSAE. The first form, *do you think you want*, is a variation on the *do you want* construction, with the addition of a hedging expression *you think* (see Fraser 2010). This utterance occurs between a husband and wife, where the speaker employs three orientations to lack of contingency (hedging and two reason statements) and to high contingency (a direct willingness query and two downgraders that allow the recipient to decline).

(148) Transcript 34

- | | | | |
|----|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | KAREN: | .. Yeah=. | |
| 2 | | .. Do you think you want to read that together? | E1 |
| 3 | | ... That interest you at all? | C1 |
| 4 | SCOTT: | ... Unhunh. | |
| 5 | KAREN: | ... Cause if it -- | |
| 6 | | If it really wouldn't, | C2 |
| 7 | | if you're just saying that to make me happy, | C3 |
| 8 | | then[=], | |
| 9 | SCOTT: | [No]=, | |
| 10 | | [2I thi%-2] -- | |
| 11 | KAREN: | [2I didn't2] [3n= yea=h2]. | |
| 12 | SCOTT: | [3I'm=3], | |
| 13 | | ... I think it probably would, | |
| 14 | KAREN: | ... It seemed like it would be fun to read out loud. | E2 |
| 15 | | ... And I don't wanna start it if we're going to read it together. | E3 |
| 16 | | I don't want to start it <X on my own X>, | |

Here the speaker, Karen, asks her husband if he wants to read a particular book: .. *Do you think you want to read that together ... That interest you at all* (lines 2-3). She seems to be using the *do you think you want* form to literally query the willingness of the hearer rather than purely as a form for eliciting a beneficial action (cf. (143) and (139)(b)),

though it does also function as a request for the action to read a book. However, unlike (143), the speaker does not expect that the action being indirectly requested will be performed immediately—that is, she does not expect Scott to pick up the book she is referencing and begin reading it in that moment the way that the buyer in (143) does expect the seller to write that fifty dollars as been paid. However, she does expect a verbal response to her query, which Scott gives in line 4: ... *Unhunh*. By verbally answering the literal meaning of Karen's utterance in lines 2-3—that he wants to read the book— Scott does commit himself to performing the action in the future.³⁵ This direct query of willingness for doing a future action is perhaps why the form *do you think you want* is both used by the speaker and why it is understood and answered first as an information question and secondly as a request.

However, Karen is not satisfied with her husband's positive response. She seems to doubt that his *Unhunh* (line 4) reflects a strong desire to read the book with her. This is evident in her immediately providing him with a socially acceptable reason to decline her request: ... *Cause if it -- If it really wouldn't, if you're just saying that to make me happy* (lines 6-7). She recognizes that acknowledging unwillingness is a dispreferred response (Schegloff 2007) and that often people try to avoid giving outright assertions of unwillingness, so she gives Scott a chance to answer honestly in case his first answer in line 4 was not an accurate reflection of his willingness. In addition, she tells him why she prefers an honest answer to her willingness query: ... *And I don't wanna start it if we're going to read it together. I don't want to start it <X on my own X>* (lines 15-16). She plans to read the book whether Scott is willing to read it with her or not. She will wait to read it if he is willing, but presumably, will read it immediately if Scott does not want to read it. This

³⁵ Whether commitments to perform a future action in a request can count as compliance or not is an issue not discussed here. For this study, a commitment to comply is counted as compliance.

adds both a justification to her query—she needs to know Scott’s willingness in order to make decisions about her future actions—as well as a level of pressure on Scott to tell her the truth. If he is affirming willingness just to be polite, this lack of transparency will prevent her from performing an activity that she values highly (Karen is clearly a person who cares a lot about reading, as the first half of the transcript records her at work—in a bookstore).

The last willingness interrogative form, *would you like*, like other willingness interrogative forms, occurs as an offer or invitation. The appearance of this form in the SBCSAE shows a strikingly ambiguous context. It occurs in Transcript 3, where a couple and their guest are preparing dinner. Examples (145) and (146) already discuss some of the interactions between these participants, both of which happen after the following exchange:

(149) Transcript 3

1	12.96 14.21	MARILYN:	.. (H) Oh,
2	14.21 15.21		... fabulous.
3	15.21 16.52		... (H) [~Peter],
4	16.26 16.54	ROY:	[X]
5	16.52 19.09	MARILYN:	would [2you like to2] ... string the bea=ns?
6	16.60 17.30	PETE:	[2What can I do2].
7	19.09 19.36		Sure.

The timing of this exchange is what is most striking. The sections of the transcript in numbered brackets indicate that two speakers are speaking at the same time. Thus, the *you like to* in line 5 and *what can I do* in line 6 are uttered at the exact same time. The time stamps also highlight the overlap. Marilyn’s utterance in line 5 begins at 16.52 and Peter’s in line 6 at 16.60, just 8 hundredths of a second after Marilyn’s. In line 6 Peter is clearly offering to help with meal preparation, and if this utterance occurred before

Marilyn's request, *would you like to string the beans*, then her utterance would make sense as an invitation to help in response to an offer. But Marilyn's request actually begins in line 3 (at 15.21 seconds into the transcript), over a second before Peter's. Does Marilyn sense because of Peter's actions that he is wanting to help? Or does Peter quickly acknowledge that he is very willing to help prepare dinner—an expected social action for visiting guests who are close friends with the hosts—because he guesses what Marilyn is about to ask? Either way, it is clear that Marilyn uses the interrogative construction *would you like* in a context both where she expects Peter to comply and Peter expects Marilyn to ask for his help with dinner.

These two willingness interrogative forms both demonstrate ambiguity. At one end, (148) seems to be more literally a query about the speaker's willingness rather than strictly a request for action, and on the other extreme, (149) seems to be hardly a literal question of the speaker's willingness, as he offers to comply with the request before the speaker has even stated the specific action she is requesting. With just one token each for these forms, it is not clear if these contexts represent a pattern.

The category of willingness interrogatives in the SBCSAE in all its forms share several characteristics: they present options to the hearer as well as specifically query the willingness of the hearer. Examples (140), (147) and (148) seem to be cases where the speaker is unsure about the hearer's willingness to comply and the utterance functions as a query about this, much like a resource interrogative functions as a query about the possibility of the action happening. The speakers in (141) seem to flout this convention, as the speaker knows that the hearer is specifically *not* willing to perform the action, but makes the request as a way to tease him. On the other hand, (142) and (143), the only utterances in this category that occur in a wide social distance context, do not seem to be specifically querying the speakers willingness, but rather seem to assume it.

This assumption is validated by the immediate compliance that the hearers in each of this instances gives. A final group of willingness interrogatives occurring during preparation for a meal, *do you wanna* ((145) and (146)) and *would you like* (149) are ambiguous. The actions occur between speakers in a close social distance context, seem relatively low imposition, but no clear pattern for why the forms occur presents itself. Additional data is needed to confirm more specific patterns.

5.4.4 Conventional Modal Interrogatives

Conventional modal interrogatives include requests made with the forms *can you*, *could you*, *will you* and *would you*. As noted in Section 4.4.2 Conventional Modal Interrogative Results Overview, these request forms occur in the SBCSAE in all context types except for transactional contexts, across a range of c/e levels, though more heavily skewed toward levels 1-2, and at all three social power levels, though more frequently in neutral and low – high social power contexts. The following section will examine each of the forms independently to identify any key patterns.

5.4.4.1 Can you

There are 7 *can you* and 1 *can you just* modal interrogative requests in the SBCSAE. The following tables illustrate the distribution of context type, contingency/entitlement level and social power for these seven tokens.

Table 5-3 Distribution for Context Type of *can you* modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE

Intimate	Socio-cultural	Professional	Pedagogical	Transactional
5	1	1	1	0

Table 5-4 Distribution of C/E Levels for *can you* modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE.

0 – Low	1 – Low	2 – Low	3 – Low	4 – high	5 – high	6 – high
0	3	2	1	1	0	1

Table 5-5 Distribution of Social Power for *can you* modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE

High – Low	Neutral	Low – High
2	3	3

Can you modal interrogatives within the SBCSAE occur in a range of contexts. They occur in all three social power contexts and in both high and low c/e level contexts, though within the low c/e level requests, none occur with a 0 c/e level. While more *can you* modal interrogatives in the SBCSAE occur between speakers of close social distance, they also occur between speakers with wider social distance. The one pedagogical context *can you* modal interrogative occurs at a public lecture, so while it is an utterance occurring between speakers in a kind of student-teacher relationship, it is not a permanent one. In addition, the participants in this exchange do not have a prior social connection, so it could perhaps also be coded as occurring in a transactional context. The actions requested with *can you* modal interrogatives include (seemingly) simple, straightforward tasks which the speaker sees as helpful to improving a situation or accomplishing a particular task.

- (150) Hey ~Brett. Can you move your chair.
- (151) Can you get me some pants?
- (152) Dad, can you give me a toothpick? from ... down there?
- (153) can you open the drawer please.
- (154) ... Oh wait, .. Jeff, can you hang on just a sec?
- (155) Well can you just put em in the bag, ... in there for now,okay?

These tokens all occur in intimate or socio-cultural contexts—between close family members and friends. Except for (155) which has a c/e level of 6, they all occur in low c/e level contexts. The final two *can you* modal interrogatives, occurring in wide social

distance contexts, are requests for rhetorical action---that is, requests for the listener to explain or say something. In essence, a speech act request for a speech act:

(156) Can you expand, uh, just a bit, about your ... thoughts on uh,.. bringing art to the prisons.

(157) Um, I hate to say it, but, ... can you guys go do Q and A?.

Example (156) is spoken by an audience member to a guest lecturer immediately after the moderator has invited the audience to ask question; thus it is an appropriate request for the occasion. Despite this authorization, the audience member still employs some hedging, not only by prefacing the request with a modal interrogative but by her hesitations (*uh*) and qualifications (*just a bit*). In (157), the speaker also uses *can you* in a context where she displays orientation to lack of entitlement. Like (156), this occurs in a context of farther social distance than the *can you* requests in (150) - (155). In this case, the speaker is conducting a training session for some coworkers, thus the context has both professional and pedagogical elements.

