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Issues in Action Formation: Requests and the Problem with x

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Abstract: In previous interactional studies of formats for utterances doing requests, attention has been given to the initial verb (such as *can/could* or *wonder*) and possibly the subject (especially *I* vs *you*). The current study examines the main types of grammatical variation found in what we call the "x component," that is the segment after the initial verb and subject. We examine two types of requests: those with *can you x* and those with *wonder x*, and we find that variations in the *x* component in these requests are associated with variations in the unfolding development of the request sequences. We thus suggest that the *x* component is crucial to the interactional work accomplished by the requesting utterance.

The data are drawn from a larger project on requests in American English at a shoe shop in North America.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Requests, Action formation

1 Introduction

For three years we have been engaged in a project to understand the formation of requests at small businesses in the US. The greatest issue we have faced in this project is the extraordinary variety of request forms that customers produce in these businesses. It is, of course, well known that requests can be formatted in a range of basic syntactic formats, i.e., as imperatives, declaratives or interrogatives. Similarly, we know that request formats can vary with respect to complexity: a request can, for instance, take the form of a main clause only, or consist of two or more clauses that are subordinated under a main clause. Finally, it is no surprise that request formats can vary lexically: the verb can, for instance, be either *need* or *want* or a modal like *can* or *will*, or a complement-taking predicate like *wonder*. Many of these possible variations have been addressed in previous—interactionally oriented and empirically based—research on requests (for a brief overview, see below), where they have been accounted for as manifestations of the various interactional concerns that participants may need to orient to when making a request.

The kind of variation that has emerged in our data, however, goes beyond what has previously been described and accounted for. Specifically, we find that those grammatical constituents of request formats that have typically been notated as 'x' (as in *I wonder x,* or *can you x*) in previous studies of requests allow for variation at all levels of linguistic organization, semantic, lexical, morpho-syntactic and prosodic. More significantly, we find that these variations are of interactional relevance to participants and are thus worthy of inclusion in our descriptions of action formation (Levinson 2013; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen 2014a; Rossi 2015).

Linguists' interest in the morpho-syntactic variation of requests is relatively long-standing, with the first detailed exploration being Ervin-Tripp (1964, 1976), who noted an association between format, on

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the one hand, and sociological (e.g., familiarity and rank) and situational factors (e.g., the difficulty of the task, the likelihood of non-compliance) on the other. Blum-Kulka et al (1989) similarly proposed that matters such as social distance and relative power between participants have an impact on the level of directness with which a request is made and consequently on the morpho-syntactic format of the request. This approach was taken up by Aijmer (1996:148), who in a study of English requests argued that all indirect requests are "variants of a few extremely flexible and productive sentence stems" that can be "added to, embedded, etc., in order to 'build up' large and elaborate request patterns which are appropriate in the new situation." More recently, work within the traditions of Conversation Analysis and Interactional Linguistics has explored the relationship between the morpho-syntactic formats that can be used for making requests and these formats' interactional relevancies, both within and across languages (e.g., Wootton 1981, 1997, 2005; Lindström 2005; Vinkhuyzen & Szymanski 2005; Heinemann 2006; Curl & Drew 2008; Zinken & Ogiermann 2011, 2013; Rossi 2012, 2015a; Childs 2012; Couper-Kuhlen 2014; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen 2014a and the papers therein; Zinken 2015; Zinken & Deppermann 2015; Fox & Heinemann 2016; Mondada & Sorjonen 2016; see Drew & Couper-Kuhlen 2014b for a recent overview). This work has generated a range of important findings about how participants in interaction employ grammar to accomplish social action.

In general, however, previous research has employed a certain level of abstraction by focusing on initial verbs (at least in Indo-European languages) such as 'need', 'want', 'can', or 'wonder'. Thus, while the initial verb and possibly the subject are noted as particular lexical-grammatical items, this is often followed by the placeholder *x* (as in Polish *trzeba x* (Zinken & Ogiermann 2011) or Italian *mi x* (Rossi 2012) and *hai x* (Rossi 2015b)); or by nothing (as in Danish *kan du ikke/vil du* (Heinemann 2006); or English *I wonder if* vs *can/could/will/would you* (Curl & Drew 2008) and *need/want* declaratives (Childs 2012)). The notation of *x* or nothing after a verb or clause is presumably meant to capture the claim that all utterances that contain specific lexical items in a specific syntactic frame count as an instance of that format, regardless of what comes after in the clause.

In a recent study of English *can I have x* requests, Zinken (2015) problematizes this level of abstraction by noting that:

> From a 'mono-modally' linguistic perspective, that is, if we consider only the morpho-syntactic format of turns, we see that *can I have x* resembles the second person polar question format (for example, *can you pass me x*), namely in so far as both request formats employ a modal verb expressing possibility, and both are polar interrogatives. However, the present results suggest that **it would be misleading to generalize across request formats on relatively abstract grammatical grounds** (such as polar interrogative syntax). (Zinken 2015: 36, our emphasis)

The abstraction that Zinken (2015) warns against here is not that of the placeholder *x*, which he himself employs, but rather that of the subject that follows the modal verb *can*; in other words, whether the subject of *can* is *I* or *you* (i.e., *can* I versus *can* you; Vinkhuyzen & Szymanski 2005 use the terms self-oriented and other-oriented for this distinction). In a previous study of American English requests in the shoe repair shop (Fox & Heinemann 2016), we have similarly demonstrated that *can I* and *can you* requests are distinct. Moreover, we found that a request format such as *need* declaratives can also be further de-abstracted by identifying three types of *x* components that follow *need*: NPs (e.g., *I need **heels***), resultative clauses (e.g., *I need a second hole **punched***) and gerunds (e.g., *these need **resoling***). We found that in the shoe repair shop, *need*+NP requests are used for routine, no-problem requests, which orient to very low contingency in granting (Curl & Drew 2008), such as requests for new heels and soles. *Need*+resultative clause requests, on the other hand, are used when customers orient to a need to explicate the **manner** in which the requested repair is to be carried out. Similarly for *need*+gerund requests, we found sequence expansions after the initial request, but in these cases the customer explicates the **nature** of the problem for which they are seeking a solution from the shoetender. We thus demonstrated that the specific character of the *x* component of *need* declaratives is consequential for the conditions of the use of this type of request.

In what follows, we continue this work by focusing on the *x* component of two other formats for requesting: modal interrogative requests that are formulated with the verb *can/could* and have *you* as the subject (*can you x*), and declarative embedded requests that are formulated with the verb *wonder* (*was*

wondering/wondered/wonder/wondering x).[1] We have chosen these two formats because they are relatively frequent in our data and are also formats that have been described in previous work. Through our exploration of these two types of requests, we hope to demonstrate that what might otherwise be considered relatively minute and unimportant morpho-syntactic details—such as whether the *x* that follows *can you* is a verb phrase that contains a deictic element or an indefinite NP, or whether the *x* that follows *wonder* has *if I can* or *if you can*, or whether what follows *wonder* is an *if* clause, an *about* phrase or a paratactic construction—are matters that participants in interaction appear to attend to when producing and responding to requests.

2 Data and methods

The *can* and *wonder* requests that we focus on in this paper have been extracted from a larger collection of requests made at a shoe repair shop in a small town in the United States. The shop is operated and owned by two generations of the same family, with a few non-family employees. The staff take turns serving the counter and engaging with customers; as not all staff are actual cobblers and to avoid the use of the collective noun 'staff', we refer to individual members of staff as 'shoetenders'.

Customer-shoetender encounters are organized around three main activities: customers enter the shop to drop off an item for repair, to pick up an item that has already been repaired, or to buy accessories such as laces, shoe polish, insoles and so on. Items that can be repaired in the shoe repair shop include most leather items such as shoes, boots, belts, purses, jackets, baseball gloves, and saddles; in addition the staff are able to repair or replace zippers on a variety of objects (e.g., suitcases and coats).

Requests in the shoe repair shop can be made both by customers and by shoetenders, they can occur in any of the three main types of encounters, that is: drop offs, pick ups, and purchases of accessories; and they can concern matters not only of repair, but also of time (e.g., *is there any way to (kind of) rush job on that?*), price (e.g., *u:m I have a couple (0.4) of (0.5) coats and a bag that (0.4) I just wondered how much it would cost to: fix the zippers?*) and availability (e.g., *do you have red shoe polish?*). In the collection of requests that forms the basis for the current study, we have focussed only on requests produced by customers during drop-off encounters that involve a request for a repair. These requests come in a range of different formats: declaratives of trouble (e.g., *these are in bad shape*), *need/want* declaratives (e.g., *these need new heels, I want this stitched back on*), *can* interrogatives (e.g., *can you fix this, can sneakers be resoled, can I just get a tap thrown on these*), *be* interrogatives (e.g., *is it possible to resole these*), *wonder* clauses (e.g., *I'm wondering if there's anything you can do about this scratch*) and *want to* clauses (e.g., *I wanted to see if there's any way those can be repaired*) (see Fox & Heinemann 2016 for an overview). In the current study, we focus exclusively on two types of requests from our data: *can* interrogatives that have *you* as the subject (e.g., *can* ***you*** *fix this*) and *wonder* clauses. The study is based on a total of 40 cases, where 16 of these are *can you* interrogatives, and 24 are *wonder* clauses.

Some of the repairs requested by customers are treated by the participants as highly routine actions; replacing heels is the most frequently requested repair in our collection. Similarly, stretching boots is quite routine for the staff, although customers may not always be aware of this fact. On the other extreme we have requests for completely unique repairs (such as stitching a cowboy pattern on boots for a newborn baby). We will see in the course of our discussion that customers orient to the possible routineness or unusualness of their request in the design of their request.

In our collection we have found it important to distinguish between requests made in the 'initial slot' and those produced later in the interaction. Requests made in initial slot are done immediately after greetings. In other words, the customer enters the shop, approaches the counter, greetings are done, and then the customer produces the request. On occasion we find requests being produced later, after extended talk introducing the problem, or after another request (either pursuing a first request or introducing a new item needing repair). As we will show, customers orient to this sequential distinction in their request design.

1 For both types, we did not distinguish between *can* and *could*. It is almost certainly the case that there is an interactionally significant difference between the two; however, it is beyond the scope of the present study to explore this level of organization.

Because of the nature of shoe repairs, the requests in our corpus are requests for service rather than requests for the transfer of objects. Moreover, they are almost all deferred requests (Houtkoop-Steenstra 1987; Lindström 1997), since it typically takes days or weeks for the repairs to be completed (although we do have a few instances in which the staff perform the repair work while the customer waits). These facts shape the kinds of request formats we find, their relative distribution, and the interactional work that they do (cf. Kendrick & Drew 2016). Our specific findings, and the patterns that we describe in the following, should thus not be seen as exhaustively defining requests in identical—or even similar—forms outside of the shoe shop; rather, these examples are intended to illustrate that relatively granular morpho-syntactic differences in the way in which a request is formulated in the shoe repair shop are of relevance in a particular way, to these particular participants, in this particular context and that every request is in reality uniquely formed for its current purposes and shaped by its sequential context. Nor have we been able to explore all the morpho-syntactic variation that we find in our requests. In exploring the *x* component of *can* and *wonder* requests, we are in effect applying only a slightly more granular lens of investigation than has been applied in previous literature, while leaving many more granular variations or *x* components un-explored. None of this, however, should detract from our more general point, i.e., that attention to relatively minute morpho-syntactic details is of relevance to participants (and thus to us as analysts) in designing and formulating actions. We thus suggest that the study of action formation (for requests or any other social action) could be enriched by attention to finer levels of morpho-grammatical detail.

3 The problem with x: current study

In what follows, we explore *can you x* and w*onder x* requests. We begin with *can you x* requests.

3.1 can you x

Interactional work on *can you* began with a study by Wootton (2005) on *can you* requests in the speech of a young British child. Wootton found that the child used *can you* requests when the action she was requesting was not projectable from the current course of activity that the requestee was engaged in. A very similar finding for second-person polar modal interrogatives such as *can you* x in English is offered by Zinken & Ogiermann (2013). Focusing on requests for objects in family interactions, Zinken & Ogiermann propose that this form "enlists the other person's assistance for a new project that benefits the requester" (Zinken & Ogiermann 2013: 257) and thus "the request seeks assistance with a project that requires the requestee to depart from their current line of action" (Zinken & Ogiermann 2013: 261).

