

## POSTPRINT

# A cline of visible commitment in the situated design of imperative turns

## Evidence from German and Polish

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In the management of cooperation, the fit of a requested action with what the addressee is presently doing is a pervasively relevant consideration. We present evidence that imperative turns are adapted to, and reflexively create, contexts in which the other person is committed to the course of action advanced by the imperative. This evidence comes from systematic variation in the design of imperative turns, relative to the fittedness of the imperatively mandated action to the addressee's ongoing trajectory of actions, what we call the "cline of commitment". We present four points on this cline: *Responsive imperatives* perform an operation on the deontic dimension of what the addressee has announced or already begun to do (in particular its permissibility); *local-project-imperatives* formulate a new action advancing a course of action in which the addressee is already actively engaged; *global-project-imperatives* target a next task for which the addressee is available on the grounds of their participation in the overall event, and in the absence of any competing work; and *competitive imperatives* draw on a presently otherwise engaged addressee on the grounds of their social commitment to the relevant course of actions. These four turn shapes are increasingly complex, reflecting the interactional work required to bridge the increasing distance between what the addressee is currently doing, and what the imperative mandates. We present data from German and Polish informal and institutional settings.

**Keywords:** action formation, commitment, embodiment, imperative, imperfective, modal particles, participation, requesting

### 1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the construction of imperative turns in the management of practical courses of action in German and Polish. The work accomplished in such

practical courses of action mostly involves the manipulation of material objects, and includes such events as providing an object or performing some task. Within research fields concerned with natural interaction, there has been growing interest over recent years in the use of imperative grammar in managing practical action – one sign of which is the present volume.

Imperatives in the sense of a grammatical structure are generally understood to be dedicated to getting another person to do something (e.g., Lyons 1977; Aikhenvald 2010). Indeed, imperative turns are cross-linguistically the predominantly used practice for making “requests”, understood in a broad sense (Floyd, Rossi, and Enfield under review), and such uses are also central to our chapter. Nevertheless, just as requests can be accomplished with forms other than imperatives, imperatives can also be used to do things other than requesting (expressing, e.g., wishes: *have a nice day*; conditionals: *go to the party and you’ll be in bad shape tomorrow*). The coordination of practical courses of action – a universal concern in human social life – might therefore be a better starting point than a folk concept such as requesting (Kendrick and Drew 2016). Our focus here will be not so much the action type of “requests”, but more broadly the use of imperative turns in contexts in which some practical course(s) of actions is being pursued by one or several of the participants.

Researchers of natural interaction have analyzed the use of imperatives (1) in relation to a speaker’s (whom we will refer to as A) entitlement to have a request granted (e.g., Antaki and Kent 2012; Craven and Potter 2010), (2) in relation to the practical, multimodal and temporal context of cooperative activities (e.g., Mondada 2014b, this volume, 2013), and (3) in relation to the fit of the action mandated by the imperative with the addressee’s (whom we will refer to as B) course of actions (e.g., Rossi 2012; Wootton 1997; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). We pursue and systematize observations made within this last line of research. Wootton’s (1997) study of requests made by a young English-speaking child to her caregivers was the first to point out the pervasive relevance of how an action to be carried out fits the trajectory of what B is currently doing. Wootton observed that the child would select an imperative format predominantly in those situations in which the requested action was consistent with a line of action that she and her parent had agreed on earlier in the interaction. Rossi (2012) extended this finding in work on informal interaction among Italian-speaking adults. In his data, speakers would select an imperative predominantly when the request was grounded “bilaterally” in the local context. This bilateral grounding would, prototypically, mean that doing the requested action constitutes an extension of a trajectory already engaged in by the request recipient, that the requested action contributes to a wider joint project to which both requestee and requester were already committed, and (therefore) that doing the requested action benefits both participants (see also Rossi this volume).

The concept of “bilateral requests” thus captures, on the one hand, features of the context that are publicly observable, namely, the (prospective) request recipient’s embodied conduct as visibly being a contribution to the wider project to which the requested action will also contribute. On the other hand, the concept also captures more global and less tangible features of context, namely the (prospective) request recipient’s status as a beneficiary of the action, and “co-owner” of the project to be advanced with the requested action.

We focus here more closely on *B*’s embodied conduct as it can be observed in moments leading up to *A*’s formulation of an imperative turn. The notion of “social commitments” will be useful in systematizing relationships between the embodied engagements and social obligations of *B* on the one hand, and the course of actions advanced by the imperative on the other. Making a social commitment means taking on an obligation towards others: if I agree to take part in putting up a tent in the garden the next day, I have made a commitment to that project; I have taken a share of the responsibility for the success of the undertaking (see Thompson, Fox, and Couper-Kuhlen 2015, in relation to request sequences; Clark 1996). Social commitments of this kind often entail a commitment to nested sub-projects and actions (e.g., Enfield 2013; Bangerter and Clark 2003): If I have made a commitment to take part in putting up the tent, I have committed myself to being there at a particular time; to contribute to sub-procedures such as unpacking the tent, etc. As we zoom in further into subroutines that are instrumental to a course of action, we enter into a domain in which we can speak of commitments in a related but distinct sense. If I stretch out my hand in the direction of a branch lying on the grass, there is a moment at which I have “committed” myself to a noticeable arm movement that will be accountable, for example, as a move to pick up the branch. This move can itself be in the service of a commitment to a joint project (clearing the patch for the tent), but it need not be. Commitment in this usage means not so much taking on an obligation, but making a decision, choosing a path. Such embodied commitments are social only in the weaker sense that they might be made in front of others, and therefore accountable to them (see Clark 1996: 294). This public nature of social commitments, in their social and embodied dimension, will be central to our analysis.

We focus on reflexive relationships between the grammatical form of the imperative amid other formal features of imperative turns, on the one hand, and the embodied engagements of the prospective addressee of the imperative, on the other. We will describe four types of bodily and pragmatic alignment of the person to whom the imperative is addressed towards the course of action advanced by *A*’s imperative; and four corresponding imperative turn shapes that can be analyzed as adaptations to *B*’s presently visible engagements.

These four imperative turn shapes differ in systematic ways. They can be placed on a cline from a maximally simple shape, to increasingly more complex ones. This increasing complexity in turn design correlates with an increasing distance to be crossed from *B*'s present embodied and pragmatic engagements to the imperatively mandated action. At the syntactically lean end, we find imperatives formulating an action that *B* is visibly (or hearably) already minded to do (in her embodied engagements, *B* has already committed herself to that very action, Section 4.1). One step up on our cline, we find imperatives that target an action that is new to the recipient, but that advances a local project in which *B* is already bodily engaged (*B*'s conduct displays a commitment to a local project, Section 4.2). Further up, we find more complex imperatives formulating an action that is new to the recipient, in a situation in which *B* is not currently engaged in a relevant local project, but is available for work that is part of the overall social event, or "global project", that is advanced by the imperatively mandated action (*B*'s conduct displays a commitment to a global project, Section 4.3). At the complex end of the cline, we find imperatives that aim to draw on a recipient who is presently engaged in an unrelated course of actions (but in these cases, *B*'s manifest or "in-principle" social commitment to the project furthered by the imperative is recoverable from the history of the interaction, Section 4.4). Before we turn to the analysis, we provide some information on data and methods (2), and on the grammar of imperatives in German and Polish (3).

## 2. Data and methods

The findings that we present here are based on the close examination of the multimodal, sequential context of imperative turns, with particular attention to the prospective turn recipient's embodied conduct, and of the formulation of the imperative turn. Data come from three corpora of video-recorded natural interaction. The first set of data consists of recordings that are part of the FOLK corpus, a large in-progress corpus of spoken German compiled at the *Institute for the German Language (IDS)* in Mannheim.<sup>1</sup> From that corpus, we have examined recordings from three institutional settings (13 hours of classroom interaction, 8.5 hours of practical lessons in driving school and 4 hours of emergency drills by professional paramedics) and one informal setting (3.5 hours of recording of two sisters redecorating a room). The second corpus is a set of recordings of board game interactions in German, part of a developing parallel European corpus of informal interactions

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1. Fully transcribed audio-recordings are accessible via [www.dgd.ids-mannheim.de](http://www.dgd.ids-mannheim.de).

(PECH; work on the German part of the corpus is based at the IDS Mannheim). This corpus currently consists of four recordings with a duration of about five hours. The third corpus consists of recordings made by the first author, in collaboration with Eva Ogiermann, in the homes of Polish-speaking families living in Poland. These recordings capture various everyday situations, including mealtimes, meal preparation, and playing with children. The corpus amounts to 14 hours of recordings made by nine families.