In terms of social power, as in the general overview, all three categories are distributed across this form. However, (156) and (157), the two tokens occurring in wider social distance contexts are neutral and low – high utterances, respectively. For examples (150) - (155), the social power contexts range from 2 high – low, 2 low – high, and 2 neutral. Aijmer (1996) notes the function for the *can you* modal interrogative request in British English as “minor favors in transactional settings.” While the SBCSAE does contain fewer conversations in transactional contexts than in intimate and socio-cultural contexts, it is striking that none of the *can you* modal interrogative requests occur in transactional contexts. (This is not to imply that speakers of North American English never use this form in such settings.) This may be due to the fact that Aijmer defines “transactional” differently in her study than it has been defined in the current study, as

strictly interaction between two strangers who are conducting a commercial or business transaction, or it may be that this corpus does not sufficiently capture enough uses of this form to include such a function. Or it may indicate that in naturally-occurring spoken North American English, *can you* modal interrogatives have a slightly different pragmatic function than in their British counterpart. Many of the *can you* modal interrogatives do seem to fall under the categories of asking for “minor favors” (Aijmer 1996), particularly (150) - (154), which all have c/e levels of 1 or 2. Although (156) and (157)³⁶ have higher c/e levels of 3 and 4, since they occur in professional and pedagogical settings, the speakers may be following the pattern seen with *if* statements of hedging their requests because of the wider social distance. However, *can you* modal interrogatives do not appear to be the only modal interrogative used for low c/e level requests, as will be seen in the following sections.

Vine (2009) identifies modal interrogatives as occurring in New Zealand workplace interactions in contexts where the previous conversation has not been related to the request (i.e., in isolation) as well as in high imposition contexts. The utterance in (157), the only *can you* modal interrogative in the SBCSAE that occurs in a workplace interaction does have both of these characteristics. It occurs immediately after a lesson on taking care of penguins (the speaker says, *So that is penguin stuff*, indicating the end of the lesson, then immediately states the request in (157), *Um, I hate to say it, but, ... can you guys go do Q and A?*). However, the generally small number of interactions in workplace environments makes it difficult if this pattern applies in U.S. workplace contexts. Outside of professional contexts, some of the *can you* modal interrogatives also follow the pattern of being used in isolation vs. part of problem-solving or task-

³⁶ Though framed by the speaker as a minor favor, this seems to be more of a persuasive strategy rather than the reality of the request.

related conversation preceding them. (150), (151), (153) and (154) all occur in contexts where the immediate conversation surrounding the modal interrogative is distinctly unrelated to the action being proposed. Thus it is possible that Vine (2009)'s observation of this pattern extends to more than just workplace interactions.

5.4.4.2 *Could you*

The modal interrogative request form, *could you*, occurs only once as a naturally-occurring spoken request in the SBSCAE³⁷. This utterance,

(158) .. Could you grab me a box of tea.

is spoken by a husband to his wife. The request seems to reflect a similar function as (150) - (154), where a family member or friend asks for a “minor favor”—i.e., a simple, relatively easy action that will help them accomplish a task. In contrast to those examples, however, (158) has a c/e level of 4—slightly higher than the c/e levels of 1 or 2 which characterize most of the *can you* modal interrogative requests. Besides hedging the request with the modal, *could you*, the speaker prefaces it with a statement of intention and then ends up complying with the action himself rather than insisting that the listener comply. Thus his use of the modal *could*, perhaps indicates a slightly weaker sense of entitlement than the *can you* requests in (150) - (154). For example, in (152), Kendra asks for a toothpick, presumably because her father is sitting closest to where they are located. Her deictic expression, *from...down there*, which is indicating to her father where the toothpicks are seems to indicate that this is the case. However, with the *could you* request in (158), the broader context given below does not indicate that the action could be more conveniently accomplished by the listener than the speaker.

³⁷ *Could you* modal interrogative occurs twice in reported requests.

(159) Transcript 19

1 FRANK: Maybe [I'll have tea].
2 MELISSA: [anything about that] again.
3 FRANK: .. Could you grab me a box [<X of tea X>].
4 MELISSA: [That was] Grandpa ~Flynn.
5 I asked him something about the Democratic Plat[form].
6 X: [(Hx)]
7 MELISSA: (H) Like what [%all do they believe @]?
8 FRANK: [Oh here,
9 we got this.
10 <X<P I'll just use that P>X>].

First, Melissa's conversation in lines 2,4-7 is not related to Frank's request, but rather the broader conversation that the family is having. Frank interrupts this conversation with his assertion, *Maybe I'll have tea* (line 1), and request, *Could you grab me a box of tea* (line 3). However, lines 8-10 indicate that Frank has found some tea himself, *oh here, we got this. I'll just use that*, thus retracting his request in line 3. Frank's lack of a deictic expression in line 3, as occurs in (152), may indicate that he does not necessarily believe that the tea is any closer to his wife than it is to him, but rather that he would merely like the favor of someone else getting it for him. When circumstances change and he realizes that there is tea close at hand, he is satisfied with retracting the request and getting it himself. It may be that speakers in intimate and socio-cultural contexts are likely to use *could you* as a minor favor without an obviously strong reason for asking (e.g., a deictic reason as in (152), the listener is closer to the object than the speaker) except that the request is relatively simple and clearly within the ability of the listener to comply; on the other hand, speakers may be likely to use *can you* as a minor favor for a simple task within the listener's ability but when there is an additional level of priming that increases the expectation that the listener should comply (e.g., the listener is closer to the object, the speaker is unable to do the action, such as in (150) where the speaker cannot move the chair himself because the listener is sitting in it or (154) where only one person in a

telephone conversation can *hang on*).³⁸ Aijmer's (1996) note that in British English *could you* is the "preferred or unmarked way of making requests" could in fact reflect a similar function in North American English. However, more data is needed to determine this. In addition, it may be that what Aijmer defines as an "unmarked" or "preferred" form for requesting needs further clarification and definition.

5.4.4.3 *Will you*

There are four *will you* modal interrogative requests in the SBCSAE. They all occur in low social distance contexts (1 intimate and 3 socio-cultural), with c/e levels of 2, 4 and 5, and social distance contexts of either neutral or low – high. These results follow similar trends seen with the both *can you* and *could you* requests, as primarily occurring in close social distance contexts, a range of c/e level requests between 2-6 and in neutral and low – high (though not limited to these two) social power contexts. The four *will you* modal interrogative requests are

(160) Will you pass me some of that tea please.

(161) Dale] will you help Mom out.

(162) ... Will you play later?

(163) Uh ~Evelyn, will you do that again <@ sometime- @>.

These utterances demonstrate a range of functions, from passing on object, a kind of function seen with *can you* and *could you* modal interrogatives (as well as let statements and imperatives), requesting a favor (161), (162), as well as requesting a rhetorical action (163) (here the speaker is requesting that a book club member repeat some information from a lecture that she gave in the past, though not immediately). Aijmer (1996)

³⁸ On a purely personal level, I find myself using *can you* for requesting my husband to get me something when he is already close to it, e.g., in the kitchen while I am on the couch, but using *could you* when he is sitting on the couch with me. In that case we are both equally far away from the kitchen, but I do not want to get up myself, so I ask him.

describes *will you* requests in British English as “fairly direct and assertive” which is less a functional description than a description of the speaker’s intention. That is, saying that the use of *will you* makes the request direct and assertive seems to imply that the speaker means to be direct and assertive with this choice of form. As noted in Section 3.4.1.3 Contingency and entitlement, the analysis in the current study is not intended to be an analysis of the potential internal thoughts and motivations of the speaker, as this is nearly impossible to determine. Rather, this study seeks to identify the degree to which the speaker references contingencies and entitlement within the request turn. However, if assertiveness is defined as an utterance with linguistic elements that typically mark commands or indicate a speaker’s sense of urgency, then utterances in (160) - (163) display a range assertiveness. (160) and (161) could perhaps be analyzed as assertive, though both occur between speakers in an equal social power context. (160) carries the sentence-final *please* which in American English typically marks a command (Sato 2008), and (161) is a part of a multi-unit request sequence where the speaker uses increasingly explicit request constructions in order to try to persuade the listener to comply (see Irvin-Tripp’s 1976 discussion on explicitness). The speaker first uses an *I need* statement and an indeterminate agent pronoun for her request, as seen in line 2 of (164):

(164) Transcript 35

1	1023.106	1024.744	MAUREEN:	[5XX .. XX X X=5].
2	1024.744	1027.480		[6I need someone to help Mom.. out to the table6].
3	1027.402	1028.289	ROGER:	[7XX XXX7]?
4	1058.387	1060.270	ROGER:	... Here I am,
5	1060.270	1061.093		see if she[’s X] --
6	1062.595	1063.743	MAUREEN:	[Well ~Dale will help her],
7	1064.012	1065.427	ROGER:	[2See if she trusts a2] drunk.

8	1065.979	1067.373	MAUREEN:	[3Let ~Dale help her please3].
9	1067.373	1067.972	ROGER:	[4No=4],
10	1115.669	1117.052	MAUREEN:	[~Dale] will you [2help Mom out2].

The entire request takes place over several minutes, so the transcript times are given to illustrate this. One of the many participants within hearing range, Roger, offers to comply with Maureen's *need* statement request in lines 3-5 (although his response was not intelligible in the recording, the little bit that exists plus Maureen's assertion in line 6 indicates that Roger has verbally and perhaps even physically moved to comply). Maureen's assertion in line 6, *well Dale will help her* and request to Roger in line 8, *let Dale help her please*, indicate that Dale was the intended agent of her *need* statement request, although she did not state this explicitly. Nearly a minute and a half later, Dale has not responded to her less explicit request, so in line 10, Maureen repeats it: *Dale will you help Mom out*. This time, unlike line 2, all the elements of her request—the agent, action, and beneficiary/object are explicit. While Maureen's utterances in lines 6 and 8 indicate that Dale was actually the *someone* she referenced earlier, these utterances are not requests spoken to Dale himself. Rather, they are spoken to Roger. In these cases, Maureen is stating the agent, action and beneficiary/action, but the essential condition—that the utterance “count as an attempt to get H to do A”—is not operative (Searle 1975:71). Because these previous attempts are less explicit and infelicitous, it could be argued that these iterations of Maureen's request are less direct, while her final iteration, which is fully explicit and fulfills all of the felicity conditions of a request, is fairly direct in comparison to her previous iterations. In addition, Maureen's insistence that Dale comply with the request and that Roger not comply could be evidence that her *will you* modal interrogative is assertive. However, the definitions for these terms need further

quantification in order to make comparisons between the assertiveness of *will you* modal interrogatives and other constructions, such as imperatives.

