Calling for Participation: Requests, Blocking Moves, and Rational (Inter)action in Survey Introductions

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Abstract

We draw on conversation analytic methods and research to explicate the interactional phenomenon of requesting in general and the specific case of requesting participation in survey interviews. Recent work on survey participation gives much attention to leverage-saliency theory but does not explore how the key concepts of this theory are exhibited in the actual unfolding interaction of interviewers and potential respondents. We examine interaction using digitally recorded and transcribed calls to recruit participation in the 2004 Wisconsin Longitudinal Study. We describe how potential respondents present interactional environments that are relatively discouraging or encouraging, and how, in response, interviewers may be relatively cautious or presumptive in their requesting actions. We consider how interviewers' ability to tailor their behavior to their interactional environments can affect whether an introduction reaches the point at which a request to participate is made, the form that this request takes, and the sample person's response. This article contributes to understanding the social action of requesting and specifically how we might use insights from analyses of interaction to increase cooperation with requests to participate in surveys.

Declining participation in survey interviews is a problem of urgent importance for social science (Battaglia et al. 2008; Groves 2006; Groves, Singer, and Corning 2000). Leverage-saliency theory (LST) provides a perspective on survey participation that is related to rational choice theory but also emphasizes that the content of survey requests matters for participation. LST and the research on which it builds, however, give little attention to the details of survey interactions themselves. Instead, LST treats survey design as offering a relatively fixed set of attributes, each of which has a leverage (valence and weight) for the sample person that can be made salient in an interaction

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and thus exerts influence that varies across sample persons. With a conversation analytic approach, one can explore matters of leverage and salience, and by extension rational choice, as dynamic aspects of the interaction between an interviewer and a potential respondent. In this article, we draw on conversation analytic methods and research to explicate the interactional phenomenon of requesting in general and the specific case of requesting participation in a survey interview. Using this approach in combination with LST, we seek to better understand why requests for participation unfold as they do and how interviewers can improve the chances of achieving cooperation.

LEVERAGE-SALIENCY THEORY

Leverage-saliency theory (LST) is a theory of how potential respondents make decisions to participate in a survey interview. The theory can be considered an elaboration of a simple rational choice theory (RCT) with social and cognitive elements (Roose, Lievens, and Waege 2007). LST assumes that a potential respondent has an expected utility for participating in a survey and agrees to participate if this expected utility is greater than other uses of time and effort. Leverage refers to a potential respondent's assessment (including valence and weight) of a survey's attributes that make participation more or less appealing. For example, a cash incentive might have a positive valence and a greater weight as the size of the incentive increases; a long interview might have negative valence and a weight that increases with the length of the interview (Dijkstra and Smit 2002). Whether an attribute has a positive or negative leverage varies across sample persons. A specific survey topic may have positive leverage for individuals who are more generally interested in talking about that topic and a negative leverage for those who are not (Groves et al. 2006; Groves et al. 2000).

Saliency—or salience—refers to the prominence of different attributes of survey participation for a sample person who is deciding whether to participate. While orthodox rational actors use all available information, LST calls attention to how survey organizations and interviewers provide information to sample persons that influences their decision making. A survey might provide a financial incentive and appeal to civic duty, for example, but an interviewer might emphasize only one of these aspects, making it more salient and potentially more influential as sample persons decide whether to participate. Consequently, requests for participation in a given survey might obtain different responses from the same person, depending on which attributes are made most salient. According to LST, a decision to participate is based on the combination of the leverage and salience of attributes, with the leverage of a specific attribute mattering more or less according to how salient it is.

LST provides an explicit model of how survey practitioners could heighten the probability of acceptance by increasing the salience of attributes with positive leverage and neutralizing the salience of those with negative leverage. This accords with actual practice: interviewers emphasize positive aspects of participating and either omit or attempt to mitigate negative aspects. For example, an interviewer might acknowledge that an interview takes a long time but note that it can be broken into parts and that the sample person can quit at any time (Dijkstra and Smit 2002). By emphasizing that the leverage a survey attribute has differs across sample persons, LST calls attention to the importance of interviewers' tailoring of requests to a sample person's cues. Interviewers can encourage participation by observing "idiosyncratic concerns of the householder and [customizing] their remarks to those concerns" (Groves et al. 2000:299; see also Couper and Groves 1992; Groves, Cialdini, and Couper 1992; Maynard and Schaeffer 2002b).

If leverage is defined as a psychological attribute, it cannot be directly observed. Previous research, however, has identified groups of sample persons for whom the leverage of an attribute, such as incentives, can be presumed to vary. Groves and colleagues (2000), for instance, examine whether financial incentives have the same effect in generating participation among sample persons with different levels of community involvement (see also Groves et al. 2006; Roose et al. 2007). Survey practitioners recognize that if interviewers can assess the leverage that a survey attribute has for a sample person, they can tailor communications to increase the salience of survey attributes with positive leverage (Groves et al. 2000). We take a less psychological approach and examine the talk between interviewer and sample person to observe how a sample person may display the leverage of various survey attributes or the request itself, and how, in response, an interviewer may make particular features of the survey design salient or suppress their salience. That is, leverage and salience are at least partly phenomena that interviewer and sample person observably develop as they interact with one another.

Research in Conversation Analysis (CA) shows how, in pursuing a response (Pomerantz 1984) or revising initiations including requests (Davidson 1984), participants display their understanding of leverages (to use the vocabulary of LST) that could prevent acceptance of such requests. Previous survey research codes what interviewers do during persuasion into ''broad categories of interviewer actions'' and ''strategies'' in interviewers' turns of talk (Groves and Couper 1998:260), but does not embed these actions and strategies in interaction. Furthermore, this research sometimes uses interviewers' reports of their strategies, which can be unreliable (Campanelli, Sturgis, and Purdon 1997), rather than recordings (Groves and Couper 1996). By contrast, we use recordings rather than recollections and analyze

real-time, actual practices that may reduce or enhance participation rates.

ANALYZING REQUESTING ACTIONS

CA research on requesting, and especially the more generic practices and structures that requests involve, provides new insights into survey interview requests. Previous studies of survey introductions have used CA (Houtkoop-Steenstra and van den Bergh 2002; Maynard and Schaeffer 1997, 2002a), but none has fully explicated the more generic practices of ordinary requesting as a backdrop for understanding the dynamics of asking for participation.

Speech act theorists and linguists working in pragmatics have also investigated requests. Searle (1969:69, 1975:61), a speech act theorist, describes requesting as an utterance that attempts to get a recipient to do something according to a set of felicity conditions (Grice 1975) or shared rules and rational understandings. Shared understandings allow a hearer to infer that a question such as ''Could you do this for me?'' is requesting something rather than seeking information about the hearer's ability (Searle 1969:68). In pragmatics, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory suggests that requests are made in indirect ways (like Searle's example) to avoid threatening a recipient's face. Curl and Drew (2008) review and critique these approaches from a CA standpoint; they suggest that speech act theory overemphasizes participants' cognition and use of inferencing rules to go beyond the literal meaning of utterances, while politeness theory—although interested in the actual design of utterances—either uses fabricated examples or abstracts examples of actual, spoken utterances from their production contexts.