We examine German and Polish materials together because of the strong parallels in the use of imperatives in the organization of practical action that we have noticed in our work. German and Polish are both Indo-European languages with a long history of mutual borrowing. Nevertheless, the two languages are typologically distinct. We therefore offer their parallel analysis in support of the thesis that the generalizations that we make concerning relationships between visible commitment and the design of imperative turns will hold across diverse languages. Transcription follows the conventions developed within Conversation Analysis (Jefferson 2004). We further draw on emerging conventions for multimodal transcription (Mondada 2014a).

### 3. The grammar of imperatives in German and Polish

Across languages, the second person singular imperative is the most widely attested. It seems to be an implicational universal that if a language has an imperative form at all, then that form will encode the second person singular (Chrakovskij 2001; van der Auwera, Johan, Dobrushina, and Goussev 2013). This is just as we would expect, given the understanding that the imperative is dedicated to getting another person to do something. Beginning with German for alphabetical reasons, grammars of German consider the imperative as a verbal mood, i.e., it is coded by the morphology of the verb (Donhauser 1986; Fries 1996; Duden 2005; Zifonun, Hoffmann, and Strecker 1997). Imperatives are semi-finite: They encode number but are only possible in active voice and do not encode tense and person (they are always addressed to (a) “second” person(s)). Imperatives may only be constructed with agentive (or, less commonly), experiential and mental verbs. Imperatives may not be embedded in other syntactic structures. Basically, the imperative singular is constructed by using the stem (Example (1) below), plus optional <e>-suffix (as a more formal variant). Exceptions apply, which we describe here only insofar as they occur in the data presented. For example, if a verb exhibits an <e> in its stem, then the ablaut variant <i>/<ie> is substituted for <e>, and no inflectional <e> may be added (Example (2)):

- (1) *schieb-Ø/(-e) mal drunter* ('push underneath', from *schieben*, 'to push', see Extract (9))  
 (2) *lies-Ø mal vor* ('read aloud', from *lesen*, 'to read', see Extract (12))

The imperative does not require a subject, although it may be added, e.g., to pick out or disambiguate referents. Sociolinguistically, the German morphological imperative is an informal variant, it requires (and, reflexively, indexes) social proximity. German being a *t/v*-system (Friedrich 1972), if the imperative is to be used, it requires that the speaker address the same recipient(s) using the informal second person pronoun *du* (singular) or *ihr* (plural) (Duden 2005: 548). The morphological, informal imperative is socio-deictically opposed to a formal variant, which, however, is not morphologically marked and thus not a verbal mood, but which is considered as an instance of a sentence mood (or sentence type), called "request sentence" (Aufforderungssatz, see Zifonun, Hoffmann, and Strecker 1997).<sup>2</sup> It is constructed by using a verb in second person plural present tense indicative in verb-first position plus the social deictic formal pronoun *sie*: e.g. *holen sie* < - *holen* ('fetch'). Since all participants in our German data are familiar with each other and use informal address forms, only morphological imperatives occur in the interactions under study.

In Polish, aspect is grammaticalized as a category of the verb, so that with respect to the large majority of verbs, it is necessary to form either an imperfective or a perfective imperative. As in German, the second-person singular imperative among people who are familiar with one another is built morphologically, with a verb in imperative mood. Imperative mood in Polish affixes the relevant morpheme *-Ø/-(i)j-*,<sup>3</sup> to the verb stem (e.g., Spaeth 2009). Here are two Examples (3)–(4). (3a) is the imperative of the imperfective verb *dawać*, (3b) is the imperative of the perfective verb *dać*, both meaning 'to give'.

- (3) a. *da-wa-j mi szklankę* ('give-IPFV-IMP me (a) glass', from *dawać*, 'to give')  
 b. *da-j mi szklankę* ('give-IMP me (a) glass', from *dać*, 'to give', cf. Extract (13))  
 (4) *zobacz-Ø* ('(take a) look (at it)', from *zobaczyć*, 'to look', see Extract (8))<sup>4</sup>

2. The same applies to the first-person plural adhortative, which is syntactically constructed like the request sentence type, using the first-person plural indicative present tense + first-person plural pronoun: *gehen wir* ('let's go').

3. A further morpheme expressing person and number is affixed in plural uses, but this will be irrelevant in this chapter.

4. The closest imperfective "partner" of *zobaczyć* ('look') is *widzieć* ('see'), which does not form an imperative.

The Polish imperative paradigm is more complex than the German one, as the morphological imperative can be combined with first person plural marking (resulting in a meaning similar to the English hortative *let's do x*). We will restrict ourselves to second person singular imperatives here.

In Polish, as in German, there are imperatives that can only be recognized at the sentence level. This concerns, again, imperatives that express an honorific function, that is, that are addressed to a person with whom the speaker does not have a close social relation. In these cases, a periphrastic hortative/imperative construction with the particle *niech* + verb in 3rd person singular can be employed (e.g., *niech Pani usiądzie*, roughly 'may the Mrs sit down'). Our data are from interactions among family members and peers, and we do not have cases of this honorific imperative/hortative.

#### 4. The cline of visible commitment

##### 4.1 Initiating co-participants and responsive imperatives

At one end of the cline of commitment, we find imperative turns directed to recipients who have already initiated a relevant action: they have announced it or are already beginning to carry it out. Such imperatives are tightly targeted at a deontic dimension of the specific action *B* is already minded to do: In the cases we discuss in this section, the permissibility of *B*'s (projected) action is in doubt, and the imperative turn provides a go-ahead to that action (see also Heinemann & Steensig, this volume). The speaker of the imperative turn enacts the deontic authority to decide upon the permissibility of the relevant action. In such contexts, we find maximally simple imperative turns, which, in Polish, are built with verbs in imperfective aspect. In Extract (5), the family's son Bartosz has been helping to carry plates from the living room to the kitchen after dinner. At line 1, he is coming back into the living room and announces that he will now look for his lost ball, a matter the family had been discussing earlier. In next position, his mum formulates a turn that consists of just one word: the imperfective imperative *sprawdzaj* ('check', line 3).

##### (5) [PP2-1\_3912120]

```
01 BAR: +To ja idę zobaczyć za telewizorem czy
        Then I go look behind television whether
        Then I go and look behind the TV whether
        bar +>>entering, crossing living room----->

02 BAR: nie ma tam mojej piłki
        not have - my ball
        my ball is not there
        bar ----->
```

- 03 IWO: sprawdzaj,  
 check-IPFV.IMP  
 do that  
 bar ----->>
- 04 ((Bartosz proceeds to search for the ball under cupboard))

Iwona formulates the imperative *sprawdzaj* ('check') as a response to Bartosz's turn in which he tells of his intention to look for the ball. Iwona's turn is built as a response in the following ways: The turn does not provide any information about such matters as what to check, or where to check. The imperative itself formulates an action that Bartosz has already formulated in his turn, albeit using different words: *sprawdzaj* ('check') refers to the same action that Bartosz has already announced using the verb *zobaczyć* ('look'). In sum, Iwona's turn is hearable as being built entirely on the information in Bartosz's prior turn, and thus as being responsive to this turn.

Iwona's imperfective imperative targets an action that is already incipient: its incipiency has come into common ground through Bartosz's just-prior first person declarative turn. This declarative has formulated a project that the speaker will now proceed to implement (see Keevallik's related analysis of "my-side offers" this volume). Iwona's imperfective imperative aligns with Bartosz's project (see also Lehmann 1989, for a similar finding in relation to Russian). Bartosz's announcement is relevant here because he is officially still occupied with a different activity, clearing the dishes after a meal. It therefore embodies the awareness that his project of looking for the ball involves decisions, namely, whether he can go and do as he plans, or whether he must perform more chores. It is this deontic uncertainty – the uncertainty whether Bartosz must do more cleaning up, or whether he can go and look for his ball – that the imperfective imperative is responsive to, and the particulars of this case give Iwona's action the quality of a *go-ahead*.

Imperative forms encoding imperfectivity might be particularly apt for contexts in which a relevant course of actions is already ongoing, as is the case in Extract (5) (see Zinken 2016: Chapter 8). In German, aspect is not grammaticalized as a category of the verb. However, it has been argued that the modal particle *mal* can have a perfectivizing function (Hentschel 1991): *mal* indexes that the requester asks the addressee to perform the requested action 'only once', but not repeatedly or regularly, thus building on the bleached original meaning of *einmal* 'once' (Weydt and Hentschel 1986: 14; Bublitz 2003), following the well-established path of grammaticalization from temporal to discursive or subjectifying uses of grammatical forms (Traugott and Dasher 2002). The modal particle *mal* is a very common element in imperative turns used in the organization of cooperation in German: it is ubiquitous in those contexts that we will examine in Sections 4.2–4.4. Against that background,

it is noteworthy that imperatives without *mal* in German, just like Polish imperative imperatives, are commonly used in contexts in which they are responsive to a deontic uncertainty in what has just transpired in *B*'s prior move.