In contrast to (160) and (161), (162) and (163) seem to less clearly fall into the “direct and assertive” functional description. Although the utterance in (162) is also a repeated version of a request spoken earlier, the first iteration of this request is a *do you wanna* construction (discussed extensively in Section 5.4.3.1 *Do you wanna* and *you wanna*) which may be more frequent in low c/e level contexts where the speaker is responding to an offer or implied offer. This form is in no way less explicit than the *will you* construction, so this is not a case like (137) where the speaker transitions from a less to a more explicit request form. In addition, the social power context of (162) is low – high, thus the speaker does not have entitlement through social power status, nor does he include command markers, such as a sentence-final *please*. In fact, the hearer has refused to comply with this first version of the request (see Section 5.4.3.1 *Do you wanna* and *you wanna* for full discussion of this conversation), thus a more direct and assertive request form might seem counterproductive to achieving his goals. What the speaker does alter, however, is the nature of the request. In the first, he asks for an immediate action, *Danny, you wanna play football?* [i.e., do you want to play now], and in the second he asks for a future action: *will you play later*. This is the speaker’s strategy for persuading the listener to comply, while the explicitness or directness of the request stays the same in both iterations.

Finally, in (163), the speaker not only fails to show additional assertiveness or explicitness, but also demonstrates hesitancy. This *will you* modal interrogative request is prefaced by an *uh*, a 2 second pause and an open-ended time frame for compliance. These hedges seem to indicate the speaker is not intending to be assertive. It also

seems striking that with *will you* requests in the SBCSAE, (160) is the only one in which the listener complies with the request.

In fact, the lack of compliance on three of the four *will you* requests provides a more striking similarity when the surrounding discourse context is examined. What all four requestive utterances share is that the recipient of the request appears to be engaged in an unrelated activity so that the *will you* request interrupts an activity. In (160) the participants are engaged in doing math homework, and the conversation immediately before and after the request for tea is all related to solving a math problem. In (161), the non-compliance of the speaker's preferred hearer indicates that he is, for some reason unavailable to comply. There is circumstantial evidence in the transcript that Dale's reason for not complying are not related to an unwillingness to help. Since the beginning, he has been involved in helping Maureen prepare for the meal. Several times throughout the transcript he is responding to her requests for help and complying. In fact, just 2 seconds earlier at , Dale offers, *You got any extra work for me?* Thus when he does not pick up on Maureen's hints for him to help their mother, it seems more likely that he has found another task to do. (162), as discussed extensively in...., is a very clear interruption of the hearer's conversation with adults with a request to play football. And finally (163), as noted above is a for a lecture that she had previously given. If she were to comply immediately, it would be an odd disruption of the book club members' discussion. Thus the speaker adds the qualifier *sometime*, to indicate that it is a 'later' request (see Vine 2009) as opposed to a 'now' request. So while *will you* requests in the SBCSAE do not seem to share a similar functional profile to British English usage, all four of them involve requests for action that are (or would be) interruptions to the recipients current activity. They are not assertive in the same sense as imperatives or directives in asymmetrical power situations where the speakers expect compliance, but the speakers do seem to

have some degree of entitlement, as they do not incorporate extensive orientation entitlement or contingencies into their requests. Thus *will you* requests, based on this small sample, seem to occur in contexts where the speaker is making either a low imposition request (such as passing tea in (161)) or slightly higher imposition request (such as re-doing a lecture in (163)) by interrupting the hearer already engaged in an unrelated activity. This interruptive element of the utterance can account for the speaker choosing to query if the speaker is willing to perform the task, while the fairly low-imposition nature of the action requested can account for the speaker not using more extensive lexico-syntactical hedging typically found in high c/e requests.

5.4.4.4 *Would you*

The final conventional modal interrogative request form, *would you*, occurs 5 times in the SBCSAE, along with an additional variation, *would you mind*, occurring once. All of the *would you* requests occur in an intimate context type, while the *would you mind* occurs in a professional context (though between work colleagues who seem to know each other well). Furthermore, all six of the *would you* modal interrogatives have the lowest c/e levels of the other conventional modal interrogative categories, with four level 2 c/e and two level 1 c/e. None of the *would you* interrogatives occur with a c/e level higher than 2. They also occur in all three social power contexts, with 3 high – low, 2 low – high and 1 neutral social power contexts. Like imperatives, *would you* modal interrogatives seem to demonstrate fewer references to entitlement as well as a stronger pattern of occurring in high – low contexts, perhaps indicating that *would you* requests occur when the speaker feels a strong expectation of the right to request.

(165) Erika would³ you, [4follow ~Dale out, and⁴] just hand him [5that X X5][6XX XXX
XX?

- (166) Would you just get me a small glass of ging- --) % .. There's a b=ig bottle of it, ..
down, ... in that ... bottle rack [thing]? .. That's th- already open, and I drank out of
it, so you can just give me that.
- (167) Gail4], would you go[5= downstairs5], there are two bottles .. Of [burgundy in the
refrigerator, and bring up a roll of] [2paper towels,
- (168) Would you turn on the light X>]?
- (169) Would you just shut up and <VOX Go=d VOX>.
- (170) Hey would you mind turning off the lights for me.

In contrast to the *will you* requests, the *would you* modal interrogative requests in (165) – (170) are complied with immediately by the listener. (165) – (167) occur during preparations for a family dinner (discussed in Section 4.2.3.1 *I need, I want, I wanna*) and are task-based requests related to these preparations. They are all spoken by the matriarch (one of several adult sisters) who seems to be the one organizing and directing this activity. The requests in (168) and (170) to turn lights on or off are both spoken in low – high social power contexts. The first is spoken by a child to a parent (intimate context), while the second is spoken by an employee to her employer (professional context). The additional hedging, *would you mind* plus the explicit mention of the beneficiary in the phrase *for me*, in the context with wider social distance follows the pattern seen throughout the corpus that even simple, straightforward or expected requests in wide social distance contexts are likely to be hedged more than low contingency requests in close social distance contexts. Finally, the utterance in (169), *would you just shut up*, followed by the loud exclamation, *god*, is spoken by a sister to her brother, who has been teasing her. She is clearly exasperated and frustrated, hence her exclamation. Using *would you* to request as a request to stop an action, especially when that person is frustrated, was noted by Rhinier (2007) in transcripts of situational comedies. However, in

the SBCSAE, requests to stop an action occur with nearly all of the other linguistic forms, not exclusively with *would you* modal interrogatives. None of these patterns follow Aijmer's (1996) functional description of *would you* modal interrogatives in British English, which she says denote tentative requests and suggest social distance and formality. None of the *would you* requests in the SBCSAE are tentative and they all occur in close social distance contexts, with one possible exception, the *would you mind* construction.

5.4.5 Summary of Modal Interrogative Requests

The following table summarizes some of the major trends seen in the SBCSAE data for modal interrogative requests.

Table 5-6 Results Summary for Modal Interrogative Requests in the SBCSAE

Requesting Forms	Social Distance	C/E Level	Social Power	Discourse Function
Resource Interrogatives				Queries ability or possibility
Permission Interrogatives			Neutral or Low – High	Initiate turn, interrupt, request visible object
Willingness Interrogatives		Low c/e Levels (1-2, with several exceptions)		
<i>Can you</i> interrogative	Close Social Distance Wider Social Distance	Low C/E Levels (1-2) Mid C/E Levels (3-4)		Primed requests for minor favors
<i>Could you</i> interrogative	Close Social Distance No data for wide social distance	Higher C/E Level (4)		Non-primed requests for minor favors
<i>Will you</i> interrogative	Close Social Distance		Neutral, Low – High	Low imposition requests that interrupt non-related hearer activity
<i>Would you</i> interrogative		Low C/E Levels (1-2)		Task-based, all complied with

First, the resource interrogative *do you have* shows no sensitivity to the three primary contextual factors of social distance, contingency/entitlement and social power. Speakers seem to use these utterances to request only when they are genuinely unsure of the ability of the listener to comply or the possibility of the action. Second, permission interrogatives, typically *can/could I* forms, show sensitivity only to social power, as they occur only in equal or low – high social power contexts. In most of these cases, the

speakers reference themselves, the beneficiary of the action, in the subject of the query (*can I...?*), as opposed to the conventional form which references the agent or the listener in the subject (*can you...?*). While the subject of these utterances references the speaker, the action being requested is still one that needs to be performed by the listener. But by inverting this conventional form and decreasing the emphasis on the agent, the speakers are able to minimize the force of a dis-preferred or face-threatening action, making it an ideal form for equal or low – high social power interactions. Third, willingness interrogatives, such as *do you wanna* and *would you like*, at first glance seem to show no sensitivity to the three major contextual factors. However, a possible normative pattern shows them occurring in mostly low c/e levels, between 1 and 2, with several exceptional cases that appear to prove the rule. More data is needed to identify other patterns in usage that would explain their distribution.

Finally, the conventional modal interrogative forms, *can you* and *could you* present a possible sensitivity to social distance and degree of contingencies and entitlement in the context. They both occur in close social distance contexts with requests for minor favors. However, *can you* may be used when there is a priming condition that makes the listener a more favorable candidate to comply with the action than the speaker, indicated by c/e levels of 1-2. These priming conditions include the listener's close proximity to a requested object or the inherent impossibility of the speaker to do the action. *Could you*, on the other hand, occurs just once in a close social distance context where the speaker requests a minor favor, but the listener is not in a necessarily more favorable condition to comply nor is the speaker unable to accomplish the desired action. This is demonstrated by a c/e level of 4 as well as by the fact that the speaker does not use any deictic expressions and eventually accomplishes the action himself rather than waiting for the listener to comply. In wide social distance contexts, *can you* interrogative

requests occur with slightly higher c/e levels (3-4) than in close social distance contexts, though the actions being requested are still minor favors. There are no *could you* interrogative requests in wide social distance contexts in the SBCSAE. However, data from COCA indicate that it is widely used in transactional settings.

Will you and *would you* interrogative forms in the SBCSAE also demonstrate varying patterns. *Will you* interrogatives show sensitivity to social power, as they occur only in equal or low – high social power contexts. They also request actions that are not necessarily unusual or difficult, but they are requests which interrupt the hearer's activity and the action being requested would require the hearer to stop his or her current activity in order to comply with the request. As a result, three of the four *will you* requests in the SBCSAE are not complied with. This imposition is not necessarily reflected in the c/e levels of these requests (two of them have a c/e level of 2), since c/e level measures only the degree to which the speaker references contingencies or entitlement rather than what the listener may view as the contingencies or entitlement. In these cases, *will you* interrogatives occur in both low c/e level (2) and high c/e level (4,5) contexts, but the listener's hesitation to comply or outright non-compliance indicates that the speaker may not be evaluating the situation in the same way as the listener. In addition, these requested actions (playing football, reviewing a previous lecture) are not task-oriented requests. This is particularly evident in (164), repeated here in (171):

(171) Dale] will you help Mom out.

