

Using Entitled Requests to Pursue Closeness in Conversations Between Young Adult Romantic Couples

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Abstract: I utilized a discourse analytic approach to examine how young adult couples pursue closeness by negotiating entitled requests in their everyday interactions. Although freely expressing entitled requests may at times be treated as relationally off-putting, I suggest that they may be a method that romantic partners use to enact closeness or intimacy, albeit counterintuitively, by pursuing controversy. I draw on data to reveal how entitled requests are often formulated to do a lot more than simply ask for things. They are used to engage in relational coaching, offer object lessons, and reciprocal tit-for-tats, but are typically created in light-hearted ways that involve humor, exaggeration, and sarcasm. I show that the interactive contexts for making and receiving entitled requests can be a valuable space for observing how relational expectations are negotiated to index accountability, relational identities, and the cultural communicative norms which govern romantic relationships among young adults.

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1. Introduction

Within close relationships, making requests may function to either pursue or stymie closeness or intimacy. Although requests may seem like ways to pursue closeness by asking the other to meet one's needs, they may stymie closeness when they are built or delivered in ways that come off as entitled. An entitled request reveals the extent to which one partner displays that both have the right to impinge upon the other to have their needs met, which may trigger a cascade of relational repercussions. The recipient's response may show the extent to which they work to meet their partner's needs or the obligation to do so (e.g., politeness demands), and the subsequent responses to either the fulfillment or declination of entitled requests can both display appreciation and disappointment. Responses can also enact a range of other social actions (MANDELBAUM, 2014) that underscore relational idiosyncrasies between the partners. In short, the entire discursive context around the making and receiving of entitled requests between

intimates is potentially a subtle but promising window into the orchestration of closeness between couples. [1]

I begin with a literature review of entitled requests as germane to my study (Section 2). Then I conceptualize entitled requests as a discursive method for pursuing intimacy between intimates (Section 3). This will be followed by an overview of the discourse analytic methodology utilized (Section 4), and a discussion of the participants and data collection process (Section 5). My analysis of the data will detail how romantic partners formulate entitled requests to pursue closeness (Section 6), leading to a discussion (Section 7). [2]

2. Entitled Requests

I broadly utilized a discourse analytic approach (EDWARDS & POTTER, 1992; POTTER, 1996) to examine how young adult couples pursue affiliation by formulating and receiving requests that display entitlement in their natural everyday interactions. The literature on requesting in social interaction is dense and wide in scope (for an invaluable compendium, see BLUM-KULKA, 2008; DREW & COUPER-KUHLEN, 2014; ERVIN-TRIPP, 1976; GOODWIN, 2000; LEE, 2011; LEVINSON, 1983; SCHEGLOFF, 2007; STERPONI, 2009; WOOTTON, 1981). The general focus of some of this research is on the linguistic structure (lexico-syntactic forms) of requests and how various structures index (or breach) norms of politeness (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987). Focusing on the formulation and reception of "entitled" requests, e.g., the requester's expectations that the recipient is obligated and/or willing to fulfill their request, is one such structure that has received a range of attention. [3]

In contrast, CURL and DREW (2008), and other conversation analysts, have noted that entitled requests have less to do with the speech setting and more to do with the speakers' orientations to known or anticipated contingencies surrounding the request. An entitled request displays speakers' understanding of these contingencies as well as the recipients' ability, desire, or willingness to grant the request. And although entitled requests may occur across a range of interactions, the role-relationships between the speakers and the relative deference associated with those relationships may be associated with the use of entitled requests (ibid.). Romantic relationships among young adults may be one such role-relational setting where entitled requests may be common, though this depends on a range of other factors, like cultural norms governing interactional practices between young adult intimates. [4]

More broadly with respect to role-relationships, LINDSTROM (2005) found that the formulation of imperative-like constructions to enact requests signaled entitlement between senior citizens and home-health providers. Among a similar population, HEINEMANN (2006) discovered that the negotiation of negative interrogatives ("Will you or can't you?") often convey entitlement. CRAVEN and POTTER (2010) argued that parental directives in the form of imperative constructions during family mealtime talk often construed the speaker as highly entitled. CURL and DREW (2008) have shown how requests sometimes display

entitlement when they embed a description of benefits to the recipients should they comply, and again that *contingency* is a dimension related to entitlement, i.e., the extent to which speakers display awareness of factors that affect the grantability of a request. WOOTTON (1981) and ZINKEN and OGIERMANN (2013) have similarly shown how various modal constructions enact entitlement and how they are sensitive to the various contingencies involved in fulfilling requests. [5]

In my study, I examined the discursive contexts for making and receiving entitled requests between romantic partners, which is an underexplored area within discursive research. Although requests are typically treated as dispreferred and imposing actions in institutional or formal contexts (LEVINSON, 1983; SCHEGLOFF, 2007), in more informal and familiar interactive contexts, such as romantic partnerships, there is the potential for requests to be more common or expected and thus less often mitigated. Between family members and friends, researchers have demonstrated that requests are often entitled (MANDELBAUM, 2014) because in these relationships, speakers may have more normalized sets of expectations for what they believe they can ask, as well as the perception that there are not contingencies that would prevent their interlocutors from granting their requests (CURL & DREW, 2008). The same *may* hold true for romantic partners, though the research on this is lacking. [6]

Although freely expressing highly entitled requests may on the surface seem rude, they may be one way that romantic partners attempt to affiliate or enact closeness (see also BLUM-KULKA, 1997; GOODWIN, 2006). MANDELBAUM (2014) has shown how in the formulation, fulfillment, and acknowledgment of requests, family members at mealtimes do more than just make or respond to requests. When requests are built with entitlement, they can also irritate, demand, critique, or micromanage, which may index a couple's relationship issues. MANDELBAUM revealed how requests between family members can enact social actions like impatience, attentiveness, critiques, or teach object lessons regarding norms of proper conduct, and so on. I borrow this idea and suggest that this, more than notion, may reveal uniquely fine-tuned relational bids. The interactive context for making and receiving entitled requests is a ripe space to see how couples manage the nitty-gritty of relational expectations. When intimates make or respond to entitled requests, they are doing more than just asking for or getting/not getting what they need; they are also communicating how relationality is to be constructed. [7]

Entitled requests are thus methods for managing relational accountability. They are employed as part of a rhetorical process of delicately positioning both one's needs and desires as well as one's rights to make such requests. Romantic partners may have normalized sets of expectations for what they believe they can ask, perhaps as part of one's own sense of who one is as a romantic partner in a relationship with implicit rights. More delicate entitled request formats assume entitlement and may thus be part of identity work for young romantic couples. It is a way of practicing sovereignty. It is also possible that the entitled request format

is somewhat culturally normative; it may reflect a culture communicative press that avoids ostensibly polite or formal methods of address. [8]

3. Entitled Requests as Counterintuitive Pursuits of Intimacy

I draw from research on cooperation and affiliation between friends and relational partners (DREW & WALKER, 2009; HERITAGE, 1985; TRAVERSO, 2009), as well as the ways subjectivity, stance, and positioning are managed (EDWARDS, 2007; STIVERS, 2008). MANDELBAUM (2003) and POMERANTZ and MANDELBAUM (2005), for instance, have detailed the methods whereby partners in close relationships repair problematic or relationally disconnecting dynamics to both manage the subject-side of self-presentation (EDWARDS, 2005, 2007) and maintain relational affiliation, which has the effect of smoothing out the interaction and keeping partners aligned. [9]