Like Curl and Drew (2008), and following Heritage's (1984) critique of attempts to develop causal, abstract explanatory models of social action without analyses of actors'

concrete conduct, we study requests in their interactional contexts. To start, we explicate practices of requesting by using the CA concept of preference. Preference might seem to have a psychological referent—the desires of a speaker who emits a bit of talk to achieve those desires. In CA, however, preference refers to design features of the talk itself: the interactional accompaniments to turns of talk that initiate actions and the subsequent or responsive turns. Preference structure, in other words, is exhibited in patterns of talk. For example, as first (i.e., initiating) turns in two-part sequences, offers are preferred over requests.[1] Speakers defer requests through preliminary moves, such as turns that provide background. In one example, a caller leads up to a request with "I have a big favor to ask you" and some background information about a broken "buttonholer" (Schegloff 1980). The preliminary turns and backgrounding foreshadow or project a request for help without explicitly requesting it. The call recipient then interjects, "Rita, I told ya when I made the blouse I'd do the buttonholes." The recipient of a possible request thus preempts it with a preferred action—an offer. Other features of requesting also attest to its dispreferred and delicate status: when a person telephones to make a request, the co-participants may work through several more casual topics before the request is finally performed (Schegloff 2007).

Understanding that, interactionally, requests are dispreferred actions in ordinary conversation (between acquaintances, friends, and family members at least) gives us some purchase on the structural difficulties associated with requesting participation in a survey interview. Besides being strangers to their call recipients, interviewers are working against the typical pattern in which a request is postponed until a later point in the conversation, after other topics are pursued. In contrast to ordinary conversation, the requesting action in a survey is often the first order of business and it is the sole purpose of the call. Furthermore, although preliminary identification and recognition

activities may precede the request, it is extremely rare for sample persons to offer participation. That is, the interaction leading to a request is highly unlikely to generate an offer to participate. In the subsample of 200 acceptance calls we studied, only two resulted from offers made by sample persons. Line 20 in Extract 1 (see p. 795) provides one instance of this occurrence (for transcribing conventions, see the online supplement [http://asr .sagepub.com/supplemental]).

Preceding the offer, the female respondent (FR) in Extract 1 complains about working "nights" and her "messages an' crap" (lines 10, 11, and 13), and initiates a sequence at line 16 (in talk that overlaps the turn at line 15) asking about the time involved for completing the interview. The female interviewer (FI) hedges (lines 18 to 19), and then FR urges movement toward the interview in a way that is consistent with her displays that the messages she has been getting and the duration of the interview have negative leverage. FR says, "Well let's just do it" (line 20), suggesting they get the task done immediately to end the calls and messages and remove the bothersome nature of the interview. While her offer may be begrudging, it does preempt the need for the interviewer to request participation.

Although preemptive offers can happen in survey introductions, the overwhelming pattern is for interviewers to produce (or attempt to produce) a formal request. Sample persons regularly withhold offering participation, even when interviewers present opportunities to do so in leading up to a request. In fact, the lead-up usually not only fails to elicit an offer, but it often yields a preempting declination that blocks an interviewer from making a request altogether.

FEATURES OF REQUESTING ACTIONS

One of the most prominent features of requesting actions is the degree to which they

```
 1     FR:    He<u>ll</u>o?
 2            (0.3)
 3     FI:    ↑H<u>i</u>: ↓could I speak to Brenda Caw please?
 4            (0.4)
 5     FR:    ↑Speaking.
 6            (.)
 7     FI:    ↓°H<u>i</u>:° I'm calling about the Wisconsin Longitudinal S:<u>t</u>udy, .hhhhh
 8            u:m: (0.2) d- (0.2) didju receive a letter? (.) from us recently
 9            regarding (this) stu[dy?   ]
10     FR:                        [Y<u>eah</u>: ]I ↓did an' I work nights and I've
11            gotten all kinds of hhhhh
12     FI:    ↑<u>Oh</u>↓:: o[kay:.]
13     FR:           [messa]ges an' crap,
14            (0.2)
15     FI:    [↑Oh(h) o↓k(hh)ay I'm s:(hh)orry.]
16     FR:    [How  long  is this gonna ta<u>ke</u>.  ]
17            (0.3)
18     FI:    .hhhhh U:m: well it's hard tuh say becuz it varies from person tuh
19            person, .hhhh on average, it['s-]
20     FR:                              [Wel]l let's just ↓<u>do</u> i<u>t</u>.
21            (0.4)
22     FI:    Oh: okay? (0.4) i<u>f</u>: at any time you need tuh go ↑just let me ↓know,
23            ...
```

Extract 1. HP059

exhibit entitlement to make the request (Curl and Drew 2008). Researchers have studied requests in institutional settings such as home health care (Heinemann 2006; Lindström 2005) and a copy shop (Vinkhuyzen and Szymanski 2005), while Curl and Drew (2008) compare requests in ordinary conversation with calls to institutional settings such as doctors' offices. This research finds that requests with imperatives or interrogatives with modal verbs (e.g., ''can you,'' ''could you,'' or ''will you'') are high on entitlement and predominate in conversation, whereas requests to institution-based co-participants are regularly formed as declaratives prefaced with variants of ''I wonder if'' and are thereby low on entitlement. A second dimension that requests can display is an assumption that granting or accepting the request does not face many contingencies—that is, the recipient can fulfill the request because there are few impediments. A third dimension on which requests vary is the use of mitigating and politeness terms such as

''please'' (Heinemann 2006). Their use or non-use may diminish or reinforce the displays of entitlement or contingencies just described. For example, the request (arrowed) at line 7 in Extract 2, with the modal form ''Could you,'' is an entitled request in which there are no mitigating items and it displays a known contingency (Curl and Drew 2008:143) when mentioning Leslie's upcoming trip (line 9).

Compare the request in Extract 2 with one a caller makes to a doctor in Extract 3, using an I-wonder preface (Curl and Drew 2008). Such prefaces, often used in institutional settings, display low entitlement and an awareness of contingencies surrounding granting of the request. These displays may be general enough to be accomplished by the I-wonder preface alone—what Gill (1998) calls a speculative preface—or there may be a more concrete naming of contingencies (Curl and Drew 2008).

As we examine survey requests, we will see that modal verbs and I-wonder prefaces

```
 1    Les:      Hello:?
 2              (0.3)
 3    Gor:      It's Gordon.
 4    Les:      .hhhh Oh Gordon. Sh'l I ring you back darling,
 5    Gor:      Uh:: ↓no y- I don't think you can,
 6              (0.3)
 7    Gor:      But uh: just to (0.3) say (.) Could you bring up a letter.←
 8              (.)
 9    Gor:      When you come up,
10                  .
11                  .    ((Discussion re: which form))
12                  .
13    Les:      Okay
```

Extract 2. Field SO88:2:8:1

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         Doctor:  .hhHello:
         Caller:  Hello I. I'm wonderin' if a doctor could call and see
                  Robert Smith please
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Extract 3. 2:1:9

play a role in displaying entitlement, but they do so in relation to other aspects of the request, including features of the scripted introduction. In addition, in a slight departure from Curl and Drew (2008), we distinguish contingency as a separate dimension from entitlement. That is, we suggest that different formats for requesting, beyond displaying a speaker's stance toward the projected grantability of a request (Curl and Drew 2008:149), can respond to concrete features of the interactional environments in which a request is produced. Requests may be sequentially retrospective and take account of the interaction so far, in addition to projecting a type of next action. To adapt Heritage's (1984:242) felicitous words, requests are often locally context-shaped as well as context renewing.