Though the initial iteration of this request for action of helping an elderly woman to the porch is presented as a task-oriented request, the conversation in (164) illustrates that another participant, Roger, offers to comply, and in fact does initiate the action. However, despite the fact that the request is being complied with, the speaker continues to insist and finally directly request that Dale do the action, rather than Roger. Since Dale can see

that the action is being completed, he no doubt recognizes that this is not a request for a task to be completed but rather a particular favor that he be the one to do the action.

In contrast to the favor-based actions of the *will you* interrogatives, *would you* interrogatives all involve task-oriented actions. In addition, they show sensitivity to c/e levels, as they all occur with low c/e levels of 1-2. Unlike the *will you* interrogatives, *would you* interrogatives occur mostly with task oriented requests at all three social power levels, and are all promptly complied with by the listener. Though only one token occurs in a wide social distance context, additional COCA data indicates that *would you* interrogatives are used extensively in transactional contexts as well. The tokens and contexts of all four conventional modal interrogative request forms in the SBSCAE do provide a contrasting pattern of sensitivity to the three major contextual factors of social distance, contingency/entitlement and social power, as well as additional elements of the discourse and social context like the kind of action requested (favor vs. task-oriented). However, many of these patterns present possible overlapping contexts, such as *can you* vs. *would you* or lack substantial data to make strong assertions about these patterns (e.g., *could you*).

5.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the major linguistic categories of directives in the SBSCAE, *let* statements, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, modal statements, imperatives and modal interrogatives, all demonstrate varying patterns of sensitivity to features of the linguistic, social, pragmatic, and discourse environments. However, these patterns also demonstrate varying degrees of stability. For example, *let* statements and *if* statements show the highest levels of consistency, while forms such as modal statements or conventional modal interrogatives only suggest possible patterns that need additional data and more refined context analysis to confirm. In addition, the linguistic categories in

this analysis also show overlapping functional and discourse patterns. For example, task-oriented, low c/e level requests occur across *need/want* statement, imperative, and *would you* modal interrogative categories. These patterns and the implications of them will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Within the SBCSAE, the linguistic forms for requestives all illustrate various patterns of sensitivity to the contextual factors noted within this study. That is, no one group of linguistic forms has an identical pattern of use with another group of linguistic forms. Table 5-2 and Table 5-6 illustrate this reality. Besides social power, social distance, contingency and entitlement, requestive forms demonstrate sensitivity to contextual elements such as task-related requests that are part of cooperative activities between speaker and hearer, initiating new pedagogical moves, responding to offers, maximizing cooperation when it is not expected, interrupting an activity, and distinguishing between primed and non-primed requests. This final chapter will first give an overview of the analysis in Section 6.1 Summary and then in Sections 6.2 Implications for theory and 6.3 Practical implications for Language Learners of English discuss some implications of this study for theory and for English language learners. Section 6.4 Future Directions for Additional Research will suggest some additional directions for future research.

6.1 Summary

The current study highlights six syntactic categories of requestive utterances found in the SBCSAE, a spoken, naturally-occurring corpus of North American English. Twelve elements of the context were identified for each form. These include the social distance and social power relationship between speakers as well as their social identity; the degree to which speakers orient to contingencies the listener faces and their own entitlement to make the request; the nature of the directive as a request for action, to prohibit an action or for information; the interactional position of the request utterance within the requestive sequence; the explicitness of the request; and whether the

interaction was a singular requestive utterance or a multi-unit request sequence. In addition to these contextual elements, additional information about the age, gender, occupation and relationship between speakers was available from the meta data in the SBCSAE. Though this analysis did not quantify these features, they were a part of the qualitative analysis of the request sequences analyzed. As predicted by Ervin-Tripp (1976), Brown & Levinson (1987), Curl & Drew (2008), social power, social distance, contingency and entitlement were significant contextual factors in distinguishing which forms occurred in which contexts (See Appendix A for overview of all contingency and entitlement strategies found in the SBCSAE).

However, these factors alone could not account for the distribution of forms. Some forms, such as *let* statements, *if* statements and imperatives, were more easily accounted for with these contextual factors, demonstrating more straightforward patterns that appear to strongly predict the contexts in which these forms occur: *Let* statements occurred in very low c/e level contexts only in high-low or equal social power settings. *If* statements demonstrated sensitivity to social distance and contingency/entitlement (c/e). In wide social distance contexts they were used for low c/e level requests and in close social distance contexts they were used for high c/e level requests. Imperatives also occurred in primarily low c/e level contexts and often in high-low or neutral social power contexts. However, as imperatives and *let* statements, as well as other syntactic requestive forms occurred in similar contexts, it became clear that these three contextual factors alone could not explain the distribution of these forms. Interactional analysis along the lines of conversation analysis revealed additional patterns. For example, imperatives tend to occur in sequences where the participants are collaborating on a task. In pedagogical contexts, this activity is often set up with a *let* statement directive by the instructor and then additional directives that guide the student through the activity occur

as imperatives. A similar pattern between modal interrogatives and imperatives was noted by Vine (2009) in workplace interactions.

The remaining requestive categories, modal statements, modal interrogatives and *need/want* statements presented complex distribution of contextual factors. For some of these categories, the limited number of tokens made it impossible to draw any concrete conclusions. However, by analyzing the utterances within their sequential, interactive contexts, some potential patterns emerge. Modal statements seemed to follow offers previously made by the hearer. *Need/want* statements in bare stem forms occur when the requested action fulfills a shared goal of both participants or is related inherently to the overarching purpose of the interaction. Within this interactional reality, speakers choose *need/want* statements over imperatives when the hearer is not directly participating in the same activity as the speaker. In the SBCSAE, speakers also used *would you* modal interrogatives in this same context. *Need/want* statements also co-occur with imperatives as justification for directives, particularly in high entitlement contexts, such as parent-child interactions. Finally, *need/want* statements in cleft constructions such as *what I would like* occur in high c/e level contexts, along with extensive hedging, mitigation strategies, hesitation and repetition. An overview of the contextual factors and statement requests is shown in Table 5-2.

The final linguistic category of requestives, modal interrogatives, often labeled a “conventionally indirect” strategy and often presented as the iconic requestive strategy for North American English (particularly *could you...*) appears in a range of contextual and linguistic variation in the SBCSAE, and Table 5-6 summarizes these results. As the potentially conventionally default syntactic form for requests in North American English, the modal interrogative’s appearance in a range of high to low social power, imposition and close to wide social distance makes sense. As the default requestive form, we would

expect fewer contextual restraints on this form. Still, detailed interactional analysis of some forms revealed potential patterns, but a limited number of tokens prevent any major conclusions. The patterns found in the SBSCAE contain a wide range of contexts and forms which will need to be tested in larger corpora as well as across interactions in similar environments (e.g., work vs. home environments). Additional analysis of these tokens across similar contexts will help to reveal more precisely the patterns and factors that shape the forms speakers use.

6.2 Implications for theory

What is the implication of these results for the theoretical frameworks in which we study requests? First, the variety of contexts in which a singular syntactical or lexical category can occur supports Watts' (2003) assertion that politeness is not found in a form, but rather in the interaction. The distribution of forms in the SBSCAE illustrates that a static view of a form containing *a priori* a particular degree of 'politeness', such as in Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory that the more direct a request is the less 'polite' it is, is insufficient to explain the empirical data of this study. For example, *need/want* statements occur as low imposition requests, in close social distance and minimal social power difference contexts like (172)

(172) I need someone to help Mom .. out to the table [during a family meal preparation context]

as well as in a low-high asymmetrical power contexts, where the speaker knows the hearer is unlikely to comply with the request:

(173) All I need is your signature so I can .. play the volleyball. On the volleyball team.
[speaker has been grounded as punishment for misbehavior]

The action itself is not inherently difficult, but given the circumstances in (173) of the teen being grounded, the request suddenly becomes a much higher imposition request than

might be expected. Furthermore, a slight variation of the form *I need* occurs in a high imposition, low-high social power and slightly wider social distance context.

(174) .. I think,... you know, like I said, what we need to do, is this board has to realize, ... in my opinion that, .. that they have to come to grips with, the fact that they are responsible, ... for basically what they've created. [spoken by a board member of an arts organization to the board director]

Though the action being requested is less explicit (the speaker does not elaborate exactly what actions he wants the board director to take in order to make the board realize...they are responsible for something), it is prefaced with *what we need to do*, a *need* request, significantly mitigated by the cleft construction *what + [we need to do]* and a first person plural subject.

This same distribution of forms can be seen even with imperatives, which overwhelmingly occur in low c/e contexts and generally in high-low or neutral social power and close social distance contexts, but in fact also occurs in a very high imposition context, where the speaker attempts to coerce his girlfriend into sharing some gossip with him. Although an outsider to this conversation might conclude that the speaker is being rude, the hearer gives no indication that she interprets his imperatives as rude. She accepts his teasing with laughter and as a validation of a close relationship with him. The implication for such variation is that an interactional framework as suggested by Watts (2013) provides a better explanation for the forms that speakers choose in particular contexts because it draws on the local sequential context as an explanation for the forms speakers use as well as the broader socio-linguistic realities of social power and distance. Such a framework is particularly helpful for highlighting the contrastive distribution of one or two requestive forms at a time (e.g., Wootton 1981, Curl & Drew 2008, Vine 2009, Zinken 2015). A more general study such as the current one can (and

does) draw broad conclusions that are helpful, but cannot fully account for the contexts in which speakers choose particular forms in the detail that these more focused studies do.

Second, in contrast to what Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness might predict, a variety of forms can occur in the same socio-linguistic contexts. Some tokens within the SBCSAE corpus and across various linguistic forms do occur in similar, and sometimes seemingly identical, contexts. However, what constitutes a 'similar' or even 'identical' context needs to be defined, as there are several ways in which tokens from the SBCSAE could be viewed as occurring in similar contexts. For example, the following two utterances, an imperative and a *need* statement both occur during preparation for a meal, are spoken by a parent or adult of higher social power to younger family members, and involve task-oriented actions.