Consider Extract (6), from a recording of four adults playing a board game in German. The game is being played in Carlotta and Olafs house; Anna and Thorsten are their neighbours. Anna has been eating plums from a bowl on the table. After completing a move and passing the dice cup (lines 1–3), she extends her arm to take another plum (lines 4–5). As she picks one, she formulates what she is doing, and she formulates it as a potentially inappropriate activity, eating all the plums by herself: *ich esse die ganz alleine merkt ihr das*, ('I am eating them all by myself, are you noticing that'). Olaf initially responds with *ja=ja* ('yes=yes', line 9), a multiple saying (Stivers 2004) that might be designed to stop Anna from "seeking permission", but that can also be (mis-)understood as confirming that he has been "noticing" Anna eating all the plums. Whatever the case may be, Olaf extends his turn with an imperative TCU giving a go-ahead: *mach das* ('do that', line 9). Carlotta seconds the go-ahead by repeating the imperative TCU (line 10), and she provides additional information addressing the potential inappropriateness of what Anna is doing: Carlotta and Olaf have more plums (line 10), therefore Anna can eat the entire bowl, and need not feel obliged to leave any for the others.

(6) [PECH\_BG01\_3931751]

- 01 ANN: °ach=ich muss ja run{ter}°  
 PRT I must PRT down  
 oh right, I have to vacate ((the spot on the board))
- 02 CAR: [°m:hm,°
- 03 +(0.4)+  
 Ann +passes dice cup to Thorsten+
- 04 ANN: man +muss so viel machen dass man  
*man* must so much do-INF that *man*  
 there are so many things you have to do that  
 Ann +extends arm to bowl with plums->
- 05 gar nicht viel °ent+scheid(en ka)nn°  
 PRT not much decide-INF can.3SG  
 you cannot decide a lot  
 Ann -----+picks plum---->
- 06 CAR: [ja:: ]  
 yes
- 07 ANN: Ich +esse die ganz alleine  
 I eat.1SG them PRT alone  
 I eat them all on my own  
 Ann -----+retracts arm with plum->



your thing (to) put in there,<sup>5</sup> roughly, ‘put your thing [the paint roller] in there [the paint bucket]’, line 4). After stalling briefly (possibly in response to Pauline’s *also* (‘so’)), Tamara continues and completes her movement (line 4).

(7) [STRA\_01\_A01b\_1317330]

```
01 PAU: wadde mal, (.) dann lass MICH mal, (.)
        wait.IMP PRT      then let me PRT
        wait a moment (.) then just let me

02      ge- (.) %gib mir mal% die Leiter da rüber.
        (go-) give me PRT the ladder there over
        (go-) give me that ladder there here
pau . . . . .%points to ladder%,,,

03      +(0.5)
tam     +turns around and leans over to lay down paint
        roller-- >

04 PAU: also#: (.)+tu dein Ding da r+ein legen,=genau,+
        So do.IMP your thing there into put exactly
        So (.) put your thing into this, exactly
tam     -----+stalls-----+continues----->+
        #Fig.1
```

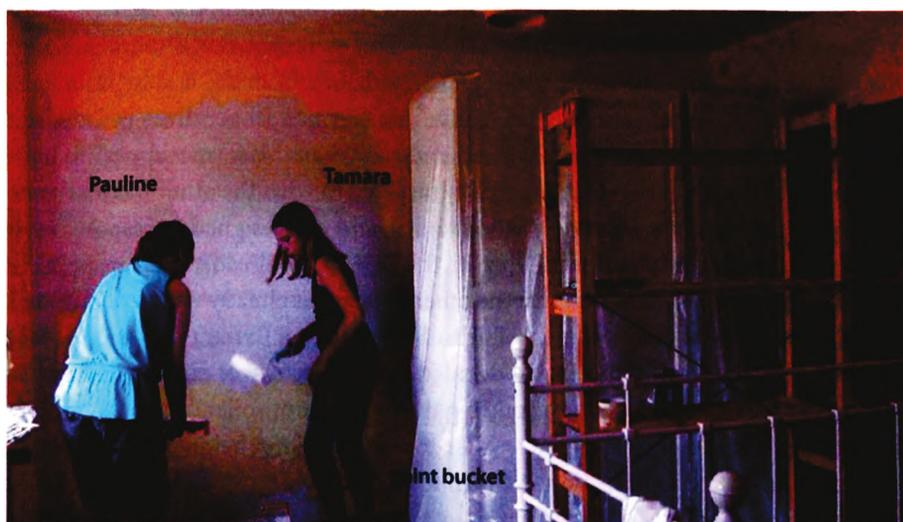


Figure 1. Tamara bends down to lay paint roller into paint bucket (Extract (7), line 4).

5. We provide a “strange”-sounding gloss to avoid confusion with the English use of *do* for emphasis (*do put your thing in there*). The German *tun* (‘do’) does not have this emphasizing function.

The imperative turn without *mal* (line 4) is here again tightly tied to an embodied commitment that *B* has already made. Tamara's choice to put down the paint roller might be deontically sensitive in so far as it is an action other than that projected by Pauline's request to bring the ladder. Sequentially speaking, Tamara's bowing down towards the bucket can be analyzed as an embodied extension of the base sequence (Pauline's request for the ladder, line 2, and Tamara bringing the ladder, not transcribed here). Pauline's responsive imperative works to ratify Tamara's conduct as being a kind of "pre-second" (Schegloff 2007), an action preparatory to the pending second pair-part, compliance with the request in line 2.

The imperative turn here is much longer than the ones we examined in Extracts (5) and (6). Nevertheless, it is again designed as responsive to what has just transpired, and as lean in its information. By introducing an auxiliary verb, *tun* ('to do') (see also Schwitalla 2006, on *tun* as an auxiliary verb), in turn-initial position, and coding the imperative on that auxiliary, Pauline achieves a separation of the imperative from the more informative verb *reinlegen* ('lay/put in'), thereby reducing the informative import of her imperative while maximizing its contiguity to the action to which it is responsive. The reference to the paint roller as *ding* ('thing') and maybe also its possessive characterization as *dein ding* ('your thing') further contribute to reducing any claim to new information in the turn.

In this section, we have examined three cases of responsive imperatives that provided go-aheads to what the other had already begun to do. It is by no means the case that Polish imperfective imperatives, or German imperatives without the particle *mal*, always give go-aheads. What imperatives in this format appear to have in common, though, is that they are tightly targeted to what the other has just done (or, in other contexts: accountably failed to do), and are designed as responsive to an action *B* has already committed to. In the case of go-aheads, such responsive imperatives align with an action that the other person has already visibly committed to. The commitment that became visible in *B*'s conduct in Extracts (5) and (6) was social only in the weak sense that *B* decided on a trajectory of actions in front of another. In Extract (7), *B*'s action (putting down the paint roller) was accountable in terms of a social commitment to a wider course of actions: helping with the work of renovating. In the next section, we turn to cases in which *B*'s conduct embodies such a stronger form of social commitment: a *participatory* commitment to a joint course of action (Clark 1996; see also Rossi 2012).

#### 4.2 Engaged recipients and local project imperatives

In the previous section, we have examined imperative turns enacting go-aheads to something that the other person had already begun to do. We now turn to

imperatives that fall more clearly into the domain of *requesting* an action. In the introduction, we briefly characterized the finding that imperatives are used for requesting predominantly in situations in which the requested action is in line with what *B* is currently doing, and serves a course of action, or joint project, to which the addressee is already socially committed. These two contextual qualities – an ongoing trajectory of action that is conducive to doing a particular action, and commitment to a project that is progressed by that action – are distinct in principle, but in many situations, they fall together. Maybe the clearest instances of this are cases in which *B* is already engaged in “work” with a material object as an instrument within the local project that will be progressed by the requested action. In such cases, an imperative turn might merely *nudge* the addressee to do a particular next action now. The term *nudge* captures two characteristics of the type of action we now examine: Firstly, they request an action the relevance of which is not apparent to the recipient at that moment, and secondly, the requested action is an extension of what the other is already doing, and it requires only a relatively minor adaptation in his or her ongoing course of actions (Zinken 2016: Chapter 3).

Consider the following example from Polish. Klaudia and Paweł are making preparations for dinner, and in this fragment, the local project that Klaudia is pursuing is to check the readiness of the food that is heating up in the oven. She opens the oven door slightly, but then asks her partner whether the food has warmed up (line 2). Klaudia’s embodied conduct displays her commitment to the local project of checking on the food. Her partner, after giving a non-answer to Klaudia’s question, nudges her to ‘look inside’ the oven (line 4).