To put matters in terms of LST, CA research about requesting actions suggests that speakers take into account the valence and weight that attributes of a request—their leverages—potentially have for the recipient of the request. That is, syntactic forms such as declaratives and positive or negative interrogatives, modal verbs, mitigating words or phrases, and utterance prefaces can be used alone or together to increase or decrease the salience of features of a request that potentially have leverage with a particular sample person. As the analysis will show, CA-informed research makes it possible to examine what happens in the interaction between interviewers and householders and how interviewers assess in situ the leverage of some attribute that may be operative for a sample person.

DATA AND METHODS

We use recordings of interactions, data about sample persons, and materials prepared for interviewers from the 2004 round of the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) survey. WLS began with a one-third sample of 1957 Wisconsin high school graduates and had follow-up waves in 1964 (mail to parents), 1975 (telephone), and 1992 (telephone and mail). WLS collects a wide range of economic, familial, health, and other

information and has been used in many studies (Hauser 2005). Because we have considerable information about those who refused to participate in 2004 as well as those who agreed, WLS provides an exceptional opportunity for our investigation.

This study is part of a larger project in which we analyze interactions between interviewers and sample persons using both CA and quantitative methods to estimate the effects of interactional variables on survey participation. In 2004, calls to WLS sample persons were digitally recorded; for 8,261 WLS sample persons, field efforts were made that did not result in the sample person being classified as a noncontact or as incapable of participating. To ensure that the cases in our analysis have comparable histories of contacts with interviewing staff, we drew our project sample from the 4,627 sample persons for whom initial telephone contact resulted in either a declination (some of which may have been converted to acceptances in a subsequent call) or an acceptance (some of which may have resulted in only partial interviews). The rate of acceptances versus declinations among these 4,627 sample persons is 88.7 percent.

To draw the project sample, we used logistic regression to estimate sample persons' propensity to refuse to participate, based on their education, cognitive test scores from high school, and health status (Hauser 2005). We then selected matching pairs of calls in which one sample person agreed to participate and the other declined. We selected pairs to match exactly on sex and on past record of WLS participation, and then as closely as possible on propensity score. We use matched pairs so that the successful and unsuccessful calls we analyze will be comparable with respect to important predictors of participation that precede an interaction. The most desirable sample using this method would be homogenous within pairs but heterogeneous across pairs with respect to the matching variables. To

increase the contrast across pairs, we grouped available pairs into thirds according to their propensity to refuse and selected 100 pairs from the lowest third and 100 pairs from the highest third. The initial sample for the main project thus consists of 200 pairs (400 calls).

For the present investigation using CA methods, we analyze a subset of the calls. We selected this collection of 57 acceptances and 51 declinations (a total of 108 interactions) unsystematically based on the order of cases in sample lists and the availability of recordings. We made detailed transcriptions using CA conventions (see the online supplement). Transcribed acceptances and declinations are drawn about equally from the high- and low-propensity-to-decline strata of the sample. All personal names, locations, and schools are pseudonyms.

WLS has high continuing participation for a longitudinal study, but nonresponse bias remains a concern (Hauser 2005). Although the WLS is a longitudinal study that uses an advance letter, our research has implications for cold-called, random-digit dialing samples and other surveys without previous contact. The matters of interaction we examine, such as call recipients' small signs of encouragement or discouragement and interviewers' devices for tailoring, are relevant in a wide variety of surveys and other contexts in which occupational callers solicit various kinds of participation (Weathersbee and Maynard 2009).

Advance Letter

All calls in our CA collection are initial telephone contacts with a sample person for the 2004 survey. As in many surveys, however, the advance letter represents an early effort to promote participation (see the online supplement). If sample persons read the letter, various survey attributes discussed in the letter may affect their decisions about participation. Some attributes described in the letter can be

presumed to have positive (although perhaps weak) leverage: the survey is confidential, it can be administered at a convenient time, sample persons may "enjoy" the interview and find it "rewarding," and the researchers "appreciate" continuing participation and will "be most grateful."[2] Other attributes may be either positive or negative, depending on a sample person's view: the University of Wisconsin is conducting the study, the study is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging, and a report will be sent as soon as all interviews have been completed. Only one attribute can be presumed to be negative: sample members are asked to look over health insurance plans before the interview and to be familiar with the names of their plans. The letter does not mention another potentially negative leverage, the length of the interview, which was typically well over an hour. Overall, we speculate that an advance letter affects the context within which the initial contact takes place in several ways: it provides an interviewer with a resource to incorporate into her introduction, it may relieve an interviewer of the need to provide some details of identity or the purpose of the call, and some sample persons who read the letter may be predisposed one way or another before getting the call.

Introductory Script

For the phone call to a household, WLS provides the interviewer with an illustrative introductory script in the form of a series of screens on the interviewer's monitor. The first screen of interest contains the following:

> Hello, my name is [SAY NAME]. I am calling from the University of Wisconsin Survey Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. May I please speak to [RESPONDENT'S NAME]? (IF NECESSARY: We're not advertising or selling anything.)

If the person who initially answers the phone appears to be the targeted sample person, the interviewer's script reads:[3]

> Is this the [RESPONDENT'S NAME] that was enrolled in [NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL] High School in 1957? [IF YES:] As you probably recall from our recent letter, we are doing a follow-up study of our sample of people who were Wisconsin high school seniors in 1957. We'd like to interview you now for this important study.

At this point, interviewers who follow the script have identified themselves by name and activated the salience of their institutional identity, the original survey in 1957, and possibly whatever other attributes (and leverages they evoke) that may be remembered "from our recent letter." With its last sentence—"We'd like to interview you now for this important study"—the screen also poses the official or formal request. Consistent with previous research, we find that interviewers engage in considerable "analytic alternation" (Maynard and Schaeffer 2000): interviewers use the script in their talk but then embellish or improvise as the occasion calls for, only to return to a close reading when it is possible or necessary. WLS interviewers were trained to consider the scripted introduction as flexible, meaning they could use it as a guide rather than following it verbatim (Houtkoop-Steenstra and van den Bergh 2002; Morton-Williams 1993).

FORMS OF REQUESTING IN WLS INTERVIEWS

In developing LST, Groves and Couper (1998) noted how experienced interviewers, in maintaining interaction, may observe the leverage some survey attributes have with sample persons. Interviewers can use cues provided by sample persons to tailor their

own talk to increase the salience of attributes with positive leverages and to decrease the salience of those with negative leverages (Groves et al. 2000). Our examination of practices indicates that interviewers show sensitivity to the interactional environment in which a survey request occurs, including the various kinds of detailed vocalizations, as well as silences, from a sample member or from a spouse or other informant who initially answers the phone. Using these detailed cues, we classify the actions of sample persons or informants when answering an interviewer's call as discouraging, encouraging, or ambiguous, following how interviewers themselves seemed to orient to the cues.

Past CA research considers many instances of requests among non-professionals, including situations in which non-professionals appeal to individuals in particular institutional settings (e.g., health care). In requests for survey participation, the usual roles are reversed: institutional actors (interviewers) are making requests of individuals solely because they were 1957 Wisconsin high school graduates and not because of their occupational or other institutional identities. While our study adapts the concepts of entitlement, contingency, and mitigation described in earlier studies of institutional and ordinary interactions, we add two other relevant dimensions of survey requesting— task partitioning and preemption.