In drawing on SACKS's (1974) and JEFFERSON's (1978) work on how storytellers make relevant the taking of a stance by the recipient, STIVERS (2008) found that there is a preference for recipients to affiliate not simply with the content but also (and importantly for my current study) with the stance of the teller towards what is said. In short, in response to a variety of discursive actions (i.e., requests, accounts), it is likely that sociorelational demands will outweigh informational demands (ibid.). Speakers may work to affirm similar stances and seek alignment. In the context of making requests between romantic partners, making requests may be formulated in ways that increase the probability of speaker closeness, even if those methods may at first glance seem counterintuitive. [10]

For example, because entitled requests can come off as bossy or irritating, especially when the recipient does not perceive the one requesting to be entitled, it would be counterintuitive to expect that entitled requests would be successful methods for pursuing intimacy. Romantic partners who are pursuing closeness would potentially avoid them because they are annoying or adversarial. But researchers have shown that spontaneous displays of closeness between romantic couples do not always present in conventionally expected ways (KOROBOV, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2022; PICHLER, 2017). I have shown that young adult couples sometimes achieve affiliation after ostensibly contentious or adversarial moments of play fighting, argument, or conflict (KOROBOV, 2011a, 2011b, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2022). PICHLER (2017) has similarly detailed the indirect, playful, and idiosyncratic ways that couples pursue affection, which include the switching of frames, voices, codes, non-verbal cues, and personas, as well as the use of ritualized insult sequences and the playful occasioning of gender roles. The central (counterintuitive but consistent) finding across these studies is that ostensibly contentious forms of social interaction are often helpful for pursuing connection. [11]

This finding is not without precedent. It connects with researchers who have argued that contentious banter does not always pose the kind of face-threats for young adult intimates in the ways that would be traditionally expected according

to politeness theory (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987). Instead, social events like disagreements and arguments, or in this case the negotiation of entitled requests, may be expected, routine, and even playful or sociable, and by extension, young adult romantic relationships may be increasingly characterized by a kind of openness and candidness that may result from the friction created by casually arguing, directly or indirectly telling each other off, or speaking one's mind (see GEORGAKOPOULOU, 2001; KOROBV & LAPLANTE, 2013). There is reason to think that "contentious banter displays and nurtures, rather than threatens, their closeness" (STRAEHLE, 1993, p.227). In short, young adult intimates in contemporary western cultures may pursue potentially adversarial forms of social interaction, such as entitled requests, as a means of exploring compatibility and creating closeness. [12]

I conceptualize the contexts for making and receiving entitled requests as an apropos setting where a broader discursive set of methods for pursuing controversy is relevant (HUTCHBY, 1996; JEFFERSON, SACKS & SCHEGLOFF, 1987). In everyday relationships, speakers routinely monitor each other's talk for potential affiliatives and arguables and, when pursued, can be said to be doing relationship by pursuing controversy (HUTCHBY, 1996; JEFFERSON et al., 1987). Pursuing controversy is seen as a practical achieved activity that is demonstrable, which involves speakers failing, at least initially, to coordinate stance or position around a delicate activity (STIVERS, 2008). The key idea, however, is that pursuits of controversy do not always result in adversarial disaffiliation. Apropos the current inquiry, pursuits of controversy vis-à-vis entitled requests may be used by partners to test compatibility and connection as part of the process of pursuing intimacy. Among intimates, pursuing controversy by using entitled requests may be relationally constructive, as they allow speakers to explore and negotiate contentious topics as well as cultural understandings about what being a romantic partner or being in a romantic partnership means to them (MANDELBAUM, 2003; POMERANTZ & MANDELBAUM, 2005; STOKOE, 2004, 2006; WILKINSON & KITZINGER, 2008). [13]

4. A Discursive Approach

The discursive approach that I utilize is an outgrowth of several strands of research, namely work in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (e.g., ECKERT, 2021; GARFINKEL, 1967; HERITAGE, 1984; SACKS, 1992; SCHEGLOFF, 1997), discursive psychology (e.g., BILLIG, 1987; EDWARDS & POTTER, 1992; POTTER, 1996), the theoretical work on relationality found in social constructionism (e.g., GERGEN, 1994), and specific work in applied CA (e.g., ANTAKI, 2011; LESTER & O'REILLY, 2019; TEN HAVE, 2001). The goal is to reveal the organization of not simply the architecture of turn-taking, but also of valued social activities that occur within institutional and/or relational contexts (ibid.), which borrows from more "critical" varieties of discursive work interested in the sociology of partnership and intimacy. My discursive interest thus centers on how the production and receipt of entitled requests enables or stymies couples from pursuing intimacy. [14]

Romantic couples' formulations of entitled requests are taken to be a discursive site where romantic relationships are *constituted* and *contested* in and through social interaction. I am thus attentive to in situ moments when intimates engage in interactively relevant social actions, such as the use of entitled requests, as part of the business of conducting their relationships. I am guided by the question: what social business is being conducted or accomplished by the rhetorical project of formulating and receiving entitled requests, here and now? The focus is examining how closeness is pursued by young adult couples in the contexts where entitled requests are managed. Although the contexts in which the conversations between the couples analyzed here are described in more detail below, it is worth noting that the couples were never given any specific direction as to what to discuss or how to interact. Other than being asked to randomly record their conversations, their production and negotiation of entitled requests were all spontaneous. [15]

5. Participants and Data Collection

I situate my project within a larger series of studies interested in intimacy and romantic partnerships in emerging adults (KOROBOV, 2011a, 2011b, 2017, 2018, 2020a, 2020b; KOROBOV & LAPLANTE, 2013). I was the principal investigator and two graduate students helped with recruitment and data collection. I used a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling to recruit the participants (CRESWELL, 1998; OTTENBREIT-LEFTWICH, GLAZEWSKI, NEWBY & ERTMER, 2010). The two purposeful sampling criteria I required for this study were that the participants had to be young adults (between the ages of 19-26) and had to report being in a serious dating relationship for at least six months. Some of the couples who agreed to participate lived together, and some did not. Though I was open to both heterosexual and same sex couples, all the couples who agreed to participate were heterosexual. To find the participants, I utilized word of mouth, posters, and emails to student listservs from the local university (Southeast USA) and community, which represents the convenience aspect of the sampling. The resulting participant pool was comprised of 40 participants (20 heterosexual romantic couples) from the university and the local community. This sample size was deemed appropriate because of the amount and depth of relevant conversational data produced, thus resulting in a saturation (DE WET, 2010) of analytically rich discursive themes. Each couple produced an average of approximately seven hours of recorded conversational interaction, for a total of approximately 140 hours of conversational data. The study received IRB approval. Proper ethical guidelines were always adhered to, including the provision of pseudonyms for all participants. [16]