(175) Take this to the table please. [37e]

(176) Stephanie, w- I need you and ~Erika to carry chairs from the front porch, those four little white ones, and they'll stack, you can stack two together, and carry them around. ... A=nd, I'll put this out, and we're ready to eat.

In this case, the differing requestive forms occur in contexts which share similar socio-linguistic (social power, social distance) and functional elements (*e.g.*, carry items to a table). However, in the case of (175), an imperative is used when the participants are both actively cooperating in the task of making tamales. This usage confirms Zinken (2015:37) who notes that "an imperative format can often expect compliance because the requested action is already expectable and/or part of a jointly owned project." The hearer, Shane, although a teenager, demonstrates throughout the transcript that he is not only an active participant in the activity of making tamales but that he is an expert as well by giving cooking advice to his mother and grandmother. He tells them, *You got enough in there already. You don't need anything more... Cau=se, you put all that ... garlic ..*

peppers .. chili stuff in there, ... plenty of salty stuff in there (though he ends up being incorrect about his assessment). This illustrates his “bilateral” participatory role (Rossi 2012) as an equal or co-owner in an activity which the imperative utterance helps to facilitate. In contrast, Stephanie and Erika in (176) are intermittently helping with preparation for the meal but primarily participating in a conversation about choosing colleges (they are also in their late teen years). In this case, the *I need* requestive form acknowledges that the speaker is interrupting the hearers’ activity. Zinken (2015:24) suggests that *can you* requests are likely to be used in a context where requested activity is not in the speaker’s “current trajectory of action and the requested action would contribute to some activity that is pursued only by the requester.” In (176), only one of these conditions apply: the requested activity is not in the recipients’ “current trajectory” (Zinken 2015:24) as they most likely would have kept on talking instead of volunteering to assist with meal preparation. But the request *to carry chairs* is not an action that is only relevant to the speaker, as Maureen indicates when she says, *I’ll put this out and we’re ready to eat*. By carrying chairs to the table, the hearers participate in an activity—eating—that is being pursued by all three participants. Thus (175) and (176) illustrate that more than social distance, power and imposition affect the forms a speaker chooses to request. In this case, the degree of participation in an “established cooperative activity” (Zinken 2015:24) affects the forms speakers use to request. This degree of participation can only be identified in the interactive context, as it depends on what the participants are doing before the request is made. Although the current study did not initially set itself up within a strictly interactive framework, the complexity and variety of the results have demonstrated that such a framework is necessary to fully understanding the pattern of contexts and forms in North American English. As Watts (2003:114) notes, a framework such as Brown & Levinson’s is inadequate because where

“the variables are taken to be static social entities that determine the degree of politeness offered....power and social distance become reified, taking on an existence outside the social sphere of the interactants rather than being themselves constructed...through the interaction itself.”

The current study, especially in setting up social power and distance, attempted to extract these variables out of the interaction and establish them as independent. Subsequent research with this data will benefit from a more thoroughly interactional framework, and provide a more coherent explanation for why speakers choose the forms they do in requesting.

In another case of ‘similar contexts’, two or more requestive forms occur in an apparently identical context because both forms are used by the speaker to request the same action. In these cases, the utterances can occur within the same turn-at-talk, as in (177), where a *let* statement is immediately followed by an *I want* statement:

(177) Let me see. I want you to pull them all out. I want you to pull every bottle out.

Thus it appears that these two forms occur in nearly identical contexts since they occur consecutively. The only difference in context is the immediate, local discourse context changes. *Let me see* occurs initially and *I want you to pull them all out* has a slightly different discourse context, in that it is the second iteration of the request for the action of showing an object to the speaker. Its immediate linguistic and discourse context is that it follows a *let* statement. Several minutes later, the speaker repeats these forms, varying only the number of times the repetition occurs: three *let* statements followed by an *I want* statement. These repetitions feel more like verbal exclamations points and attempts to cajole the hearer into complying (though it is evident from the transcript that the speaker begins to comply even before the speaker has finished the request). They also illustrate one of the primary functions of a *need/want* statement: to add entitlement to a directive already given in the form of an imperative (see Section 5.2.3 *Need/Want* Statements) or

let statement. This will be discussed further in Section 6.3 Practical implications for Language Learners of English.

Requestive forms may occur within the same conversation for a particular requested action, but they may occur across several turns-at-talk, as discussed in Section 5.2.3.4 Multi-unit request . Example (89) is such a case where the speaker uses several different linguistic forms for requesting an action throughout a longer, protracted conversation with the hearer. Here, the three forms she uses are repeated.

(178) *Multi-unit request sequence from Example (89)*

- a) You could p- take these Coke cans,...and put them in the bag full of Coke cans that are in your bedroom...and then we can do can squish. And squish em. For the recycling bin....Okay?
- b) Well can you just put em in the bag,...in there for now, okay?
- c) What I'd like you to do is put those cans away please.

The various linguistic forms, a modal statement, modal interrogative and a *want* statement are produced in reaction to the responses of the listener, which in the case of (178) is the hearer's lack of compliance, both verbal and non-verbal, to the request. As an interaction between a parent and her ten-year-old child, this multi-unit sequence illustrates a similar pattern demonstrated by Craven and Potter (2010) who look at British English directives in family discourse. They found that the directive forms parents used usually progressed from more indirect to increasingly direct—essentially “that the multiple directives upgrade the issuer's entitlement and downgrade the recipient's contingencies” (Craven and Potter 2010:426). The forms in (178) illustrate such a progression, starting with a suggestive *you could* in (a) that on the surface does not fully invoke the parent's license to demand action from her son. The *you could...* form of the directive makes almost no reference to the speaker's entitlement to request, presenting the action in a way

that emphasizes the hearer's freedom of choice (though in reality, he has no such real freedom) (Brown & Levinson 1987). It presents the initial request in terms of very low speaker entitlement. When the son capitalizes on the freedom of choice his mother presents him by offering an excuse that his feet hurt, the speaker modifies the nature of the request, this time couching it as a modal interrogative in (b), the conventional format for a request. While this form ostensibly queries his ability to perform the action, the transition from a suggestion to a explicit request form signals the speaker's entitlement to require the action from the speaker and her willingness to persist until the son complies. Finally, when her son has failed to perform the action requested, she ignores his unwillingness to comply and repeats the directive in bald terms of her entitlement In (c), the *want* statement in as a cleft construction presents the directive strictly in terms of the speaker's entitlement. The phrase-final *please* marks the directive nature of the utterance (Sato 2008). Again, here we see that a strictly socio-linguistic analysis could not explain the variation in forms, since the social power, social distance and imposition of the requested action do not change throughout the exchange. But as the interaction unfolds, the participants construct their turns in a way that addresses the contingencies as they are revealed, thus accounting for the variation in requestive forms. Other examples of speakers managing the contingencies presented as the interaction unfolds have been explicated in previous sections of the dissertation.

Finally, alternate linguistic requestive forms that share basic socio-linguistic and discourse features occur in the SBCSAE. (175) and (176) illustrate this, as well as some elements of (178). The following two requests occur within the same transcript and are spoken by the same speaker to the same listener, though in two distinct discourse turns:

- (179) Stephanie, w- I] need you and ~Erika to carry chairs from the front porch,those
four little white ones, and they'll stack, you can stack two to[gether, and] [2carry
them around2]. ... A=nd,I'll put this out, and we're [ready to eat]
- (180) Erika would3] you, [4follow ~Dale out, and4] just hand him [5that

These two requests, a *need* statement and a modal interrogative with *would you*, are both spoken by an older relative, Maureen, to a younger one, Erika. They involve actions related to preparing for a meal and occur within the same event, though not within the same local discourse context, as (180) occurs at 11.152 seconds and (179) occurs at 985.082 seconds. Maureen uses these two forms almost exclusively in her requests for help in preparing the meal. She uses two additional *I need* statements addressed to unspecified recipients (*I need someone..../ I need your brother-in-law*) and a *would you* interrogative to an additional adult family member, Gail. In the contexts of all the requests mentioned here, the recipients appear to be engaging in another activity and complying with Maureen's request requires them to interrupt their current activity and engage in the requested action. While Zinken and Ogiermann (2013:265) note that the "polar interrogative form" (specifically *can you*) is used in British English and Polish as requests for an object in such an environment, the examples here in American English are not exclusively limited to the modal interrogative since *I need* statements occur here too.

The age of the hearer is not a distinguishing factor either, as the recipient of both (179) and (180) are in their late teens. In addition, Maureen addresses adults with both the *I need* and *would you* formats. Both formats express the high entitlement of the speaker to make the request, either by referring merely to the speaker's need for the action to take place or by the lack of extensive hedging in the *would you* requests. However, they do require the speaker to move to a different location or expend some effort—to carry items to another room or in the case of the others, to bring an item to the

speaker. But why the speaker orients the request in (179) in terms of her need, while orienting the request in (180) to the hearer's desire appears to be, at this point, unclear. Zinken and Oigermann (2013:261) suggest that there are environments that "appear to provide relevant cues" for more than one requestive form, and that speakers may choose one over the other. This may perhaps be one of those "mixed environment" (Zinken and Oigermann 2013:261). At this point, both requestive forms are effective in achieving the speaker's goals of getting the family ready to eat and compelling the less active participants to contribute to this goal. Another possibility is that a video recording of the interaction would highlight alternate environmental cues for the two forms. Fox (2015) proposes an explanation of request sequences that depends on visual as well as linguistic cues. It is possible that an element such as distance (see also Ervin-Tripp 1976) between speaker and hearer or hearer and the object of action could explain the distribution of these forms.

In summary, repetition in requestive utterances in the SBCSAE illustrates that an interactional framework for analyzing the requestive forms speakers choose provides a better explanation than Brown & Levinson's politeness model. Brown & Levinson (1987) cannot account for more than one form occurring in a range of sociolinguistic settings not can it explain why a variety of requestive forms occurring in overtly identical contexts. An interactive framework where the participants orient to their perception of entitlement and the contingencies a listener faces (Curl & Drew 2008) explains more easily the progression of requestive forms in a context where the essential social distance, social power and imposition does not change, while at the same time a sequential analysis of the syntactic forms speakers choose to request illustrates that speakers are sensitive to the activities that recipients are and are not a part of (Zinken and Oigermann 2013). It

also can allow for mixed environments that provide cues to speakers for more than one form, thus explaining why certain forms appear in nearly identical contexts.

