RESPONDING TO DIRECTIVES: WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO WHEN A PARENT TELLS THEM WHAT TO DO?

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – *This chapter examines children's options for responding to parental attempts to get them to do something (directives).*

Methodology/approach – *The data for the study are video recordings of everyday family mealtime interactions. The study uses conversation analysis and discursive psychology to conduct a microanalysis of sequences of everyday family mealtimes interactions in which a parent issues a directive and a child responds.*

Findings – *It is very difficult for children to resist parental directives without initiating a dispute. Immediate embodied compliance was the interactionally preferred response option to a directive. Outright resistance was typically met with an upgraded and more forceful directive. Legitimate objections to compliance could be treated seriously but were not always taken as grounds for non-compliance.*

Research implications – *The results have implications for our understandings of the notions of compliance and authority. Children's status in*

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interaction is also discussed in light of their ability to choose whether to ratify a parent's control attempt or not.

Originality/value of paper – *The chapter represents original work on the interactional structures and practices involved in responding to control attempts by a co-present participant. It offers a data-driven framework for conceptualising compliance and authority in interaction that is based on the orientations of participants rather than cultural or analytical assumptions of the researcher.*

Keywords: Directives; compliance; authority; children; family interaction; conversation analysis

INTRODUCTION

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Family mealtimes are busy and often fraught interactional events. Feise, Foley, and Spagnola (2006, p. 77) gloss family meals as 'densely packed events' where 'lots has to happen in approximately twenty minutes: food needs to be served and consumed, roles assigned, past events reviewed, and plans made'. In addition to the practical tasks involved in holding a family meal, researchers have identified the dinner table as a crucial site for the performance of key family functions such as the socialisation and social control of children (Charles & Kerr, 1985; DeVault, 1984; Larson, Branscomb, & Wiley, 2006; Nock, 1987). Given the time constraints and highly task-oriented nature of the mealtime interaction, parental directives such as 'Sit up straight' or 'Finish your fish' where they *tell* children to do something are, not surprisingly, common occurrences (Vine, 2009).

This chapter will examine instances in everyday family interaction when parents attempt to tell children what to do (directives). Directives claim an entitlement to control the actions of the recipient. As such they are a highly assertive and invasive social action. When faced with a directive from a parent, children can comply (and accept their parent's right to control them) or resist the directive, challenge their parent's authority and dispute the legitimacy of the directive. The turn immediate following a directive action is crucial for determining the progression of the sequence and will be the focus of the analysis presented here: Will the sequence escalate into family conflict? Will the child acquiesce to parental control?

I begin with an introduction to the study of directives in family interaction, particularly parental directives targeting children. I then explore

some of the response options available to children in the data. Finally, I discuss the implications of the identified practices for responding to directives for our understanding of authority, compliance and children's status in family interactions.

Directives

Directives are examples of actions often labelled by analysts as social control acts (Pearson, 1989). This includes actions such as 'offers, requests, orders, prohibitions, and other verbal moves that solicit goods or attempts to effect changes in the activities of others' (Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor, & Rosenberg, 1984, p. 116). Goodwin glosses directives as 'utterances designed to get someone to do something' (Goodwin, 2006, p. 517). This description fits with Searle's (1979) sense of the 'illocutionary point' of directives in his discussion of Speech Act Theory; it has also become an accepted way of characterising directives by subsequent researchers (e.g. Vine, 2009) and is the working definition adopted here. Blum-Kulka (1997) points out that all forms of social control acts impinge on the recipient's freedom of action to some degree.[1] Directives are actions through which the speaker can assert control or authority over the recipient. Kidwell (2006) points out that one of the central research themes running through work on directives has been with how directives constitute and point up power differentials between participants (e.g. Ervin-Tripp, 1976; West, 1990). This is explored here through the question of whether the entitlement to tell someone what to do is grounded in static social roles (such as parent and child) or provided for in the interactional roles occupied by participants in the interaction.

Recent interaction based work on actions designed to get someone to do something has developed the notion of entitlement as an alternative to more static concepts of power and authority between participants (see Curl & Drew, 2008; Heinemann, 2006). Such work suggests that the formulation of the social control act varies depending on the degree to which the speaker treats himself or herself as entitled to expect compliance with their request/directive. For example, Heinemann (2006) examined interactions between home-help care assistants and their elderly care recipients. She showed that the care recipient could display different 'degrees of stance towards whether she is entitled to make a request or not, depending on whether she formats her request as a positive or negative interrogative' (Heinemann, 2006, p. 1081). Similarly Curl and Drew (2008) showed how different request formulations varied in the degree to which the speaker displayed (a) an

entitlement to expect the request to be fulfilled and (b) an awareness of potential contingencies that could hinder compliance. The notions of entitlement and contingency do not necessarily contradict findings that suggest social roles do matter. A local claim to entitlement often does reflect the social statuses of speakers (e.g. teacher versus student (Macbeth, 1991) but not always (e.g. Maple Street children (Goodwin, 1980, 1990).

In an earlier study using the same data to be analysed here, Craven and Potter (2010) extended Curl and Drew's (2008) analysis of entitlement and contingency and applied it to sequences involving parental directives to children at mealtimes. What was striking about the collection of mealtime directives is that they embodied no orientation to the recipient's ability or willingness to perform the stated activity. In addition to restricting the contingencies available to the recipients, the imperative formulation enabled speakers to display full entitlement to direct the recipient's actions. Directives are occasions when one person involves him or herself with another's business without asking, or even reporting a wondering, about their willingness or capacity (with a modal construction or 'I wonder if … ' preface). The imperative formulation *tells,* it does not *ask*. This means that, unlike a question or a request, the directive does not make acceptance relevant as a next action; it makes relevant compliance.