My aim was to procure data from settings as natural as possible rather than researcher moderated interviews, questionnaires, or sentence completion tasks. I told the participants that they would be participating in a study interested in the conversations that take place between young adult couples in the spaces of their everyday home-lives. Each couple was given a digital audio recorder to take with them for two weeks with the instruction to simply turn the recorder on whenever

they were spending time together (i.e., eating meals, driving in the car, taking a walk, cuddling, watching TV, working, etc.). Both participants could turn the recorder on when they wanted. It was not possible to edit or delete audio segments. At the end of the two weeks, the digital recorders were returned, and the participants were paid \$25 each. [17]

Although the conversations took place in the couple's natural everyday settings, the participants did have to self-select about when to turn the audio recorders on and tend to them somewhat. The participants rarely oriented to or made mention of the audio recorders, nor did any of the participants display discomfort about being recorded. The data presented here are a subset of a larger corpus of ongoing analyses looking at a wide range of interactional styles of engagement between young adult romantic couples. In my study, I focused on the couple's use of entitled requests. Attention was given to the formulation, receipt, and acknowledgment of receipt of entitled requests. [18]

I began the analysis by culling from the data set all stretches of interaction that included requests of any kind. Requests were broadly defined as "an act of asking for something." In sum, I identified 78 requests. To qualify as an entitled request, there needed to be demonstrable evidence that the request was treated as entitled by the recipient (i.e., the requester demonstrated some sense of expectation that the recipient was obligated and/or willing to fulfill the request). Certain context clues as well as the syntactic form that the request takes (e.g., imperative, or imperative-like constructions, etc.) were sometimes helpful in determining this. That said, syntactic formats are not necessarily more "entitled" than others across the board, which meant that requests had to be fully viewed within their interactional and role-relational contexts. As CURL and DREW (2008, p.147) have noted, the requesters' choice of form for making a request reflects "their evaluation of the contingencies surrounding the granting of a request as well as their entitlement to make the request." Of the 78 requests identified, I coded 39 as entitled requests. These 39 entitled request sequences became the focus of the present study and a small subsection of these are presented below. In keeping with a discursive focus, this subset of entitled request sequences is presented below according to a light version of JEFFERSON's (2004) transcription conventions (see the [Appendix](#)) with my focus on examining how the couples pursue connection while negotiating entitled requests. [19]

6. Analysis

In my analyses that follow, each step in the unfolding of entitled request sequences (initial request, initial request receipt, and third position response to the request receipt) is analyzed to understand how the negotiation of entitled requests function to create spaces that do "more than" just requesting (MANDELBAUM, 2014). In these examples, this "more than" will involve the creative ways in which the couples attempt to maintain connection amidst the potential relational trouble of entitled requests. In this first excerpt, Randy (R) and Lisa (L) were pulling into a drive through window at a fast-food restaurant, and Randy began the request sequence in Line 3 with a question that functioned as a request. Randy adopted a peculiar syntactic request structure to ask Lisa what she wanted him to order for her. There are three request sequences in this excerpt.

1	R:	I'm jus' gonna pull in through the drive through.
2	L:	o:hkay.
3	R:	whatcha' gon' want?
4	L:	excuse me?
5	R	hhaha dear sweet love of mine (.) can't ya just
6		tell me what the fuck(hh) you(ha) want?
7	L:	o::hhaha so much [better.
8	R:	[off of the dollar menu(hhha).
9	L:	you lil shit(hahh).
10	R:	hahaha nah but for real (.) can I get ya something?
11	L:	just a large fries (.) please.
12	R:	large fry for <u>the lady</u> it shall be.
13	L:	oh boy.
14		(3.0)
15	R:	you got some money?
16	L:	hahhahaha (.) no::.

Excerpt 1 [20]

The first request occurred in Line 3 when Randy used a distinctive linguistic format to request information from Lisa about what she is going to want him to order for her.

3 R: whatcha' gon' want?

4 L: excuse me? [21]

Syntactically, Randy's request is built like an interrogative, possibly akin to *what are you going to want?*, which is a format that typically indexes low entitlement. But given Lisa's response in Line 4, it is not oriented to a low-entitled request. Lisa problematized his request, treated it as dispreferred and displayed offense ("excuse me?"), thus orienting to his request as potentially rude. Even though Randy's request had the syntactic shape of an interrogative, it is hearable as an assumption followed by an entitled directive, i.e., it comes off as *you are going to want something, so tell me what it is*. Her response to this does something more (MANDLEBAUM, 2014). It shows the entitled request to be an impropriety. Lisa's response was oriented to Randy's request as such, taking issue with the indirect presumption that she will want something and with Randy's rather curt request for her to just tell him what that something is. [22]

At this point, the interaction could easily have become contentious, but it did not, and that is key. In Line 5, Randy tended to the potential impropriety by attempting to repair it with a laughter-laced preface and reformulation of the request.

5 R: hhaha dear sweet love of mine (.) can't ya just
6 tell me what the fuck(hh) you(ha) want? [23]

In third position, Randy acknowledged Lisa's response, first by tending to the impropriety that he had been rude and did so with a third position receipt that was playful and exaggerated ("hhah dear sweet love of mine"), which again did something more than simply offer an apology or acknowledgment. His response went playfully overboard. It was a staged caricature of an overly romanticized preface. In so doing, he indirectly patronized the offense she took in Line 4, and thereby downplayed the seriousness of her remonstrance to his original request. He then reformulated the request, but this time not with a low entitled request (which might be expected, given the expectation of repair) that would have displayed care or concern, but instead he counterintuitively raised the stakes with a designedly entitled negative interrogative construction (HERITAGE, 2002) laced with laughter and profanity ("can't ya just tell me what the fuck[hh] you[ha] want?"). Again, there was something more happening here than just a playful response. Randy appeared to be intentionally staging a playful comeback, albeit a risky one, that invited levity around the way in which they might make and receive requests. He was inviting her to subvert expected proprieties while maintaining connection. The intersubjective banter, laughter, and mutual teasing that follows in Lines 7-9 confirms Lisa's willingness to engage similarly. [24]

In Line 10, Randy then switched gears and stepped out of the play frame ("nah but for real") and reformulated the request yet again, this time with a request that has a low entitled interrogative design shape.

10 R: hahaha nah but for real (.) can I get ya something?
11 L: just a large fries (.) please. [25]

After Lisa replies in Line 11, note Randy's acknowledgment in third position. He repeated back her item request and then tagged it with "for the lady it shall be," which is yet another staged caricature of an overly formal antiquated old English lexical receipt. The function yet again appears to be to make light of the idea of politeness or propriety through parody, which in retrospect casts doubt on the seriousness of his low entitled request in Line 10. Lisa once again got the joke and played along and, after a moment of silence, Randy punctuated his subversion of the propriety frame by jokingly asking her if she has money to pay for her own food, which again downplays his chivalry. She laughed at this, letting us see that she did not take him seriously. What I see in this excerpt are a series of requests designed to do more than just make requests. They toggle between high and low entitlement design structures to playfully undermine expectations of relational proprieties and even traditional gender roles. And, more importantly, rather than result in disconnection, they seem to work as fodder for pursuing closeness. [26]

In this next excerpt, Tasha (T) and Henrik (H) were talking about an upcoming event. Tasha began by noting when they needed to leave to be on time for the event. Her high-entitled request is delivered in Line 3. Henrik formulated one in Line 7.