1. Entitlement. Scripted requests in the WLS (e.g., "We'd like to interview you now for this important study") exhibit entitlement in the sense of claiming a right to the interview by taking participation for granted through the syntax and verb forms employed. Interviewers' spoken requests vary in the degree of entitlement. Requests that are relatively high in entitlement, as compared with those that are not, employ modal verbs ("we *would* like to interview you now") or turn-initial copular verbs ("*is* this a good time to start the interview?").

Requests are relatively higher in entitlement when they use a declarative syntactic form rather than an interrogative syntactic form, except when a declarative request contains a "wondering" preface ("we were wondering if now is a good time to start the interview") or other prefacing phrase of speculation (Gill 1998).

2. Contingency. WLS survey requests vary in when they suggest the interview can be done. Requests that present only the option of doing the interview "now"—what we call "one option" requests—display a presumption that no obstacles or contingencies stand in the way of current participation. Requests that exhibit an orientation to a possible high level of contingencies pose multiple options; for example, an interviewer might say the interview could be done now or later, or that it could be postponed until a more convenient time or after the survey center sends additional information.

3. Mitigators. WLS survey interviewers vary in their use of politeness markers and other hedges such as "please," "just," "some," "might," and "trying" that can weaken the force or boldness of a request (Brown and Levinson 1987; Watts 2003). For example, using modal verbs leads to a request high in entitlement, but such a request can include mitigating terms that diminish entitlement, as when an interviewer asks, "Would you be able to work on that some this morning?"; "be able to" and "some" soften the request.

4. Task partitioning. Interviewers sometimes offer to break the interview into parts. When interviewers simply ask "to interview" the sample person or "to do the study," this implies the interview will be completed in one sitting (low partitioning). By contrast, when an interviewer asks to "start" or "begin" the task, or offers to complete the interview "in parts," the request can be heard as implying that the instrument could be administered incrementally (high partitioning).

Fully Cautious Requests	Ambiguous Requests	Fully Presumptive Requests
Low entitlement ("I wonder if . . ." or comparable prefacing)	Low or high entitlement	High entitlement ("We would like" or "is" prefacing)
High contingency: two timing options ("now" or another time)	High or low contingency	Low contingency: only one timing option ("now")
Use of mitigators	Some mitigators	No mitigators
Task partitioning ("start" or "begin")	Possible task partitioning	No task partitioning
All three preliminary sequences present: sample person verification, letter receipt, and study description	One or two preliminary sequences preempted	Preemption of all three preliminary sequences: sample person verification, letter reference, and study description

Figure 1. Continuum of Cautious and Presumptive Requests

5. Preemption. Interviewers sometimes skip sections of the opening script prior to the request, such as verifying whether the recipient is a 1957 graduate of a particular high school, asking about the advance letter, or stating the purpose of the call (''doing a follow-up study''). Because they omit this material, preemptive requests are produced early in the call. In the contrasting category are requests preceded by most or all sections of the scripted opening; these requests occur later in a call.

Using these five practices, and analyzing the interactional environments of 69 explicit requests in our subsample of 108 cases,[4] we classify requests as relatively cautious or presumptive along a continuum through which interviewers design their utterances. Figure 1 depicts the continuum on which requests can be arrayed, with fully cautious requests at one end and fully presumptive requests at the other.

In fully presumptive requests, at least three of the following features are present: entitlement is high through the use of modal (would) or copular (is) verbs, only one option is presented for the timing of the interview, there is no task partitioning, there is no

mitigation, and at least one of the scripted statements is preempted (i.e., sample person verification, reference to the advance letter, or description of the study). Fully cautious requests have at least three of the complementary practices—that is, entitlement is low, more than one timing option is suggested, task partitioning is present, there is mitigation (at least two forms), and there is no more than one preemption. Some requests fall in-between; for example, a request can be mostly presumptive or mostly cautious depending on which and how many of these practices interviewers deploy.

SURVEY REQUESTS IN THEIR INTERACTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Discouraging Environments and Requesting

A sample person or informant can create a discouraging interactional environment with the content of their statements, by failing to respond when an interviewer's talk

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 1    MR:   .hhh Hello?
 2    MI:   tch .h ↑Hi Mister Martino? hh
 3    MR:   Yes.
 4    MI:   My name is Brandon Johnson. I'm calling from the Wisconsin
 5          Longitudinal Study? .h Ah d- we sent you a letter ahu:::h probly
 6          about th:ree months ago. I don't know if it- do you remember what
 7          (0.4) th- ah Wisconsin Longi↑tudinal ↑Study is?
 8                (0.3)
 9    MR:   No.
10                (.)
11    MI:   #No? .hh Um (0.3) es↑sentially what it is is back in nineteen fifty
12          seven when you gradu↑ated from uh Stockdale ↑High School I think it
13          ↑says. .hh Um (0.4) we did a s- we began a st↑udy with you and
14          we've talked with you about ↑ev'ry:: twelve years since then?
15                (0.4)
16    MI:   .hh Do you #re↑member ↑that at all?
17                (0.9)
18    MR:   Ye:ah I remember o::ne.
19                (.)
20    MI:   Okay. .hh well- (.) basically it's been a↑bout (0.2) n:: eleven
21          years, and so we're ↑doing another wa:ve of this study right now.
22          .hh um . h I was wonder↑ing if- do you have some t↑ime to maybe
23          begin it ↑now or would you like us to send you another letter
24          to remind you about what it is?
25                (0.2)
26    MR:   ↑I':::m not gonna ↓be innerested sir. hh
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Extract 4. HP005

provides an opportunity, by responding at such points in a terse fashion, and by imbuing their talk with various prosodic cues (e.g., pacing, intonation, and volume). For example, in one of our calls (before Extract 4), a female informant replies to an interviewer's request to speak to a male sample person by asking, ''Who's calling please?'' This response presents a mild challenge to the interviewer because it is a dispreferred response to the request (the preferred response being ''yes'' or something comparable); it inserts a repair sequence before the request is actually answered, suggesting there is trouble with the request (Schegloff 1979). The interviewer then identified himself as calling from the WLS and said they had called ''a couple days ago.'' The informant replied, ''Yep, many times,'' in what might be a mild rebuke. In some calls, one can hear offline interaction between the informant and the sample person that exhibits a stance toward the interview, but in this case, the informant said she had to ''go down and let him know'' and nothing was audible for about 25 seconds. That she had to retrieve him from elsewhere in the household, apparently almost a half-minute away, might be relevant to the interviewer.

When the sample person (MR) in Extract 4 comes to the phone and in response to the interviewer (line 2) confirms his identity, it is with a terse, downward intoned ''yes'' at line 3.[5] After the interviewer (MI) identifies himself by his name and the name of the study (lines 4 to 5), the possible complete turn, its questioning intonation, and the subsequent inbreath (line 5) present an opportunity for acknowledgment by MR, but he bypasses this opportunity. The interviewer's claim of having ''sent you a letter'' (lines 5 to 6) also meets with no response; when MI

asks whether MR remembers the WLS, MR delays (line 8) and then answers in the negative (line 9), again tersely and with downward intonation. As MI begins to describe the study, he embeds an implicit confirmation request about MR's high school (lines 11 to 12) but receives no response (notice the inbreath and other hesitations at line 13). After MI completes the study description and ends this utterance with rising intonation (lines 13 to 14), MR still withholds response. Subsequently, MI again asks whether MR remembers the study (line 16). MR delays answering and then only does so with a weak confirmation token and with a vague reference that minimizes his previous involvement (line 18). In a number of ways, this sample person, like the informant who answered the phone, shows a discouraging stance toward the possibility of participation in the interview.