6.3 Practical implications for Language Learners of English

One of the primary motivations for the investigation of the contexts in which requests occur in naturally occurring spoken American English is the potential application to learners of English. Pragmatic competence is one of the more difficult aspects of fluency to achieve in a second language (Kaspar 1997, Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011). It is not sufficient to say that a particular form is more polite (*e.g.*, *would you please* is more polite than an imperative), as the current study illustrates. Linguistic forms do not carry inherent politeness that can simply be applied to any context indiscriminately. Rather, a more helpful way of framing polite (or “politic”) usage (Watts 2003) is to understand the strategies and forms that are available for requesting, identify the contexts in which those forms are used and then choose the appropriate forms and strategies. And without detailed analysis of the forms English speakers use and the contexts they occur in, it is impossible to create useful tools for teaching effective strategies in requesting to learners of English.

Several observations and applications concerning this topic can be made. First, the patterning of imperatives, *need/want* statement requests, modal interrogatives as in

(181) Hey ~Steven? Come on over here, I want you to grate this cheese for me. Okay?

(182) Erika would you, follow ~Dale out, and just hand him [5that X X5][6XX XXX XX?

indicate that these forms, particularly in contexts which contain only minimal modifiers—in (181) an initial direct address and a phrase final tag question, and in (182) the single lexical item, *just*—carry high entitlement and low imposition. Thus, teaching learners of English to simply add “politeness markers” such as a single lexical downgrader or to use a past tense modal as opposed to a present tense modal, does not go far in enabling them

to avoid impolitic utterances. These strategies appear most often in low imposition requests when they occur in transactional or institutional settings. In addition, *let* statement, *if* statements, modal statements, imperatives, *need/want* statements and modal interrogatives all occur in high entitlement, low contingency contexts. This means that identifying requestive forms in isolation do not completely explain the degree of appropriateness they will carry in any given context. Understanding the sequential patterns that these forms often occur in will help learners to differentiate appropriate contexts in which to use them. Imperatives carry clearly high entitlement and occur in sequences where participants are engaged in a previously established cooperative activity and the imperative requests an action that advances that activity, such as in the tamale-making sequence of Transcript 37, where a sequence of imperatives advances the tamale-making process. The pedagogical pattern seen with *let* statements and imperatives seems to be a variation on this theme. Once the activity has been established by the instructor with a *let* statement, a string of imperatives follows to guide the students through the activity (see also Vine 2009)

Second, in high c/e level requests---where American English speakers demonstrated sensitivity to high contingencies and low entitlement, the syntactic category of request was not so significant as the lexico-syntactic modifiers and the strategies orienting to entitlement and contingencies. Speakers used modal interrogatives, *if* statements, *need/want* statements, imperatives and modal statements for the core requestive utterances. However, in low-high and neutral social power interactions and non-intimate environments, high c/e requests are heavily qualified with lexico-syntactic modifiers, interrupters, hesitation, restatement as well as external modifiers:

(183) Transcript 29

1	558.430 559.690	LARRY:	Now what we'd want you to do,
2	559.690 560.440		in this case,
3	560.440 561.400		is maybe --
4	563.100 563.920		.. See this this --
5	563.920 565.940		The end of this room might be modified.
6	565.940 566.940		... So,
7	566.940 568.780		... all we wanna know is,
8	568.780 571.690		... is that we can eventually be able to do this.
9	572.160 572.780		... Alright.
10	572.780 576.590		... To to get % .. get this= ... duct work done,
11	576.590 577.070		when we do --
12	577.070 578.990		when we do the modification to [the] --

In (183) the initial requesting form *now what we'd want you to do* is a cleft-construction *want* statement but the requested action does not immediately follow this construction. First the speaker follows it with a contingency marker (*in this case*) and then a hedge, *maybe*. When the proper syntactic sequence would be to state the action he is requesting from the hearer, the speaker instead interrupts the request completely and inserts a grounder that justifies his requests: *See...this this—the end of this room might be modified* (lines 4-5) The requestive head is re-stated in lines 6-7, *so...all we wanna know is*, as another cleft construction. It is not until line 8, 10 seconds after the request sequence was initiated that the actual action is stated. This hesitation to come to the point of action by interrupting the request itself with additional qualifiers and hedges appears in (184), another low-high, high c/e level request.

(184) Transcript 10

1	267.30 269.60	PHIL:	(H)2] ... And what we will do (Hx),
2	269.60 270.15		is I think,
3	270.15 271.45		.. what we're gonna probably wanna do,
4	271.45 272.39		or what I would like to do,
5	272.39 274.09		is I would like to take a day.
6	274.09 274.79	BRAD:	M[hm].
7	274.44 276.96	PHIL:	[(H)]= ... %d=- during the week,
8	276.96 278.11		and we'll just take a whole day.

9	278.11 278.61	.. That day.
10	278.61 279.57	An=d myself,
11	279.57 280.75	(H) uh,
12	280.75 283.06	if we have a uh= facilitator,
13	283.06 283.56	BRAD: .. Mhm.
14	283.56 284.94	PHIL: (H)= U=m,
15	284.94 285.69	that that person,
16	285.69 288.47	you and !Patricia and .. %!D= !Donna,
17	288.47 289.02	BRAD: .. Mhm,
18	289.02 289.97	PHIL: and maybe one other,
19	289.97 291.37	or two other board members would,
20	291.37 293.02	.. actually spend that day and just say okay,
21	293.02 294.47	this is what went on at that [retreat].
22	294.09 294.39	BRAD: [Mhm].
23	294.47 296.17	PHIL: (H)= These <X are the X> con[2cer=ns2],
24	295.74 296.21	BRAD: [2Yeah2].
25	296.17 297.62	PHIL: (H) .. These were comments,
26	297.62 299.72	.. %= these are the ones that we feel we can address.
27	299.72 301.17	.. [These are the ones that] pertain to you.

The essential request and its syntactic form appears in line 5 as a relatively simple *need/want* statement: *I would like....* However, it is prefaced by three cleft clauses that re-phrase the *want* statement in terms of first person plural (see Brown & Levinson 1987), interrupted by a hedge, *I think*. The speaker spends a great deal of time pausing between phrases as he builds up to the request, which finally appears in line 20: *spend that day and just say*, 19 seconds after the requestive head construction in line 5. In addition, the speaker does not even name the hearer as the agent of the request (though one participant of several) until line 16, saying *you and Patricia and Donna*. The speaker uses repetition to delay the statement of the requested action, repeating the time the action is being requested three times: *and we'll just take a whole day* (line 8), *that day* (line 9), *actually spend that day* (line 20). The speaker also spends a significant amount of time listing all of the other participants in the action that he is hoping will be there, starting with himself, *myself* (line 10), *if we have a uh facilitator...U=m...that that person* (lines 12-15).

The lexico-syntactic modifiers in these two cases include cleft constructions, hedging phrases like *I think, maybe, alright*, and fillers like *um*. Most significant is the timing of the requests themselves. There is significant delay between the initial construction of the request head (in both cases *I/we would like/want*) and the naming of the requested action itself, between 10-19 seconds. This delay is filled with both blank space, repetition, and interruptive grounders. There is an additional extended stretch of time in the description of the action being requested. In (183) the speaker takes an additional 10 seconds to state the entire request. In (184) the speaker takes an additional 9 seconds. In contrast, low c/e level requests with *need/want* statements take significantly less time and lack the high degree of repetition and hedging that these two illustrate. (172), (173), (175), (176) and (179) are low c/e level *need/want* statement requests that take 1-3 seconds for the speaker to articulate, use the simpler *I need* format rather than a cleft-construction. In addition, high c/e level requests between in asymmetrical power contexts, particularly the parent-child interactions such as (178) may contain some of the strategies seen in (183) and (184), such as cleft constructions, they do not contain the extended fillers and hesitations seen in those interactions. The articulation of the directive contains little or no delay between the head request and the action being requested.

The variation in the forms of *need/want* statements is especially relevant in light of some studies which suggest that *need/want* statements are one of the preferred requestive forms that non-native English speakers use in emails to professors, along with direct questions, imperatives and modal interrogatives (Chen 2001, Biesenbach-Lucas 2007, Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011). However, according to Hendriks (2010) who looks at English email requests of Dutch-speakers, “results from the study suggested the underuse of elaborate lexico-syntactic modifier combinations such as subjectivisers and tense/aspect (e.g. ‘I was wondering if...’)...[and,] underuse of elaborate

modification...may reflect negatively on the sender's personality and may result... in pragmatic failure" (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011:3196). Although the current study addresses spoken requests rather than email requests, it powerfully reinforces this conclusion. In low entitlement, high contingency contexts like (183), (184) and even (22), the speakers use "elaborate modification" both in the head act, as well as syntactically modifying the head act itself, extensive hedging and manipulating the grammatical tense and aspect (cf. lines 1-3 of (184)). In contrast, high entitlement, low contingency requests such as those in (172), (175), (176), (177) as well as a majority of the requestive utterances in the SBCSAE contain simpler mitigation devices, such as past tense modals and the use of *please*. Biesenbach-Lucas (2006:100) noted that non-native speaker emails were characterized primarily by these same modifications but lacked "linguistic flexibility to use different modification devices for different request types" (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011:3196). If the same applications can be made to spoken requests (and this is not at all certain—just a supposition that needs further analysis), then it may indicate that more attention should be paid in exposing learners of English to native speaker data, with the intent of helping them gain more "linguistic flexibility" in exposing them to a variety of the syntactical combinations and modifications that native speakers use in high imposition requesting. These might include cleft constructions, moves such as *I was wondering if*, and re-phrasing of requestive forms, such as in (183), lines 1 and 7: *Now what we'd want you do to/...So, all we wanna know is, is that*. In addition, strategies such as hesitations, fillers and delaying/interrupting the explicit mention of the requested action can be pointed out as all characteristics of native speakers' high imposition requests.