1	T:	to not on time five is prolyly when we should leave.
2	H:	five o'clock?
3	T:	yeah (.) so make sure you are ready by five (.) it
4		would mean so: much.
5	H:	wow (.) uh o:k.
6	T:	it ain't gotta be like that.
7	H:	mmhm (.) just say please be ready by five (.) period.
8	T:	Henrik (.) ba::be (.) we always are late to shit and
9		this is important to me.
10	H:	not cause of me though.
11	T:	fine (.) okay doesn't matter (.) I'm talking to myself
12		here too.
13	H:	see (.) yes thank you.
14	T:	for what?
15	H:	owning it hhaha.
16	T:	hhhaha fuck off haha.
17	H:	n'watch (.) I probably be the one to make us late this
18		time.

19	T:	I KNOW (.) that's my fear (.) you <u>are</u> over(hh)due.
20	H:	hhah this is true.

Excerpt 2 [27]

Tasha's high-entitled request occurred in Line 3 in the form of a directive. Her preface of *so* marks her directive as a way of prefacing a sequence initiating (or incipient) action (BOLDEN, 2009)—that is, as a relevant or expected next move to his questioning of her statement in Line 1. It oriented to his question as a potentially dispreferred response, as maybe doing more than simply clarifying. His questioning could be a method for foreshadowing delay or disagreement. Tasha may have been expecting simple agreement from Henrik. And because she did not get that, her *so* ushers in a relevant next action vis-à-vis a high-entitled request in the form of a directive, which she then punctuated with "it would mean so: much," which amplifies the entitlement. The tag is an overwrought appreciation (MANDELBAUM, 2014; SCHEGLOFF, 2002), or an overdone display of anticipatory appreciation, which calls attention to itself as a kind of potential object lesson (MANDELBAUM, 2014) directed at Henrik. Once again, entitled requests and their receipts do more. [28]

Henrik reacted to this accordingly with a strong display of surprise ("wow") plus the expressive interjective "uh:" with slight elongation which is used to display disbelief or confusion (CLARK & FOX-TREE, 2002), thereby problematizing Tasha's request by treating it as surprisingly unexpected. Tasha then oriented to Henrik's insinuation that she is being overly entitled by suggesting that he need not see her actions that way. Henrik responded with his own highly entitled request in Line 7, in the form of a directive that also does more. Like with Tasha's "it would mean so: much" overwrought appreciation tag, his entitled request functioned similarly as an object lesson in a kind of tit-for-tat. He was now arguably coaching her on how to simply ask him for something in a more straightforward and less condescending way. Ironically, her rejoinder in Line 8 is again potentially patronizing, as it began with a caricatured romantic form of address, which can easily appear condescending (i.e., she was enacting the very thing he criticized), followed by an exaggerated and scripted statement in the iterative present tense ("we are always late to shit") (EDWARDS, 1995) that justifies her concern and her subsequent "this is important to me" by formulating it as a reoccurring problem. Henrik deflected in Line 10, showing that he orients to her scripted extreme case formulation as directed at him. All this escalating tension is what I expected given the delicate and potentially contentious nature of entitled requests and how they do more. [29]

However, in Line 11, the building tension around the use of entitled requests shifts when Tasha made a concession. She included herself as an object of her critique, and thus initiated relational repair and the pursuit of connection. She made the concern about lateness their problem, not just Henrik's. And then, in an elegant and playful de-escalation, Henrik appreciated her move and even named it as her "owning it," which Tasha playfully treated as having gone too far (since

she was inviting *shared* accountability, not solo blame) in her Line 16 laughed-through rejoinder for him to go "fuck off." Henrik oriented her comeback as non-serious, and then repaired his previous turn by self-deprecatingly positioning himself as the one who will likely, in the end, make them late, thus making some concession that her concerns may not be altogether off. He did some owning here and further collaborating around the project of creating common ground. In the end, they both playfully agreed and maintained alignment in their assessment of mutual accountability of the situation and thus created affective closeness. What I see here at the terminus of this exchange is a rather elegant negotiation of the trouble that entitled requests may create which gets playfully resolved in a shared pursuit of intimacy. [30]

The request in this next excerpt came from Jane (J) in Line 4 as she used a unique request format to ask Paul (P) to unload the dishwasher.

1	P:	where are all the cups?
2	J:	dishwasher is full but it's clean.
3	P:	oh ok [gotcha.
4	J:	[wanna maybe unload it since you're there?
5	P:	ohh::hhaha nice (.) I see what you did there.
6	J:	thank you.
7	P:	should I unload it since I'm here (.) <u>no</u> (.) but will I
8		cause I'm a great guy (.) also <u>no</u> .
9	J:	[hhahhha]
10	P:	[hhahhah] but thank you for asking or telling er'
11		whatever that was.
12	J:	that was called a nudge (.) a <u>gentle loving</u> nudge.
13	P:	ohh(hhah) yea of course.

Excerpt 3 [31]

Jane's request (Line 4) was designed as a low entitled request in two important ways. First, it was built with the interrogative "do you want to" construction which offers choice. Secondly, it included the modifier "maybe" which further emphasizes the idea of choice into the grantability of the request. And finally, the tag of "since you are there" attended to issues of contingency (CURL & DREW, 2008), which is a displayed awareness on Jane's part that there are factors (i.e., Paul's convenient location) that would make it easier for Paul to say yes to the request. In sum, Jane's request was markedly designed to appear to be low entitled. However, Paul did not receive it that way, which makes this an interesting case. Paul construed it as a high entitled request that is intentionally disguised ("I see what you did there") as a low entitled request. What I notice

here is thus a request that is designed to appear low entitled, but which ended up being treated by Paul (and Jane) as a highly entitled request. [32]

In Line 5, Paul modulated his interpretation with laughter since he was essentially calling out Jane for being disingenuous. He thus did more than simply disagree with her request. He turned it into an object lesson. However, rather than being contentious about it, he showed that he is having a light-hearted go at her. Her "thank you" in Line 6, as a third position acknowledgment, also did more. It displayed tacit agreement with Paul's interpretation and a willingness to play along. And then, in Lines 7-8, in a clever reconstruction of Jane's request structure, Paul constructed back-to-back rhetorical questions which delineate what he took to be the surface request versus the actual request. Typically, in two-part rhetorical question constructions like this (LEGGITT & GIBBS, 2000), the first part is designed as the dispreferred structure, which the speaker rejects, and the second part is designed as the preferred format, which is typically then accepted by the speaker. However, Paul playfully subverted this two-part structure by disagreeing with both parts. [33]

Paul's rhetorical constructions pivot on the distinction between *obligation* and *willingness* as two potential motivating factors to grant a request. He first indexed the idea of obligation ("should I"), which functioned to expose what he took to be the hidden and dispreferred motivating force behind Jane's request. He answered this part of the rhetorical question with a "no," which is expected. This is where he may be teaching Jane a lesson. He then moved on to reconstruct the question according to his willingness to grant the request since he is a "great guy," which he rhetorically set up as the preferred motivating force with respect to contingency. At this point, I expected to hear him say yes to this second part as a way of showing that he would grant the request because he is a good person, rather than out of feeling manipulated. But, in an interesting twist, he said no to this, which is designedly a tongue-in-cheek way of displaying self-deprecation. Even his own good character would not motivate him to grant his girlfriend's request. By implicating himself as an unwilling participant, despite both contingency and his own good nature, he mitigated the force of his object lesson to Jane. Jane may have been at fault for being manipulative, but Paul was at fault for being selfishly unwilling. Even though it's playful self-incrimination, the effect is that it proffered a connection with Jane. [34]