(8) [PP4-1\_55720]

```

01 kla  ..*opens oven door..->
02 KLA: podgrzało  s&ie?
        warm-PST.3SG REFL
        has (it) warmed up?
        ----->
        paw  ...&looks->
03      (0.4)
        paw  to oven ----->
04 PAW: †nie wiem.  zajrzyj.
        not know-1SG in.look-IMP.PFV
        I don't know. Look inside
        paw  ----->
        kla  ----->
        %Fig 2
05      (0.4) *(0.3)
        kla  ----->*.. opens the door more, head closer.>
        paw  ----->

```

06 PAW: zobacz&  
 look.IMP.PFV  
 look/have a look  
 ----->&  
 kla ----->

07 &(0.4)  
 paw &turns gaze away->&  
 kla ----->

08 KLA: jabłk\*ami pachnie  
 apples-INSTR smell-3SG  
 (it) smells of apples  
 ---->\*,,,closes oven door,,>>



**Figure 2.** Paweł begins to respond to Klaudia's question, Klaudia is already engaged in the relevant local project (Extract (8), line 4).

Klaudia's commitment to the project of checking on the readiness of the food is embodied in her conduct: she is positioned in front of the oven, has slightly opened the oven door, and is looking at the food. Earlier research has already found that imperative turns making a request in such a context tend to be simple in their composition (Rossi 2012; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). Extract (8) is an extreme example of this: Paweł formulates two imperative turn-constructional units, both of which consist only of the perfective verb in imperative mood. Imperative nudges do not include "polite" items such as *please*, or mitigators that would minimize the work requested (*a little, for a moment*, etc.). Furthermore, grammatical objects of the verb that could lexically encode material objects involved in the requested action tend to be minimized. In Extract (8), line 4, the object that Klaudia is requested

to 'look inside' is not formulated at all. The observable embodied conduct of *B* is clearly a consideration for *A* in designing his imperative request.

While Paweł formulates the imperative TCU *zajrzyj* ('look inside', line 4) as part of a responsive turn, the imperative here is formally and functionally different from the responsive imperatives examined in the previous section. Paweł's proximal response is his non-answer, *nie wiem* ('I don't know', line 4), and the imperative *zajrzyj* ('look inside') here functions as a replacement for an answer: a suggestion for how to find out what Klaudia wants to know. Hence, the imperative TCU provides new information. Formally, it is different from the previous cases (specifically, Extract (5)) in that it encodes perfective aspect. Extract (8) illustrates a general quality of local project imperatives that has not been specifically described in earlier work, but that is important in the present contrast to responsive imperatives. The action targeted by local project imperatives is *new* to the recipient. While Klaudia is visibly committed to the local project of checking on the food's readiness, the particular action that should constitute the next step is not at all apparent to her, as her question displays.

Here is another example of an imperative request, this time from German, formulated in a situation in which the recipient is already engaged in "work" with a material object as part of a relevant local project. As in the previous case, the relevance of doing a particular next action now is not evident to *B*. Pauline and her sister Tamara are about to redecorate a room. Their dad, August, is helping them to move a wardrobe away from the wall. August and Pauline are working together to slide rugs underneath the two ends of the wardrobe, so that it can be moved more easily, and without scratching the floor. At the beginning of the extract, August and Pauline have just managed to put a rug underneath one end of the wardrobe, and the task now is to slide one underneath the other end, too (lines 1–2). Pauline picks up another rug (line 4). August now pulls one end of the wardrobe in order to lift up its other end, while Pauline crouches down with the rug at the ready. Although the wardrobe is not lifted yet, Pauline manages to move it a bit across the floor. This occasions her observation that the wardrobe is moving quite 'peacefully' (lines 5–7), which could be heard as a proposal to change plans, that is, to move the wardrobe without the rugs. In overlap with this, August formulates the imperative: *jetz schieb des schieb mal drunter* ('now pu- (.) push (it) underneath', lines 8–9).

(9) [FOLK\_STRA\_01\_A01a\_513470]

01 AUG: SO::: jetzt müsst mas\_gleiche  
 so now must.SBJV us.it same  
 okay, now we would have to do the same

02 eigentlich auf der Seite au: mache,  
 actually on that side too make-INF  
 on the other side, too

03 PAU: hm:. %(0.3) da ist noch einer;%  
 PRT there is still one  
 m: there's another one  
 %turns around-----%

04 ((PAU bends down to pick up rug))  
 ((13 lines omitted))

05 PAU: aber guck mal der rutscht eigentlich  
 but look.IMP PRT it slides actually  
 but look *mal* it slides  
 pau >>pushes wardrobe slowly-----

06 ziemlich friedlich-% (0.2)  
 quite peacefully  
 quite peacefully  
 ----->%

07 [vor sich hin.]  
 front REFL PRT  
 along  
 [ ]

08 AUG: [ja jetzt schieb] des schieb mal  
 yes now push.IMP this push PRT  
 yes now push this push *mal*

09 drunter;  
 underneath

10 PAU: kann ich ja net-=is ja net oben;  
 can I PRT not is PRT not up  
 well I can't it's not up

When August requests that Pauline slide the rug underneath the wardrobe (line 8), she is already crouching at the far end of the wardrobe, rug in hand, and thus visibly engaged in the local project of getting the rug underneath the wardrobe. August's imperative turn builds off the unambiguous accessibility of these elements of context: the material object to be pushed underneath the wardrobe is first formulated by a demonstrative pronoun only (*des*, 'this', line 8), and when he repairs his turn, reference to the rug is omitted altogether; the wardrobe is referred to only by a pronoun cliticized to the spatial locational preposition *unter* ('underneath it', line 9). The use of the pronominal forms reflects that the referents are recoverable without problem (cf. Ariel 1990), and this is provided for by the spatial context, in particular *B*'s present embodied conduct.<sup>6</sup> Still, Pauline's statement in line 5–7 could be heard as implicating a proposal to move the wardrobe without the help of the rug. In terms of the interactional alignment of participants, August treats his addressee

---

6. In this particular case, the valency restrictions of the imperative verb *schieb* ('push') for its direct object also support the identification of the material referents.

Pauline as committed to the local joint project of getting rugs under the wardrobe, but not as already about to do the specific action that is mandated by the imperative.

Extract (10) is from a rehearsal of reverse parking in driving school. The instructor tells the student to look back (using a declarative turn format) and to complete the trajectory of positioning the car in the parking space (lines 1–2). The student looks back but, seeing that she is beginning to turn the steering wheel in the wrong direction, the instructor incrementally extends her turn to ask the student in which direction the car should move (lines 4–6). With this question, the instructor opens a new sub-project, establishing the direction in which the car should be steered. Responding to this question, the student reverses her body orientation to face forward again. At this point the instructor requests that the student look back again, using two consecutive imperative-formatted turns (lines 7, 9).

(10) [FOLK\_FAHR\_02\_15]

```

01  INS:  jetzt %guckste wieder nach hin+ten,% und
      Now  look-you again to backwards and
      Now you look back again and
      ins .  ....%points to rear window----->%,,,
      stu                                ...+looks to rear

02      lenkst  fertig.%
      steer-2SG complete
      complete steering
      window----->

03      (0.6)

04  INS:  und zwar wohin?
      and indeed where
      and in fact where

05      (0.2)+(2.3)
      stu  ---->+

06  INS:  wo+  soll  dein Auto,=
      where should your car
      stu  ..+looks to the front window----->

07  INS:  =guck  mal nach [hin#ten;]
      look.IMP PRT to backwards
      look mal backwards

08  STU:  [          ]
      [in #die ] Richtung.+
      in this direction
      #Fig.3
      stu  ----->+

09  INS:  guck +%mal nach hinten; wo  soll  dein Auto hin;%
      look.IMP PRT to backwards where should your car PRT
      look mal backwards      where should your car go?
      ins  ....%points to rear window----->%
      stu  ....+looks to rear window----->
          #Fig.4

```

10 INS: nach+ da, oder nach [da; ]  
 to there or to there  
 there or there  
 stu ---->+, , , ,

11 STU: [ ]  
 [nach] da.  
 to there  
 there



**Figure 3.** STU looks ahead and points to the right during INS first imperative request (Extract (10), line 7).

**Figure 4.** STU looks back during INS second imperative request accompanied by pointing (Extract (10), line 8).

The sequential environment again has qualities that set this case apart from the other local-project cases discussed in this section: the student has been instructed to look back before (line 1), but has retracted from that body orientation in the face of a new task (lines 5–9). In this context, the instructor's imperatives (lines 7 and 9) receive some distinct qualities of *correcting* or *reminding* the student of the continuing relevance of the earlier instruction. However, what is most important for us here is that at the moment the imperative is formulated, the student is engaged in work that is part of an ongoing local project, namely establishing in which direction to steer, and the imperative nudges her to do an action that will progress this project, but that is visibly not something the student already knows she needs to do. Again, the imperative turns here are perfectivized with *mal* in an environment in which the addressee of the request is committed to the local project, but is not attuned to the requested action.