In this discouraging context, after confirming MR's apparent remembrance by suggesting a time span since the last interview and identifying the study as "another wave" (lines 20 to 21), MI produces a request with a number of cautious features. At lines 22 to 24, there is hesitation before the request, a preface that is low in entitlement ("I was wondering if"), a re-started utterance ("do you have some time to maybe begin it now") that is mitigated with the "maybe," a suggestion of partitioning ("begin"), and two options for timing ("now" or later after re-sending the letter). None of the preliminary sequences are omitted: there is a reference to the advance letter at lines 5 to 6, MI's proposal to the recipient that he graduated from Stockdale High School in 1957 (which serves as sample person verification) at lines 11 to 13, and a description of the study over lines 13 to 21. The interviewer, operating in a discouraging interactional environment, produces an earnestly cautious request that is, nevertheless, turned down (line 26).

In some similarly discouraging environments, interviewers' cautiously formed requests

succeed in gaining acceptance. Our point here, however, is to observe that interviewers may embellish their requests in a variety of ways that are tailored to a sample person's unfolding signals of discouragement.

Encouraging Environments and Requesting

When interviewers obtain early cues from sample persons that can be interpreted as encouraging, they are often more presumptive in their requesting practices. In encouraging environments, sample persons produce relatively immediate and explicitly agreeing responses ("right" or "correct" instead of "yes/no"), employ expansive (rather than terse or one-word) confirmations and acknowledgments,[6] modulate their pitch within these utterances substantially (rather than using monotone), or offer unprompted displays that they recognize the study or the purpose of the call.

In Extract 5, after MI introduces himself and asks to speak to the sample person (lines 3 to 5), MR relatively quickly acknowledges being that person (line 7) in an expansive utterance with an intonational contour that rises and then falls slightly toward the end (i.e., sounding affiliative, see note 5). MR also acknowledges his high school graduation (line 11) at an early juncture in overlap with MI's inquiry (lines 8 to 10). When MI mentions the letter that had been sent (lines 13 to 14), MR not only interrupts to acknowledge receipt but also offers a report about where the letter is (lines 15 to 16).

MI, at line 18 in Extract 5, then preempts the next scripted item—the study description ("we are doing a follow-up study of our sample of people")—and produces a request that, with an initial copula, is high on entitlement. By posing only the option of "now" as "a good time," the request is low in contingency, and MI does not offer to partition the task or use any mitigation. The repair that MR initiates at line 20 indicates that he did

```
  1     MR:    tch Hello:?
  2                 (1.2)
  3     MI:    Hullo: my name is: (.) Marcus Beale an' I'm calling from the
  4            University of Wisconsin Survey Center: at the UW Ma:dison:? May I
  5            speak to Nathan?
  6                 (0.2)
  7     MR:    This ↑is Na:than.=
  8     MI:    =.hh (.) Hullo: Nathan? u:m:: (0.3) tch (0.2) is this the Nathan
  9            Getz who wuz enrolled at Shellfish High School in nineteen
 10            fif[ty seven?]
 11     MR:       [Yeah:.   ]
 12                 (.)
 13     MI:    .hh An' as you probally recall from uh recent letter
 14            [we're (°goin' thru°)]
 15     MR:    [Yeah I got it      ] leh- (.) layin' on my ↑de:sk ↓in thuh
 16            bedroom.
 17                 (0.4)
 18     MI:    Al↓right well is now a good time ↑for ya? sir? ←
 19                 (0.2)
 20     MR:    Hah?
 21                 (.)
 22     MI:    Is now uh good time to do the study?
 23                 (0.3)
 24     MR:    ↑Oh yah.
```

Extract 5. HP058

not hear the line 18 request; after the request is reproduced, he readily agrees to do the interview. The oh-prefaced form MR uses proposes that his doing the interview can indeed be presumed (Heritage 1998). This interviewer fashioned a strongly presumptive request in line with an encouraging environment, and the sample person's acceptance exhibited an orientation suggesting that such presumptiveness was warranted.

Ambiguous Environments and Requesting

Each phone call's opening is comparatively brief: Extract 5 takes only 25 seconds from MR's answering "hello" to his acceptance, "Oh yah," at line 24; Extract 4's opening is about 47 seconds. In these moments, nonetheless, interviewers may confront stances toward the interview that are strongly encouraging or discouraging. In reviewing the 69 requests in our subsample of 108

cases,[7] we identified 34 interview openings as predominantly encouraging and 10 as predominantly discouraging. Twenty-five environments show either a mixture of encouraging and discouraging forms of responsiveness or consistently neutral displays. These environments seem ambiguous, and we assume that if they appear that way to us, as analysts, after repeated inspection, it is because they were ambiguous for the interviewers in the first place. That is, in classifying ambiguous environments, we suggest that interviewers' own orientations exhibit this analysis.

How do interviewers handle calls with ambiguous environments? Extract 6 is an example. After answering MR's question at line 16 by discussing "how long" it would "take" (not on transcript), the respondent accepted the request by stating that his "time is real flexible," and he went on to complete the interview. Up to the point at which he agrees to begin, MR is expansive in some ways but only tersely responsive in others.

```
 1    MR:      .h Hello. h
 2                     (0.2)
 3    FI:      tch tch ↑Hi: can I speak tuh Evan ↓Royal please?
 4    MR:      °Yeah° thissiz Evan speakin.
 5    FI:      tch Hi:: u:h my name is Linda I'm calling from thuh University
 6             of Wisconsin ↑Sur:vey Center? .hh Um:: is this the Evan Royal who
 7             wuz enro:lled at Belmont High School in nineteen fifty ↑seven?
 8    MR:      Yuh: ↑huh
 9                     (.)
10    FI:      .h ↑Great um: (.) well as you probably re↓call from our re↑cent
11             letter .h we're doing a followup study of our sample of people who
12             ↓were uh Wisconsin high school seniors in nineteen fif↑ty ↑seven .h
13             An we'd just like to interview you now for this im↑portant ↑study
14             if you've got some ti:me?
15                     (1.5)
16    MR:      How ↑long does this take.
```

Extract 6. HP001

After FI asks for the sample person (line 3 in Extract 6), the call recipient identifies himself in an expansive way but with uniformly falling intonation. There is no acknowledgment after FI's personal and institutional identification (lines 5 to 6), even though FI ends with rising intonation and takes an inbreath. In answering the sample person verification question (lines 6 to 7), however, MR produces an acknowledgment with notable pitch movement within the utterance. But MR does not acknowledge either the letter reference (lines 10 to 11) or the study description (lines 11 to 12), and FI goes on to produce the request for participation. The environment is ambiguous, having both encouraging (expansive self-identification and upward intoned confirmation) and discouraging indicators (downward intonation on the self-identification and withheld acknowledgment at turn transitions).