In Lines 9-13, they have a joint laugh around Paul's rhetorical re-construction and the surprising twist at the end of it, before Paul playfully thanked Jane for "asking or telling er' whatever that was." This again drew attention to Jane's ambiguous request format as well as the implicit distinction between high versus low entitlement, as well as how one format type may masquerade as another and how Paul was deft enough to pick up on it and turn it into fodder for playful relational banter. Jane playfully construed her request as a "gentle loving nudge," which both mitigated his suggestion that she is perhaps being manipulative while offering an interpretation that preserved the possibility of her own benevolence. This kind of debate around motives between intimates when it comes to interpreting requests is common. And here, in this excerpt, Paul and Jane

playfully teased out these motivations and used them to pursue controversy as a method for achieving closeness. [35]

In the next excerpt, Wendy (W) opened with a high-entitled request in the form of a directive asking her boyfriend Kirk (K) to grab her phone from the car. After some back and forth, her high-entitled request is reiterated in Lines 17-18.

1	W:	baby be the best ever boyfrie:::nd and grab my
2		phone I think I left it in the car.
3	K:	I'm not going out there (.) and I <u>am</u> the best
4		boyfreend'er whatever you call it hhah (.) <u>already</u> .
5	W:	that is <u>not</u> true (.) unless you get my phone.
6	K:	oh I'm not (.) cause I won't be your gopher boy?
7	W:	no::: it is because you have not yet bought me a mug
8		or good tshirt that says I have the best boyfriend ever
9		on it hhhaa.
10	K:	hhhaha I LITERALLY just saw one of those shirts or'some-
11		on Instagram it said hottest boyfriend and had an arrow
12		like pointing as if I was next to you.
13	W:	exactly yes I need one.
14	K:	you would never wear it.
15	W:	to sleep in (.) yes I would(hhha).
16	K:	jesus (.) then you can buy it.
17	W:	are you still over there (.) come on go see if my
18		phone is out there.
19	K:	so bossy:: (.) kinda love that (.) turns me on.
20	W:	hha forget it (.) I'll go look.
21	K:	works every time 50% of the time hhha.

Excerpt 4 [36]

Wendy prefaced her high-entitled request in the opening line with what is arguably itself an implicit highly entitled directive to "be the best boyfriend" and then supplied what the evidence for this would be, i.e., him getting her phone for her. Both are built with directives, but the force of the high-entitled composition was mitigated in at least two ways. First, her use of "baby" is a softener that circumscribes the request as part of a romantic partnership. He is her "baby," or loved one, which is a way of preparing him for how to hear her request. And the

elongated intonation she places on the term "boyfriend" made her request sound playfully exaggerated. It indexed the colloquial malapropism of boyfriend as "boyfreend." It was a way of signaling play, or that this is not to be taken too seriously. [37]

Kirk's rejoinder tended to the high-entitled format, which treated it as dispreferred, and then rejected it ("I am not going out there"). But he did much more than this. He took it as an opportunity to remind her that he is already the best boyfriend ever. He was teaching her a lesson, resisting her manipulation, and by recycling her malapropism, he was also showing that he did not take this too seriously. Interestingly, Wendy oriented less to his declination of her request and more to his assertion regarding his boyfriend status and responded with playful disagreement. What I interpret here is a highly entitled request sequence that has quickly shifted into a light debate about the quality of Kirk's partnership and the contingencies (whether he gets her phone or not) that are determinative. Again, requests do more. Here, they are relational fodder. In Lines 5-16, what evolved was essentially a playful back and forth about expectations and imagined gifts they might get one another to express the quality of their care, as well as playful subversions of such ideas. All of it is contained within a marked play frame. [38]

In Line 17, Wendy returned to her request and reformulated it. This time she prefaced it with contingency (CURL & DREW, 2008), noting the possibility that he is "still over there," which increased the grantability of the request. In her first request, she omitted this, but added it this time as a way of potentially increasing the chances that Kirk would comply. It is therefore formulated, at least initially, to appear less entitled. Nevertheless, she once again used the directive request format "come on go see" which re-inscribed high entitlement. She appeared pushy. As I expected, Kirk did not grant her request, or even offer a yes/no receipt in second position. Instead, he did something more. He first engaged in scolding her for being "so bossy" and then playfully flipped the script and turned her simple request for him to get her phone into potential sexual foreplay. Rather than being positioned in the one-down spot of being told what to do, Kirk responded to her bossiness as an invitation to something sexual, noting that he "kind of likes it" and that it "turns him on." He flipped the script and positioned himself now as the pursuivant of what he took to be Wendy's flirtation. Wendy laughed, as if to signal she got the frame shift and understood what it was intended to do. She treated it as part of a tit-for-tat, or transactional bid by Kirk to turn the request into a sexual transaction. Not wanting this, she quickly retracted her request which, given Kirk's final turn where he quoted a famous line from the film *Anchorman*¹, was the intended consequence he was hoping for. He declined her request, but they nevertheless remained aligned. Like with the other excerpts, the entire interaction following the high-entitled request was built with levity and a clear sense of connection. [39]

In the next excerpt, Stella (S) formulated a highly entitled request in Lines 3-4 that asked Lionel (L) not to put his feet on the coffee table that she had cleaned.

¹ *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy* is a 2004 American satirical comedy film about the action news television format of the 1970s, starring Will FERRELL.

1	S:	the remote is on the side there.
2	L:	I see it (.) [got it.
3	S:	[I just cleaned that (.) don't pu' can
4		ya not put your feet on there?
5	L:	oh what (.) [why?
6	S:	[dude like you have no idea (.) I spent
7		hours tryin'ta clean this table (.) get all these
8		scratches out like it'd mean the <u>world</u> to me if ya
9		didn't (.) ya know I just wanna keep it clean.
10	L:	ok fine (.) damn.
11	S:	it's cool (.) you prolly forgot.
12	L:	I didn't forget (.) I literally never knew.
13	S:	what did you think I was doing for hours working on
14		this here while you were sitting here watching tv er'
15		whatever?
16	L:	I was doing my own thing (.) minding my business
17		n'not micromanaging you.
18	S:	hhhahah (.) please(hha).
19	L:	being respectful.
20	S:	well thank you for being respectful (.) I guess I had
21		it confused with not giving a shithhah.
22	L:	oh(hha) ok look (.) lemme look at it (.) yeah looks
23		very nice bu::t'uh look right here yah <u>missed</u> a spot.
24	S:	shut da'fuck up(hhhahah).
25	L:	<u>see::</u> it's best if I do not pay attention.