These three examples have allowed us to briefly restate a finding of earlier work, namely, that imperative requests are often relatively lean in their design (relative, for example, to requests in the next section). This leanness has been analysed in the context of the relationship of the requested action to courses of action, to which *B* is already committed (cf. Rossi 2012; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). In contrast to earlier work, we have focused here on a particular multi-modal context, which we might term *B's engagement*, in which *B* is already engaged in “work” that is part of the local project to which the participants are jointly committed, and to which the

requested action will also contribute. *B*'s engagement, as we have seen, can provide indexical grounds for the formulation of imperative requests that are lean, yet designed as informing about a next action that is not anticipated by the recipient.

*B*'s engagement in work related to a local project constitutes a context that provides strong evidence to other participants of *B*'s commitment to the course of action furthered by the imperative, both in the sense of embodied committedness, and in the sense of a participatory commitment: When Pauline crouches down with the rug in Extract (9), she commits to a trajectory of actions in front of the others, and this choice enacts the participatory, joint commitment she entered into moments earlier (lines 1–3 in the transcript) to slide a rug under the other end of the wardrobe. We begin to see here how commitments come hierarchically nested one in the other (Clark 1996; Enfield 2013; Bangerter and Clark 2003). For example, Pauline and August's commitment to sliding rugs underneath the wardrobe is part of their existing joint commitment to moving the wardrobe away from the wall; which is part of Pauline and Tamara's joint commitment to painting the wall; which is part of their joint commitment to redecorate the room. The higher "up" a commitment is in the hierarchy, the less it might be visible in local conduct at a given moment in time. In the next section, we turn to imperatives that address *B* as being committed to an overall, "global" project in situations where this commitment is less strongly, but still, realised in *B*'s embodied conduct at that moment.

### 4.3 Available recipients and global project imperatives

We now move to imperative turns where the visible embodied conduct of the recipient does not provide such unambiguously visible grounds for expecting their commitment to the local project pursued with the requested action. The request recipients in these cases are committed participants to a global project, and are as such *available* for contributing to relevant local projects. Imperatives in these contexts have a more complex design. Structures that add to the complexity are mostly dedicated to the identification of material objects, through the formulation of lexical noun phrases instead of deictic pro-forms and, often but not always, related "big" pointing gestures (Enfield, Kita, and de Ruiter 2007); and, where relevant, to the selection of an addressed party.

Extract (11) is from the redecoration recording examined earlier (Extracts (6) and (9)). The redecoration is a collaborative undertaking, and Pauline and Tamara are jointly committed to this global project. Still, this clearly does not mean that the recipient of a request is always already engaged in the *local* project that is progressed by a request, as in the cases examined in the previous section: Sometimes, a request to carry out some action can initiate a new local project. The imperatives

we now examine treat the addressee as a committed participant to a relevant global project, and hence as *available* for contributing to a more local course of actions. In Extract (11), Pauline and Tamara are preparing a next phase of work, which is to paint the walls. Pauline is reading the instruction on a tub of paint, and Tamara is standing next to her. It is important to note that Tamara is not just doing “nothing”: She is attuned to her sister and displaying her availability in the way she has positioned her body. At line 3, Pauline begins formulating an imperative request, for Tamara to bring a paint roller hook. In formulating the imperative, a substantial amount of work goes into identifying the material object in question: a relative clause (*den ich da weggelegt hab*, ‘which I have laid away’, line 5), which is reformulated by a (right-dislocated) lexical noun phrase (*diesen Hakendingsdabumsda*, ‘this hookthingummybob’, line 6), and a pointing gesture (line 5) become part of the imperative turn. At line 8, just before Tamara takes the paint roller hook, Pauline produces another turn, *den nehm wir da für* (‘we will use this for it’), which might do additional work to display that proper reference has been established.

## (11) [STRA\_01\_A01b\_58720]

```

01 PAU:  so, (.) aufrühren,%
        so stir up
        <<-reading aloud paint instruction%

02      (1.0)

03 PAU:  und nehm wir vielleicht den komischen- (.)
        and take we perhaps the weird
        and perhaps we take the weird

04      hol mal
        bring PRT
        bring mal

05      da# den %+den den ich da% weggelegt hab
        there the the the I there put.away.PTCP.PST have
        there which which I have laid away this
pau      .....%points at hook of paint roller%
tam      .....+walks to fetch hook of paint roller---->
        #Fig. 5

06 PAU:  diesen, (.) Hakendingsdabumsda,
        this hook thingummybob

07 TAM:  ((laughs))=

08 PAU:  =Den nehm wir da,für;=#
        This take we for-it
        We will use this for it
        tam ----->#grasps hook of paint roller

09 TAM:  =(chuckles)

```

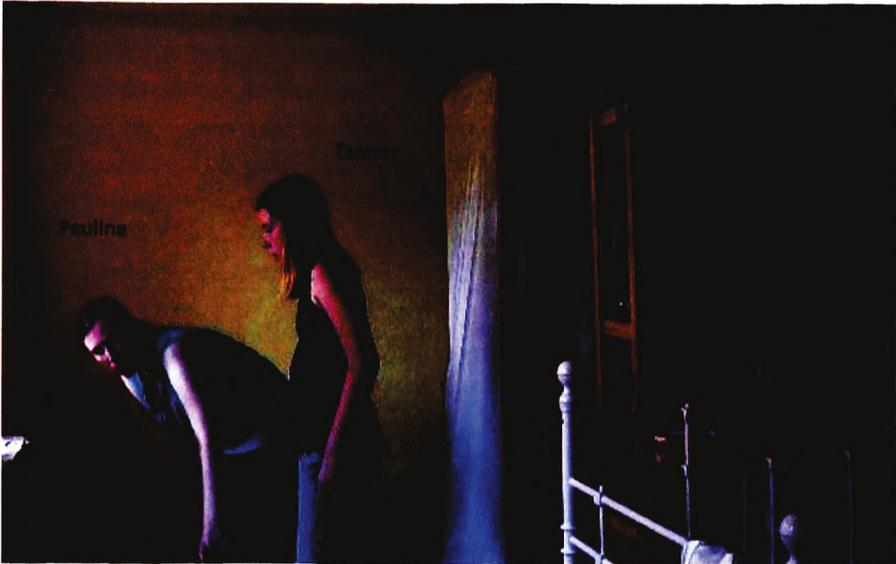


Figure 5. Tamara is attuned to Pauline. Pauline begins formulating a global project imperative (Extract (11), line 5).

Throughout the redecoration, Pauline positions herself as the expert, and Tamara as her helper. Here, Pauline is deciding on how the two will proceed with a next phase of work. The choice of the imperative in this context might index these asymmetries in deontic and epistemic authority (on deontic authority, see Stevanovic and Peräkylä 2012; on epistemic authority, see Heritage and Raymond 2005), and give Pauline's request the quality of what we might gloss as an *instruction*. As the example shows, instructing a recipient who is available for but not already engaged in a relevant local project requires adaptations to the design of the imperative turn.

Such imperative formatted instructions in the context of an addressee's availability are also characteristic of educational settings. Extract (12) is from a classroom German lesson. After a pupil has read a poem, and nobody volunteers to provide a summary (lines 1–4), the teacher formulates a local project: *probier ma's mal zusammen* ('let's try it together', line 8). As a first step, he asks one pupil to read aloud the first verse of the poem, using two imperative turns (lines 11–12).

(12) [FOLK 137]

01 TCH: wer traut sich\_s zu ne Inhaltsangabe zu machen?  
 who dares REFL-it PRT a summary PRT make-INF  
 who dares to provide a summary?

02 (1.2)

03 TCH: von diesem Gedicht,  
of this poem

04 (3.0)

05 TCH: schwierig, =ne? (0.4)  
difficult TAG  
difficult, isn't it?

06 (0.4)

07 TCH: hm\_hm, ((dental click)) macht nichts;  
PRT make-3SG nothing  
uhum doesn't matter

08 °h okay °h probier ma\_s mal zusammen;  
okay try we-it PRT together  
okay let's try it *mal* together

09 °h mal (.) strophe für strophe, =ja?  
PRT verse by verse TAG  
just verse by verse, right?