Of course, what is left unsaid here is that the difficulty in achieving this linguistic flexibility and awareness of how to frame high imposition requests may not be primarily a

linguistic problem, but one of social awareness. Indeed, Chen (2006:45) suggests that a non-native English speaker's "pragmatic failures 'did not result from a lack of linguistic knowledge about native speaker norms, but from a strategic choice of using these forms to construct an identity that she desired to perform'" (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011:3196). While the purpose of the current study has not been focused on determining why North American English speakers evaluate some contexts as requiring high c/e level mitigation, a cursory overview of all of the 5-6 c/e level requestive contexts in the SBCSAE reveal two possible motivations for these orientations to entitlement. First, 5-6 c/e level contexts in the SBCSAE require significant effort from the recipient with very little potential reward (except perhaps the satisfaction of helping). In (183) a contractor faces a request for preparing a room for ductwork which he will not get paid to install. (184) requires the hearer to attend an all-day meeting with his board members that appears to be outside of their regular scheduled meeting times. Other 5-6 c/e level requestive contexts include a request to babysit (59), to read a book that is potentially uninteresting to the hearer (148), and to prepare and do a lecture that the hearer had done previously (163). All of these require significant time and/or effort by the hearers to comply with. The second kind of high c/e level context occurs when speakers face significant resistance by the recipient to grant the request. This often motivates them to either address contingencies or assert entitlement, as in the parent-child interactions in (115). Besides parent-child interactions, the environments in the SBCSAE in which these 5-6 c/e level requests occur include a family argument (101), discussion between a husband and wife about the placement of a plant (61), and a boyfriend's injunction to his girlfriend to gossip about a mutual friend (123). Additional evidence for these two categories of high c/e level requestive contexts lies in distinct patterns in the unfolding of the interactive sequence. The first category, high-effort requestive contexts, displays much of the lexico-syntactic strategies described

in the preceding paragraph—cleft constructions, mitigation devices, hesitations, fillers and re-statements—in the initial presentation of the request. In these environments, the speaker seems to expect opposition from the beginning of the interaction, which is why they frame the request as they do, with extensive mitigation and hesitation often occurring before the requested action is mentioned, as in (183) and (184). As noted above, the speaker in (183) utters two reiterations of the head act, *Now what we'd want you to do, So, ... all we wanna know is*, interrupts it with a justification statement and hesitates for almost 10 seconds. The speaker in (184) gives five reiterations of the head act (*and what we will do, what we're gonna probably wanna do, or what I would like to, I would like to take a day, we'll just take the whole day*) plus even more hedging, fillers and hesitation, taking almost 20 seconds to get to the requested action. An additional example of these high-effort, high imposition sequence includes (148), repeated here:

(185) Transcript 34

1	686.985 691.197	KAREN:	... (Hx)=
2	691.197 695.627		... Oh=,
3	695.627 697.150		I looked at Orlando today.
4	697.150 698.391	SCOTT:	... The book?
5	698.391 699.454	KAREN:	.. Yeah=.
6	699.454 701.102		.. Do you think you want to read that together?
7	701.102 703.831		... That interest you at all?
8	703.831 706.411	SCOTT:	... Unhunh.
9	706.411 707.832	KAREN:	... Cause if it --
10	707.832 708.834		If it really wouldn't,
11	708.834 710.412		if you're just saying that to make me happy,
12	710.412 710.717		then[=],
13	710.613 710.890	SCOTT:	[No]=,
14	710.890 711.406		[2I thi%-2] --
15	711.097 712.144	KAREN:	[2I didn't2] [3n= yea=h2].
16	711.406 712.180	SCOTT:	[3I'm=3],
17	712.180 716.765		... I think it probably would,
18	716.765 719.024	KAREN:	... It seemed like it would be fun to read out loud.
19	719.024 724.554		... And I don't wanna start it if we're going to read it together.

20 724.554 725.908

I don't want to start it <X on my own X>,

In line 1, Karen begins to think about making her request, but 14 seconds pass before she actually articulates it in line 6. She clearly expects opposition, although her husband responds with an apparently immediate acquiesce in line 7: *Unhunh*. Despite this positive response, Karen continues to treat the request as if the contingencies are still present, providing the hearer with a way out (lines 9-11) and three justification clauses (lines 18-20). This continued orientation to possible contingencies seems rationally inconsistent with her husband's continued positive responses throughout the exchange. Either she doubts his sincerity, or her initial expectations about how the interaction would unfold continue to influence the sequence. The fact that she fails to adapt her interaction to the speaker's assent gives evidence for her mindset entering the conversation as one where she expected and planned for encountering obstacles. A speaker's expectation and planning for contingencies is a hallmark of this kind of high-imposition sequence.

In contrast, the second kind of high-imposition environment found in the SBCSAE are those in which the speaker (intentionally or unintentionally) does not seem to anticipate contingencies, but rather deals with them as they unfold in the conversation. These interactions demonstrate less pre-head mitigation, less reiteration and fewer lapses in time. Instead, the speakers deal with the contingencies in more straightforward forms:

(186) Transcript 33

1	404.541 404.990	DON:	[6Ma=6],
2	404.990 405.856		[7we have to hear7] [8this8] --
3	404.990 405.856	LEANNE:	[7<HI<F Wait wait7] [8X I F>HI>8] --
4	405.474 405.914	JENN:	[8XX8]
5	405.914 407.533	BILL:	[9<F Will you let9] [~Leanne finish F>].
6	405.914 407.533	JENN:	[9Did I X9][XX=]?
7	406.433 406.942	LEANNE:	[Wait,
8	406.942 407.533		<HI ti=me HI>].

(186) is a collective request by a group of family members to both stop one member from speaking (Jenn) and allow another (Leanne) to take the floor. Don, Leanne, Bill, then Leanne again, produce a succession of short, succinct directives in order to deal with the contingency of Jenn refusing to give up the floor. This occurs with a modal statement in line 1-2, *we have to hear this*; an imperative in line 3, *wait, wait*; a modal interrogative in line 5, *will you let Leanne finish?*; and an imperative/modal interrogative in lines 7-9, *wait, time, can I say something*. A similar pattern of repeated directives occurs in (178), and as discussed there, involve a mother's increasingly entitled requests for her son to complete a chore, including a modal statement, modal interrogative and finally a *need* statement. This repetition, unlike that in (183) and (184), is not a repetition that delays stating the action or re-phrases the requestive head in more mitigated terms. It repeats the entire request at least twice in forms that increasingly demand compliance and assert entitlement. Sometimes initial opposition to a request is not expected, but when it occurs, speakers orient to those contingencies in ways similar to (185) or (59) by attempting to provide solutions that mitigate the contingencies and still provide for the request to be granted. This strategy produces more succinctly expressed utterances than those where speakers orient to the request from the beginning as if expecting opposition. (187) illustrates this environment. Here the speaker's initial request in the form of an imperative signals little orientation to contingencies and a strong entitlement to make the request. Despite this overt assumption of entitlement, his request meets with strong opposition from the hearer. The speaker employs strategies to overcome those obstacles (and ultimately is not successful), but these are not the same kinds of strategies seen in the first kind of high-imposition request. Instead of cleft constructions, hedging devices and hesitation, he employs cajolers, sweeteners and reason statements.

(187) Transcript 28

1 552.965 553.390 JEFF: ... Okay now,
2 553.390 556.340 tell me the stuff that (H) she doesn't want ... you
to tell me.
3 556.340 557.940 JILL: @@@@[@@]
4 557.635 558.285 JEFF: [Now that] she's gone.
5 558.285 559.640 JILL: (H) Now's the chance.
6 559.640 560.115 JEFF: Yeah because,
7 560.115 560.895 y- remember,
8 561.225 562.460 ... you're my .. girlfriend,
9 562.460 563.340 before you're her friend.
10 563.340 565.365 JILL: @@@@[@Jeff.
11 564.420 565.850 JEFF: [@@ (H)]
12 565.390 565.900 JILL: (H)]
13 565.900 566.600 JEFF: @@[2@2]
14 566.230 567.475 JILL: [2@2]@@ Oh.
15 567.475 568.370 JEFF: [3(H)3]
16 567.475 569.575 JILL: [3(H)3] .. Oh swee[4tie.
17 569.160 570.500 JEFF: [4(H) Remember4],
18 569.625 570.475 JILL: .. @@@@4]
19 570.500 572.345 JEFF: .. you're gonna spend the rest of your life with
m=e.
20 572.345 573.095 JILL: @@@@
21 573.095 575.275 JEFF: (Hx) .. [(H)] I='m your partner [2<X honey X>2].

Here Jeff's imperative for his girlfriend to *tell me the stuff she doesn't want you to tell me* is responded to by Jill's laughter (line 3). Jeff proceeds to cajole her with a quick succession of grounders, *now that she's gone, now's the chance, remember, ...you're my girlfriend, remember you're gonna spend the rest of your life with me, I'm your partner*, as well as terms of endearment, *Oh sweetie* (as well as others—the interactions continues longer in the same style). Whether or not he expected her hesitation to comply before requesting, his succeeding orientations to the primary contingency, her unwillingness to comply, address that hesitancy directly in an attempt to override her objections through

cajoling, sweeteners, and reason statements that appeal to the priority of their relationship³⁹.

Thus in this second category of high-imposition contexts the speaker does not always frame the initial version of the request by orienting to low entitlement and high contingency. Instead, as the speaker faces resistance by the hearer, he or she chooses a strategy to orient to those contingencies as they occur in the sequence of the interaction. These strategies involve cajolers, appeasers, and restatement of the entire requestive utterance in a more or less entitlement-oriented variation. In particular, for interactions where a parent is giving directives to her child and the child hesitates to comply, the forms evolve into increasingly high-entitlement variants in order to manage those contingencies (see also Craven and Potter 2010).

To summarize, the discussion notes some major theoretical and practical implication for learners of English. First, this study demonstrates that a static view of context is insufficient to explain the variation of forms speakers use in requesting. Only a sequential, interactional analysis can explain some cases of repetition, in which speakers appear to use a variety of forms in the same context, or a particular form in a range of contexts. Interactional analyses that have focused on a limited number of forms have been able to propose definite patterns for some requestive constructions in British and New Zealand English, as well as in Italian and Polish (Curl and Drew 2008, Vine 2009, Rossi 2012, Zinken and Ogiermann 2013, Ogiermann 2015, Zinken 2015, Fox 2015). For

³⁹ In addition, this interaction is an excellent example of the necessity of viewing politeness as a construction of the interaction rather than as a construct which can be defined outside of it. As a native speaker of English, I found this speaker's request and follow-up to be rude, asking for inappropriate information in an inappropriate way. However, the hearer clearly does not perceive his inquiries as rude or inappropriate. Her laughter in response to his request and his continued cajoling indicate that she views his request as a validation of their relationship and an indicator of her high status with him. In this case, it is not my outsider's judgement of politeness that matters, but the recipient's.

the requestive forms in this study that lacked a sufficient number of tokens, more focused interactional analysis of these forms will hopefully provide accurate descriptions of the specific environmental cues that explain the distribution of these forms. Second, for learners of English, this study demonstrates that gaining pragmatic competence is not as simple as learning a few forms such as past tense modals or *please* that can be tacked onto requestive utterances to make them 'polite'. For all six syntactic categories of requests occurred in low imposition contexts with minimal hedging and modifiers, and five of the six categories also occurred in high-imposition contexts. With high-imposition requests, learners of English need to gain linguistic flexibility, particularly in lexico-syntactic modification within the request sequence. These modification strategies exhibited by native speakers in high-imposition contexts include cleft constructions, hedges, fillers, reason statements acting as interrupters, hesitation, and re-statements and reiterations of both the pre-head material and the requestive head itself. In addition, speakers seemed to employ the strategy of delaying the statement of the requested action as long as possible. These contexts were identified as high-effort requests, in which the speaker requested an action that demanded a great deal of time and effort from the hearer without a significant reward. Alternate high-imposition requestive contexts occurred when the speaker encountered objections and resistance from the hearer after an initial request was made that did not strongly orient to contingencies. In these cases, the speaker managed the contingencies either by ignoring them and re-framing the requests in high-entitlement terms or by providing solutions to the obstacles and using lower-entitlement forms. By identifying the forms English speakers use to request in both high and low imposition contexts as well as the lexico-syntactic strategies employed before and after the head act, learners of English can take concrete steps toward gaining pragmatic competence.