While speakers of other languages can make requests by producing second-person polar interrogatives, studies suggest that the system of requesting is mapped differently in different languages. For Polish, where modal interrogative requests are "extremely rare" (Jörg Zinken, personal communication), Zinken & Ogiermann (2013) thus identify the simple interrogative as the request form which functions similarly to the English *can you* x format. A similar perspective is offered for Italian by Rossi (2015a), who describes the English *can you* request form as "functionally comparable to the Italian simple interrogative" (Rossi 2015a: 161) and finds that the second person modal interrogative *puoi x* (something like 'can you' *x*) has a more restricted usage than does *can you* in English. In his study, *puoi x* requests are used when the requester anticipates resistance or unwillingness to comply on the part of the requestee. He finds three main environments in which such resistance can be anticipated:

> i) the requestee has displayed overt resistance to do the action or to cooperate in the matter at hand before the request is made, ii) the requester's entitlement to make the request is low, or iii) the action requested is costly for the requestee. (Rossi 2015a: 135)

The reason for these differences between English, Polish and Italian seems to lie in the grammatical options available to speakers of each language for constructing requests. In English everyday family interactions, the main options for requests for objects or here-and-now actions appear to be the imperative and the 'can you' forms; Italian and Polish in contrast, offer a third possibility, the simple interrogative form. The availability of this non-modal second-person interrogative allows speakers of Polish and Italian to use the (much rarer) modal interrogatives for more specialized requests, i.e., where resistance is anticipated. The second person modal interrogative in Italian and Polish thus has a different place in the 'system' (de Saussure 1959) of request forms than it does in English.

Curl & Drew's (2008) study of second person modal requests and *I wonder if* requests in British English telephone calls offers a related but slightly different perspective on *can you* requests. Given that their data is telephone calls involving deferred-action requests rather than face-to-face interactions involving here-and-now actions and objects, it is perhaps unsurprising that they do not report on the use of imperatives—imperatively formatted requests are apparently less frequent in English than in many other languages even in face-to-face interactions (e.g., Wierzbicka 1985; Blum-Kulka et al 1989; Ogiermann 2009; Zinken & Ogiermann 2013; Kent & Kendrick 2016), and if the 'home environment' for imperative requests is for actions that are projectable from the requestee's ongoing activity, then they are likely to be quite uncommon in phone calls, where the requestee's main engagement is talking to the requester. Modal requests are thus a frequent form in English telephone calls (Curl & Drew 2008), and according to Curl & Drew they orient to low contingency and high entitlement.

In a previous study we explored *can you* requests at the shoe shop (Fox and Heinemann 2016). Our findings in that study further illustrate Rossi's claims about the value of forms within a system of contrasts. We have no imperatives in our collection, so *can you* requests do not contrast with imperatives at the shoe shop; rather, they appear to contrast with simple declaratives with *need*, as in *I need new heels* (Fox & Heinemann 2016). Both types of requests usually occur in the 'initial slot', right after customer and shoetender have greeted one another, but while simple declaratives with *need* are used for repairs that are routine and without foreseeable complications, *can you* requests appear to be used for less routine repairs, with an orientation to the possibility that the requested repair may present some issues for the staff. Nonetheless, the contingencies are relatively low and entitlement is high. In our previous study of requests (Fox & Heinemann 2016), we detailed those contingencies that are oriented to with *can you* requests as indicating the possibility that the requested repair lies outside the ability of the shoetender. This contingency, we found, was in contrast to the contingencies invoked through other types of *can* requests with alternative "choice of referential strategy" (Aijmer 1996:175). For example, in our previous work we examined the *difference*s between *can* requests that take a first-person subject (*can **I** x* requests, such as *can I get these fixed*) and those that take a noun phrase subject (*can **NP** x* requests, such as *can sneakers be resoled*). In the following, we seek to establish that the 'referential choice' of different **direct objects** in *can you x* requests is also interactionally relevant.

Based on our 16 instances of *can you x* requests, we can conclude that there are at least three types of *x* (all instances are transitive verbs): first, there are cases in which the direct object of the main verb is an indefinite NP that indexes the desired solution and the prepositional object (as in, *around it*) is a deictic/anaphoric element that indexes the item (or parts of it) brought in for repair (e.g., *can you just run **a circular seam** around* it); second, there are cases in which the direct object is a deictic element that indexes the item (e.g., *can you fix **this***); and third, there are several instances of *can you do **anything** (with this/about this)*, in which the direct object indexes a non-specific solution and the item is introduced in a prepositional phrase, as a deictic element. As a first observation, we can note that these alternatives have consequences for the specificity of the request: whereas the first type of request offers a specific desired result, the second type of request is less specific with respect to the desired outcome and the third type leaves it entirely open to the shoetender to both diagnose the problem and provide a solution. As we shall see in the following, the three alternatives also engender different sequential trajectories.

Consider Extract (1) below, in which the direct object introduces a specified solution and the prepositional object indexes the item brought in for repair. The customer is in the process of removing a boot from a plastic bag. When the boot is out, the shoetender solicits a request with (*what do ya)*

go:t (line 4), in response to which the customer presents the boot to the shoetender, sole first, and simultaneously produces his request (*can you guys find new soles for this*):[2]

(1) Shoe Shop 2-7-2015

```
01          ⊃ (1.2) ⊃ (0.3) ⊃ (1.0) ⊃
    cus     ⊃places bag on counter⊃releases bag⊃steps back⊃
02          (1.4)⊃ (3.0)
    cus          ⊃ steps to counter, unties one bag
03          ∇(0.3)
    sho     ∇shifts gaze to bag
04  SHO:    ⊃*(what do ya ) go:t.* ⊃ ((sniff))
    cus     ⊃brings shoe out of bag⊃
05          (.)
06  CUS:    can you guys (find) new⊃ soles for this? ⊃
    cus                            ⊃presents sole to SHO⊃
07          (0.2) ∇ (.)∇
    sho           ∇vertical nods∇
08  SHO:    yeah,
09          ⊃(0.5)⊃
    cus     ⊃lowers shoe to counter⊃
10  CUS:    kay,
11          ⊃Λ(1.5)Λ⊃
    sho      Λpicks up shoe, inspects soleΛ
    cus     ⊃unties second bag⊃
12  SHO:    let's see:,
13  CUS:    ⊃I had to u:m, s:- (0.3) u:m (0.3)⊃
    cus     ⊃removes second shoe from bag, places it on
            counter⊃presents sole to SHO
14  CUS     shoe Λgoo, (0.4) one of 'em,
    sho          Λshifts gaze to second shoe
15          (0.2)
16  CUS:    (      )⊃
    cus             ⊃places second shoe on counter
17          Λ(2.5)Λ
    sho     Λinspects first shoeΛ
18  SHO:    u::::m (0.8) could run you up tuh (.) u:m,
19          sixty or seventy bu⊃cks,=
    cus                       ⊃waves hand
20  CUS:    =not a problem.
21          (0.2)
22  SHO:    >okay,<
23          ∇(1.4)∇
    sho     ∇places first shoe on counter,
            reaches for writing pad∇
24  CUS:    do yu- do you do any uh bag repair?
```

As noted in section 2, requests in the shoe repair shop are typically deferred, as they concern matters that cannot be immediately accomplished. In Extract (1), the shoetender orients to this by producing a proximate granting of the request by nodding and saying *yeah* (lines 7-8); that this is understood as a granting is evident by the customer's sequence-closing *okay* (e.g., Beach, 1993), as well as by his placing the boot on

2 In all examples, the verbal components have been transcribed according to Jefferson (2004) and analyzed using Conversation Analysis. The embodied actions of the participants have been transcribed according to Mondada (2014). The symbols ⊃, Δ, Λ, and ⊆ each annotate where a described non-verbal action begins and ends. Asterisks mark creaky voice.

the counter where it is accessible to the shoetender (lines 9-10). The shoetender does not request further details of the desired repair.[3]

Compare the straightforward trajectory of Extract (1) with the unfolding sequence in Extract (2), which involves a case where the direct object indexes the item brought in for repair. The customer arrives at the counter before the shoetender does, and while waiting removes one of the shoes from the bag she has brought with her. After initial greetings and inquiries about the resident dogs (not shown here, except for the final contribution to this topic from the shoetender in line 10) the customer produces her request (*can you clean these up*):

(2) Shoe Shop 7-29 2015

```
10  SHO:    (he's) hard to getΛ up,
    sho     >>Λgaze to dog     Λgaze to shoes, poises pen
    cus     >>⊃gaze to shoes-->
11  CUS:    ⊃Λcan you clean these up,
    sho      Λlowers pen
    cus     ⊃lifts one shoe, sole facing SHO
12  SHO:    ⊃Λmm hm,
    sho      Λpoises pen
    cus     ⊃turns shoe, heel facing SHO
13  CUS:    [(   )
14  SHO:    [clean ⊃Λand polish?
    cus            ⊃lowers one shoe to counter
    sho             Λgaze to counter, lowers pen to pad
15  CUS:    yeaΛ:h, ⊃Λ
    cus          -->⊃looks up-->
    sho         Λturns pen upside down and clicks on counterΛ
16          Λ(0.2)
    sho     Λlowers pen to pad
17  CUS:    >(specially)< the heels,= ⊃and thenΛ um (.)
    cus                          -->⊃gaze to shoes
    sho                                 Λgaze to shoes
18          .tchhh this: (0.2) little (0.1) decorative
19          part here, it looks like the leather split,
```

As was the case in Extract (1), the shoetender clearly orients to granting the request: while finishing her comment about the dog, she turns towards the customer, and gazes towards the shoes with a pen poised. The customer presents one shoe to the shoetender, sole up, while producing the request (see Fox & Heinemann 2015); and as soon as the request is produced the shoetender grants it with *mm hm* (line 12). Instead of immediately taking down the details of the request, however, the shoetender now inserts an expanding inquiry, pursuing details of the requested fix: *clean and polish?* (line 14). After confirming that she does want the shoes cleaned and polished, the customer herself provides additional details (*especially the heels*), before moving on to her second request (*and then*) by producing a troubles description (lines 18-19[4]). Here, then, both shoetender and customer orient (if briefly) to the need for further specification of the details of the request, presumably because the solution (*clean these up*) is too vague.

Extract (3) below illustrates the third and most unspecific set of *can you x* requests from our data, in which the direct object indexes a non-specific solution. Here the customer is already at the counter, shoes in hand, when the shoetender arrives; after an exchange of greetings the customer produces his request (*can you do anything about this*) while simultaneously lifting the shoes onto the counter:

3 The inspection the shoetender performs of the boot is directed towards providing an estimate involved in doing the repair (lines 11-14) and the customer does not provide any further details of the repair either—his account at lines 13-14, is about previous repairs he has done himself to the other boot.

4 In contrast to Kendrick & Drew (2016) we treat statements of trouble as requests in this setting.

(3) Shoe Shop 10-13-2013

```
01              ⊇(0.2)⊇
      cus       ⊇lifts shoe⊇
02    CUS:      can you do any⊇Λthing about ⊇thi:s?⊇=
      cus                     ⊇points       ⊇taps shoe⊇
      sho                      Λleans in
03    SHO:      =yeah ⊇we can reline it,
      cus             ⊇puts shoe down
04              ⊃(0.5)⊃
      cus       ⊃continues to look at shoe-->
05    SHO:      put a new leather Λliner inside (it),
      sho                         Λbegins to back up, moves away
                                    from the counter
06              (2.0)⊃ (1.0) ⊃ (1.0) ⊃(1.0) ⊃ (1.0)
      cus         -->⊃looks up⊃down⊃up⊃down⊃ up>>
07              Λ(2.0) ⊇ (1.0) Λ (1.0)
      sho       Λapproaches counterΛ
      cus             ⊇blows out air
      sho                      Λ picks up shoe, inspects>>
08    CUS:      how much would that go about
```

The rather unspecific character of the request in Extract (3) is reflected in the response that the shoetender provides; instead of simply granting the request (as in Extract (1)) or checking the specific details of the desired repair (as in Extract (2)), he provides a candidate solution: *yeah we can reline it* in line 3. The customer does not immediately accept this solution (see the pause in line 4), perhaps because he does not know what 'relining' means, and the shoetender subsequently explicates what this means (line 5). The customer pursues the suggested solution by inquiring about the cost of the repair (line 8).