Directing Children

There exists a cultural assumption that parents should be able to expect compliance from their children in a way they would not from other adults (Dix, Stewart, Gershoff, & Day, 2007). Children are often on the receiving end of directives from adults. The general observation from Craven and Potter (2010) was that non-compliance with mealtime directives recurrently led to upgraded (more entitled and less contingent) repeat directives. Second directives tended not to acknowledge the recipient's right not to comply and so upgraded the directive to further restrict the optionality of response solely to compliance. This is the basis for the suggestion that when imposing on another participant's behaviour, highly entitled parental directives claim the right to *tell*, not just to *ask*. The recipient is not straightforwardly permitted to decline. If children choose not to accept a parents' claim of entitlement and instead resist the demands of the directives, then a conflict situation arises between parent and child.

This chapter is interested in directives for their potential to spark parent–child conflict. It aims to explore the practices used by children to respond to

parental directives and examine the consequences of the various response options in terms of conflict management and power negotiations between participants. This chapter will outline some of the practices evidenced in the data that children used to respond to parental directives and draw some preliminary conclusions about the character of directive responses. I will then spend some time reflecting on the key issues raised by the analysis, drawing on findings from the research literature in order to flag up some of the issues involved with responding to a directive that need to be accounted for and managed both in situ by participants and during analysis by researchers.

DATA AND ANALYTIC APPROACH

The data for the present study came from a corpus of video recordings of family mealtimes. Mealtimes are a site of co-ordinated family action in an environment where standards of behaviour and normative practices are routinely made relevant (Feise et al., 2006). This makes it an ideal site for the study of corrective or instructive sequences, potentially rich with conflict and challenge for participants.

Families with at least two children under ten who regularly ate together at a table were recruited to participate in a study about mealtime interaction. Having at least two children provided the opportunity for the analysis of sibling interaction as well as adult and parent–child interaction. The aim was to have material in which there was interaction between family members in all combinations.[2] All participating families were given a camera and asked to film meals as they felt happy and able to. They had the option of not recording or deleting any meal before submission to the researcher for any reason. Typically, filming began at or around the time the first participant sat down, and ended when most or all family members left the table at the conclusion of the meal. All activities that took place during the recording period were treated as mealtime interaction even if they were not directly oriented to eating a meal. This mirrors sociological work suggesting the function of the family meal extends far beyond just the consumption of food (Feise et al., 2006).

The data were transcribed according to the Jefferson transcription conventions (Hepburn & Bolden, in press; Jefferson, 2004). Names and identifying features within the talk were anonymised through the use of pseudonyms.[3] The analysis focuses primarily on the data collected by the three families recorded specifically for this project. The data is supplemented

by excerpts of data from a further four families taken from the DARG archives with permission from the original researchers where applicable.[4] In total the data represent just over 25 hours of video recordings. The analytic approach draws heavily on contemporary conversation analysis (Drew, 2008; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Schegloff, 1996). At the same time, it is guided by discursive psychological principles in considering the role of cognition or psychological states in unfolding action (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992).

ANALYSIS

A very common response type found in the data was immediate embodied compliance. Craven and Potter (2010) describe immediate embodied compliance as the interactionally preferred response to a highly entitled directive. Therefore, the analysis will begin by considering three examples of that response type before evaluating alternative ways of responding to directives. The discussion will then relate these findings back to the existing literature on compliance, authority and children's status in interaction

Embodied Compliance

The responses to directives in the data collected for this study have not been counted or coded in terms of compliance or noncompliance, as the focus was not to make distributional claims about directives. Nevertheless one of the most common and straightforward responses to a verbal directive is an embodied response that displays compliance without the need for a verbal comment (Excerpts 1–3).

Excerpt 1. Amberton_7_8_53-62

1	**Emily**		Urh huh huh chocolate up[my nouth urh urrrrgh]
2	**Emily**		[((contorts face))]
3	**Emily**		((cough)) ut[ur t ur uhht]
4	**Emily**		[((points repeatedly at her mouth
5			while raising arms and grimacing))]
6	**Mum**	→	((turns to look at Emily)) ENou:::gh
7			[(0.3)]
8	**Emily**	→	[((puts her arms down and sits normally))]
9	**Jess**		Hh hh HAh

In Excerpt 1 Mum issues the directive 'ENou::gh' on line 6. In response, 7-year-old Emily immediately stops waving her arms about, pointing at her mouth and making noises. She lowers her arms and sits still and upright in her chair. She makes no verbal acknowledgement that Mum has directed her to stop her ongoing activity, but her embodied conduct displays both her receipt of, and compliance with, Mum's directive. Excerpts 2 and 3 are examples of the same phenomenon – the child is directed to change her behaviour and does so without verbally responding to the directive.

Excerpt 2. Forbes_5_1_68-75

```
1    Lucy  A    [((takes mouthful and hangs her elbow over back
2               of chair with fork in her hand))]
3               [(1.8)                          ]
4    Dad   →    >Now< DO:N't fli:ck ya- (.) kni:-[ >fo:rk o:ver=
5    Lucy                                        [((unhooks elbow))
6    Dad        =the::re. Kee:p it over your pla:te ple:ase.
7          B    [(1.9)                  ]
8    Lucy  →    [((begins to eat again))]
```

Image A – Line 1 (Excerpt 2)

Image B – Line 7 (Excerpt 2)

Fig. 1. Forbes_5_1_68-75 – Images A and B of Lucy's arm position before and after Dad's directive on line 4.