Excerpt 5 [40]

This excerpt begins as Stella told Lionel where to find the remote for the television, followed by a request that he not put his feet on the coffee table. Her request began as a demand ("don't pu'") but she immediately self-corrected and repaired it to a request that is formulated as a negative interrogative ("can ya not") which reflects high entitlement on her part (HEINEMANN, 2006; HERITAGE, 2002). She used the verb "can" to indicate that the only contingency (CURL & DREW, 2008) for granting the request is his willingness. As I expected given the previous examples, Lionel's receipt did not immediately consent to her

highly entitled request, but instead did more. He displayed uncertainty, which indirectly problematized the request, and then questioned it. [41]

Her third position receipt also did more. It did not orient to his question in Line 5 as a simple request for clarification, but instead oriented to it as a challenge. Her third position response involved dude speak (a move which recruits a kind of light-hearted and shared intersubjective knowing), a positioning of him as ignorant ("you have no idea"), further elaboration on the effort she spent, and then the beginning of a second highly entitled request in Lines 8-9 that began with the overwrought utterance (SCHEGLOFF, 2002) "it'd mean the world to me" that functioned as an overdone display of preemptive gratitude. Like in the previous excerpts, these overwrought utterances showed the anticipated consent of the request as the expected or proper response to her hard work, which doubled as an object lesson to Lionel for not having seen this. Her request came only in part, however, as she began with another negative interrogative ("if ya didn't") but then stopped short of specifying what she wanted him not to do, perhaps because at this point it was obvious. She needed only to say "you know" to index her request that he not put his feet on the table. The self-interruption and use of "you know" tacitly mitigated the force of her reminder and reindexed the invitation to shared intersubjectively that he understood her request without having to spell it out. Her third position receipt was thus not just a reproach plus restatement of the request, but also a tacit bid for alignment. [42]

In Line 10, Lionel began by agreeing, which orients to the bid for alignment, but then added "damn" as a way of positioning her as having gone too far. He treated her previous turn as an overdone display, and he was not letting her off the hook for it. Stella then countered with "it's cool" and tried to offer him the benefit of the doubt, to which he objected, since this put him in a position of ignorance, even if it is unknowing or innocent ignorance. He reminded her it is not that he forgot, but that he never knew (i.e., she never communicated it), which set off an interesting negotiation of accountability regarding blame (EDWARDS, 1995; KOROBOV, 2019, 2020b, 2023). At this point, the argument could have easily escalated, which often happens when blame is being negotiated. Instead, they laughed at each other's defenses regarding minding one's own business, being respectful, and micromanaging. Each move was a playful object lesson directed at the other. Stella positioned Lionel as having ignored her obvious efforts (or "not giving a shit") and Lionel positioned Stella as micromanaging and himself as respectfully minding his own business. [43]

The high entitled request context thus turned into a playful tit-for-tat. The excerpt ends with Lionel playfully consenting to paying attention, which is what Stella has been asking for all along, but not without a twist. Lionel playfully pretended to find a dirty spot on the coffee table that she had missed. The point of this, of course, was to make her regret her request that he pay attention (she displayed playful annoyance to show that she gets what he is doing), which is yet another object lesson that is designed to convince Stella that she does not really want him to pay attention after all. This critical way of paying attention is likely not the kind of paying attention that Stella intended, but it goes without saying, and the two

laughed it off rather than further hash it out. This is typical light-hearted relational maneuvering among couples as they delicately manage the blame and attribution work that often arises on the heels of a set of high-entitled requests. [44]

This next excerpt begins with a request by Nate that is formulated with low entitled interrogative request format ("I wonder if").

1	N:	I wonder if you'd be willing to meet us at 5 instead
2		of 6?
3	Z:	for what (.) why?
4	N:	cause they moved th'(.) can't ya just do 5 (.) it's
5		too much to explain (.) they moved everything up
6		an'I'm on the phone now and I gotta let Mike know.
7	Z:	uh: I dunno know I gotta think [about like (.) that.
8	N:	[think about what?
9	Z:	jus tell him what you want.
10	N:	((into phone)) lemme call you back.
11		(2.0)
12	N:	Zoe (.) <u>babe</u> (.) it's just an hour earlier
13		(.) can ya not swing it?
14	Z:	you're putting me on the spot (.) <u>ba::be</u> .
15	N:	ok(hhaha).
16	Z:	just lemme think (.) <u>babe</u> .
17	N:	ok (.) I'll ask again later (.) <u>babe</u> .
18	Z:	oh I can't wa::it.
19	N:	hah'Imma pepper you with texts in about an hour.
20	Z:	lucky me hhha.

Excerpt 6 [45]

Nate's use of "I wonder if" displayed orientation to the possible unknown contingencies (CURL & DREW, 2008) that could affect the grantability of his request. At least initially, this resulted in a low entitled request, with the requested action displaying an awareness that granting the request was only a possible option. Zoe's receipt of this, however, displayed resistance, and oriented to the initial request as not having provided enough information. NOLEN and MAYNARD (2013) have shown that although contingency and thus low entitlement is displayed through prefaces like "I wonder if," in some contexts contingency and entitlement may operate separately. For example, being offered

additional information (like options for when to do something) may affect perceived entitlement. In this case, Nate did not offer this, and Zoe wanted to know more, thus orienting to the question as being possibly highly entitled, even though Nate formulated it with an awareness of contingency. [46]

In Line 4, Nate began to tell her why, but then self-interrupted his explanation and delivered a high-entitled request built with a negative interrogative ("can't ya just"), that he then followed with a brief but protracted explanation for why the time had changed, and then displayed contingency yet again (he was presently on the phone with his friend Mike) to show why he was pushing for a quick answer. Nate then switched to a high entitlement request format because he was trying to work out a plan in real time with his friend. Zoe offered a two-part resistance—first, she said she didn't know and wanted to think about it and then, after Nate pressed her ("think about what"), Zoe told Nate to just tell Mike what he wanted, which was taken up by Nate not as a sign that she was now genuinely open to his request, but rather as a way of passively opting out of the exchange. This becomes clearer because Nate did not tell Mike that Zoe had agreed but instead told him that he needed to call him back so he could talk privately with Zoe. At this juncture in the interaction, there was palpable disconnect between Nate and Zoe. [47]

In Lines 12-13, Nate did not attempt repair. There are three parts to this turn. First, he said her name and then followed it with a term of endearment ("babe"), which creates intimacy. It is a softener to what follows, which is a case softener ("*just* an hour earlier") to minimize the contingency, or force, of his request, reminding her yet again that this is grantable with minimal compromise. Then, in the third part of his turn, he formulated the request again with a high-entitled negative interrogative format ("can ya now swing it"). Zoe's response did more than simply remind him that he is once again putting her on the spot. She also recycled his use of "babe," formulated it as a tag but drew it out and said it more loudly to create exaggerated emphasis on it. She was drawing attention to his creation of it as a softener and recycled it as a way of both softening her own resistance and potentially making fun of it. Nate got the joke, agreed with her, and laughed. In the lines that follow, they each repeated "babe" with exaggerated affect that created closeness around the joke. Nate agreed to give Zoe space, but jokingly stated that he would nevertheless pepper her with texts to procure a response, thus displaying self-awareness about how he was coming across. He both made fun of the urgency of his requests, thus affiliating with her concerns, while also casually reminding her that he still wanted an answer. The exchange ended somewhat amicably with light sarcasm and laughter. [48]

In this next exchange, Brian (B) formulated three entitled requests to Karen (K) asking if he could borrow Karen's brother's car for an upcoming weekend trip since their car was being repaired.