Extracts (1)-(3) illustrate some of the variation we find in the *x* component of *can you x* requests and the interactional consequences of these variations. We find that a detail as minute as the type of noun phrase used as the direct object, together with the type of verb, shapes the trajectory of the requesting sequence: deictic elements with verbs like *fix* and *do* construct a somewhat non-specific request, which typically gets clarification work done in response; indefinite NPs occur in requests that ask for a specific repair which gets immediate granting; and *anything* with *do* works to construct a thoroughly non-specific request which can get a candidate solution in response.

Table 1. Types of x in 'can you' requests

Type of x	Function and response type
Deictic elements with vague verbs	Somewhat non-specific request with clarification work in response
Indefinite NPs	Specific repair with immediate granting
Can you do anything	Non-specific request with candidate solution as response

In the next section, we offer similarly detailed findings for *wonder* requests.

3.2 wonder x

Wonder requests have—to our knowledge—only been described in any empirical detail by Curl & Drew (2008),[5] who demonstrate that these requests invoke greater contingencies for granting the request than

5 There is, however, work on what may be similar constructions in e.g. Swedish (Lindholm & Lindström (2003)).

do modal *can/will* requests.[6] *Wonder* requests, according to Curl & Drew (2008), are thus a means by which speakers can display their requests as "contingent on knowing and following the proper procedures and practices" of, for instance, a service provider (Curl & Drew 2008: 141). This seems to apply also to *wonder* requests in the shoe repair shop, where there are a wide range of contingencies oriented to, in keeping with the large set of 'procedures and practices' which customers may orient to as relevant but regarding which they show themselves to lack full knowledge. These contingencies include but are not limited to: the doability of the repair (e.g., is the item too damaged to be repaired easily), the skills possessed by the staff for accomplishing the repair, whether the materials for the repair are available to the staff, the desirability of the possible repair options (e.g., will the customer like the color, the sound, or the feel), the durability of the repair (whether it will last), the suitability of repair options for the function of the item, and the visibility of the repair (e.g., will it be noticeable). Extract (4), in which the customer has brought in a pair of patent leather military shoes, provides a first illustration of this greater orientation to contingencies:

(4) Shoe Shop 1-31-2015

```
01  SHO:      Λ⊇hi,
    sho      >>Λcomes to counter-->
    cus        ⊇lifts shoes from counter with left hand-->
02  CUS:     >how are you,< ⊇
    cus                 -->⊇moves right hand to shoe-->
03  SHO:     go:od, ∇
    sho            ∇reaches for a receipt pad-->
04  CUS:     ⊇>I'm ↑wonderingΛ∇ if there's anything you
    cus      ⊇extends index finger, runs along a scratch on shoe-->
    sho                  -->Λ
    sho                    -->∇rests hand on pad, leans in-->
05           can do about< ⊇ (.) that scratch
    cus                -->⊇holds index finger on scratch-->
06           specifi⊇cally ∇>and then just< ⊇ (0.2) ⊇
    sho                -->∇reaches for shoes
    cus          -->⊇moves hand to other shoe, brushes with
                  unfolded hand⊇lowers shoe towards SHO's hand⊇
07           ∇s:cuff marks 'n: crea:ses >and
    sho      ∇takes shoe, walks to other SHO-->
08           all that s[tuff,
09  SHO:              [I think patent leather
10           is about the hardest thing in the
11           world to work with.=∇
    sho                       -->∇shows shoe to other SHO>>
12  CUS:     =that's what I was afraid of. hnn
```

The customer exchanges greetings with the shoetender while the shoetender is on her way to the counter. At the same time the customer prepares himself, physically, to be ready for the request, by picking up the shoes he has brought in and placed on the counter. The shoetender similarly prepares to meet the request; on her way to the counter she reaches towards the receipt pads stacked to the right of the counter. In line 4, the customer initiates the requesting sequence with a *wonder* utterance. The desired solution is formulated with both a vague verb (*do*) and a nonspecific direct object (*anything*), while the target of the desired solution is made very specific, both through the customer's manipulation of the shoes (see Fox & Heinemann 2015) and through the verbal description *that scratch*. The customer thus displays that though he has diagnosed the problem(s), he is refraining from suggesting a possible course of treatment, leaving that entirely to the province of the shoetender (cf. Fox & Heinemann 2015; see also Extract (3) above). In

6 Throughout this study we refer to requests with *wonder* as simply "*wonder* requests," rather than as *I wonder* requests. While all of our *wonder* requests have first person subjects, the pronoun *I* is not always overtly expressed. We have therefore not included *I* in the name of the form.

other words, the customer displays his uncertainty as to whether *that scratch* is repairable or not. In addition, the use of the negative polarity item *anything* here seems to bias the request towards a possible rejection, i.e., an answer that confirms that nothing can be done (Heritage & Robinson 2011, see also Extract (3) above).[7] The shoetender similarly orients to the *wonder* request as involving contingencies that may eventually prevent her from granting the customer's request. First, when it is evident to her that the customer is about to produce a *wonder* request, i.e., on *wondering* (line 4), she rests her right hand on the counter, instead of picking up the receipt pad that she originally seemed to be reaching for. She then leans in, presumably to inspect the shoes (and the problem indicated by the customer). As soon as the customer's request has reached possible completion, at *that scratch specifically,* she extends her right hand, reaching for the shoe with the scratch. When the customer lowers the shoe, she takes it and begins to walk towards the back of the shop where another shoetender is working, at the same time providing an account for the likely rejection of the request (*I think patent leather is about the hardest thing in the world to work with*). In other words, the shoetender here aligns with the customer's presentation of there being possible contingencies that will prevent the shoetenders from doing the repair, as well as with his implication that the repair is likely not to be granted. Finally, at line 12 we see that the customer displays himself to have been aware of the problems and the potential rejection all along and does an epistemic upgrade (*that's what I was afraid of*).

In our data, *wonder* requests are regularly vague in formulating a repair-solution, as in Extract (4) above. Verbs such as *do, fix, revive*, and *have*, which do not specify an exact type of repair, are often used; and even the objects of the verbs often do not specify exactly where the problem is (*anything, something, it, things*). This facet of the composition of *wonder* requests (Schegloff 2007) seems to go hand in hand with Curl & Drew's (2008) observation that *wonder* requests display a high orientation to contingencies beyond the customer's control; in cases where solutions are vaguely formulated as in Extract (4), such contingencies can, for instance, concern the customer's lack of knowledge about what the shoetenders as professionals are able to do.

There are however, two ways in which our *wonder* requests differ from those described by Curl & Drew (2008). First, the requests considered by Curl & Drew (2008) are all produced in telephone conversations, whereas ours occur in face-to-face interaction. Perhaps as a consequence of this, it appears that the production of a *wonder* request can be motivated by factors in addition to an orientation to uncertainty about whether the request can be granted in our data. For example, in all of our instances of *wonder* requests in the 'initial slot', the requesting utterance is initiated before one or both participants has reached the counter, or while the customer is manipulating the item to make the problem visible (cf. Sorjonen & Raevaara 2014). In Extract (5), for instance, the customer begins her requesting utterance while still several steps away from the counter:

(5) Shoe Shop 5-9-2015

```
01  CUS:        ⊃∇I was wondering: (0.3) ∇#>if you<∇
    cus        >>⊃approaching counter with purse held up-->
    sho         >>∇approaching counter∇places shoe on counter∇
02              guys⊃ can ∇fix⊃ this.
    cus         -->⊃raises purse, then lowers it onto counter⊃moves
                     right index finger to purse-->
    sho                  ∇places both hands on counter, leans in-->
03  SHO:        yes:. ∇
    sho            -->∇leans back
04  SHO:        ∇I put a new ⊃slide on. ∇ so >I have
    sho         ∇moves right hand to purse∇moves left hand to purse
                     and grabs it-->
    cus                  -->⊃moves finger away from purse
05              to take< Λthis off, Λ(0.7) undoΛ
    sho                  Λpoints to part of purse
                                Λmoves hand along purseΛ
06              this, (0.1) get a new one, (0.2)
```

7 We do have instances of *something* as opposed to *anything* (see Extract (11), for example), so it is not the case that *anything* is the standard form in our requests.

As was the case for Extract (4) above, the customer's use of a *wonder* request in Extract (5) can be accounted for in terms of this displaying an orientation to the possibility that the request might not be grantable. But as the transcript illustrates, the *wonder* request is also initiated before the customer reaches the counter, and is produced such that the customer, the shoetender and the item are perfectly aligned when the customer produces the final part of her request. Both shoetender and customer are still making their way towards the counter when the customer initiates her *wonder* request in line 1. The *wonder* is stretched and followed by a 0.3 second pause, both of which allow the customer to get closer to the counter before completing her request: on *if you* she is still a few steps away but has begun to raise the purse that she is bringing in for repair; on *guys* the purse reaches its apex at the same time as the customer reaches the counter, and on *fix this* the customer lowers the purse and moves her index finger towards a particular area, presumably to index what *this* refers to.

While more syntactically simple request-formats are overwhelmingly initiated when customer, shoetender and item are already at the counter (44/46 instances of *need/want* declaratives, and all 23 of the *can* requests), all of the initial-slot *wonder* requests in our data (n=18) are similar to Extract (5) in being produced while one or both of the participants are still on the move; they conclude at the exact point where both have reached the counter and the item is ready for a demonstrated inspection. It seems, thus, that one motivation for producing a *wonder* request could reside in the fact that this type of request takes longer to produce than other, syntactically simpler, request-forms; the longer form allows the customer more time to be 'ready' for the shoetender's inspection (reminiscent of Sorjonen & Raevaara's (2014) findings on the use of clausal requests at convenience stores). While other resources clearly exist for extending the production time of a request, or delaying its production—for example, the customers could just wait or approach silently, or they could use self-repair, or they could begin with a preliminary such as *I need help with something*—each of the other resources available could be problematic in this sequential location. For example, waiting or approaching silently does not orient to getting the request sequence underway as early as possible, which may indicate some trouble. Starting a differently formatted request and engaging in extensive self-repair could be done, but interestingly we do not have examples of that strategy in our collection. Preliminary utterances such as *I need help with something*, or *I don't know if you can help with this* do occur in our collection but they have different functions: they are used as pre-pres, in environments where background is given before moving on to the request proper. Of course, we are not suggesting that there are no other possibilities for extending or delaying a request, only that *wonder* requests do in fact seem to be used for these functions.

The second way in which our *wonder* requests differ from those of Curl & Drew (2008) is with respect to tense/aspect. While Curl & Drew (2008) report that their *wonder* requests are all in the simple present, the *wonder* requests in our data come in four variations: simple past and present (*wondered/wonder*), and past and present progressive (*was/am wondering*). Despite the lack of variation in their data, Curl & Drew (2008, footnote 2) suggest that tense may nevertheless be interactionally relevant and our data suggest that this might in fact be so.

When used as initial requests (see above) *wonder* requests are typically formulated in the simple past or the past progressive (see Extract (5)). While this is a tendency, rather than an absolute pattern (see e.g., Extract (4) for an initial *wonder* request in the present progressive), it suggests to us that customers generally attempt to locate their 'wondering' as having happened before the visit and thus as being a motivating factor for the visit. Certainly—and in contrast to this—when customers produce *wonder* requests that are not initial requests, they do not use the past tense and thus avoid the implication that they have been 'wondering' about the problem and/or solution prior to coming to the shop. For example, in Extract (6) below, the customer brings in a pair of boots, and produces as her initial request a report of trouble (*my foot doesn't quite fit through here*); only later does she produce a *wonder* request, and it is in the present progressive:

(6) Shoe Shop 6-5-2014

```
01  CUS:        ∇hell[o:,
02  SHO:             [hi,
    sho       >>∇comes to counter-->
03              (0.1)∇
    sho         -->∇
04  CUS:       hi how are ya,
05  SHO:       good.
06              (0.5)
07  CUS:       ⊃(so) ΛI'm bri⊃nging these boots in,
    cus        ⊃opens lid of box⊃takes boot out-->
    sho               Λlooks down to box, then to boot-->
08  SHO:       'kay, ⊃
    cus           -->⊃takes hold of boot with both hands-->
09  CUS:       I'm needing the⊃m for a wedding?
    cus                    -->⊃
10              (0.1)
11  SHO:       alright,=
12  CUS:       =and (0.4) my foot doesn't quite
13              f:it through here,
14              (0.3)
15  SHO:       you wanna show me?
16  CUS:       yeah.
17              (0.8)
18  SHO:       do you wear a sock? Λor a nylon?=
    sho                        -->Λlooks to CUS→
19  CUS:       =um I don't, [but (it's like)
20  SHO:                    [you're ju-⊇ you're just barefoot?
    cus                                ⊇looks at SHO-->
21  CUS:       yeah.
22              (0.1)
23  SHO:       cuz that might help. li[ke a nylon.
24  CUS:                              [o:h.
25  CUS:       oka⊇y >do you ha- Λdo you have one that
    sho                         -->Λlooks away and moves
                                  along the counter-->
    cus        -->⊇looks to the left, then at SHO, then down-->
26              I could< try?=
27  SHO:       =u::h, ⊃(let's) see⊃ if I have one.
    cus        -->⊃places boot on counter⊃lifts paper in box-->
28              (1.3)
29  SHO:       (    )
30                 ⊇(0.3)Λ
    cus:       -->⊇looks to SHO-->
    sho              -->Λturns and moves towards the back of shop-->
31  SHO:       let's (.)⊇try a plastic bag.
    cus              -->⊇looks down
32              (0.1)
33  CUS:       okay,Λ⊃
    sho          -->Λ
    cus             -->⊃takes other boot from box⊃
34              (1.1)
35  CUS:       <I've had just the worst luck in finding>
36              cowboy boots for this ⊃wedding.⊃
    cus                              ⊃shakes head⊃
37              (.)
38  CUS:       it's been a nightmare.
```

```
39              ⊃Λ(4.7)Λ⊃
    sho        >>Λcomes from back with plastic bag, walks to end
                of counterΛ
    cus         ⊃moves to end of counter, sits down one boot in hand⊃
40  CUS:       >and I'm just wondering if it's possible to<
41              either stretch them or >get a zipper
42              put in< or [something?
43  SHO:                   [okay. Λ
    sho                          Λleans down with bag>>
```

As in other examples, we here see the customer organizing her actions to prepare for the repair request which is the reason for her visit to the shop. Waiting at the counter, she greets the shoetender as he approaches (lines 1-5); when he has reached the counter, she flips the lid of the shoebox she has brought open and begins to take a boot out and at the same time launches her requesting utterance with *so*, thus indicating that what is to come is the main reason or warrant for the interaction (e.g., Bolden 2009). The shoetender moves his gaze from the customer to the boots, thus showing his understanding that a request is underway. The requesting utterance here consists of a background description (*I'm bringing these boots in, I'm needing them for a wedding*,) followed by a declarative of troubles (*and my foot doesn't quite f:it through here*. lines 12-13). Seeing as this is a problem of fit, it requires more inspection before the shoetender can provide a solution and in line 15, he initiates an inspection sequence with *you wanna show me?* Instead of engaging in the inspection immediately, however, he initiates another sequence that explores a possible solution to the lack of fit (*do you wear a sock? or a nylon?*). When the shoetender furthermore explicates that a sock might help (line 23), the customer asks to try one on and the shoetender moves to the end of the counter to try and find one. Having no apparent luck with this, he announces that they can try with a plastic bag instead and both he and the customer move to the end of the counter to try the solution out (line 39). Though the shoetender has thus proposed a possible solution (nylons) in response to the customer's claim that the boots don't fit, and though the customer seems to willingly engage in trying out this solution, she now goes on to produce a *wonder* request, *>and I'm just wondering if it's possible to either stretch them or get a zipper put in or something?<*. The *wonder* request clearly proffers a different line of solution than the one suggested by the shoetender, which could be potentially delicate, as it may be heard to challenge the shoetender's expertise. The delicate nature of producing a request in this position might account for why it is formulated as a *wonder* request, and why the *wonder* request is in the **present** progressive (rather than the simple past or the past progressive tense): with this, the customer appears to orient to the 'nowness' of the request—that it is emerging now given the interactional contingencies.[8]

On a very general level, then, our *wonder* requests seem to follow the same pattern as the *wonder* requests explored by Curl & Drew (2008); they typically invoke higher contingencies than other types of requests (e.g., *can you* requests) and other facets of their composition also suggest an orientation to the requests being possibly not grantable. Our data however also suggests that factors such as the spatio-temporal organization of the encounter and its sequential development are also oriented to through the production of a *wonder* request (see Nolen & Maynard 2013 for similar suggestions). Furthermore, in the following exploration of the interactional relevance of variations in the *x* component in *wonder* requests, we attempt to demonstrate the reflexive relationship between variations in the *wonder* component and the *x* component.

3.2.1 Exploring *x* in *wonder* requests

In our data, the *x* that follows *wonder* can be either hypotactic, i.e., consisting of a dependent, syntactically subordinated construction, or paratactic, i.e. consisting of an independent clause, such as, for instance *can I get a different tread put on*. The hypotactic constructions come in two categories: *if* constructions and *about* constructions; and the *if* constructions can be further separated into a) those that have *I* as the

8 *Just* in *I'm just wondering* clearly does important interactional work; however, an exploration of the uses of *just* in our requests is beyond the scope of the current report.

subject of *can/could* (e.g., *wondered if* ***I could get*** *those stretched*); b) those that have *you* as the subject of *can/could* (e.g., *I just wondered if* ***you could*** *put vibram soles on this*)**;** and c) cases with *there's* and *it's* (e.g., *I'm wondering if* there's anything *you can do about that scratch* and *>and I'm just wondering if* ***it's possible*** *to either stretch them or get a zipper put in or something?<* **.** In the following, we will look at each of these possible variations, beginning with the 'referential choice' that can be made in *wonder if* requests.

3.2.1.1 3.2.1.1 *wonder if* requests and referential choice

Wonder if you could/can

As is the case for *can* requests, the most common 'referential choice' for *wonder if* requests in our data is *wonder if you can*, i.e., where the 'wondering' targets the shoetender's ability to perform a requested repair. We have six instances of this type and a common factor for all is that the customer identifies either the part of the item that needs repairing, the repair that they want done, or both. In Extract (7) below, for instance, the customer specifies a particular type of non-slip sole that she wants the shoetender to put on her shoe:

(7) Shoe Shop 4-8-2015

```
01  SHO:        ⊇hull[o,
02  CUS:              [hey how are you today,=
    cus       >>⊇approaching counter-->
03  SHO:      =good.
04              (0.3)
05  CUS:      goo:d,
06              (0.5)
07  CUS:      >↑I just wondered if you could< ⊃put <vibram
    cus                                       ⊃lifts boot-->
08                ⊇⊃soles>⊃ Λon these?
    cus       -->⊇
    cus        -->⊃tilts boot⊃
    sho                  Λtakes boot-->
09  SHO:      yea:h.Λ ⊃ d[o you want (.) uh:m
10  CUS:                 [(possum)
    sho          -->Λ
    cus               ⊃lets go of boot
11  CUS:      Λ>like the< best for sno:w andΛ (0.5)
    sho       Λputs boot on counterΛreaches for
                 sole samples to his right>>
12  CUS:      >crappy weather (kinda)<
```

The *wonder* request that is produced here is initial, i.e., it comes right after the exchange of greetings and is correspondingly formulated in the past tense to index that the customer has been 'wondering' about the repair before coming to the shoe repair shop (compare to Extract (6), above). And as in many other cases of *wonder* requests (see Extract (5), above), it is initiated before the customer reaches the counter and brought to completion at the exact point at which the item needing repair is presented to the shoetender, on *these* (line 8). What is of primary interest to us here, however, is the fact that the customer identifies not only that she wants new soles on her boots, but exactly what kind of soles she wants.

Consider Extract (8) below as a further illustration of this finding. In this example the customer also uses a *wonder if you can* form for a request in which she makes clear what the desired solution is (reattaching of a buckle):

(8) Shoe Shop 6-28-2013

```
01  CUS:    ⊇hi [there.
02  SHO:       [↑hi,
    cus     ⊇moves towards counter-->
03          ⊃(0.9)
    cus     ⊃raises and stretches arm holding
            shoes towards counter-->
04  CUS:    Λ(wonder if you can) put this back⊇ on⊃there,
    cus                                  -->⊇
    cus                                      -->⊃shoes on
                          counter, moves right hand to left,
                    takes buckle, places buckle on counter-->
    sho     Λreaches with left hand for receipt pad-->
05             Λ(1.1)⊃Λ
   cus            -->⊃
   sho     -->Λplaces receipt pad on counter, leans inΛ
06 SHO:    Λ⊃uo::h wr- >it just⊃ went rightΛ there?<
   cus      ⊃takes right shoe, tilts to SHO, side facing,
            lets go of shoe⊃reaches for left shoe, lifts
             and shows side to SHO-->
   sho     Λmoves both hands to right shoeΛright hand to
            left shoe, leans further in and inspects>>
07          (0.3)
08 SHO:     ye⊃↑ah,⊃
   cus      -->⊃places shoe on counter⊃
```

Though the lexical choice of the customer's request is not linguistically specific (as compared to the 'vibram soles' in Extract (7) above), the customer's use of the indexicals *this* and *there* in conjunction with her manipulation of the relevant items clearly makes explicit exactly what she wants (cf. Fox & Heinemann 2015). The shoetender has no trouble understanding the basics of the customer's request as displaying that she wants the buckle reattached: she subsequently inspects the items thoroughly to determine where the buckle should be attached (line 6), before confirming their ability to do the requested repair with *ye↑ah* in line 8. The customer treats this as a confirmation and lets go of the shoe.

The use of *wonder if you can* requests for a particular problem is also evident in Extract (9) below. Here, the request itself is relatively vaguely formulated, with the verb *do* and the negative polarity item *anything*, which indicates that the customer is unsure about what—if anything —can be done to solve her problem. As we see in her continuation, however, the problem for which she is seeking help is very particular. In turn, the shoetender treats the request as specific by denying their ability to meet the exact demands of the customer *we won't have a really pretty thing* (line 10) before stating the solution they can offer, *a regular: (0.2) tsk slider*:

(9) Shoe Shop 1-8-2014

```
01  SHO:        Λ⊃h↑i,
    sho        >>Λapproaching counter-->
    cus         >>⊃approaching counter-->
02  CUS:       >hi, how are Λyou?<=
    sho                  -->Λ
03  SHO:       =good.=how are ⊃you?=
    cus                      ⊃holds boots up and forwards-->
04  CUS:       =good. ⊃⊃ I wondered if you could do anything
    cus             -->⊃⊃places one boot on counter, holds other up-->
05             with⊃ these. Λ⊃=see >.hh< (.) this ⊃has this⊃
    cus         -->⊃places boot on counter⊃moves right hand to top
                       of boot⊃then left hand⊃
    sho                    Λleans in
06             ⊃really pretty (.) little thing on it. ⊃=but we⊃
    cus        ⊃takes hold of slider with right hand⊃moves both
                  hands to other boot⊃
07             ∇lost the ⊃one off <this [one>.
08  SHO:                                [↑o:h.
    sho        ∇looks to other boot
    cus                  ⊃lifts other boot-->
09             (0.6)
10   SHO:      (we won't have a really pretty thing) (0.2) it'll
11             be a regular: (0.2) tsk slider.
```

As Extracts (7)-(9) illustrate, hypotactic *wonder if you can* requests are used when the customer has a very particular repair and/or trouble in mind, i.e., when they know what they want, but may be in doubt as to whether the shoetenders will be able to comply (for whatever reasons). This is evident also in the shoetenders' responses to such requests: in all three extracts above, the shoetender does work to demonstrate to the customer the extent to which they can or cannot meet the customer's requirements. In Extract (7) this is done by providing samples of the kinds of soles the customer has requested, in Extract (8) by first inspecting the item in more detail, then expressing doubt as to whether they can do the repair; and in Extract (9) by specifying that they do not have a matching item for the repair, then providing some samples of what they do have. In this way, the shoetenders treat the customers' hypotactic *wonder if you can* requests as invoking the contingency of how the shoetenders' practices and procedures can match the specific requirements of the request; and they treat the customers not as 'wondering' whether anything can be done to their item, but rather as wondering whether what they want done can be done.