At the start of Excerpt 2, 5-year-old Lucy has hooked her elbow over the back of her chair and is dangling her fork over her shoulder in a somewhat cavalier fashion. On line 4 Dad begins a directive with '>Now< DO:N't fli:ck ya- (.) kni:-[>fo:rk o:ver=='. As Dad repairs kni- to fork Lucy begins to unhook her elbow. Dad continues the directive on line 6, and in the space for a response Lucy begins to eat again using her fork correctly (line 8). Through her embodied actions Lucy displays an orientation to Dad's incomplete TCU as a directive and delivers a change in conduct as a response. That conduct is in line with the prescription delivered in the directive. Her change in conduct is swiftly and neatly provided without elaboration or performance. Like Emily in Excerpt 1, Lucy does not offer

any verbal acknowledgement of the directive or her stance towards it. Notice that Lucy has finished complying before Dad has finished delivering the directive. This is an example of how embodied responses to directives can blur the turn taking structure of the interaction by responding to a directive before it has been fully delivered. It also speaks to the projectability of directives as a social action and the type of response they make relevant.

In Excerpt 3, 5-year old Lucy ostentatiously pauses mid way to putting food in her mouth. Dad issues a directive on line 6 for her to 'plea:se eat ni:cely'. In response Lucy sharply and swiftly closes her mouth around the fork and pulls it out before swallowing the food.

Excerpt 3. Forbes_7_2_63-70

```
1                [(1.0)                                    ]
2    Lucy        [((opens mouth wide and holds fork with food on
3                it in her open mouth, looking at Dad))]
4    Daisy       °Oh yeah.°
5                (0.8)
6    Dad     →   Lu:c°y° plea:se eat ni:cely.
7                [(1.4)              ]
8    Lucy    →   [((closes mouth sharply around fork then pulls it
9                out and swallows))]
10   Mum                                  [Wi:ll y-]
11   Lucy        ((turns to look at Mum)) [Is it   ] schoo:l tomorrow=
```

Lucy's immediate response to the directive is embodied compliance (lines 8–9). Once Lucy has demonstrated compliance, her next action is to initiate a new sequence of talk unrelated to the directive (line 11). It is interesting to note that Mum and Lucy both initiate new talk simultaneously, and that Mum gives up the floor to Lucy, allowing her to progress the conversation. Here we can see an example of how directives, once responded to, drop quickly from conversation, typically without a sequence closing third or other acknowledgment of compliance.

Excerpts 1–3 are examples of the simplest and smoothest form of directive sequence found in the mealtime data. They also represent the shortest type of directive sequence. This type of directive sequence rarely extends beyond two turns and typically does not become topicalised in the conversation. It appears designed to maximise progressivity and prevent the wider conversation becoming stalled by the directive. The response itself exhibits no markers of dispreference, such as mitigation, elaboration, delay or hesitation (Schegloff, 2007). Immediate embodied compliance adopts a positive alignment to the action initiated by the directive speaker and moves

to further that course of action. As such, it can be considered the preferred response to a directive (Pomerantz, 1978, 1984).

By complying with the directive, the recipient aligns not only with the action indicated by the directive but also with the speaker's right to have issued it in the first place. That is, they support and confirm the directive speaker's entitlement to *tell* them what to do and to control their actions. The combination of a directive as a first pair part and immediate embodied compliance as the second pair part leads to the collaborative and locally occasioned creation of a ratified power asymmetry between the participants. Without both parts the asymmetry would not be confirmed as a shared orientation between the participants. There is no power struggle in Excerpts 1–3. There is no conflict. Instead, the directive speaker asserts a claim to primary deontic rights to make decisions and control actions and the recipient surrenders their own claim.

The general impression within the data of the prevalence of compliance as a response to parental directives mirrors findings from developmental psychology suggesting there is a relatively high rate of compliance from children in response to parental control moves (Braine, Pomerantz, & Lorber, 1991). For example, Brumark (2010) reports that children aged 6–11 years 'complied in about 70% of cases with direct as well as indirect parental regulation' (2010, p. 1083). Similarly, Kuczynski and Kochanska (1990) reported that 'children's most frequent response to the requests of their parents was immediate compliance' (1990, p. 404). The findings from these studies and my own data indicate that compliance is the preferred second pair part to a directive, and that children do frequently comply with parental directives. Therefore, any interpretation of noncompliance or resistance as a response to a directive needs to be done in the context of immediate compliance as the norm.

Resistance

Craven and Potter (2010) demonstrated that recipients can and do sometimes refuse to comply with attempts to get them to do something. The focus of that paper was primarily centred on the directive rather than the response. However, it merits comment here that recipients in the data did resist some directives and that this resistance had consequences for the progression of the sequence. In Excerpts 1–3, the recipient's immediate compliance fully ratified the entitlement claimed and offered no challenge

towards the speaker's right to issue the directive, and so to control the actions of the recipient. However, this is not always something recipients are willing to concede.

Contingency (according to Craven & Potter, 2010; Curl & Drew, 2008) relates to the provision the speaker makes within the directive to acknowledge that the recipient's capacities and desires might interfere with compliance. The more contingent an attempt to get someone to do something is the more scope is offered for resistance. Recipients often take advantage of the scope for resistance offered by modal formulations to do just that. For example, in Excerpt 4 Dad says 'C'n yuh] finish your fi:sh' (line 1), and in response 4-year-old Jessica delivers a turn that directly opposes the directive (line 4).

Excerpt 4. Amberton_1_12_51-62

1	**Dad**		[Er: (.) C'n yuh] finish your fi:sh (.)
2			plea:se.
3			(0.2)
4	**Jess**	→	I: don' want
5			(0.4)
6	**Dad**		Don't ca::re,
7			(0.5)
8	**Dad**		Finish yuh fish.
9			(0.7)
10	**Mum**		I::'m jus' g[unna get (uh) p]iece of fish=
11	**Emily**		[((cough))]
12	**Mum**		=between these two:.