1	B:	the car's not gonna be ready until tomorrow now=
2	K:	=wuh?
3	B:	yah'l dunno the guy I just spoke to the guy n'he said
4		they didn't even look at until after lunch so I guess
5		they're [behind.
6	K:	[well there goes driving up to the lake.
7	B:	right (.) unless we can take your car.
8	K:	you mean my brother's car [I just can't
9	B:	[I mean can't ya just ask
10		him (.) can't ya see if he'll let you?
11	K:	uh::aarrhg I'jus' I (.) <u>no</u> (.) I mean=
12	B:	I'll call him and ask him (.) I don't care.
13	K:	that's totally not your [place to.
14	B:	[well I'm not afraid of him.
15	K:	I'm not afraid of him (.) it's about respect (.) we
16		don't mooch off each other like that.
17	B:	I'm not afraid to be the mooch (.) I'll be the bad
18		guy (.) let me ask him (.) this was gonna be our
19		little trip (.) I want to spend time with you.
20		(3.0)
21	K:	fine (.) I'll see him tonight (.) but I'll ask.
22	B:	yaa:ss:: awesome (.) love you.

Excerpt 7 [49]

Like in previous excerpts, Brian's initial entitled request in Lines 9-10 (formulated as a negative interrogative pressing for a positive response) was mired in situational contingencies. They needed a car for their trip that was already planned, and Brian's car would not be ready because it was being repaired. So, given these circumstances, Brian launched an entitled request that they borrow the car that Karen drove. In Line 7, Brian made a statement ("unless we take your car") that Karen oriented to as an indirect request for her to ask her brother to use it, since her reply included "I just can't," which oriented to the implicit request that she ask. Karen reminded Brian that the car she drove was her brother's car,

which showed Brian's request to be entitled, and then displayed reluctance in assuming they could use it for their trip. Brian then offered a two-part request, first asking if she "just can't ask," then self-corrected and mitigated the force of the request (likely because she had just said "I just can't") to simply "seeing" if Karen's brother will let them. In short, his request did more than simply ask for something. His initial framing in Line 7 posited it as her car, which increased the grantability of the request. And then, after she reminded him that it was not her car to loan out, and that his request was perhaps overly entitled, he used the negative interrogative format to maintain his pressuring stance but switched from "ask" to "see" to display awareness that he is appearing entitled. [50]

Karen rejected his request (Line 11), but not without an overt display of emotional equivocation, which did more than simply decline his request. It showed Brian that resisting his request is not easy, which foreshadowed tacit alignment with Brian. It was not that she did not want to borrow her brother's car, it was that she was reluctant to ask her brother. Her turn-initial guttural "uh::aarrhg" was a performative display of discomfort. Brian picked up on this, which is why his next offer to call her brother and ask himself can be seen as a way of taking care of the discomfort she felt by offering to do the hard work so she does not have to, which could be seen as benevolent. Instead, Karen oriented to it as controlling ("that's totally not your place"). What then ensued is a moderately contentious back and forth where Brian framed her reluctance to ask as based in fear and himself as not afraid, and Karen re-framed her reluctance as rooted in a respectful desire to not "mooch" off her brother. Again, a lot more was being done interactively following the initial requests. The couple engaged in dispositional critique. [51]

Brian nevertheless persisted (Lines 17-19) by recycling his position that he is not afraid, this time to be the "mooch" or "bad guy" by asking her brother. He then made the request again, but this time he used a straightforward and unmitigated directive ("let me ask him"). There was no hedging or softeners. It arguably felt entitled and may once again appear to be pushy. However, his entitled request was tagged with an emphasis on not only situation contingency (they needed a car for an upcoming trip) but also this time on relational contingency. His request did a lot more, both interactively and relationally. He pressed because this was about *them*. This downplayed the appearance of selfishness. Brian's request now appeared to be one that would make possible "our trip" together and displayed his desire to spend time with Karen. This doing more is where relational repair began to occur and where Karen's stance shifted. There is a long pause, followed by Karen agreeing for the first time ("fine"), then offering to speak to her brother about it that night. She agreed to ask her brother, which allowed her to maintain control over the situational contingencies while acquiescing to Brian's request. The excerpt ends with Brian expressing alignment and connection. [52]

This last excerpt featured a uniquely formulated indirect request from Cal (C) to Galina (G) to take the trash out.

1	C:	hey Galina you prolly forgot (.) but the trash people
2		come tomorrow (.) if ya wanna get it out there.
3	G:	probably (hha)should get that trash out then(hhah).
4	C:	jus' a lil' reminder (.) that's all.
5	G:	for me (.) or you?
6	C:	for you (.) so we can both be working together on stuff
7		like partners (.) like how you were saying.
8	G:	wow that is <u>so</u> : sweet of you (.) I love that (.) now you
9		want me to list all the things I do for you?
10	C:	can you put sexual favors on there (.) I think that
11		needs t'be tops on there hahhaaa.
12	G:	oh yeah that's all:: (.) that <u>is</u> the list ba:sically(hha).
13	C:	hey (.) a guy can dream.
14	G:	hha (.) these chips are way too salty by the way (.) have
15		you tried them?

Excerpt 8 [53]

There are three parts to Cal's request. First, it is prefaced with an awareness of both personal and situational contingency (CURL & DREW, 2008). He first noted that she "prolly forgot" which has a double-edged positionality to it. It can function as dispositional scripting (EDWARDS, 1995) by treating the recipient as someone who may routinely forget things and needs reminding (which would obviously be a critique, and thus dispreferred) or it can orient to the forthcoming request item (to take the trash out) as the type of thing that anyone might ordinarily forget. Cal did not make it clear which way he meant it, which may have set his forthcoming request up to fail. He then followed this up with a statement of contingency ("the trash people come tomorrow"), which is a preface that displayed the situational relevancy or contingency of his request. The trash needing to go out is timely. Because he displayed a preemptive awareness of contingencies that may affect the grantability of his forthcoming request, he set his request up to appear low in entitlement. He then delivered what sounded like a low-entitled indirect interrogative that embeds choice ("if ya wanna get it out there"). However, though the request was built to sound un-entitled, and is prefaced with an orientation to contingencies that *could* mitigate entitlement, it nevertheless came off as entitled and was resisted by Galina. [54]

These types of requests were common in this corpus and may be common among romantic partners. The formulation of "you prolly forgot" was used by Stella in Excerpt 5 and was employed here again to offer the benefit of the doubt. However, like in Excerpt 5 and again here, the offering of the benefit of the doubt only works when the recipient agrees that the object of the request to which they are now being offered the benefit of the doubt for having forgotten, was theirs to fulfill. If Galina does not see taking out the trash as her job, being offered grace for having forgotten to do it is off-putting because it is presumptuous. Additionally, Galina could see that Cal had not forgotten that the trash needed to be taken out, and that he could simply take it out, but was choosing not to and instead treated it not only as Galina's responsibility, but also as a responsibility that he was entitled to remind her about. As such, the request can be heard as entitled, and Galina's resistance can be anticipated. [55]