6.4 Future Directions for Additional Research

Additional research could take at least two directions. First, more investigation needs to be done that will identify for English language learners high imposition contexts in a way that clarifies how interactive sequences may unfold and the appropriate requestive forms and accompanying strategies that they require. Second, more in-depth analysis of interactional contexts that involve requests will help to illustrate both the requestive forms American English speakers use as well as the normative environments for those forms. This study follows in the footsteps of Evin-Tripp (1976) as an investigation into the range of forms English speakers use to request in everyday interactions. It demonstrates that key sociolinguistic factors such as social power, social distance and imposition do influence to some degree the forms speaker use, but they are not sufficient to account for the full variation of forms. Thus, the study draws upon the principle of sequential relevance established in conversation analysis to argue that a complete explanation can happen only when they are studied within the interactional context where they occur. Rossi (2012:433) notes that patterns of conversational interaction are identified in CA analysis by first “identifying a target phenomenon” then “collecting a set of cases from a sample of different interactions.” The current study has provided a wealth of potential target phenomena to be examined more closely, such as the distribution of *need/want* statements and imperatives across close social distance contexts, how *if* statements, *would like* statements and *do you wanna* interrogative requests pattern in a conversation, *I would like* vs. *I wanna* in wide social distance and low imposition contexts, and the distribution of conventional modal queries *can you* vs. *could you*, *will you* vs. *would you*, and *let* statements in close vs. wide social distance contexts, among many others. Without this broader picture of the forms speakers are using, we might not be able to identify the target phenomena to study. These patterns,

however, need to be examined in cases where the environments share basic socio-linguistic features, such as home, work, or transactional contexts and close or wide social distance contexts. By isolating these forms in more specific contexts, the features of the context which lead to their selection can be identified.

Appendix A

Strategies or phrases that indicate contingency and entitlement in the *Santa Barbara*

Corpus of Spoken American English

Strategies or Phrases that Indicate Contingency and Entitlement for Requests in the

Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English

Contingency – indicates speaker awareness or orientation to possible obstacles (or lack of them) that the listener faces in complying with the request

Time – strategies that reference timing as a way of minimizing or overcoming obstacles for the request.

- *one other thing*
- *for a minute*
- *whenever she has the chance*
- Condition statement: *when you're ready, when I throw you*
- *Now* (condition for request)

Ability/Willingness/Possibility – strategies that reference/query the agent's ability or willingness (or unwillingness) to comply or the possibility of the action occurring.

Willingness

- *if you're interested?*
- *time/interruptions it takes to get H to stop talking—technically 5 of them*
 - *Imperative*
 - *Will you* interrogative
 - *Imperative*
 - *Can I* interrogative
- *Please*
- *If you will please*
- *okay if you would,*
- *will/would you*

Ability/Possibility

- *Do X again and not have to stop and think about where the foot goes* (additional step/effort required)
- Negative verb phrase : *if you don't have*
- *by any chance*
- *If* statement (about possibility/contingency factor)
- questions/ascertains listener ability: asks if he knows what to do
- *Now I don't know if...*—expresses that he doesn't know if what he would like to do is possible
- *Can/could you*

Both

- Wh question with <thump> (ability/willingness?)
- Yes/no question, *e.g, do you have x* (ability/willingness)

Solution – addressing contingencies by offering a solution to them

- solution to contingency (e.g., when the H can't find the object being requested, the S states information about where the object is)
- suggestion statement (solution, willingness)

- alternate imperative/action requested (caters to H's unwillingness)
- *now that she's , I know there's stuff she won't tell me* –identifies removal of an obstacle

Previous Interaction – orienting to a previous interaction as the basis for requesting

- refers to previous decision about the timeframe (made by both participants)
- Reports a previous instance of the request that was left unanswered (i.e., ambiguous)

Incentives – providing rewards, incentives or threats that directly address contingencies

- incentive statement for ignoring the stated obstacle/preference of listener
- explanation of conditions: the room might be modified
- threat (i.e., a negative incentive strategy)

Repetition

- Repetition/re-phrasing of request goal (*This board has to realize = they have to come to grips with the fact*. These are two equivalent phrases.
- Excessive repetition of *want* statements
- Simple repetition (e.g. *stop it + don't make fun of me*)

Downgraders & Concessions

Downgraders

- Modal statement/suggestion with *Just* (*you could just say*) (downgrader)
- limitation on what the request applies to (this case only) (downgrader)
- exclusive statement---just limited to one, simple thing *all I need* (downgrader)
- Heading off a possible contingency: *I don't really find it to be, you know, a confrontation* (downgrader)
- statements modified with *just*
- downgrades amount of effort being asked for, e.g., *do you have x on you-* limits scope/extent of effort S is asking from H

Concession

- acknowledges son's tendency to get distracted (*I know its tempting* (concession)
- affirms listener's reasonable explanation for the obstacle: *other bags in here*, with *yeah* (concession)
- concession that they'll stack two together (thus it will be easy for the two of them to complete the task) (concession/downgrader?)
- fake sympathy
- changes parameters of the request in order to accommodate obstacles (e.g., *give me the highlights* in lieu of *tell me everything* from first iteration of the request)
- acknowledging reasonableness of the obstacle
- retraction, preface by *actually*

Both

- Limiting request as only relevant for when the room would be modified

- Concession that they'll stack two objects together (thus it will be easy for the two of them to complete the task)
- negative *yes/no* question

Euphemism

- euphemism: *on what your thoughts are*
- *something*: not requiring extensive or a particular description, but just whatever the person wishes to share about that topic

Incentive

- *you know what you could do to be helpful* : opportunity to be helpful displays her awareness that it might not be a welcome request
- reward/incentive statement

Coaxing

- *come on*
- *let it out*

Uncategorized

- *but* statement
- at first addressed to "someone"; but when Roger offers, Maureen tells him not to help (so clearly she did have a particular restriction/requirement for completing the task---it had to be Dale, not Roger.
- imperative statement that addresses obstacle (e.g., *don't fuss* – addresses unwillingness)
- negative assertion/imperative form
- listener's stated intention and requester's contradicting of it
- retraction *actually*
- *no* imperative to stop listener's action/redirect with a *should* statement

Entitlement – indicates awareness or orientation to speaker's right (or lack of) to make the request

Reason Statement

- *need/want* statements
 - cleft statements –what we want statement (cleft want statements)
 - Downgrader/want statement—exclusive want statement (all we wanna know)
 - Emphatic *want* statement—*this is the one I want you to open*
- *because* statement
- other stated justification/reasons for why the request is desired action
 - Assertion that it's *a better idea* (reason statement), *you gotta, you need, I'll have x,etc.*
 - sniffing noise to reference sickness (indicating entitlement/reason to ask for favor)
 - discourse marker *well*, is S applying H previous statement to her situation as entitlement for her request

Justification through...

References to previous occurrence

- *you wanted to learn Hane-makikomi* (justification based on H's previously stated desire)
- *tell you what* (solution to a previously stated problem)
- Previous discussion about the speaker's need for the class of object requested (previous occurrence)
- Reference to listener's previous offer (previous occurrence)
- Reference to previous iteration of the request/command
- Previous invitation

Assertion statements

- Modal statements (*you gotta, you need to, you should do x, x will help...*)
- Assertion -- *It's a better idea*
- Asserts first claim on the object (before another requester)
- Asserts S right (*I'm a great man*)
- Asserts first claim on the object (before another requester)

Distance

- past tense (distance)
- objectifying (*it* instead of *you*)

Uncertainty

- hesitations and fillers (uncertainty)
- *I think* (uncertainty)
- Unfinished/Re-started turns (uncertainty)
- *I wonder if I can*
- *I hate to say it...*

Concession statement

- *doesn't have to be at lunch, it's okay, but you don't have, if you see it in TV, I'll just use that*

Downgraders

- *Jeesh* - marks tone as light, downgrading the force of the imperative, to some degree
- *Yes/no* interrogative downgraded from a modal interrogative

Incentive statement

- *if we did it, she could probably go home tomorrow*

Hedging

- hedging phrases , e.g., *you know, maybe, I think, in my opinion, I wonder*
- Suggestion statement

Repetition

- *Like I said*

Permission/Urging

- *Go ahead*
- *Can I...*
- *Let....*

Solidarity

- Using *we* for appeal to solidarity

Suggestion statements

- *You could do x* (presents options to the listener)

Uncategorized

- Burying agent *you*
- *if* statement
- negative query *can't it be ?*
- terms of endearment: *sweetie, honey, good girl*
- appeal to speaker's authority/knowledge by term of address (e.g., doctor)
- use of verb *stall out*, references H's lack of ability to continue
- Advice interrogative (*should I call?*)

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Biographical Information

Lynnelle Rhinier Brown started her academic career with a B.A. and M.A in English from Bob Jones University, then stumbled into linguistics while teaching at the Instituto-Universitario México-Americano in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2001. Since then, she has taught a range of English and linguistics classes in both Mexico and the U.S., with a focus on academic preparation for international students in U.S. universities. Understanding how to help her students become successful in their second language interactions became the motivation for her interest in pragmatics, speech acts—particularly requesting—English for academic purpose, and conversation analysis. She hopes to continue exploring requestive interactions, both the factors that shape the forms we use and the strategies that explain our choices in conversation.