In this excerpt, Dad issues a directive to Jessica using a modal form, 'C'n yuh] finish your fi:sh (.)' (line 1). Note that the modal form orients, at least notionally, to Jessica's ability or willingness to perform the projected action. It ostensibly enquires about Jessica's ability to finish her fish by asking if she *can* perform the stated action. Jessica's response (having had her ability/willingness invoked) is to explicitly state that she does not want to comply with the directive ('I: don' want' on line 4). In his next utterance, Dad straightforwardly treats Jessica's desires as no longer consequential for the ongoing directive sequence. He explicitly tells her he doesn't care what she wants (line 6). Dad then reissues his directive, this time as an upgraded imperative formulation (line 8).

The upgraded formulation removes any orientation to Jessica's willingness or ability in relation to the directed action. It outright tells her to finish her fish. This highlights Dad's claim for entitlement to direct her

actions and prevents compliance being contingent upon her ability or willingness. It is for this reason that Craven and Potter (2010) claim that strongly entitled directives do not just project compliance as a preferred response but can work to restrict the available response options to solely compliance. Incidentally, Jessica does then back down, comply with the directive and ratify Dad's entitlement to control her actions.

Had Jessica continued to resist it is likely that the ensuing disagreement between her and Dad would have escalated into a situation of open conflict. This highlights how difficult it can be for children to resist directives when the speaker is willing to upgrade their entitlement and restrict the scope for resistance in subsequent versions. Resistance leads to confrontations and argument talk that threatens progressivity and intersubjectivity. This can be seen more clearly in an excerpt taken from Craven and Potter (2010) and reproduced as Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5. Crouch_2_1_12-35 (Taken from Extract 6, Craven & Potter, 2010, p. 427)

```
1     Mum →  [kath'rine] >c'you move< [along] a little bit please.]
2     Mum    [((starts to push chair next to Kath))                ]
3     Anna   [((moves out of the way of the chair))                ]
4     Anna   .hhu:
5     KathA  [((swings legs round to side))]
6     Kath   [nng                          ] (.) I wanna sit
7            [<on> th- ]
8     Mum→   [KATh'rine], [katherine don't] be:- (.) do:n' be=
9     Mum                        [((shakes head))]
10    Mum→   =horrible. [↑come on, mo:ve back ple:ase.          ]
11                     [((restarts pushing chair towards Kath))]
12    Kath   aah
13    Mum    [((pushes Kath and her chair backwards))  ]
14           [(2.0)                                    ]
15    Kath    [Aaa:::how:::::::↑:::::: ((dur 3.1))]
16    Mum     [((moves other chair into position))]
17    Mum    [((picks Anna up and sits her on the chair))]
18    Kath   [↑↑aaoo[ww::::: ((dur 2.8))                ]
19    Mum→           [y'need t'be ki::nd to yo:ur        ]
20       →   si:ste:r. (0.2) [now mo:ve your le:g] round the=]
21    Mum B                  [((moves Kath's leg round))     ]
22    Kath                   [↑A:::::h!          ]
23    Mum →  =front.
24           (0.4)
```

Image A: Line 5

Image B: Line 21

In Excerpt 5, Katherine is sitting on her chair somewhat askew. In line 1, Mum's turn takes the form of a modal interrogative: 'kath'rine] >c'you move< [along] a little bit please.]'. It asks a question about Katherine's willingness or ability to perform the indicated action. In response to Mum's turn, Katherine could offer immediate embodied compliance on line 5 by shunting herself and her chair sideways to make space for her sister's chair to be positioned next to hers. Instead she swings her legs round to where Mum wants to place the chair (line 5 – Image A). That is, in the slot directly after the request, her movements display the opposite of compliance. Katherine also begins to formulate an account that specifies her wants or desires ('I wanna sit [<on> th-]' on lines 6–7). Similarly to Jessica in Excerpt 4, Katherine draws on the orientation to willingness/ability indexed by the modal form of the directive to account for her non-compliance.

Mum does not allow Katherine time to finish delivering her account. She breaks into Katherine's turn on line 8 with an upgraded version of the first attempt. Note that some elements of the initial directive no longer appear in this construction. Relevantly in this context the modal form is not now used. Thus, Mum says 'do:n' be horrible', rather than using a modal such as 'can you not be horrible'; and she says 'mo:ve back' rather than using a modal such as 'will you move back'. In addition, the moderating element 'a little bit' has been dropped. By dropping the modal form from the construction Mum removes the contingency of the 'can/could you' modal interrogative in the earlier utterance. In showing less concern with contingent elements such as the recipient's capacity or willingness, she heightens her display of entitlement to direct her daughter's actions.

Mum's turn in lines 8 and 10 provides several opportunities for compliance. Katherine could move her legs around during or after the naming, the formulation of her non-compliance as horrible, the 'come on',

the directive or the politeness marker. However, Katherine's only response is a small cry on line 12 as Mum is pushing a chair towards her.

At this point something interesting and complicated happens. Mum moves from verbally directing Katherine to physically moving her (Image B). Katherine accompanies this with extended indignant sounding cries on lines 15 and 18. This is perhaps a limit case of minimising contingency and maximising the display of entitlement. By physically moving Katherine into position she is given (almost) no possibility to avoid compliance. It is hard to think of a stronger display of entitlement to control the actions of the other than to physically move them into place. Mum does issue a further verbal directive on lines 20 and 23. This has no modal construction; it prefaces an imperative – 'mo:ve your le:g round the front'. – with a curt sounding 'now' (which perhaps upgrades the cajoling but encouraging '↑come on'). However, given the coordination with the physical movement of Katherine by Mum it is hard to see how any further compliance could be given. At this point Mum leaves no space for Katherine to comply independently.