10 (1.2)

11 TCH: Lina fang mal an, (.)  
NAME start.IMP PRT PRT  
Lina begin *mal*

12 lies mal die erste Strophe vor,  
read.IMP PRT the first verse aloud  
read *mal* aloud the first verse

13 LIN: ((reads aloud first verse of poem))

In a classroom setting, it is the pupils' fate to be *available* for tasks relating to the educational objectives to which the pupils, at least officially, are committed. In this sense, all of the pupils in this classroom are available for taking on the job of reading aloud the first verse of the poem, although none of them are visibly already engaged in work that would make reading the first verse a simple extension of that trajectory (none of them are volunteering by raising a hand, and none has established mutual gaze with the teacher). The teacher's imperatives are adapted to this context. Both imperative turns formulate tasks that are new to the recipient, in the sense that the recipient is not already visibly or hearably about to do them. Accordingly, the imperatives are "perfectivized" with the particle *mal*. The first imperative TCU selects an addressee for the request by means of a vocative term (line 11). The second imperative TCU specifies the precise task (reading) and its theme with a lexical object NP (*lies mal die erste Strophe vor*, 'read *mal* aloud the first verse', line 12).

In Extract (11), the addressee was available by virtue of her participation in a collaborative undertaking (redecorating a room together), and in Extract (12), the addressee was available by virtue of expectations (and the material organization) of the institutional setting. We now turn to an example from a family mealtime

recording. Family mealtimes are informal events that are not arranged collaborations in the way that, for example, redecorating a room together is. The commitment that family members have toward this event are rather of the implicit type, engrained by practice (see Michael, Sebanz, and Knoblich 2016: 3).

In Extract (13), Kasia and her sister Dorota are having breakfast. Kasia's father is also sitting at the far end of the table, and his grandson, Kasia's son Josef, is sitting on his lap. Dorota is watching Josef as Kasia requests that she pass a gherkin lying on her plate (line 2). Dorota passes her the gherkin (line 4).

(13) [Pa02Apr2012\_511610]

```
01          %(1.6)
   dor      %gaze to Josef--->
02 KAS:     ten- %ɪdaj          kawalek tego   ogóraʃ
           this  give-IMP.PFV piece  this-GEN gherkin-GEN
           this- give me a piece of that gherkin
   dor      .....%gaze to Kasia-----%
03          %(.)
   dor      %--gaze to her plate---->>
04 DOR:     %a  proszę
           but bid-1SG
           here you are
   dor      %picks up gherkin, passes to Kasia---->>
```

Kasia's imperative turn targets an availability on the part of Dorota that is weaker than what we have seen in Extracts (11) and (12). Dorota's commitment to the social event of sitting around the table and eating together is organized in part by the ecology of the kitchen table. She is not, however, attuned to her sister in the way that Tamara is attuned to Pauline's work in Extract (11). It is rather just that she is not engaged in anything that would be strongly incompatible with passing the gherkin (see also Rossi, this volume, on such lack of incompatible engagements as a context for imperative requests): This provides for what we could call a "negative" form of availability. In sum, availability might come in stronger and weaker forms, from a performance of attunedness, through "official" availability by means of institutional expectations, to mere presence and lack of incompatible engagement. In the context of a merely "negative" availability, an imperative might have the quality of an *appeal*, rather than an *instruction*: the social commitments on the grounds of which compliance can be expected are more implicit. Kasia's imperative turn in line 2 of Extract (13) has a prosody that is characteristic of imperatively formatted *appeals* addressing *B* as available in Polish family mealtimes, namely a marked pitch peak on the imperative verb (Zinken 2016: Chapter 3). We expect that there will be differences across individuals, families, and cultures in the strength of availability

that is considered sufficient for addressing an imperative to another person in the management of practical courses of action (see also Bolden this volume; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013).

#### 4.4 Divergent engagements and competitive imperatives

The grammatical complexity of imperative turns indexes the visibility of *B*'s commitment to the course of action progressed by the imperative at the moment *A* starts to produce the imperative turn. Both in our Polish and our German data, the most complex syntax is produced when the addressee's availability for the requested action seems to be uncertain, given their current bodily position, or when participants are overtly engaged in different trajectories of action. Both languages provide linguistic resources to produce an imperative that indexes recognition that the requested action might interfere with the addressee's current action orientation. In Polish, the imperative of the verb *wziąć* ('to take') appears to be on its way towards grammaticalization as a discourse particle. This imperative/particle often prefaces the imperative of another action verb in the type of context we now examine. We refer to this turn shape as a "double imperative", even though such turns do not always request that the other person "take" something. In German, a range of temporal adverbs and grading particles are used (see below), in addition to the modal particle *mal*. In both languages, the turn structure is more complex than in the cases of available recipients. Objects are always encoded at least by pronouns, but more often they are lexicalized. Actions and objects are sometimes further specified by locatives (spatial deictics and locative NPs). These complexities of structure reflect the fact that speaker and recipient are often not bodily pre-aligned with respect to relevant referents, thus being in need of more explicit means for establishing the domain of scrutiny (Goodwin 2003; Stukenbrock 2015: 56–59) in order to be able to locate and identify the referent within that domain.

Consider Extract (14). This fragment comes from the beginning of a recording in which the parents, Magda and Jakub, together with their two daughters, craft a paper caterpillar at the kitchen table. In this fragment, the crafting activity has not yet started. Magda is working at the sink, while Jakub is moving around the kitchen, calling his younger daughter to the table (line 1), then removing a purse from the table, and finally replacing a lid on a bottle by the kitchen work surface (line 4). At line 5, Magda addresses a double imperative to Jakub, for him to take a rubbish bag out for her.

## (14) [PP6-1\_24990]

01 JAK: Julka  
NAME  
 Julka

02 &(2.0) &  
 jak &claps hand on table to indicate Julka's place -> &

03 &(3.5) &  
 jak &picks up item from the table,  
 places it on a shelf -> &

04 &(2.5)  
 jak &walks to work surface, replaces lid on a bottle-- >

05 MAG: weź mi wyjmij proszę torebkę&  
PRT I.DAT take.out-IMP please bag-ACC  
 weź get out a bag for me please  
 jak ----->&

06 &(0.2) &  
 jak &moves his torso back.. ->&

07 MAG: &śmieciową  
rubbish.ADJ-ACC  
 a rubbish bag  
 jak &bends down for rubbish bag----->>

In a broad sense, we could say that the parents are here both socially committed to a shared wider project, namely creating the conditions that would allow them to start the crafting activity with their children. Furthermore, the request is certainly not placed at random: It is addressed to Jakub after he has walked to a place in the kitchen (to replace a bottle lid) that is close to where the rubbish bags are: all he needs to do is to bend down and get one from a drawer.

Still, the situation is different from the contexts we have considered so far, and the selection of the double imperative is sensitive to these different elements. Both parents are here engaged in their separate trajectories of action. Unlike in earlier cases, there is no established bodily alignment between Magda and Jakub here. Complying requires a substantial social reorientation from Jakub, in so far as he is not attuned to what Magda is doing and what she might need next. Note that Jakub does not respond immediately. Whereas in previous examples (e.g., Extracts (11) and (13)), addressees begin re-orienting their bodies in alignment with the work to be done before the first possible completion of the imperative TCU, Jakub here completes his current task (screwing the lid on the bottle) during Magda's formulation of the imperative (line 5). Magda's extension of the imperative turn with an increment in line 7 (in fact, merely an extension of the noun phrase, *torebkę*) works to maximize the contiguity between request and compliance, and in effect

achieves the kind of overlap of the end of the imperative TCU with the beginning of embodied compliance observed in earlier cases.

The Polish *take-V<sub>2</sub>* double imperative is systematically selected in environments in which the request recipient's availability for the relevant work is in doubt (Zinken 2013). In that respect, these are often situations in which we might expect the selection of a second person polar interrogative format (*can you get me a rubbish bag out?*). The second person polar interrogative specifically indexes that complying with a request requires the addressee to depart from their present course of actions (Wootton 1997; Rossi 2012; Zinken and Ogiermann 2013). The Polish *take-V<sub>2</sub>* double imperative instead creates an orientation that the addressee, despite being presently otherwise occupied, will comply with the request on the grounds of a "commitment-in-principle" to the project progressed by the request. Often, the grounds for expecting such a social commitment can be found in the request recipient's *earlier* engagement in the relevant project (Zinken 2016: Chapter 7).

Consider Extract (15), which comes from a bilingual family, in which the son, Michał, tends to speak English, but his mum, Agata, speaks to him in Polish (MAR is Agata's partner Mark). At the beginning of the fragment, Michał comes into the kitchen from the adjoining living room and announces that he has completed a job, namely setting the table for dinner. His treatment of this job as completed is evident from his request to be given a new task (line 5). In other words, a commitment to setting the table is treated as no longer relevant by Michał at this point in time, and he is engaging in a new course of actions. However, his mum finds something at fault with the way Michał has set the table, and requests that he 'straighten out' the arrangement. She does this with a *take-V<sub>2</sub>* imperative, re-mobilising in this way his commitment to setting the table.