FI's request appears oriented to this ambiguity. While it is high on entitlement ("we'd just like to interview you"), presents just one timing option ("now"), and does not offer to partition the task, there is no preemption (sample person verification, letter reference, and study description are all present) and there are two mitigating

terms ("just" and "some"). Three features associated with presumptive requesting and two characteristic features of caution are present. This is consistent with a broader pattern: in our collection of 25 requests occurring in ambiguous environments, 18 have more presumptive than cautious features. That is, requesting practices in ambiguous environments are more often like those in encouraging environments, and the smaller number of cautious requests are not strongly so. For example, in one call identified as having an ambiguous environment, the interviewer's request was, "And I was just wondering if now is a good time for you to start that study." This displays facets of presumptiveness—no contingencies and only one mitigating "just" in the preface—but otherwise it is marked by low entitlement, task partitioning, and no preemption, all practices associated with caution.

We attribute these patterns of interaction in ambiguous environments to an interactional-structural tendency toward optimism in dealing with initial queries and other responses from sample persons, a phenomenon documented in previous research on survey call openings (Maynard and Schaeffer 2002a). Presumption optimistically treats

ambiguous signals from sample persons as foreshadowing acceptance of the request.

TAILORING AND NOT TAILORING THE REQUEST

Interviewers regularly design requests in ways that are sensitive to facets of a sample person's vocal and non-vocal feedback during the opening moments of a call. Interviewers cannot know exactly what may prompt encouraging or discouraging signs on the part of sample persons—whether it is their regard (or lack thereof) for the study, the University of Wisconsin, other matters discussed in the advance letter, events unrelated to the survey request, or a general propensity to cooperate with or to refuse surveys. For the WLS, sample persons most frequently and overtly display, as an attribute of the survey with negative leverage, the amount of time it will take. Even if interviewers are not able to discern the other leverages (either valence or weight) for sample persons, they can and do design their requests to reflect interactional signs that are interpretable as taking a positive or negative stance toward the task.

Tailoring refers to different types of responsiveness or strategic changes by interviewers, either within an encounter or across encounters, in pursuit of cooperation by a sample person. In some of their work, Couper and Groves (2002) use a narrow definition of tailoring to refer to a respondent's providing information in a turn and an interviewer's using that information appropriately in the next turn; they find a small positive effect of such tailoring on participation. Dijkstra and Smit (2002) also show that tailoring is associated with increased participation, although the relationship is similar to that for other forms of persuasion. Groves and Couper (1996) note that some types of tailoring can take place across contacts within a single household, and Campanelli and colleagues (1997) systematize such an approach

in their study of face-to-face interviews, after finding few individual contacts with any opportunity for tailoring.

The type of tailoring we identify here, tailoring to the interactional environment, has not been previously examined. Preliminary evidence indicates that small nuances make a difference.[8] Making well-tailored requests in interactional environments means acting presumptively in encouraging environments, cautiously in discouraging environments, and perhaps slightly presumptively (or less cautiously) in ambiguous ones.

In our data, a small number of requests are ill fitted; an interviewer may act presumptively when a sample person shows discouragement or act very cautiously when there are signs of encouragement. We found that 8 of 34 requests in encouraging environments, and 3 of 10 requests in discouraging contexts, seemed ill fitted. For each ill-fitted request, we attempted to examine other cases in our subsample involving the same interviewer. This was possible for 9 of the 11 ill-fitted requests; in seven of the nine instances, other requests from that interviewer were consistent with the ill-fitting ones. This consistency in an interviewer's formulating of requests suggests that some interviewers may have a particular style of requesting, either idiosyncratic to the person or based on a mechanical reading of the script.

For instance, one interviewer, whom we call "Tom," used a presumptive style in four different interviews in our subsample. In an encouraging environment (HP057), his request was "we'd like to interview you now for this important study, is that all right?" Other than the tag question, this request follows the script appearing on his computer screen and is high on entitlement, low on contingency, contains only one timing option, and does not offer to partition the interview. In another interview (LP052) with an encouraging context, Tom's request again follows the script. In one of Tom's interviews with a more ambiguous environment (LP062),

he performs no preemptions but still formats his request in a predominately presumptive way: ''Ah is now a good time to start that?'' In an interview that tended toward discouraging (LP008), Tom is even more presumptive than he was in the encouraging or ambiguous environments. He preempts several matters to say simply, ''Is now a good time er:::-,'' at which point the sample person declines. Across three different environments, Tom is presumptive in his requesting practices, exhibiting a style that seems impervious to the cues of his individual sample persons.

Interviewers, like Tom, who habitually engage in less tailoring are less successful than other interviewers (Morton-Williams and Young 1987). As it turns out, of the 66 WLS interviewers who had 50 or more completed or refused cases, Tom has the highest refusal rate (45 percent, compared with 12 percent on average). This is strong evidence that being unresponsive to the interactional environment—that is, being stylistic rather than responsive in one's requesting practices—is counterproductive. Our analysis provides insight into an interactional dynamic that could underlie findings that interviewers who follow a script have lower response rates than do interviewers who use a less formal agenda (Houtkoop-Steenstra and van den Bergh 2002; Morton-Williams 1993; Morton-Williams and Young 1987). From the very inception of the phone call, such interviewers may refrain from tailoring their talk to the discernable encouraging, discouraging, or even ambiguous cues from sample persons regarding their stance toward being interviewed. These interviewers engage in uniform if not mechanical requesting practices, whether by following the script or otherwise having a relatively rigid personal style.

Environments, Requests, and Participation

The interactional sequences that eventually result in participation or non-participation begin in the opening few seconds, continue through introductory sequences, and then go beyond the request until acceptance or declination is determined. We do not yet have definitive quantitative information about how interactional environments and requests are associated with acceptances and declinations—that is, precisely how sample persons' cues and interviewers' requesting practices influence response rates—but one matter for investigation is clear. In the 34 instances of encouraging environments, nearly all have presumptive requests and *every* case results in an acceptance. In the 10 interviews with discouraging introductory environments, however, there are 4 acceptances and 6 declinations; in the 25 ambiguous cases, there are 18 acceptances and 7 declinations. In encouraging environments, the interviewers' requests and the outcomes are relatively constant; these are likely determined in such close coordination that any role the interviewer might play in producing an acceptance, rather than simply allowing its expression, would be difficult to observe. In negative and ambiguous environments, however, there is more variability in interviewer behavior and the ultimate outcome, making these environments a potentially fruitful site for quantitative analysis.

BLOCKING MOVES

So far, drawing on previous research about requesting as a social action, we have described and analyzed facets of the pivotal act of asking for participation in a survey interview. In our collection of calls, however, we found that interviewers often are not able to produce a request because a sample person refuses relatively early in the call. We call this a blocking move, for reasons related to the organization of sequences in conversation. Request sequences (request plus reply) are one kind of base sequence in conversation (Schegloff 2007). Pre-sequences foreshadow such base sequences and enable participants to project whether

```
 1    FR:        Hello Smi:th.
 2                    (0.7)
 3    FI:        tch .h Hi my name's Sharon I'm calling from the University of
 4               Wisconsin. .h Can I speak to Michelle [Smith please?
 5    FR:                                             [This is Michelle.
 6                    (0.3)
 7    FI:        .h ((click)) Hi I'm calling for the Wisconsin Longitudin↓al Study.
 8               ,.h Have you received our letter recent[ly?  ]
 9    FR: →                                            [Yea:h] but I guess I don't
10               wanna par↓ticipate in it.
11                        (.)
12    FR:        So thank you.
13                    (.)
14    FI:        Oh I'm ↑sorry could I ask why?
15                    (.)
16    FR:        tch .h I just don't.
```

Extract 7. HP018

a base first pair part (e.g., an invitation or a request) will obtain its preferred second pair part (e.g., acceptance). In this sense, and because they circumvent such responsive actions as rejections, pre-sequences deal with the delicacy of an initiated action (Schegloff 2007). The second part of a pre-sequence is a go-ahead move, with which the recipient of a pre-invitation or pre-request moves the talk toward the base sequence. Of course, as Extract 1 shows, when the base sequence involves an action such as requesting, the pre-sequence initiation can provide an opportunity for a preemptive offer. But a pre-sequence also provides an opportunity for a blocking move (Schegloff 2007). For example, Party A's "What're you doing?" (a pre-sequence inquiry that could foreshadow an invitation as a base first pair part) might get a response from Party B, such as "Well, we're going out," that could preclude Party A's issuing an intended invitation.