Katherine does not ratify Mum's entitlement to direct her in the same way as the recipients in Excerpts 1–3 did through their immediate embodied compliance. Equally, whereas Jessica relented in Excerpt 4 and complied after Dad upgraded his directive, Katherine does not. Mum physically forces Katherine into the directed position. The only way for Katherine to continue to resist at this stage would be for her to undo Mum's physical manipulation and return her legs to their previously defiant position. Instead she sits still. For Katherine, absence of action (that of continued resistance) now ratifies Mum's entitlement to control her actions. Nonetheless Mum has only succeeded in controlling Katherine's actions at the point when Katherine stops resisting. Up until then the parties had been in conflict over who had the deontic right to control Katherine's behaviour. A deontic asymmetry was asserted by Mum when she first issued her modal interrogative on line 1, but only ratified and created by Katherine when she stopped resisting by line 24

From Excerpts 4 and 5 we can see that responses other than full compliance did not lead to the same swift, unmarked resolution of the directive sequence that the embodied compliance responses did in the first three excerpts. Instead, when recipients did not offer compliance, parents tended to reissue the directive in an upgraded form potentially creating conflict.

In Excerpt 4, Excerpt 5 and the other examples in Craven and Potter (2010) the scope for resistance is first acknowledged during the directive

itself through an orientation to compliance as being contingent on the recipient's capacity and/or desire to perform the action. This is typically achieved using a modal formulation. I do not want to claim that resistance only happens following modal formulations. Instead, my intention here is to show that resistance is provided for following a modal formulation in a way that is not done with a more strongly entitled directive. Thus there exists a specific environment in which the conditions projecting compliance are relaxed and alternative responses are more likely to occur. There is more scope for resistance provided for in the design of a modal request than an imperative directive.

The recipients did eventually comply with the directives in both Excerpts 4 and 5. Thus, in the end, they ratified the speakers' entitlement to tell them what to do. Without the recipient's ratification of the speaker's claim, the directive itself could hardly be taken to be an exercise in the imposition of one person's authority over another. It is the dual process of displaying and ratifying an entitlement to direct that give the directive-compliance exchange the sense of being an exercise in the imposition of authority or power.

Excerpt 5 demonstrated just how far directive speakers can go to compel compliance; overriding all objections and physically performing the action themselves. Despite this, the data contained instances where recipient objections to compliance were not overridden but treated seriously as potentially legitimate barriers to compliance. Such instances are important because they reveal limits to the deontic entitlement that can be claimed and therefore offer a potential route for recipients to resist directives without provoking open conflict.

Legitimate Non-Compliance

When issuing directives parents need to remain alert to the possibility that unforeseen contingencies might impact on the recipient's ability or willingness to comply. Possible reasons for noncompliance can sometimes be reduced or controlled through the turn design and delivery of the directive (Craven & Potter, 2010). However, there is always the possibility that a recipient may refuse to comply and be able to offer grounds for doing so that undermine the speaker's entitlement to demand compliance. In such cases the grounds for refusal then need to be dealt with and responded to rather than disregarded through a reissued directive.

There were cases in the data where non-compliant responses were treated as legitimate answers and responded to progressively rather than

with an upgraded restatement of the earlier directive. One example of this type of response can be seen in Excerpt 6 where Jack's objections to Mum's directive are responded to as a legitimate reason for non-compliance. Jack is a 9-year-old recently diagnosed with diabetes. He requires daily insulin injections, which are performed as part of the family's breakfast routine.

Excerpt 6. Hawkins_3_2.12-4.22_3-27

1	**Jack**		[last night] and it had money in,
2	**Mum**		[Jack.]
3	**Mum**		[[((points at his leg then looks for her tea mug))
4	**Mum**	→	Get your insulin done please.
5	**Jack**		.hh
6			[(0.5)
7	**Jack**		[[((changes his grip on the pen so it is in a
8			position to inject and examines his leg))
9	**Jack**		U::h. (peez) ((Yawn))
10			(0.6)
11	**Jack**		((looking at his leg)) hhh where shall I do it
12			to avoid all the bruises:.
13			(0.5)
14	**Jack**		.ts[s ((glances at Mum))
15	**Mum**		[So:mewhere away from the brui[ses I-]
16	**Jack**		[Look at tha:]t.
17			[(0.2)]
18	**Jack**		[((jerks leg up))]
19	**Mum**		((nods)) Come on,
20			(0.5)
21	**Jack**		You can tell I'm diabetic from that. I think
22			the pe:n's doing it.
23			(0.3)
24	**Mum**		No:: it's: probably you're just
25			inj[ecting ( ) close] to each si:te
26	**Jack**		[No:: cause]
27	**Mum**	C	You are love, ((stands up and leans over the
28			table to look at his leg))
29	**Jack**		[1]THat is where I hit with my:- <with
30			[muh nee:dle.]
31	**Mum**	D	[(thi)] you c'n do it more on the si::de
32			<You're doing it- (0.5) Not that side yuh daft
33			ape (.) [Out]side. hh
34	**Jack**		[This:]
35			[[(0.8)
36	**Mum**		[[((sits down))
37	**Mum:**		Come on get it in love cause it's gone eight

In this excerpt, Mum issues a directive to Jack on line 4: 'Get your insulin done please'. Jack already had his insulin pen in his hand. At this point he repositions it in preparation for injecting and does a display of

searching for a suitable site (lines 7–10). Through these actions Jack displays his orientation towards compliance and signals he is moving towards it. On lines 11–12 Jack then delivers a pre-second insert expansion to ask 'hhh where shall I do it to avoid all the bruises'. This is markedly different to Jessica's response in Excerpt 4. While Jessica displays her unwillingness to comply, Jack signals a problem that is interfering with his attempts to comply. This may contribute to why Jack receives a different reaction to his failure to comply than Jessica did. Instead of disregarding Jack's objection to immediate compliance (as Dad did to Jessica in Excerpt 4) Mum engages with Jack's question about bruises and offers a relevant response on line 15 'So:mewhere away from the bruises'. In this excerpt, Mum's subsequent turn at talk is not an upgraded directive as we might expect, but is a second pair part to an insert expansion sequence initiated by the recipient.