(15) [BP2-7\_3716040]

```
01 MIC: Mummy I've laid the table:, ((from adjacent room))
      <<coming towards kitchen-----
02      (0.2)*
      -----*
03 MAR: good boy
04 AGA: &are you (.) &wszystko (.) pokazꞑ=
      everything show.IMP
      are you (.) everything (.) show (me)
      &turns around.>&walks to adjacent room-->
05 MIC: =what shall I do nextꞑ
      aga ----->
06      ^ (3.0)
      mic ^playing in the kitchen-->
      aga ((off camera))
```

- 07 AGA: trochę chłopak ;krzywo  
 a.bit boy uneven  
 a bit uneven (my) boy  
 mic ----->
- 08 AGA: ^weź wyprostuj trochę to  
 PRT straighten-IMP.PFV a.bit this  
 Weź straighten this a bit  
 mic ^turns around, walks toward Agata--->
- 09 MIC: [co?  
 what?  
 mic ((off camera))  
 [
- 10 AGA: [(takiego) (.) krzywo to tutaj  
 (this) uneven this here  
 (this) (.) it's uneven here
- 11 weź to- wyprostuj to  
 PRT this straighten-IMP.PFV this  
 weź this- straighten this
- 12 ((MIC realigns the cutlery))

As this brief discussion shows, imperatives with an additional *weź* particle are adapted to situations in which the recipient's availability is uncertain, and in which compliance with the request constitutes a more substantial departure from an ongoing trajectory of actions relative to the simple imperative without *weź*.

Polish double imperatives with *weź* may have usage properties that are peculiar to this construction, and that have to do with the indexical relationship of this format to contexts in which *B*'s commitment to the relevant course of action was evident earlier in the interaction. However, in German we find imperative turns that become complex through the addition of other particles and adverbs, and that are used in contexts that are similar, at least in the general sense that the addressee is presently engaged in a course of actions that is unrelated to and at odds with what the imperative mandates, and that the imperative in such a context "competes" with that unrelated course of actions. There are a number of (temporal) adverbs, grading particles and modal particles that are used in German to index this, mostly in combination with *mal* or (additionally) with another modifier. In the FOLK corpus, among about 1800 imperative requests,<sup>7</sup> the following modifiers that might index competition between involvements and uncertain availability were found: *ein*

---

7. A precise count would be beyond the scope of this study, because about 20% of the imperatives (mainly of verbs of perception (*guck, schau, sieh mal* 'look', *hör mal* 'listen') and verbs of movement like *komm* ('come'), *ach geh (fort)* ('go away')) are used as attention getters and discourse markers, which are grammaticized to different degrees. In many cases, detailed multimodal analysis would be required to identify the precise status of the imperative form.

*bisschen* ('a bit',  $n = 20$ ), *einfach* ('simply',  $n = 17$ ), *gerade/grad* ('just',  $n = 15$ ), *kurz* ('shortly',  $n = 12$ ), *eben* ('just',  $n = 7$ ), *schnell* ('quickly',  $n = 3$ ), *nochmal* ('again',  $n = 1$ ).

Extract (16) from an emergency drill of professional paramedic officers provides two examples of an imperative turn in which modifiers are used when the addressee is obviously engaged in a competing project. The officer-in-chief (OCH) and his assistant (AS2) are engaged in different courses of action: While the assistant is preparing a brace for the body of the patient, who sits in a wrecked car, the officer is still in the process of attaching straps to a bandage attached to the patient and talks to another assistant (AS1, lines 1–2, Fig. 6). When the officer turns away from AS1 (line 3, Fig. 7), assistant AS2 addresses an imperative request to the officer (line 4). However, the officer declines the request and initiates another project. Also using an imperative request, he asks the assistant to fetch a pro-splint (line 10–11), which is needed to transport the patient.

(16) [FOLK 140:3:33-3:55]

```

01 OCH:  so überall gleich belüftet,=
        Okay everywhere equally aired
        Okay [it is] everywhere equally aired
    och  >>looks at AS1----->
    as2  >>removes straps from brace----->

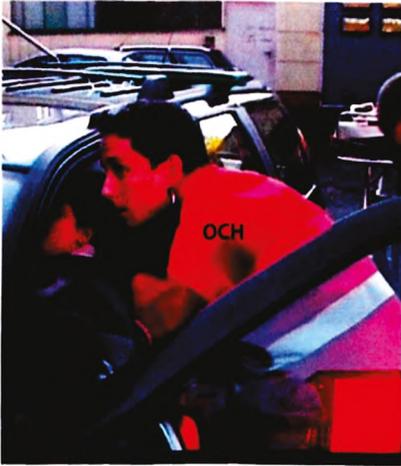
02      =also ich hab_s jetzt unten drunter.#+
        Well I have-it now below there-under
        Well I have [put] it now underneath
    as2  ----->+
                                           #Fig.6

03 AS1:  +(0.55)% hm, #
        uhuh
    och  ----->%,,,,
    as2  +puts straps aside-- >
        #Fig.7

04 AS2:  %sag mir nochmal kurz- die kommen zuerst hier ab,%
        say.IMP me once-again shortly they come first here PRT
        Tell me once again quickly these must be removed first
    och  %manipulates and looks at adhesive bandage-----%

05      hier oben da;% =ne?
        here up there right
    och .  ....%attaches bandage at patient's arm----->

```



**Figure 6.** OCH talks to and looks at AS1 (out of screen), AS2 manipulates brace (at right margin of screen) (Extract (16), line 2).



**Figure 7.** OCH turns away from AS1; AS2 still manipulates brace (Extract (16), line 3).

```

06      (1.1)%(1.2)+(2.1)
och    ---->%manipulates and looks down at doctor's kit-->
as2    ----->+
07 AS2: bi%*tte?
        excuse me?
och    ->%looks shortly at AS2 and removes medical kit-->
as2    -->*holds brace upright----->
08 OCH: moment=moment=moment.
        moment moment moment
        Wait a moment!
09      (2.0)%
och    ---->%
10 OCH: hier #nimm    jetzt erstmal kurz n pro%splint; (.)    %
        here take.IMP now first shortly a_prosplint
        here first take a prosplint for a moment
                                     ...%point prosplint%
        #Fig.8
11      hier an den arm-
        Here at the arm

```



Figure 8. OCH looks at AS2, who is holding the brace (Extract (16), line 10).

```

12      (0.2)+(0.6)
as2      +nods
13  OCH: be*ziehungsweise das ma_mer mit_m_samsplint,*
        respectively      that make-we with_a NAME-splint
        Or rather we'll do it with a SAM splint
as2      ->*puts brace aside-----*
14  OCH: *(0.2) und dann (0.25)hol me_se aus_m auto raus.
        and then      fetch we-her out-the car out.of
        and then we'll get her out of the car
as2      *walks off to fetch SAM splint----->>

```

Both imperatives in this extract are produced when the addressee is oriented to a project different from the one the speaker is pursuing. In his imperative turn in lines 4–5, AS2 asks OCH for information: *sag mir nochmal kurz- die kommen zuerst hier ab, hier oben* ('Tell me once again quickly they must be removed first here up there, right?'). The imperative is precisely synchronized with OCH's trajectory of action. It is produced at exactly the moment at which there is a chance that OCH will be available: OCH has just closed his interaction with AS1, turns his gaze away from AS1 and moves his gaze in the direction of AS2 (Fig. 6–7). This allows AS2 to use the deictic expressions *die* ('these'), *hier* ('hier') and *hier oben* ('up here') to refer to the relevant object (the strips attached to the brace) and their position, obviously assuming that these deictic expressions are sufficient for OCH to identify the referents. The imperative turn, however, also contains elements that make it more complex, the minimizing temporal adverb *kurz* ('shortly') and the modal adverb *nochmal* ('again').

Another element of complexity consists in the fact that the imperative TCU is a projector construction (Hopper and Thompson 2008), which explicitly asks for a verbal answer by using a verb of saying (*sag*, 'say') in the imperative mood. In addition to the modifiers, then, the imperative turn itself makes for a markedly complex way of asking a question: AS2 does not formulate his question right away

by an interrogative or a declarative, but the imperative is used to first name the type of response to be performed. The recipient thus is oriented to the relevance of a type of action that is not contextually expectable for him (“telling” something). With his response, OCH stalls the request initiated by AS2, and in this way displays (or claims) that he is not available. He does not gaze at the brace AS2 is holding, but (manually and visually) returns to his project of attaching a bandage to the patient (lines 4–6). After this, OCH packs up the medical kit. He does not orient to AS2, neither by body movement/position nor via gaze.