Wonder if I could

Wonder if I can requests are less common than their *wonder if you can* counterparts (see Fox & Heinemann 2016 for a similar distribution of *can I* and *can you* interrogative requests), and we have only three examples of this format in our data. These three examples are however strikingly similar, both in terms of the spatio-temporal organization of the encounter and in their sequential trajectory. Extract (10) provides a first illustration. In this example the customer is waiting at the counter, with his boots already standing on the counter; at line 1 the shoetender produces a request-solicitation as she is approaching the counter. The customer first looks at the shoetender as she continues to approach, and then at line 3 he begins his *wonder if* request, before the shoetender has reached the counter:

(10) Shoe Shop 8-2-2013

```
01  SHO:      Λwhat can I ⊃do for ya,
    sho      >>Λapproaching counter-->
    cus                  ⊃looks in direction of SHO-->
02             (0.6)
03  CUS:      >↑wo⊃ndered if I could ⊃get< ⊃those #stretched,
    cus       -->⊃looks to boots.... ⊃nods to boots⊃looks to SHO-->
04             (0.2)Λ
    sho        -->Λ
05  SHO:      'v c↑ourse, >how do ⊃you need 'em< stretched?
    cus                    -->⊃looks to boot-->
06  CUS:      ⊃well; (0.3) i- it's really tight, (0.9) ⊃
    cus       ⊃reaches for boot, fiddles with both hands
                  on top of boot⊃
07             ⊃getting them (0.3) ⊃down⊃ (.) over this:
    cus       ⊃puts right hand inside boot⊃grabs foot of
                boot with left hand⊃lifts boot>>
08             (0.1)⊃ instep,
    cus        -->⊃looks to SHO>>
09  SHO:      >okay,<
```

While stretching of a shoe or boot is a type of repair that requires further specification (where the stretching should be done and to what degree, see lines 6-8), something that is here reflected by the customer's use of the resultative verb-form, *stretched* (see Fox & Heinemann 2016 and above), there should be no doubt here that the customer knows exactly what he wants. Nor is there any indication that a stretch is outside the shoetender's abilities or that this repair is problematic to perform on the type of boots brought in by the customer. Indeed, when customers produce *can I* interrogative requests, they seem to do so exactly to display that there are no contingencies preventing the request from being granted (Fox & Heinemann 2016, see also Fox 2015). So if there are no relevant contingencies oriented to and the repair is routine, why does the customer use a *wonder if* form? We propose that the customer here uses a *wonder* request in orientation to the spatio-temporal organization, specifically to the fact that the **shoetender** is not at the counter and ready to inspect the customer's item at the point at which the request is initiated. In fact, the request is constructed so that the shoetender reaches the counter just after its completion (line 4), forming an F-formation (Kendon 1990) with the customer and the item so that she is ready to visually inspect the exact manner in which the customer wants the stretch done at the point at which she invites him to explicate this in line 5. Before producing this invitation, she grants the request with *of course*[9], thus emphatically aligning with and agreeing to the request.

We find a very similar pattern in Extract (11); the customer arrives at the counter before the shoetender does, and begins her requesting utterance (lines 4-5) while the shoetender is still on the move towards the counter. In turn, the shoetender responds to the *wonder if I can* request with *of course*:

9 While 'of course' typically disaffiliates with the prior action in treating the question/request as 'unaskable', here it seems to perform an affiliative action, which Stivers (2011) acknowledges is one possibility.

(11) Shoe Shop 5-16-2015

```
01  SHO:    ⊇h[i,
02  CUS:       [hi,
    cus      ⊇approaching counter-->
03           (3.3) ⊇∇(0.3)⊇#
    cus        -->⊇puts sandals on counter⊇
    sho            ∇approaching counter-->
04  CUS:     >I was wondering ⊇if∧ I could< u:m⊇ (0.1)∧
    sho                          ∧takes pen∧
    cus                       ⊇lifts sandal⊇rubs heel with
                               left index finger-->
05           get-∇∧ something done with thes:e,⊇=
    sho       -->∇
    sho            ∧takes pad-->
    cus                                  -->⊇
06  SHO:     ⊇=↑course,= ⊇
    cus      ⊇takes hold of other sandal with left hand⊇
07  CUS:     ⊇=*okay,*∧⊇
    cus      ⊇turns other sandal on its side⊇
    sho            -->∧
```

Though the customer here uses the vague formulation 'get something done', her manipulation of the sandals she has brought in for repair makes it quite evident what she wants done: while producing the requesting utterance, the customer lifts up one sandal, and on *get- something done with thes:e*, she rubs the heel of the sandal with her fingers. Given that the repair (replacement of heels) is both straightforward and routine, and that the customer gives every indication of knowing what she wants done (and treats the repair as routine), there appears to be no obvious motivation for the customer's use of a *wonder* request: there is no reason for the customer to express uncertainty with regard to the grantability of the request. As in Extract (10) above, we suggest that the motivation for the *wonder* form lies in the spatio-temporal organization of the interaction: the customer begins her requesting utterance before the shoetender arrives at the counter, and the *wonder if* form provides a temporal delay during which the shoetender can arrive and position herself in an appropriate F-formation (Kendon 1990).

Our third example exhibits the same pattern of spatio-temporal alignment. The customer begins her requesting utterance (lines 4-5) while the shoetender is still moving towards the counter:

(12) Shoe Shop 4-8-2015

```
01  SHO:    hi,
02  CUS:    hi ⊇how're you,=
    cus        ⊇approaches counter-->
03  SHO:    =good.>how are you doing?<
04  CUS:    goo:d.>I was wondering⊇ if< ⊇∇I could⊇ <drop⊇
    cus                        -->⊇     ⊇lowers shoes towards
                                      counter⊇drops one shoe⊇
    sho                                  ∇approaches counter-->
05            ⊇∇these off>∇ (0.4) for (0.2) ⊇repair,=⊇
    cus       ⊇picks up shoe⊇brings shoes together, heels up⊇moves
                              heel of right shoe
                               to heel of left shoe
    sho     -->∇closes register with left hand∇takes receipt-->
06  CUS:    ⊇=if ∇that's something ∇you ⊇guys cou[ld⊇∇
07  SHO:                                          [u:hm
    cus     ⊇rubs right heel along left heel⊇retracts right shoe⊇
    sho          ∇transfers receipt to right hand, then
            counter∇moves left, then right hand to left
                    shoe∇takes shoe-->
```

```
08  SHO:    mf[hh
09  CUS:      [make look [better or not,
10  SHO:                 V[*okay*
    sho             -->Vlifts shoe to inspect-->
11  SHO:    so: >.hp< (0.3) we cou::ld (0.3) >try and like<
12          (0.1) (pull it) down a little bit and just
13          touch it up with dye, Vthat's about the best
    sho                        -->Vlowers shoe, looks at CUS>>
14          we can d[o.=i- >it'll look better< it's not gonna look
15  CUS:            [yeah,
16  SHO:    ne[w, (  )
17  CUS:      [rig- oh I know. uh:m (0.3) alright. better is
18          what we want (    ).
```

Once again there is clearly no reason for the customer to express uncertainty regarding the grantability of the request. The customer is asking if she can drop off her shoes for repair, which on the face of it is a strange concern, given that the main business of the shoe shop is exactly that: customers leaving their items for repair. However, she may be indicating that she would leave her shoes for repair if they can make 'that' *look better*. It is noteworthy that the shoetender does not respond to this request; in fact, he is preoccupied with closing the register (line 5). By the time he positions himself at the counter, face-to-face with the customer and with a receipt in his hand, the customer has already arranged her shoes in a way that makes it possible for her to demonstrate the problem. She now produces a more specific repair-request that inquires into the ability of the shoetenders (*if that's something you guys could make look better*).

As illustrated by Extracts (10)-(12), hypotactic *wonder if I can* requests appear to be employed where there are no repair-relevant contingencies and there appears to be no reason for the customer to display uncertainty as to the granting of the request: clearly the shoetenders are able to do the repair in the manner specified by the customer (cf. Extracts (7)-(9)), and there is no doubt as to whether the customer's item is itself repairable (cf. Extracts (13) and (14), below).

So what motivates this apparently contradictory use of *wonder if + I can*? As we have suggested above, our three cases share a feature that is unrelated to whether the repair is likely to be granted or not: In all three cases, the *wonder* request is initiated before the shoetender is in appropriate F-formation with the customer, and/or before he or she is demonstrably oriented to the customer and the items on which the request focus. As we noted in section 3.2, the spatio-temporal organization of the request sequence seems to be one factor (in addition to orientation to the possibility that the repair is not grantable) that can motivate the production of *wonder if you can* requests; for *wonder if I can* requests, it appears to be a main motivating factor. That is, we suggest that customers produce this type of request not because there are any contingencies that may prevent the request from being granted, but because it gives the shoetender time to reach the counter and have visual access to the item brought in for repair by the time the specifics of the request are presented (e.g., *those stretched* in Extract (10), *something done with these* in Extract (11)). Further evidence for the lack of any contingencies in *wonder* requests that contain a *can I* interrogative can be seen in the fact that this type of request concerns repairs that are straightforward and routine, i.e., the stretching of a boot (Extract (10)) or the replacement of heels (Extract (11)). Moreover, we see the shoetender orienting to this aspect of the request in their response: In both Extracts (10) and (11) the granting is done with *of course*, a type of response that—as noted above—serves to emphatically align with the request, thereby confirming that there are indeed no contingencies preventing the request from being granted. Thus we are not able to see any evidence, outside of the form used, that the customer is orienting to the possible non-grantability of the request; the shoetenders treat these requests as overdone, and they all share the same fairly unusual spatio-temporal (mis)alignment. Of course it is possible that spatio-temporal organization is not the main motivating factor in these examples, but we find it remarkable that it is the one common thread for all three examples. We have no other explanation for why the customer uses *wonder* in these examples, so it at least seems to be plausible that spatio-temporal organization is at work.

Wonder if there's anything

Whereas *wonder if you can* requests are used to invoke the possibility that the shoetenders may not be able to meet the customer's requirements, and *wonder if I can* requests are used for routine requests with no evidence of orientation to problems with granting the request, but under special spatio-temporal circumstances, the third category of hypotactic *wonder if* requests, i.e., those that are formulated as 'if there's', seem to be oriented to the possibility that something integral to the item could make the requested repair impossible or problematic. We've already seen an instance of this type of request in Extract (4) above, in which the customer inquired as to whether *there's anything you can do about that scratch specifically*. There we noted that the shoetender responded by stating that *patent leather is about the hardest thing in the world to work with* before subsequently rejecting the request. Thus, the shoetender clearly located the problem as having to do with features of the item brought in for repair. We also noted that the customer subsequently indicated that he was aware of this problem (*that's what I was afraid of*), which in turn suggests that his use of the *wonder if there's* format was motivated by his knowledge about the potential challenges of the item.

Another very similar example can be seen in Extract (13), in which the customer and his companion have brought in a pair of boots that have *a smell to them*:

(13) Shoe Shop 15-3-2015

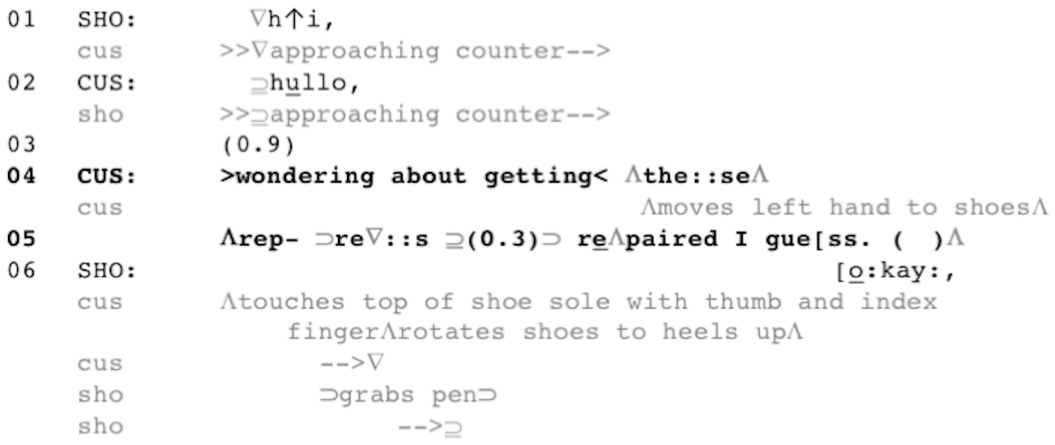
```
01  CUS:    ⊇∇.hhh I have a pair of shoes that I bought,∇
    cus     ⊇puts hands in bag-->
    sho     >>∇comes to counter, reaches for a receipt,
                puts receipt on counter∇
02              ⊇∇(0.6) a:nd∇ the::y⊇ (0.4) ha:ve∇⊇(1.1) ⊇
    cus     -->⊇takes shoes out, puts on counter⊇leans over
            shoes⊇picks up shoe, smells⊇
    sho         ∇looks at CUS∇looks to shoes∇follows shoes
                        with gaze-->
03          ⊇>kinda smell to them=I don't know if ∇they
    cus     ⊇lowers shoe-->
    sho                                          -->∇reaches for
                                            shoe with left hand-->
04          are ⊇water damaged< or ∇what.
    cus      -->⊇
    sho                              -->∇lifts shoe, smells it-->
05          (and [I was wonderi-)
06  CUS2:        [they smell mildewy hh
07              ∇(0.1)
    sho     -->∇lowers shoe-->
08  SHO:    hmm.
09              ∇(0.8)
    sho     -->∇puts left hand in shoe-->
10  CUS:    mwondering if there is anything∇ you all could
    sho                                    -->∇lifts shoe, smells-->
11          do=>∇I mean< we definitely could pull the
    sho      -->∇lowers shoe, puts left hand inside,
                   starts pulling-->
12          ⊇insoles out'n,
    cus     ⊇flashes eyebrows, looks at SHO-->
13          ⊃Λ(0.5)Λ⊃
    cus     ⊃shakes head-->
    sho     ΛnodsΛ
14  CUS:    put in new ones,
15          (0.1)
16  CUS:    y'know. ⊃ whatever,⊇
    cus          -->⊃       -->⊇looks down
17  SHO:    let's see if (0.1) that's what it is:,
18          (0.7)
19  SHO:    oh they're not removable,
```