Note the limits of Mum's willingness to progress an expansion sequence that is delaying compliance. When Jack directs Mum's attention to his bruises in a more direct fashion 'Look at tha:]t' (line 16) Mum disengages from the bruises sequence and returns to the directive sequence with an encouraging or cajoling token 'Come on' (line 19). Again note how this is not an upgraded directive in the sense that entitlement is increased and the concern with contingencies is downgraded. Mum does not dismiss Jack's problem with bruises, she just encourages him to progress. This is noticeably different from Dad's 'Don't ca::re, (0.5) Finish yuh fish' response in Excerpt 4. In the current excerpt, Mum does not disregard Jack's concerns about his bruises. She does not treat them as irrelevant or inconsequential in the face of her demand for him to inject insulin. Instead she treats the bruises as a legitimate problem, just not an insurmountable one that would prevent eventual compliance.

Jack continues to resist compliance following Mum's encouragement on lines 21–22. He announces a possible cause for the bruises – 'I think the pe:n's doing it'. If the pen is to blame for the bruises then using it to inject today will make the problem worse. Mum resists Jack's proposed explanation by suggesting an alternative explanation for the bruises: that he is injecting too close to previous sites (lines 24–25). This explanation situates the cause of bruises as being in Jack's technique, something that practice will improve rather than an inherent feature of injecting. Mum takes Jack's evident concern about his bruises seriously. She even stands up and leans over the table in order to gain a better view and assess for herself how bad they are (see Fig. 2).

Image C: Line 27 (Excerpt 6)

Image D: Line 30 (Excerpt 6)

Fig. 2. Hawkins_3_2.12-4.22_3-27 – Images C and D of Mum's movement to examine Jack's bruises more closely.

Mum's movement shows she is treating Jack's announcement as new information, prompting her to assess the bruises for herself. By line 31, having seen Jack's bruises, Mum reasserts her earlier solution of injecting elsewhere and proposes an alternative injection site 'more on the side'. Thus Mum has engaged with Jack's announcement but has resisted accepting a formulation of the problem that could lead to a refusal to comply. Although she treats his complaints as valid she does not allow him to refuse her directive to inject. In fact, as the sequence progresses she does eventually reissue the directive rather than continue to engage with Jack's objections (line 37). The crucial point I wish to make here is that Mum's entitlement to tell Jack what to do is not all encompassing. Despite the imperative directive's projection of solely compliance as a response option, the new information (bruises) introduced by Jack placed a limit on Mum's entitlement. He was objecting to doing something that hurt and Mum needed to modify the directive such that it no longer commanded him to perform a painful action (inject further away from the sites of earlier injections).

Excerpt 6 provides further evidence that social roles alone do not provide parents with an inalienable right to expect compliance from their children. Deontic rights (the entitlement to make decision about and control courses of action) are negotiated moment-by-moment between directive speaker and recipient in interaction. Issues of recipient desire or ability can be invoked to challenge or resist a directive. Such invocations risk escalating the directive sequence into conflict unless the grounds for resisting can be presented as a legitimate barrier to compliance. Even then there is no guarantee that the barrier will be treated as insurmountable.

DISCUSSION

The analysis so far has revealed that compliance is the preferred response to a directive and that children will often (but not always) comply with parental directive. The analysis highlighted that resisting a directive is difficult and can lead to upgraded and more forceful control attempts with a heightened potential for conflict. When recipients do resist directives, they are more likely to avoid escalation of the sequence into conflict if they can demonstrate the legitimacy of their objections. Nonetheless for the children in the excerpts presented here the deck does seem to be stacked against them when it comes to negotiating primary deontic rights in a directive sequence. If necessary, parents can go so far as to physically manhandle the child through the directed actions (e.g. Excerpt 5). So do parents, by virtue of their social role as parent, possess a normative entitlement to control their child's behaviour and to expect compliance?

Compliance and Authority

Compliance is often expressed in terms of its relationship to authority. In fact, when studying compliance it is almost impossible not to also study authority. Moscovici (1976) suggested that power is the basis of compliance. This seems to be a feature of traditional psychological approaches to compliance, which looked predominantly at persuasion strategies such as ingratiation (Smith, Pruitt, & Carnevale, 1982), the reciprocity principle (Regan, 1971), guilt arousal (Carlsmith & Gross, 1969), and foot-in-the-door (Freedman & Fraser, 1966).

Studying compliance often seems to automatically involve studying authority and vice versa (e.g. Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Butler, 2008; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1987). However, there is a developing body of interaction-based research that seeks to understand the nature of asymmetrical power distributions within a stretch of interaction. Such work considers how authority is produced and sustained within interaction using understandings of epistemic priority and institutional knowledge rather than assumptions about static social or personal characteristics of the participants (e.g. Buzzelli & Johnston, 2001; Heath, 1992; Heritage, 2005; Heritage & Sefi, 1992; Macbeth, 1991; Perakyla, 1998; Raymond, 2000; Sanders, 1987).