In a survey interview, during the very first turns of a call, a sample person can understand the interviewer's talk as initiating a pre-sequence and project that a formal request for survey participation is forthcoming. The advance letter sent to sample persons probably facilitates such a projection. Consequently, call recipients can preempt

a request with an offer (see Extract 1), generate go-ahead moves (Maynard and Schaeffer 2002a), or produce blocking moves and avoid hearing a formal request. In Extract 7, the sample person fashions a blocking declination at line 9 and reaffirms it with a "thank you" (line 12) that invites—or initiates—closing the call (Maynard and Schaeffer 1997).

After the declination, the interviewer asks "why" (line 14 in Extract 7) but to no avail (line 16). We observed other similar instances of this in our data; perhaps interviewers ask "why" in an attempt to maintain interaction or to elicit objections they might rebut. However, we did not find a single case in which such questions were successful in converting a (projected) declination into an acceptance.

Blocking declinations are both firm and common. In our subsample of 200 calls that resulted in declination, 126 (63 percent) used blocking moves—that is, the sample person declined before the request was made (see Table 1). Because blocking moves are preemptive declinations, avoiding such moves so that a request can be made is an important matter.

Beyond getting to the request, another interactional issue bears on acceptance rates.

Table 1. Location of Sample Person's Declination or Acceptance Relative to Interviewer's Request for Survey Participation

	Location		
Outcome – Sample Groups	Pre-request	Post-request	*N*
Acceptance	2 (1%)	198 (99%)	200
Declination	126 (63%)	74 (37%)	200
N	128 (32%)	272 (68%)	400

In a two-part adjacency-pair sequence, an acceptance is the preferred response to a request.[9] Conversation analysts have established that when recipients of requests in ordinary conversation accept, they do so with a minimal gap, with items that occupy the entire turn and that state the acceptance semantically, and with little or no accounting or explanation (Heritage 1998; Schegloff 2007). By contrast, declinations are structurally dispreferred responses, and recipients usually delay them, use mitigating prefaces, and, if they use a semantic rejection form, precede or follow it with other components in the turn, especially accountings or explanations. However, recipients often omit a semantic rejection and let the accounting stand in its stead. In the survey interview, when sample persons decline a request, they hesitate and embellish their utterances in various ways, but an acceptance is often a simple "Oh yah," "sure," "oh sure," "yah," or "okay" that appears relatively close to the request. In other words, the way in which speakers display the preferred or dispreferred character of a response results in acceptances, like good news, being "exposed," and declinations, like bad news, being "shrouded" (Maynard 2003). In some senses, preferred responses are interactionally facilitated and dispreferred ones are inhibited by these practices.

As acceptances are (structurally) preferred over rejections or declinations, the organization of the interaction order (Goffman 1983) may promote the granting of a survey request once the request is made. In other words, independent of a sample person's psychological attitude toward a survey, granting an interviewer's request may have a positive leverage in its own right, one that is made salient by the articulation of the request itself. Preference structure can provide an interactional nudge toward acceptance.

Avoiding Blocking Moves

Our point is that we can better understand the interactional practices that may alter an interviewer's chances of avoiding blocking moves and producing a request if we investigate the dynamics operating in the opening moments of such calls. For example, is there anything an interviewer can do to affect whether a sample person will be encouraging or discouraging as the two parties progress through an interview's introduction? Although we cannot now answer this question definitively, we can at least point to a line for future research.

Interviewers' opening turns regularly have at least four components: a greeting term, the interviewers' personal identification (i.e., name), their institutional affiliation, and a request for the sample person (Hollander 2008). These components can be produced in one turn of talk, but more often they are spread across two or more turns of talk and are produced in various orders. In this study, interviewers can use three additional components from their scripts—verification of a sample person's identity by referring to the high school attended, mention of the WLS advance letter, and a brief description of the WLS study. Note that the interviewer's

```
   1    FR:     ↑He↓llo.
   2            (0.5)
   3    MI:     tch ↑Hi there. ↑He↓llo. May I speak to Cindy Masterson.
   4            (0.7)
   5    FR:     You ↑got er. Whadaya want?
   6            (.)
   7    MI:     ↑Hi Cindy my name's Lou↑is Palmer. .h ↑I'm calling
   8            back from University of Wisconsin (.) Survey Center
   9            (.) about the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study?
  10            (0.8)
  11    FR:     Not interested in it.
```

Extract 8. HP008

opening turn is typically produced after only a ''hello'' from the call recipient, and so it is likely to be less influenced by and responsive to displays by the sample member than later turns. Our larger project examines variation in the presence and order of these components and their relation to survey response.

Here we focus on just one component: identification-recognition sequences. When interviewers reach a household by telephone, some follow the opening script by producing a personal (name) identification along with their institutional affiliation before asking to speak to the sample person (see Extract 5). In other cases, as Hollander (2008) observes, interviewers provide no personal identification or institutional affiliation (although the institutional affiliation can be implied by naming the study). For example, in Extract 1, after the household phone is answered, the interviewer says simply, ''Hi, could I speak to Brenda Caw please?'' (see also Extract 6). In still other calls, personal identification and institutional affiliation are offered only after the interviewer asks for the sample person and the call recipient identifies herself as that person (see lines 7 to 8 in Extract 8).

In these instances (Extracts 1, 6, and 8), the interviewer's relationship with the sample person is, at least initially, more anonymous (Heritage 2002) than if she had offered her own name in her first turn. In Extract 8, the sample person takes a challenging stance (''Whadaya want?'') right after

confirming her identity (and subsequently produces a blocking declination), and it is after this challenge that the interviewer identifies herself and the survey center. If interviewers identify themselves before asking for the sample person, as in Extracts 5 and 7, it may make salient a positive leverage intrinsic to the interaction order—namely, the reciprocity attendant upon offering one's name as a way of, or before, requesting a name from a recipient (Sacks 1989). If interviewers also reveal the name of the organization and under whose auspices they are calling, and informants or sample persons recognize and respect this organization, it may activate the attribute of trust, which research shows promotes survey participation (Roose et al. 2007). However, when interviewers immediately ask to speak to sample persons, informants or sample persons who answer the phone have no knowledge about who is calling. In these cases, the interviewer may appear less trustworthy, or less like the agent of a trustworthy enterprise. If call recipients do identify themselves or indicate that the interviewer has reached the household of the sample person, they are not reciprocating with identifying information but providing it to a nameless and amorphous other. This circumstance alone can affect a call recipient's setting of an encouraging or discouraging environment for requesting participation. We thus propose that how well interviewers work to establish reciprocity and trust in

concrete, self-identifying ways may affect the likelihood of blocking moves, being able to produce requests (including tailored ones), and, ultimately, obtaining acceptance of a request.[10]