The customer introduces the boots and describes the trouble, including bringing one of the boots to his nose and visibly smelling inside it, thus also demonstrating the problem (Fox & Heinemann 2015). At line 5 the customer's turn comes to possible completion, and the customer's companion produces another version of the report of trouble (*they smell mildewy*). Simultaneously, the shoetender picks up a shoe and smells it, presumably in an attempt to identify or experience the trouble described by the customers. He concludes this activity without proffering a solution (see the 0.8 pause in line 9). At line 10, the customer produces a *wonder* request: *I'm wondering if there's anything you all could do*. The *wonder* segment is formulated in the present progressive, which marks it as interactionally generated (see section 3.2 above); in this case we could say that the *wonder* request is produced in orientation to the lack of a proffered solution and hence in pursuit of such a solution. What follows the *if* here is neither a reference to the customer (I) nor a reference to the shoetender(s) (you), but instead the construction *there's anything*. With this construction, the customer refrains from specifying a possible solution himself, and in fact seems to adopt a pessimistic stance, through the negative polarity item *anything*, towards the possibility of a solution (cf. Heritage & Robinson 2011), perhaps in orientation to the lack of a solution being proffered immediately by the shoetender. And, though the customer subsequently offers a possible solution himself (*pull the insoles out*), this solution is rejected by the shoetender (*they're not removable*), who subsequently seeks the help of a second (more expert) shoetender. This shoetender subsequently offers a few different solutions, but offers them as possibilities and not as definite fixes (not shown here). As in Extract (4), the *wonder if there's anything* format is thus used to make a request that indicates that there may be something integral to the item or the problem that makes a repair difficult or impossible—here the combination of the smell and the fact that the insoles are not removable. In this respect, *wonder if there's anything* requests differ from both *wonder if you can* requests (that invoke the contingency of the shoetender's ability) and the *wonder if I can* requests (that are produced for routine requests with no apparent orientation to problems). These differences are similar to those shown for *can* requests by Fox & Heinemann (2016), which is perhaps not that surprising, given that most of the hypotactic clauses, i.e., the clause that follows *wonder if*, are in fact embedded *can* requests. That embedded *can* requests pattern like main-clause *can* requests solidifies *can* requests as being a recurrent practice and further illustrates how the composition of the *x* component is of interactional—and very practical—relevance for making requests in the shoe repair shop.

3.2.1.2 *wonder* about

The second type of hypotactic *wonder* request in our data is formed with *about*. This is a very infrequent form in our data; in fact, we have only two instances. We discuss both below.

(14) Shoe Shop 5-16-2015



```
07              ⊃Λ(0.8)Λ
      cus        Λputs shoes on counterΛ
      sho       ⊃grabs receipt with left hand, takes shoe
                     with right hand-->
08    CUS:      (pleased if I can)⊃
      sho                      -->⊃puts receipt on counter
                ⊃(1.2)⊃
      sho       ⊃grabs shoe with both hands, inspects⊃
09    SHO:      ⊇looks like you need new soles,
      sho       ⊇rotates shoe, prods top of sole-->
10              (0.2)
11    SHO:      thin,⊇
      sho         -->⊇
12              ⊃(0.6)⊃
       sho      ⊃moves hand to middle of shoe, tilts to inspect heels⊃
13    SHO:      ⊇and[ heels.⊇
14    CUS:          [yeah.
      sho       ⊇taps heels⊇
15    CUS:      ⊃please.⊃
      sho       ⊃puts shoe on counter⊃
```

The request that is produced by the customer in lines 4-5, *>wondering about getting< the::se rep- re::s (0.3) repaired I guess*, shares at least two of the general characteristics of *wonder* requests that we have discussed so far: It is an initial request, produced right after the greeting sequence and while both customer and shoetender are approaching the counter. Moreover, the customer's manipulation of his shoes takes place at the exact moment at which he lexically indexes the object and refers to the repair. As a natural consequence of the syntactic constraints of the *wonder about* clause, the *x* component of this request is agentless, i.e., it neither specifies who is to implement the requested action nor who will benefit. Instead, what is in focus is the actual action requested, *getting these* repaired. In this case, the action is formed through a resultative. As illustrated for *need* requests, resultative verbs are typically followed by a specification of the repair solution (Fox & Heinemann 2016) and this is the case also here (lines 9-12). The result is that the issue that is being raised with this request is not, for instance, whether the shoetender will be able to do the requested repair or whether there is something integral to the item that could prevent the repair. Rather, the issue that seems to be raised with this request is the possibility that the customer may decide not to have the repair done at all, i.e., he is displaying doubt as to whether it is worthwhile to repair the shoes he has brought in. We see some further evidence of this doubt in his incremental *I guess* (line 5), and possibly also in the fact that the request is produced in the present progressive, despite it being an initial request. As we noted earlier, initial *wonder if* requests are typically in the past or past progressive, to indicate that the customer has done his or her 'wondering' before entering the shop; here, by using the present progressive, the request may come off as being produced more on the fly, in the here and now, and thus as being something the customer is in fact still 'wondering' about and has not as yet reached a conclusion on.

We see similar, even stronger, indications of this ongoing 'wondering' in the only other *wonder about* request in our data:

(15) Shoe Shop 13-10-2013

```
01   CUS:      ∇hello, ⊃well I'm trying to decide⊃
     sho      >>∇approaches counter-->
     cus               ⊃puts one pair of boots on counter with
                     right hand and one pair of shoes with
                       left hand⊃
02             ∇⊃what's (0.6) ⊃worthwhile °(here I don't know)°⊃
     sho      -->∇moves along counter, to the left-->
     cus          ⊃moves right hand to shoes⊃pulls at
                       shoelaces, lets go⊃
03             ∇(1.0)∇
     sho      -->∇approaches CUS at counter∇
04   CUS:      ∇⊃u:hm .pt .hhh with these, (0.1) >I'm look-< u:h
     cus        ⊃hands to shoes, prodding shoes-->
     sho       ∇leans in slightly, hands on side-->
05             >they're pretty old< and I got some
06             new ones but (0.2) I'm just
07             wondering (0.8) y'know abou[t
08   SHO:                                [>stitch i[t down.
09   CUS:                                          [s:::ewing
10             them up.=yeah, I think it's starting ta;
11             ∇(0.1)
     sho      -->∇reaches for pen/receipt with left hand>>
12   SHO:      >'kay,<
13             (0.5)⊃
     cus         -->⊃
14   SHO:      its worth it ( )
```

Here, the customer overtly claims to be in the process of *trying to decide* even before he initiates the actual request. As soon as the shoetender has reached the counter and taken a position of listening and looking, leaning slightly in over the counter and placing his hands at his sides, the customer begins to manipulate his shoes, at the same time indexing them (*these*, line 4). He then initiates a troubles description of the shoes (*they're pretty old*), adding that he also has some newer shoes (lines 5-6). With this, he introduces the grounds for his 'wondering', which is then articulated in the *wonder about* request that follows. His concern is whether it is *worthwhile* (given that the shoes are old and he has another pair) to repair the shoes at all. Like the *wonder about* request in Extract (14), this request is in the present progressive and focuses on the action requested, *se::wing them up*, rather than on the shoetender's ability to perform the action or on the features of the item that is to be repaired.

As Extracts (14) and (15) illustrate, then, the contingency oriented to in our two *wonder about* requests concerns not whether the shoetender is able to perform the repair, nor whether the item is repairable, but whether the customer is going to decide in the end to proceed with the repair, given the possible costs, etc, involved. The shoetender in each case can be seen to attend to this contingency by offering their expert opinion on what the repair will entail (*looks like you need new soles….and heels*) or the 'worthwhileness' of the repair (*it's worth it*). Thus while this subtype of *wonder* request does orient to contingencies in granting the request, it seems to orient to a different set of contingencies than do the other subtypes of *wonder* requests. We thus find evidence that a more nuanced sense of 'contingency' might be appropriate for our data. Of course, our analysis is based on a small collection, so more conclusive results await additional data.

We turn now to an examination of our last subtype of *wonder* request.

3.2.1.3 Paratactic

In addition to the two hypotactic *wonder* forms, *wonder if* and *wonder about*, *wonder* requests can also be used as a preface to a non-embedded clause, creating a paratactic formulation. These paratactic

constructions seem to pattern in interesting ways when compared to most of the hypotactic constructions seen above; these hybrids seem to orient less to an orientation to the grantability of the request and more to their 'misplaced' position in the interaction; that is, while they are produced after extended talk, they are designed to display that they are not directly responsive to that extended talk but rather present the 'reason for the visit' (see also the *wonder if I can* requests). Thus, though they are not initial requests—they come after some other extended talk—they are nevertheless all done in the past progressive, a feature we typically don't see for non-initial *wonder if* requests (cf. section 3.2 above).

In our small collection of paratactic *wonder* requests, each has a different interrogative type following *wonder*. Consider first an instance with a *can* interrogative:

(16) Shoe Shop 11-22-2014

```
01  CUS:    ⊃so I⊃ brought these in here
    cus     ⊃takes a final step to counter, boots held up,
            puts boots on counter⊃tilts boots, toes pointing up
02          la:st year,⊃ and got ⊃the:se ∇>soles
    cus             ⊃moves right hand to left boot⊃runs
                    thumb over sole at toe-->
    sho                                 ∇grabs right boot-->
03          put⊃ on them,<∇
    cus     -->⊃lets left boot slide to lean on stomach,
                 reaches for right boot-->
    sho             -->∇
04  SHO:    ∇↑okay,⊃[(and they're coming ↑off,)
05  CUS:            [and this guy, when I wore
    sho     ∇lifts boot, toes pointing up
    cus         -->⊃puts left hand on sole, right hand on
                  top of boot, separates sole from top-->
06          them this season, just [*totally ⊃came off.*
07  SHO:                           [>↑okay<
    cus                                -->⊃lets go of boot
08  CUS:    .hhh
09          ∇(0.6)
    sho     ∇moves right hand to boot, inspects>>
10  CUS:    [u:hm
11  SHO:    [(      good,) let's reattach it,
12          (0.5)
13  CUS:    >so-< (.) >well I was wondering ⊃actually,< can
    cus                                     ⊃moves left hand to
              other boot, lifts at toe, turns sole upwards-->
14          I:- get a different tread ⊃put on here,⊃
    cus                             -->⊃taps sole⊃
15          (0.9)
16  SHO:    definitely.
```

In this example, the customer has brought in a boot which the shop had repaired last season, and which is now beginning to come apart (the sole is separating from the bottom of the shoe). The request and its background can thus be heard as a complaint about the work the shop had done previously. The shoetender offers the obvious solution, which is to reattach the same soles (line 11). Rather than accepting this solution, however, the customer begins a *wonder* request that is formulated with a variety of markers of the dispreferred, including silence and *well*; in addition, *actually* constructs the request as in contrast to what the shoetender had suggested (Clift 2001). It is noteworthy that the *wonder* request is in the past progressive; the customer can thus be heard to resist the implication that her request is interactionally generated. This is further indicated by her initiating her request with *so*, thus indicating that what is to come is the main reason or warrant for the interaction (e.g., Bolden 2009, cf. Extract (6), above where *so* is used to initiate an initial request and the subsequent *wonder if* request is in the present progressive to index that it was interactionally generated). Also in contrast to our other *wonder* requests we note that what comes after the *wonder* clause is not an embedded request, but an interrogative *can I get +resultative*

clause. As noted earlier, *can I* requests typically invoke no—or very low—contingencies compared to *wonder* requests; and we propose that in the case of paratactic *wonder* requests the two clauses and their interactional relevancies are in fact separated: the *wonder* clause (in the past progressive) is employed to indicate that the request should be treated as an initial, preplanned request, despite its position, whereas the paratactic interrogative that follows is formulated as it would have been had the customer produced the request in initial position. In Extract (16) above, it seems quite evident that the customer needs to describe the background about her boots before she can make her request to have new tread put on; only with this background can her request be understood as complaint-implicative. The *can I* interrogative that follows the *wonder* clause is perfectly fitted to these considerations. As noted above, *can I* requests are used to display that there are no contingencies preventing the request from being granted; and as we see from the way the shoetender responds, with an emphatic *definitely*[10] (line 16), this is indeed the case.