Much of the interaction-based research into authority and compliance has made use of the medical environment and the perceived asymmetries of

knowledge and power between doctors and patients. For the purposes of the current study, the key finding to emerge from work on medical interactions is that 'a large body of research has demonstrated that actual medical interaction does not consistently embody, and sometimes contradicts, theoretical, social–structural relationships as they relate to asymmetrical distributions of communication practices' (Robinson, 2001, p. 23). Researchers have consistently found that institutional roles alone cannot account for situated displays of authority in interaction (Perakyla, 1998, 2002; Robinson, 1998; Stivers, 2001; e.g. ten Have, 1991).

Similar findings have emerged in studies examining asymmetries and power dynamics in interactions between children as they play. The environments and types of play varied between the studies; including school and preschool crèche settings (Butler, 2008; Goodwin, 2002; Kyratzis & Marx, 2001), home settings (Griswold, 2007), pretend play or acting games (Kyratzis, 2007), and game based play (Goodwin, 1990). Across the different settings, authority figures did, on occasions, appear to emerge based on social roles such as the relative ages of the children (Griswold, 2007) or the status of the character being played during pretend play; such as a teacher (Butler, 2008; Kyratzis, 2007). However, these factors did not universally prevent younger peers from refusing to submit (Goodwin, 2002) or submissive characters in pretend play from 'misbehaving' or walking out of the game (Butler, 2008; Kyratzis, 2007). Factors such as expertise and competence emerged as useful predictors for authority figures within groups (Kyratzis & Marx, 2001). As the experience levels of the groups members changed so to did the balance between authoritative and compliant members (Goodwin, 2002).

Across all of the studies examined here it was interesting that although social roles were often used to scaffold or legitimise displays of authority, in fact each move to take authority or to acknowledge the authority of a co-participant was built out of the moment-to-moment interactions and subject to continual reassessment and swift changes as the play progressed (Goodwin, 2002). These findings reflect the conclusions reached from studying my own data: that authority and compliance were worked up collaboratively between participants as talk progressed rather than being features of static power relationships that endured across time and contexts.

The practical accomplishment of authority in action requires a collaborative effort from both parties. Authority is not a feature of an individual, but is a potential outcome of interactional negotiations regarding future courses of action if one participant acquiesces to the other's vision (Allsopp, 1996; De George, 1976).

Children's Status in Interaction

Children's status in interaction is a complicated affair that has important implications for how research is conducted (e.g. Forrester, 2010). Interaction researchers are often scrupulous about avoiding abstract explanations for asymmetry that cannot be tied to participants' orientations. Interestingly however, even interaction researchers, so unwilling to accept exogenous accounts for power differences between doctors and patients, do refer to static 'status differences' between adults and children. For example, ten Have (1991) alongside his appeal not to view doctor–patient interaction as an artefact of the participants' relative statuses, comments that adults adopt certain styles of speaking when addressing children. He briefly describes elements that he suggests form part of 'a wider ''conversational'' approach taken especially with persons with non-adult status' (1991, p. 157). His 'non-adult status' group includes children and the elderly.

Assumptions about the relevance of social roles (particularly relationship roles) between adults and children can sneak unnoticed into even the most rigorous of studies. For example, Stivers (2005) showed that repeated utterances can provide second position speakers an opportunity to claim primary epistemic rights to the object under discussion. She goes on to claim that the basis on which the epistemic right can be claimed is either a social or interactional role. I support her analysis in cases where the social role can clearly be shown to have been topicalised in the talk. For example in Excerpt 7 Stivers argues that mum indexes her social role 'as the mother and the money provider' as a basis for asserting primary epistemic right to judge five dollars as a substantial weekly allowance for her teenage daughter (2005, p. 152). In a discussion about money, mum's social role as a 'money provider' is indeed made salient in the interaction and can be shown to be the basis for asserting a primary epistemic right to assess allowances, but I struggle to see how her status as 'mother' is topicalised.

Another example of the ease with which social roles can be drawn into analyses of adult–child interaction can be taken from Excerpt 13 of the same paper (reproduced as Excerpt 7).

Excerpt 7. (13) (Schegloff, 1996, p. 176) (Stivers, 2005, p. 146)

1	**TEA**		Check and see if there's any down on the
2			bottom that people forgot to hang up.
3	**GIR**	→	That was Alison's job.
4	**TEA**	→	Oh that's right. It is Alison's job
5	**GIR**		A:lison! ((Calling out for her))

Here the teacher delivers a modified repeat of 'That was Alison's job' (line 3) on line 4. In her analysis, Stivers claims that 'her social roles—teacher versus student; adult versus child—appear to be indexed in the teacher's claim of authority' (2005, p. 146). I would argue that this excerpt can be more fully explained on the basis of the participants' interactional roles as directive speaker and recipient with the attendant claims to entitlement and restricted response options that go with such an exchange in interaction. The quasi-explanatory work done by invoking the participants' statuses as adult and child runs the risk of perpetuating assumptions about relative role identities that are not as grounded in empirical study as they perhaps could be.

The difference between adults' and children's statuses is not simply a case of them occupying different but equivalent groups; one is often treated as superior to the other. In their study of videotapes of children following written instructions for school science experiments, Amerine and Bilmes (1988) explain their findings that the children did not 'successfully' follow instructions as being a feature of childhood incompleteness and incompetence in comparison to a hypothetical adult completing the same task. They suggest that social scientists can safely treat all children as 'incompetent in the ordinary, taken-for-granted skills of daily life' (1988, p. 329).