CONCLUSIONS

Leverage-saliency theory posits that participation in surveys is a decision based on leverages that different attributes of participating have and the salience of those attributes when the decision is made. As Groves and Couper (1998) note, interviewers tailor their talk by using sparse interactional cues to infer leverages and then avoid or mitigate (make less salient) negative leverages while highlighting (making more salient) those that are positive. Consistent with this view, we propose that LST, and rational choice theory more broadly, will benefit from research that examines requests and other collaborative activities as actual, concrete actions, rather than simply activities affected by individuals' sociocognitive states. Complicated dynamics emerge from our detailed examination of actual calls for participation in the survey interview.[11] When and whether requests are produced, for example, is a contingent matter. If cues from sample persons are encouraging, effective interviewers may move efficiently toward asking for participation and may produce appropriately presumptive requests. When cues are discouraging, interviewers may postpone asking for participation while working through preliminary, scripted utterances, and then form their requests cautiously.

Sample persons, for their part, may seize interactional opportunities to issue refusals before a request is made. Skilled tailoring, therefore, not only facilitates acceptance of a request to participate, but it also may enhance the likelihood of making a request in the first place. Once a request is generated, the preference for agreement may provoke a positive leverage that derives from the interaction order rather than from attributes of the survey. Once a refusal occurs, however, matters are different. There may be an interactionally generated negative leverage if individuals have an aversion to reversing stated commitments (Dijkstra and Smit 2002). Additionally, although interviewers are provided with a detailed list of reservations that sample persons might have about participating and retorts to those reservations, sample persons do not necessarily articulate reservations in the form shown in survey materials. Worse, when interviewers in our subsample used the most tempting structural place in the interaction to ask why sample persons declined to participate—after a refusal was produced—they never obtained an interview.

The extent to which variation in interviewer practices, sample persons' interactional moves, and the interrelation between these practices and moves have measurable effects on response rates awaits further, quantitative investigation. Nonetheless, this study highlights two challenges for such research. First, if practices are effective because of their deployment in particular contexts, then their effectiveness can be assessed only by experimental designs in which that context is considered. One cannot simply assign some interviewers to do presumptive requests and others to do cautious ones; instead, properly varying the presumptiveness and cautiousness of requests depending on the circumstances may be optimal. Interviewers would need to be trained to recognize these situations—and to do so very quickly. Second, observational studies of practices need to be careful not to confuse the influence of an interviewer's practices on a sample person with the influence of a sample person's behavior on an interviewer. A naive study of our data might conclude that presumptive requests work better, but our examination of how interactions unfold suggests that presumptive requests are disproportionately produced in already-favorable contexts. The most (inappropriately) consistent and presumptive interviewer

in our data was also the least successful overall.

More generally, we have sought to demonstrate the importance of examining the actual details of interactions; in particular, we hoped to provide an interpretive understanding of the particulars of any given interaction using generic insights gained through basic research on the sequential mechanisms of conversation. Before counting and modeling possible effects on outcomes in our own study, we seek a better understanding of requesting as a social action in its own right. We do so by specifying a request in concrete interactional terms: it is, relative to offers, a dispreferred and delicate social action to perform. The delicacy of requesting is reflected in the range and variability of practices that enter into the design of this ubiquitous social action. Whereas previous CA research focuses on the design of requests relative to displayed inferences about entitlement and contingency according to the ordinary or institutional settings in which they are produced (Curl and Drew 2008), we suggest that designs also can be intimately related to their immediately preceding sequential and interactional contexts. Studies of requests and solicitations with different types of surveys (e.g., cross-sectional as opposed to longitudinal) and in other settings (e.g., calls for tissue donation [Weathersbee and Maynard 2009]) can build on our own and other CA inquiries.

Our research emphasizes the conversation analytic proposal that, if effective tailoring happens in telephone requests, the information interviewers take into account in their practices cannot exist simply in sample persons' heads but must be observable in the interactions. For interviewers, the work of tailoring is responding to displays of leverage and salience in real-time. Understanding the details of this work demands close attention to what happens, turn by turn, during these interactions. The payoffs include a better understanding of requesting as a social action and insights into how requests in specific settings can be configured to achieve their preferred outcomes.

Authors' Note

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Notes

1. We discuss the preferencing of second (i.e., responsive) turns later.
2. Survey methodologists have discussed or investigated the effect of most of these attributes on survey participation (Roose et al. 2007).
3. If the person answering the phone is not the WLS respondent, the interviewer is to ask for the respondent. If the respondent is available and comes to the phone, interviewers are scripted to again provide their name and that of the University of Wisconsin Survey Center before verifying the school from which the respondent graduated in 1957.
4. Interviewers are blocked from making a request in 39 out of 108 cases (see discussion of blocking moves).
5. For a recent study of distinctive ways in which tokens and nodding can indicate affiliation or disaffiliation, see Stivers (2008). Müller's (1996) study of German tokens suggests that affiliated prior turns have more variation in utterance intonation and length than do turns that disaffiliate. We take his study as indicative for our English data, although systematic comparative research between German

and English remains to be done. We code downward intonation as disaffiliation and within utterance variable intonation on tokens as impressionistically affiliative. Although we do not systematically investigate the prosody of talk in these interview openings, in line with previous research (Groves and Couper 1998), we recognize its importance and introduce observations regarding tone, pacing, and emphasis at relevant points in our analysis.

6. For example, in relation to the respondent verification question, out of 69 interviews with requests, asking for verification occasions expansive confirmations six times (e.g., ''you got it,'' ''that's right, that's me,'' and ''that's correct, I graduated then''). Eight responses to respondent verification are stand-alone agreement-type confirmations (e.g., ''right'' or ''correct''). All 14 expansive and agreement-type confirmations are associated with ultimate acceptance of the request. The 19 more frequent confirmations (i.e., ''yes,'' ''yeah,'' and ''yep'') more weakly align to the verification request. In these cases, 14 result in acceptances and five in refusals. These numbers are not large enough to subject to statistical test, but they do indicate possible distinctions among responses to the verification question that interviewers, taking prosody into account, can interpret as relatively encouraging or discouraging.

7. In 39 cases, interviewers were unable to make the request (see the section on Blocking Moves and note 4).

8. For example, Nolen (2008) shows that using two-option high-contingency requests, as opposed to one-option low-contingency requests, is associated with more polite responses even when the response is a declination.

9. Responses to a request are second pair parts in adjacency pair sequences. We discussed the preferencing of first pair parts or initiating actions earlier, in the section on Analyzing Requesting Actions.

10. While this article was in press, quantitative evidence supporting this proposal was developed with the aid of Dana Garbarski, Nora Cate Schaeffer, and Jeremy Freese (see Maynard and Hollander 2010).

11. Our preliminary quantitative study (Schaeffer et al. 2010) of questions regarding (1) ''who'' is calling or ''what'' the survey is about and (2) the length of the interview shows that the two types of questions are associated differently with survey participation, and that this association may vary by potential respondents' propensity to participate.

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