In the next example we see a similar pattern: Before producing her actual request the customer provides some background information. The subsequent *wonder* request is produced in the past progressive to indicate that the customer had done her 'wondering' even before coming to the shop, and the paratactic clause that follows *wonder* is perfectly designed to address the contingencies of the request. In this case, the paratactic clause is a 'be-interrogative' (Fox & Heinemann 2016) *↑is there any ↓possibility do you think to polish tha- (.) the shoes to a different color?:*

(17) Shoe Shop 11-15-2014

```
14  CUS:   =⊃I called this morning, .hh=
    cus     ⊃reaching into bag, brings shoes out
15  SHO:   =kay=
16  CUS:   =u:m, hhh ∇⊃so I tried tuh::[:,
17  SHO:                               [uh-oh
    cus              ⊃places shoes on counter
    sho              ∇lowers head to look more closely
18          (0.2)
19  CUS:   yes[:
20  SHO:      [what is ∇it,
    sho         ∇reaches for shoe, picks it up
21          (0.6)
22  CUS:   so::- (0.2) u- hhh the ∇directions on this shoe
    sho                          ∇gazes down at shoe
23  CUS:   conditioning stuff from dansko::? (.) which (0.2)
24          apparently shouldn't be used on these shoes, (0.4)
25          u::m, <∇said to use heat^h>, (0.4) with (0.4) like
    sho          ∇shifts gaze to CUS
26  CUS:   blow dry my *shoe::.* and then ⊃ (0.5) .hh apply
    cus                                  ⊃picks up other shoe
27          the conditioning stuff? (0.7) an:d then, I was >doing
28          it really fast,< and (m)I  ⊃like put it on,
    cus                               ⊃rubs top of shoe
29          and I was like oh shoot,I was supposed to add
30          heat. ⊃so I like p- (0.4) added the *heat and
    cus           ⊃brings fist close to shoe
```

10 The astute reader will have noticed that the three instances of emphatically-aligning response tokens we have given (two instances of *of course*, and here we see *definitely*) are produced after embedded *can I* requests. On the one hand, this is probably not a coincidence: *can I* requests orient to very low contingency in granting the request in that they ask about something it seems it is the other's obligation to do, and the shoetenders acknowledge this in their responses. On the other hand, however, we note that *of course* is also produced in response to other request forms in our collection, such as *can you* interrogatives. It thus appears that *of course* can be used in response to any self-evidently (to the current speaker) grantable question-formatted request.

```
31          ⊃that's⊃ ∇what happened.*
    cus     ⊃points at shoe SHO is holding, retracts point⊃
    sho             ∇looks down at shoe
32          (.)
33  CUS:    ⊃.hhh (.) ⊃↑so I was wondering:, ↑is there any
    cus     ⊃puts shoe down on counter
    cus             ⊃folds arms across chest
34  CUS:    ↓possibility do you think to polish tha-
35          (.)∇the shoes to a different color?
    sho       ∇lateral head shake
36          (0.3)
37  SHO:    we ∇can dye 'em,
    sho       ∇lifts gaze to CUS
38          (0.3)
39  CUS:    you can dye them?
```

Before the customer can account for the reason for her visit, and after the shoes become visible, the shoetender produces a response cry that indicates trouble (*uh-oh,* line 17, see Keisanen 2012), and then an inquiry seeking an account (lines 20). The customer provides an extended account of how the damage to the shoe occurred, and then comes to the solution that she proposes exploring—polish the shoes to a different color (presumably to hide the damage). She treats the problem as non-routine with her long account (which includes her own culpability). The potential lack of a solution to her problem, as well as the possibility that there may be something integral to the shoes (or to the damage she has inflicted on them) that makes them unfixable, is perfectly oriented to through her use of *is there any possibility* in lines 33-35 (see also Extracts (4) and (13)). Again, we propose that the *wonder* clause that prefaces this interrogative is not produced in orientation to any potential problems with granting the request (as these are dealt with by the interrogative itself), but rather to mark the request as not having emerged in the here and now and in response to the shoetender's account solicitation (*what is it*). Instead this is treated as a request that was planned beforehand and as the reason for the visit. Further evidence for this analysis can be seen not just in the use of turn-initial *so* (cf. Extract (16) above), but also by the prosodic production of the request as a whole: the *wonder* preface has a slight fall/drop in pitch (from 477 hz to 449 hz) at the end, and at the beginning of the interrogative component (*is there)* there is a steep increase (to 506 hz). This increase in pitch may in itself mark the request as the reason for the visit (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 2001), but it also serves to treat the *wonder* preface as distinct from the interrogative. This prosodic separation is also reminiscent of how speakers separate reported speech from other parts of their ongoing talk (e.g., Bolden 2004; Klewitz & Couper-Kuhlen 1999); the customer in Extract (17) can thus also be heard to be 'reporting' what she has been wondering about before entering the shop.

We see a similar pattern in our final paratactic *wonder* request, though here the interrogative that follows *wonder* is an inquiry about product availability, *↑do you have red shoe polish?* (which is heard by the shoetender as being a request for repair):

(18) Shoe Shop 10-13-2013

```
01  SHO:    ∇who was next.∇
    sho:    ∇moves left along counter∇
02          (0.6)
03  CUS:    I think we were.
04  SHO:    ⊃∇okay.
    cus     ⊃approaches counter, boots held up-->
    sho      ∇moves further left, grabs a receipt-->
05          (0.2)
06  CUS:    ΛI just ∇need some new:⊃
    cus                          -->⊃
    sho           -->∇
    sho     Λlooks at boots-->
```

```
07              (0.1)Λ
      sho         -->Λ
08    SHO:      Λyeah you do:,
      sho       Λlooks down-->
09              ⊃(0.4)Λ
      cus       ⊃lowers boots to counter-->
      sho          -->Λ
10    CUS:      Λ>and ⊃also I was wondering,< ⊃↑do ⊃you
      cus          -->⊃moves right hand to shoes in left
                        hand⊃takes hold of right shoe⊃separates
                        left and right shoe, one in each hand-->
      sho       Λlooks to shoes-->
11              have red shoe polish?⊃
      cus                         -->⊃
12              ⊃(2.4)⊃
      cus       ⊃brings shoes together and places on counter⊃
13    SHO:      I do:.Λthank you, ⊃Λ u:hm (1.1) I
      sho          -->Λlooks right and waves to other CUS
                              Λlooks to shoes-->
      cus                     ⊃lifts shoes, rotates them-->
14              think it should cove:r (0.0) most of it, .hhh
15              ∇(0.4)∇
      sho       ∇stretches hand towards shoes-->
16    CUS:         ∇>but< can I buy it? ∇
      sho       -->∇retracts hand, resting both hands, on counter∇
17    SHO:      yeah.⊃
      cus         -->⊃
18    CUS:         Λ⊃yeah.
      sho       -->Λlooks down>>
      cus          ⊃places shoes on counter>>
```

Here, the customer makes a request for new heels by presenting her boots to the shoetender and producing the first part of a *need* request (see Fox & Heinemann 2016). After this initial request sequence comes to a close, the customer puts down the boots and picks up a second pair of shoes she has on the counter, a pair of red pumps. She manipulates them so that the soles are visible, and then flips them back over, as she produces her second request (*and also I was wondering do you have red shoe polish*). The *I was wondering* component serves as a preface to the second request and introduces the request as having motivated the visit (at least for this pair of shoes), through the past progressive tense-aspect on *wonder*. Here, this is further indicated by the *and*-preface, which marks the request as "agenda-based" rather than "contingent" or "ad hoc" (Heritage & Sorjonen 1994: 7). And as in Extract (17), we see that the interrogative component, *do you have red shoe polish*, is prosodically set off from the preface. *I was wondering* starts at 258 hz and drops to 227 hz; the first word in the interrogative, *do*, jumps to 413 hz. We suggest that the prosodic practices here work as they do in Extract (17) above, to both separate the preface from the interrogative and mark the interrogative as a/the reason for the visit.

Our three instances of paratactic *wonder*+interrogative hybrids illustrate the remarkable fittedness of their form to their function. The two components of the request—the *I was wondering* preface and the interrogative—each orients to a different facet of the action. *I was wondering* situates the request as being the reason for the visit and thus as not emerging locally from the details of the interaction, in spite of coming in non-initial slot; the interrogative component produces the request proper and indexes the relevant contingencies.

Because the request is non-initial, both participants are in an appropriate F-formation, so the *wonder* component of the request is not doing the spatio-temporal work we have seen in our initial-slot *wonder* requests. This fact, together with the fact that *I was wondering* does not do the work of orienting to potential problems with the grantability of the request in these excerpts, raises substantial theoretical issues for studies of action formation. That is, the fact that the *wonder* component orients to neither uncertainty about the grantability of the request nor to the spatio-temporal alignment of the participants poses problems for

a view of action formation which posits a single basic function for each (request) format. We return to this issue in Section 5 below.

3.3 Summary of *wonder* requests

In this section we have seen that variation in the forms of *wonder* requests is associated with differences in environments of use. Table 2 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 2. Types of *wonder* requests

Wonder + x	Environment of use
wonder if you can/could	Orientation to the possibility that the shoetender might not be able to perform desired repair
wonder if I could	spatio-temporal alignment: shoetender is not yet at counter
wonder if there's any	something integral to the item could make the requested repair impossible or problematic
wonder about	customer might not proceed with repair
wonder + paratactic	request is produced after extended talk but is done as the reason for the visit

We move now to a discussion of our results and to our conclusions.

4 Results

Through an examination of the details of two request formats we hope to have provided evidence that the *x* component of these formats contributes in significant ways to the interactional work accomplished by the request, and thus that the *x* component of requests is a fruitful area of study for action formation.

Specifically, our examination has revealed that for *can you* interrogatives, or *can you* requests, the customer's 'referential choice' of the direct object of the main verb, together with the type of verb, shapes the interactional work of the request in the following ways: (i) indefinite noun phrases that refer to the desired solution (e.g., *can you just run **a circular seam** around it*), when used with a fairly specific verb, introduce a specific request that is relatively low in contingency and which is correspondingly simply granted by the shoetender, for instance with *okay*; (ii) deictic elements that index the item to be repaired (e.g., *can you fix **this***), with a relatively nonspecific verb, are used to construct requests that express more uncertainty about the procedures and practices of the shoetender and are correspondingly followed by further specification or clarification of the requested repair; and (iii) indefinite pronouns that index a non-specific solution (e.g., *can you do **anything***), together with the completely nonspecific verb *do*, are used to construct a request that orients to even higher contingencies, most notably the possibility that the item is not repairable at all. This last type of *can you* interrogative request is typically responded to by the shoetender offering a candidate solution to the problem for which the customer is seeking help.

For *wonder* requests we similarly found that variations within the *x* component play a role in determining the relative levels and kinds of contingencies that are invoked through the request and that consequently shape the trajectory of the requesting sequence as a whole. We found, firstly, that the *x* component could be divided into three main types: *wonder **if***, *wonder **about***, and paratactic *wonder*+**interrogative** hybrids. Within *wonder if* requests, we identified three important subtypes, each with its own pattern of use in terms of 'referential choice': with *I* as the subject of *can/could* (e.g., *I wonder if **I could***), *you* as subject of *can/could* (e.g., *I wonder if **you could***) and the more solution-oriented *I wonder if **there's anything/ it's possible***. In partial contrast to previous research, we found that only some *wonder* requests invoke or orient to more contingencies than, for instance, *can* interrogative requests. Moreover, we found that for some *wonder* requests that do invoke contingencies, each subtype of the request form is used for invoking different kinds of contingencies. First, we found that when the *x* component of *wonder if* requests is *if you can*, it serves to raise the possibility that the requested repair may lie outside the shoetender's capability.