However, her receipt of his request did more than simply resist, which again is typical in these exchanges between intimate partners. She laughed as she agreed, but only *in part*. She agreed that the trash should be taken out but omitted assigning responsibility. The laughter knowingly acknowledged her omission, which invited him into a playful back-and-forth about the assignment of accountability. Her second-part receipt thus transformed his initial request about taking the trash out into a playful repartee about their duties as relational partners, which though delicate, was handled with humor, exaggeration, faux surprise, and mild sarcasm across the ensuing turns. Cal reformulated his request as part of his participation in her previously stated desire that they work together on things, and Galina playfully objected to this by showing that she already had a list of all that she does for them. In Line 10, Cal indirectly teased her by making a second entitled request built with the "can ya" formulation. As CURL and DREW (2008) have shown, *can/could you* modal constructions display little orientation to contingencies that might affect the grantability of the request. But because he delivered this with humor and exaggeration ("needs t'be tops on there hahhaaa"), it was not taken too seriously. Galina took it up accordingly, in stride, and responded in equal measure with playfully exaggerated sarcasm. Before Galina shifted the topic in Line 14, it was clear they were both enjoying the tit-for-tat banter and seemed affiliated despite their different perspectives. [56]

7. Discussion

I utilized a discourse analytic approach to examine how young adult couples negotiate the delivery and receipt of entitled requests to pursue intimacy in everyday interactions. The various ways that couples use entitled requests to do more when managing the formulation, receipt, and responses to the fulfillment or declination of entitled requests reveals how romantic couples navigate the norms and expectations guiding relational conduct in informal settings. The discursive interaction surrounding the formulation of entitled requests shows us how relationality is pursued, often counterintuitively, at the microlevel of social interaction. [57]

Entitled requests are typically dispreferred social actions. They are imposing, irritating, and thus risky. And even in close or familiar contexts, where they may be more common, there is still reason to think that they would typically be off putting and would usually lead to conflict and disconnection. However, I use my data to show that entitled requests are routinely helpful in doing a lot more than simply asking for things. They also function to index and negotiate relational demands in ways that often do not lead to conflict. This notion of doing more (MANDELBAUM, 2014) within the context of pursuing closeness has been a central focus of this study. In general, the more that is being proffered typically has to do with social actions that pursue controversy, though not as an end goal, but rather as part of a broader process of allowing for or exploring the possibility of closeness around relationally sensitive issues. [58]

At one level, I interpret the use of entitled requests between intimates as part of exploring the possibility of closeness within the discursive domain of negotiating accountability (EDWARDS, 1995; KOROBV, 2019, 2020a, 2023) around the rights and responsibilities guiding everyday domestic rituals that are common in partnerships. As methods for managing accountability, entitled requests are employed as part of a rhetorical process of delicately positioning both one's needs and desires as well as one's rights to make such requests. Entitled requests thus have practical implications as a relational resource. They set off a cascade of relational maneuvers that clearly entail managing blame and attribution work. Though these maneuverings manifested as social actions such as relational coaching, offering object lessons and reciprocal tit-for-tats, they were often managed in light-hearted ways that involved humor, exaggeration, and sarcasm. Managing accountability vis-à-vis entitled requests built in these ways is thus delicate work around putatively important relational issues that have to do with partners' assigning responsibility to certain everyday tasks (like taking out the trash or adjusting social commitments) in their shared domestic sphere. [59]

At another level, I use my findings to offer a window into considering identity work within intimate relational spaces and how it operates within this micro-interactive domain. What I notice in these data is that romantic partners seem to have normalized sets of expectations for what they believe they can ask, perhaps as part of one's own sense of who they are as a romantic partner in a relationship with rights. Thus, they will pursue certain asks of the other using

entitled formats even if they are risky (or perhaps precisely *because* they are risky), often with a demonstrable presumption that there are not justifiable contingencies that would prevent their partners from granting their requests. Moreover, the speakers seem quite aware that what they are doing is risky, as demonstrated through the frequent utilization of various softeners and prefaces that both display awareness and attempt to mitigate the force of the entitlement. And although these attempts to soften often make it momentarily worse and are often called out and rejected, they seem to be ingredients in an overall process of pursuing connection. [60]

This begs an obvious question—why use a tricky or delicate entitled request format to pursue the possibility of closeness? Why would romantic partners not routinely choose a more polite or frictionless way of attempting to meet needs or desires that might increase the odds of a clear, positive, and conflict-free reception from their partners? One possible answer is that assuming entitlement is part of identity work, particularly at this young adult age, and that it is to some degree tantamount to practicing sovereignty. Entitled requests are one way of testing out whether or how romantic partners can ask for what they perceive they need and deserve. The entitled format is a way of gauging their partner's willingness to create a space for their partner's sovereignty without their partner having to ask for it in a demonstrably non-entitled way, which may signal a subordinate stance. It is a way of testing if one has power (i.e., entitlement) around shared responsibilities. As noted above, if a romantic partner always politely asked for things using low entitlement and was granted those things in a more frictionless way, they may get what they need but might interpret the fulfillment of the request as having been given permission in a one-down power differential. High entitled requests assume (rather than request) privilege and are thus discursive methods for establishing that a speaker has an identity with some modicum of non-negotiated agency within the relationship. Obviously, this is speculative and warrants further research. [61]

Another way of answering the question of why romantic partners might use a delicate entitled request format to pursue closeness is that this type of discursive format may be culturally normative, especially for young adults, which may extend thinking around how politeness (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987) operates in this domain. Entitled requests may embody a particular culture communicative press that intentionally avoids obviously polite or formal methods of address, which may communicate that one is trying too hard. This is to some degree speculative and deserves future research. As noted earlier, these young adults' communicative interactions are increasingly characterized by the pressure to strive for authenticity and candidness and to not be afraid to speak one's mind, but to do so in ways that are retractable or easily laughed off (GEORGAKOPOULOU, 2001; KOROBOV & LAPLANTE, 2013). In such contexts, contentious banter may not pose face-threats (BROWN & LEVINSON, 1987), and may create closeness (STRAEHLE, 1993). Previous researchers have also found that the converse is true as well—that saying "please" does not necessarily increase the politeness or receptivity of a request and may be heard as an imperative (MANDELBAUM, 2014). In short, it may be more normative than not for young adults in

contemporary discursive contexts to pursue riskier forms of social interaction like entitled requests as a means of showing the kinds of partners they are and the kinds they want to attract. [62]

To conclude, I offer a nuanced examination of how romantic couples use entitled requests to engage in a range of social actions that manage their partnerships. The interactive contexts for making and receiving entitled requests is a valuable space for observing how relational expectations are communicated and negotiated in ways that both portray the speaker's identities and index cultural communicative norms while attempting to maintain and pursue closeness. Negotiating entitled requests thus offers valuable insight into the ways in which young adult couples create accountability, agency, and culture as part of the process of pursuing closeness. [63]

Appendix: Transcription Conventions

(.)	Short pause of less than 1 second
(1.5)	Timed pause in seconds
[overlap]	Overlapping speech
LOUD	Talk that is louder than the surrounding talk
Bold	Words emphasized by the transcriber for analytic purposes
Underlined	Emphasis
>faster<	Encloses talk that is faster than the surrounding talk
<slower>	Encloses talk that is slower than the surrounding talk
rea:::ly	Elongation of the prior sound
.	Stop in intonation
=	Immediate latching of successive talk
[...]	Where material from the tape has been omitted for reasons of brevity

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