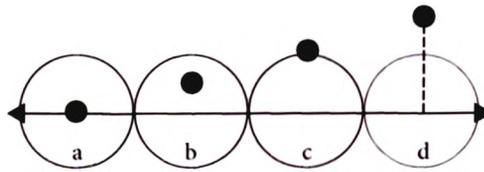
As AS2 pursues a response with *bitte?* (‘excuse me’, line 7), OCH now explicitly requires him to suspend his initiative with the multiple saying *moment=moment=moment* (Stivers 2004). Instead of complying with AS2’s request, OCH himself addresses an imperative request to AS2 (lines 10–11): *hier nimm jetzt erstmal kurz n\_prosplint, hier an den arm* (‘here now first take a prosplint quickly here at the arm’). The imperative turn contains modifying devices similar to the ones AS2 used in his prior request in lines 4–5: OCH uses a combination of three temporal adverbs (*jetzt*, ‘now’, *erstmal*, ‘first’, *kurz*, ‘shortly’). On the one hand, these adverbs claim the priority of his project over the project the requestee was trying to recruit OCH for. On the other hand, they index the possibility that dealing with OCH’s own project will only be a short intermission and that AS2’s project is not rejected, but only deferred. The design of the imperative turn thus reflects OCH’s recognition that AS2 is not oriented to his initiative, but that he is pursuing another project for which he has sought OCH’s cooperation.

AS2 embodies his ongoing orientation to his initiative of dealing with the brace by still holding it up in front of him at the moment when OCH produces his request (Fig. 8). Again similar to AS2’s request in lines 4–5, OCH formulates an object NP (*n\_prosplint*, ‘a pro splint’, line 10) and adds a locative argument by way of an increment (*hier an den arm*, ‘here at the arm’, line 11). While AS2 produced the direct object and the locative phrase using deictic terms, OCH uses full lexical NPs. This reflects that whereas AS2 took the referents of his turn in lines 4–5 to be visually available for his recipient, OCH talks about an object (the pro-splint), which is not visible for the participants, and another object (the patient’s arm) to which neither of the two is currently visually oriented.

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined the design of imperative turns in its precision-timing as it relates to moments of *B*’s visible commitment to a relevantly related course of actions. We have described four types of imperative turn shape indexing social commitment on the part of *B* at four different levels of visibility. *Responsive*

*imperatives* target the permissibility of a specific action to which the addressee has visibly already committed him- or herself; *local-project imperatives* target an action that is “new” – the addressee is not already doing it or appreciably about to do it – but that constitutes an extension of a local line of action in which the addressee is already engaged; *global-project imperatives* request new actions to be done by an addressee who is treated as *available* on the grounds of his or her attunedness to matters relating to, or at least participation in, a global project; and *competitive imperatives* request assistance or a contribution to work by addressees who are socially committed to the relevant course of actions, but who are currently engaged in some unrelated activity. These four types of context thus represent a cline in the “proximity” of the imperatively mandated action to the trajectory of *B*’s present course of actions.<sup>8</sup> This is schematically represented in Figure 9.



**Figure 9.** Arrowed line: actions mandated by imperative turns;  
Large circles: course of actions progressed by *A*’s imperative;  
Black dot: *B*’s present visible engagement;

- a. responsive imperative, the imperative formulates an action that *B* is already doing or about to do;
- b. local-project imperative, the imperative gives a nudge to do something that is part of a course of action already engaged in by *B*;
- c. global-project imperative, the imperative requests an action that is part of a course of actions that *B* is committed to at a global level;
- d. competitive imperative, the requested action progresses a course of actions in the face of *B*’s divergent engagement. Dashed line indicates *B*’s “commitment-in-principle” to the project progressed by the imperative.

Let us unpack the metaphor of the “proximity” of the imperatively mandated action to what *B* is presently doing. At the left end of our cline, we find imperatives that tightly tie to *B*’s commitment in the visible-embodied sense (recall the arm stretching for the branch). Imperatives aligning with such a commitment can require zero adaptation from *B* in his or her course of actions (see Extracts (5)–(7)). At the right end of our cline, we find imperatives that target a participatory commitment by *B* that is presently invisible (recall having signed up to put up the tent the next

8. It might be worth considering this cline as a situated reformulation of Brown and Levinson’s factor *R*, imposition, see (Brown and Levinson 1987).

day). Imperatives competitively mobilizing this social commitment require substantial adaptation from *B* in his or her present course of actions (see Extracts (15) and (16)).

The visible-embodied and the social-contractual dimension of commitment come together in the middle of our cline, most clearly so in the case of local-project imperatives (point “b” on the cline). Our findings therefore support earlier work showing that, in the domain of requesting, bilateral commitments to courses of action are the typical context for the selection of an imperative format (Rossi 2012). In addition, the finer-grained distinctions we have proposed show how participants to interaction orient to the detailed nature of the recipient’s alignment to a relevant course of action in designing an imperative request.

The further an imperatively mandated action is removed from the projectable trajectory of *B*’s actions, the more “work” is required of *A* in formulating an imperative that is fitted to its context (see also Rossi 2014, on the relationship of request formation to projectability). Conversely, the more the imperatively mandated action lies on the trajectory of *B*’s actions, the more apt are turns contributing to the management of a practical course of actions with leanly formatted imperatives. A responsive formulation is adapted to addressees who are (or should be) already engaged in or about to do the specific action; addressees who are engaged in the relevant local project attract imperative turns that are designed as presenting new information, but are otherwise lean; available recipients are addressed with imperative turns that present the action as new information, and that also include vocative practices and gestural and lexical practices that aid identification of relevant material objects; and addressees engaged in competing courses of action can be mobilized for cooperation with imperative turns that indexically display the problematic nature of the context through particles, mitigating structures (ex. (16)), markers of politeness (ex. (14)) and accounts (ex. (15)).

Linguistic items accompanying the imperative verb-form in the imperative turn reflect the increasing distance, that is non-projectability, of the mandated action from what the recipient is doing at the moment the request is formulated by addressing precisely those pragmatic aspects which account for the distance: lexical object encoding indexes that the requested object may not be (unambiguously) identifiable for the recipient (because of their spatial position, visual orientation, inability to recover the mandated action as being projectable, or competing action engagement), vocatives treat lack of attention or ambiguity of the addressed recipient in a multiparty setting as relevant pragmatic conditions, mitigating devices minimize the imposition of involving the recipient in a non-projected, competing project in respects of temporal scope and effort. Table 1 summarizes the relationship we have found between *B*’s embodied conduct and features of imperative turn design.

Table 1. The design of imperative turns in relation to the recipient's embodied conduct.

	Turn design	Action potential	Example
<i>initiating recipient</i>	Turn designed as occasioned by other's prior move Referent treated as known Addressee treated as known No object encoding	Operation on deontic dimension of just-prior action (e.g., permissibility)	<i>sprawdzaj</i> ('do that/check', Extract (5))
<i>engaged recipient</i>	Action formatted as speaker's initiative Referent treated as known Addressee treated as known Deictic reference	Nudging for contribution to local project	<i>schieb mal drunter</i> ('push underneath', Extract (9))
<i>available recipient</i>	Action formatted as speaker's initiative Address practices Lexical and gestural reference	Mobilizing assistance or contribution as participant	<i>Ten- daj kawalek tego ogóra</i> ('this- give me some of that gherkin', Extract (13))
<i>divergently engaged recipient</i>	Action formatted as speaker's initiative Address practices Lexical and gestural reference Discourse/modal particles Mitigating structures	Competitive mobilisation of assistance or contribution	<i>hier nimm jetzt erstmal kurz n prosplint</i> ('here take now first briefly a prosplint', Extract (16))

Conversation analytic work has begun in recent years to identify dimensions of context in addition to a turn's sequential position and composition that enter into giving a turn the quality of a particular action, for example, epistemic status (Heritage 2012) or, in the domain of requesting, the question of who will benefit (Clayman and Heritage 2014; Couper-Kuhlen 2014). Our analysis suggests that, in the management of practical courses of action, the addressee's bodily conduct in its spatio-temporal relationship to the turn to be formulated, in so far as it makes public a commitment to a course of action, is one contextual dimension that pervasively enters into the design of action. The selection of imperative grammar in the management of practical courses of action targets public, visible evidence of *B*'s commitment to a course of actions (or else, is aimed at creating such evidence in the face of its accountable absence, see Craven and Potter 2010), while the design of the imperative turn indexes the synchronization of lines of action towards the trajectory *A* wishes to promote.

In sum, we find that the selection of imperative grammar in the management of practical courses of action, the timing, and the design of imperative turns draw on affordances provided by the visibility of *B*'s social commitments to courses of

action. The cline of visible commitment that we have described models a semantic space that might be relevant to analysing the use of imperatives in the management of practical courses of action across languages.

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