This type of *wonder if* request is responded to by the shoetender detailing exactly how the shop may or may not be able to do the repair. By contrast, the more solution-oriented *wonder if* requests focus on the nature of the item that has been brought in for repair, raising the possibility that there may be something integral to that item that precludes the requested repair from being grantable. This latter type of *wonder if* request is correspondingly dealt with by the shoetenders in ways that orient to the nature of the item, e.g., whether scratches on patent leather shoes can be easily fixed or whether the odor of a shoe with non-removable insoles can be improved.

For the remaining types of *wonder* requests, we found that the notion of contingency (and entitlement) play a much smaller role; rather, other interactional relevancies appear to be at work in these cases. While all initial *wonder* requests are produced before both participants have arrived into a stable F-formation, we found that for *wonder if* requests in which the embedded component is a *can I* interrogative, the motivation for producing a *wonder if* request seems to reside in the spatio-temporal organization of the encounter, specifically the fact that the shoetender is not demonstrably ready to engage in visual inspection of the item brought in for repair at the point at which the request is initiated. With this type of *wonder if* request, we were not able to find evidence of the customers orienting to contingencies preventing their request from being granted; moreover, we noted that the requested repair is always routine, and the shoetenders correspondingly confirm the self-evident nature of the request with *of course*. Given the remarkable pattern observed that in all three examples the shoetender is not yet at the counter when the request is initiated, we propose that it could be this commonality that motivates the use of the *wonder* form. It is thus possible that while *wonder* is typically used to manage what Mandelbaum & Pomerantz (1991) refer to as the 'primary concern' of the customer, which is to request help, it may also be used to manage 'prerequisite concerns,' such as arriving together at the counter and being mutually available to the task at hand.

We also found differences of interactional relevance between *wonder if* and *wonder about* requests. Specifically, we found that while *wonder if* requests can be presented either as initial requests that constitute the reason for the customer coming to the shop, or as requests that have emerged interactionally, *wonder about* requests construct the request as one that might not be pursued. This difference is partially engendered by the consistent use of the present progressive tense-aspect (*am wondering*) in *wonder about* requests, but also by the syntactic constraints of *wonder about* taking agentless clauses. As a consequence of this, the contingency that is invoked by *wonder about* requests does not (at least primarily) concern whether the customer has the right to make the request, whether the item they have brought in is repairable, or whether the shoetender is able to perform the requested repair; instead, what is being presented is the customer's ongoing 'wondering about' having the item repaired or not. The shoetenders respond by explicating that the repair is, for instance, worthwhile.

Similarly, we found that our third main type of *wonder* request, which we refer to as a paratactic *wonder*+interrogative hybrid, distinguishes itself from the *wonder if* and *wonder about* formats in terms of both form and function. Paratactic *wonder* requests were shown to be used to introduce requests that are not initial but are nevertheless designed and presented as constituting the reason for the customer visiting the shop. In terms of form, these requests are well fitted to their unique use. First, we found that the seemingly contradictory features of being non-initial yet the reason for the visit were accomplished at least partially through the consistent use of a particular tense-aspect, here the past progressive (*was wondering*). In addition, the syntactic and prosodic separation of the *wonder* preface and the interrogative component of this construction means that the preface is akin to a quotative marker, while the interrogative is similar to direct reported speech (or wondering), so that the customer comes across as reporting an already decided-upon request to the shoetender in the here and now. In these cases, then, the *wonder* preface seems to be produced, not in order to address any contingencies of possibility, ability or entitlement, but instead in orientation to the temporal and sequential development of the request-sequence, i.e., specifically to signal that the request which is then accomplished through an interrogative, was preplanned and constituted the reason for the customer visiting the shop.

5 Discussion

Our exploration of *can you* interrogative and *wonder* requests has illustrated that the study of action formation may benefit from a more detailed examination of the *x* component, which has not been a focus in previous studies of requests. At a minimum, we hope to have demonstrated that action formation is a highly complex process, involving multiple layers of organization through each phrase of the utterance—the main verb, the subject, the direct and prepositional objects, the complementizer, as well as the subject and the verb of the embedded clause. Crucially, all of this possible variation appears to be employed by participants in interaction for specific interactional reasons and has consequences for the trajectory of the interaction.

The question that follows from this—which we pose, rather than answer conclusively—is the relative importance of the details we have revealed in comparison to 'higher-level' accounts that compare more general morpho-syntactic variations in requests, i.e., variations between, for instance, imperatives, modal interrogatives, declaratives of various sorts (e.g., *I need x* vs *I wonder if x*) and so forth. It seems quite evident to us that the 'core meanings' (Rossi 2015a: 81) that previous studies on requests have established with respect to this higher level morpho-syntactic variation are valid. Both our *can you* interrogatives and *wonder if you can/could* requests clearly share many of the same features that have been described in previous studies, in terms of, for instance, the situations each form is used in to make a request and the degree of contingencies that each form may be used to invoke.

But while we acknowledge the importance of 'higher-level' morpho-syntactic variation for the study of action formation, we are not entirely convinced that the variations within the *x* component that we have explored only serve to provide a more granular and detailed differentiation between request-types. On the one hand, some of our results do point in this direction: The variation that we have found in the *x* component of *can you* interrogatives for instance seems 'merely' to function as a device for lowering or heightening the strength of those contingencies that the use of a *can* interrogative already invokes. Similarly, the differences between *can you* interrogatives and the more 'solution-oriented' *if there's anything x* component that can follow *wonder if* requests appear to be primarily to do with specifying the kind of contingency that is being invoked by the *wonder if* form. On the other hand, the other three variations we have found with respect to the *x* component of *wonder* requests cannot as easily be dismissed as serving only to fine-tune the contingencies invoked by using a *wonder* request.

For example, we believe it would misrepresent the data to claim that *wonder about* requests, *wonder if I can* requests and *wonder*+interrogative hybrids are concerned exclusively with the possibility that there might be factors that could prevent the request from being granted, i.e., as requests of high contingency. In the case of *wonder if I can* requests, one could perhaps argue that the shoetender's lack of visual access to the item (i.e., the shoetender's absence from the counter at the point when the request is initiated) is a contingency that could affect the outcome of the request. Such an argument would, however both dilute the notion of contingency and at the same time give a somewhat unsatisfactory account of the participants' obvious orientation to the spatio-temporal organization of their encounter. In the case of *wonder about* requests, we could similarly suggest that the customer's expressed 'wondering' about the worthwhileness of the requested repair is a contingency, insofar as it raises the possibility of a negative outcome. But in these cases it is not so much that the customer's request may not be granted due to contingencies, but rather that the customer may eventually retract the request entirely. Finally, for paratactic *wonder*+interrogative hybrids, any contingencies that may in fact need to be addressed in the request are dealt with through the second, interrogative, part of the hybrid, leaving the *wonder* preface free to establish that the request was the reason for the visit to the shop, despite the sequential position in which the request has emerged.

An alternative account that could be offered is that our *wonder about*, *wonder if I can*, and paratactic *wonder* cases have multiple functions; that is, they orient to high contingency as well as to other issues such as spatio-temporal alignment. While this certainly seems to be the case for some of our *wonder if you can* examples (see Extract (8), for example), we find it less compelling for our three other subtypes. In these three subtypes, as just discussed, we see no evidence that the requested action is oriented to as being of high contingency. For example, in our instances of *wonder if I can*, we find routine repairs being requested (stretching, new heels, dropping shoes off), and shoetenders responding to them as unproblematically

grantable (except in Extract (12) which gets no response). And in the case of our paratactic *wonder* requests, there could be contingencies involved in granting the request, but these are oriented to in the interrogative component of the utterance and do not have to be ascribed to the *wonder* preface. We thus find no motivation for positing 'high contingency' as the function of these *wonder* components.

Another possible account for our findings could be that there are primary and secondary uses of *wonder* requests. In his study of Italian requests, Rossi (2015a), for example, suggests that while the different request forms have primary uses arising from a 'core meaning', each form may also have 'secondary uses'. In Rossi & Zinken (2016) this relationship is further clarified: core meanings are linguistic in nature with speech act potential; they represent the values within a linguistic system of contrast. Primary uses "support or actualize" their core meanings:

> From a compositional point of view, then, grammar is a first layer of action with a certain "illocutionary potential" (Alston 1994; Sadock 2006: 62, 71), which is actualized in combination with other semiotic layers. (Rossi & Zinken (2016: e25)

In our case, we could thus suggest that the 'core meaning' of *wonder* requests is to display lack of knowledge or uncertainty. The primary use that supports this core meaning could then be those situations where customers are bringing in items that they have already identified as potentially 'irreparable'. We could then propose that *wonder* requests may also have 'secondary uses' that deal with spatio-temporal and positional matters. Such an account, however, seems to stretch what Rossi means by secondary use. In his study, secondary uses vary "in one of the two dimensions that constitute *primary* environments" (Rossi & Zinken 2016: 106, emphasis in the original). Our three subtypes of *wonder* requests, by contrast, fail to conform to the single dimension established for *wonder* requests, namely uncertainty with regard to fulfilling the request. In addition, it would not be clear how spatio-temporal or positional issues would support or actualize the core meaning of lack of knowledge or uncertainty.

We could try to bolster this account by suggesting that *wonder* requests have two dimensions as part of their core meaning and thus primary use: 1) uncertainty and 2) spatio-temporal non-alignment of the participants. Primary uses would have both dimensions and secondary uses would have one or the other. Thus *wonder if I can* requests could be secondary uses, in that they exhibit spatio-temporal non-alignment but not uncertainty. And non-initial *wonder if you can* requests would exhibit uncertainty but not spatio-temporal non-alignment of the participants. This analysis thus seems to capture quite a bit of the variation in our collection. Nonetheless, it seems not to work for our paratactic cases, since those exhibit neither uncertainty nor spatio-temporal non-alignment.

Whichever way we try to make this type of analysis work, we are left with cases which do not seem to conform. We are thus left wondering whether there is a single form-function relationship within *wonder* requests at the shoe shop. It may be that the use of a *wonder* request depends crucially on the details of the *x* component, and on details of the sequential environment of use. This suggestion falls in line with other recent work on action formation. In a study of imperatives in Danish, for instance, Heinemann & Steensig (in press) conclude that "a default understanding of a structure or a form cannot be used as a point of departure" for analysis because it risks "losing insight into the actual interactional functions of action formats, on the level of granularity that is relevant to each function". Zinken's (2015) study on polar interrogatives, cited earlier, represents a move in a similar theoretical direction. We may thus be seeing a trend in the field towards more granular approaches to action formation (see also Thompson et al 2015).

We may here be seeing two possible types of analysis of variation in action formation. In the first type of analysis, fairly abstract linguistic forms are assigned invariant meanings, in contrast with other fairly abstract linguistic forms, and more contextually-derived forms and meanings arising through laminations of other 'semiotic resources' (Goodwin 2000; Rossi 2015a). The second type of analysis starts with much more granular details, which are perhaps made up of multiple practices converging and emerging into a single utterance through the exigencies of the moment of interaction (Hopper 1987; Fox & Heinemann 2016). These two types of analysis are reminiscent of two approaches in discourse-functional syntax and other usage-based approaches to form-function relationships: in one approach, a form has a single (abstract) function, and variations of function are said to arise in different kinds of context; in the second approach, a single

form may have multiple functions with no single overarching function (e.g., Kirsner 1993; Bybee 2010). Our study presents some evidence that could be understood as supporting the latter kind of approach to form-function relationships in interaction.[11]

We close this exploratory study with the hope that we have at least opened the door to a world of variation and its implications for action. Clearly more research is required to understand the full range of variation that is relevant to action formation (we ourselves have not exhausted the possibility for meaningful variation even in our two request types; almost certainly the specific verbs chosen in both types, as well as the embedded objects of *wonder* requests, warrant further exploration). The precise relationships that may exist between form and function in the formation of actions is clearly a topic of great interest within interactional approaches to language and deserves further study.

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11 One of our reviewers asked what implications our findings might have for real-time production of requests. For example, do speakers start the 'planning' process with the deictic element *this* and a gesture towards the object, and then add, for example, *I was wondering* as they are approaching the counter, and then *if you could*, etc? This is a fascinating question, which is beyond the scope of the current study. Further research could provide insight.

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