The idea that children are 'incomplete adults' may stem from a focus within developmental psychology on the acquisition of skills as the child ages (Forrester, 2010). Classical studies of children's language have tended to focus on 'what the child can do at what age and how long it takes to learn' (Cook-Gumperz, 1977; Dore, 1985; Karmiloff-Smith, 1986; Sachs, 1983). This established and extensive focus on children's competencies at various points in their individual development glosses over an implicit presupposition that children's experiences are incomplete or missing some of the aspects required in order to be treated as a participant member in society or interaction (Livingston, 1987). Ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts have identified that children seem to have shaky or restricted membership rights to categories such as 'competent speaker' and 'participant in a conversation' and have begun to reframe arguments about competencies into discussions about membership, status, and access to resources (Forrester, 2010; Forrester, 2002; Forrester & Reason, 2006; James & Prout, 1997; Watson, 1992). This may be of particular relevance when looking at notions of authority and compliance within interaction. Are children forced into positions of submission and compliance by virtue of their quasi-member status in interaction?

There are studies supporting the ability of children to exert themselves within interaction and to expect parental compliance. Burman (1994) suggests that when children draw on discourses of parental duty and responsibility for children they can exercise control. This is very similar to a finding by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1984) that children could exert the power to secure compliance when making requests related to parental obligations to care for them.

On one level, experimental and lab based work has clearly shown that language skills develop as the child matures. Therefore an adult when conversing with a child clearly has a greater range of linguistic resources at their disposal for engineering power, authority and control within the interaction. This is not to say that children are completely without such skills. Sacks (1972) discusses one practice recurrently used by children to gain a turn at talk (You know what?). He suggests that by eliciting a go-ahead in the form of 'what?' from parents, children are then able to speak again through the obligation to reply made relevant by the 'what?'. Here we can see children drawing on (and thereby showing their mastery of) the rules and features of sequence organisation (specifically pre-sequences where checking for recipiency is a common function) in order to accomplish a specific interactional goal (Schegloff, 2007). Sacks (1972) postulated that 'you know what?' was a device used by children as a means to overcome the restricted speakership rights associated with childhood. Filipi (2009) has gone even further to demonstrate how pre verbal infants can affect a form of an other-initiated repair initiator through the direction and duration of their eye-gaze when interacting with their parents. Children may therefore have specific resources and skills with which to bring their own agenda and authority to bear in interaction.

Just because adults are better practiced at, and have more extensive resources available for, exercising control in an interaction, does that mean that children should be expected to comply with their parents' demands?

CONCLUSION

The analysis began by suggesting that immediate embodied compliance was a very common response option within the data. I argued that it leads to the smoothest, shortest directive sequences by aligning positively with the course of action indicated by the directive. As such immediate embodied compliance can be considered the interactionally preferred response to a directive (Pomerantz, 1984; Schegloff, 2007).

In contrast, resisting a directive tended to lead to more forceful, upgraded directives and, ultimately, to open conflict between the participant for as long as they continued to disagree about who had primary rights to make decision about and control the recipient's actions (deontic rights). Open conflict was more likely to be avoided if the recipient's ground for resisting were treated as legitimate barriers to compliance by the directive speaker. However, resisting a directive remained a difficult social action to perform in interaction.

As a concept, compliance has traditionally been studied in conjunction with the notion of authority (Griswold, 2007). Interaction-based studies have worked to reframe the study of authority to focus on situated displays of knowledge (epistemic) or power (deontic) asymmetries (Drew, 1991; Heritage, 2005; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Heritage & Raymond, Forthcoming; Raymond, 2000; Stevanovic, 2011; Stevanovic & Perakyla, Forthcoming). Within this framework, considering the interaction in terms of how the control over a given action is distributed between participants offers a more action-oriented approach to the study of asymmetries and helps to guard against unwarranted assumptions of status differences between participants.

The fact that directive recipients in my data are often children cannot be ignored, but it remains unclear as to how their childhood status should be handled in the analysis. A wealth of studies have commented on the restricted participation rights of children in interaction (Forrester, 2002; Forrester & Reason, 2006; Forrester, 2010; James & Prout, 1997; Watson, 1992). However, such work also suggests that children can and do develop their own set of resources to overcome their participation difficulties (e.g. Filipi, 2009; Sacks, 1972) and that membership rights vary across different domains (Forrester, 2010). This makes it hard (for either parents or analysts) to develop any universal guidelines for dealing with children's interactional contributions.

Despite the difficulties children face when trying to resist parental directives, the recipient is ultimately the only person who can ratify a speaker's claim to a deontic entitlement to issue the directive. Until a recipient complies with a directive, the speaker's claim to entitlement is simply that; a claim. Deontic asymmetries between the participants are created after a claim has been asserted by one party and ratified by another. The potential for conflict exists in the space between the assertion and ratification of a directive speaker's claim to deontic authority (between issuing a directive and it being complied with). When resisting a directive, the recipient is refusing to go along with the directed course of action, is

rejecting the speaker's attempts to control them and (if their objections are not treated as legitimate) creates an environment for conflict where the two parties dispute who holds deontic authority over the recipient's behaviour.

The fact that directive recipients must surrender their claim to deontic authority over their own actions to ratify the speaker's claim reveals the fundamental dialogic process through which deontic asymmetries are created and sustained between parents and children. The management of a directive sequence requires collaborative work from both speaker and recipient. Neither party on their own is sufficient to create and sustain a given interlocutor as entitled to control the actions of another. Understanding how all parties to the directive sequence contribute to the production of situated authority will be key to understanding the action of a directive and its potential to spark conflict within interaction.

It remains to be seen how far the patterns reported here can be applied to directives in other contexts. It will be interesting follow up the organisation of directives in other task based setting such as classrooms, therapy sessions, or driving lessons, where the institution provides for different potential asymmetries (both deontic and epistemic) between the participants. This may facilitate a further disentangling of the role played by social and interactional identities when studying social interaction.

NOTES

1. This has also been expressed as a threat to the recipient's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967).

2. The use of families with more than one child is not intended to reflect a value judgement about what counts as a family. In contrast, by including the potential for as many interactive combinations as possible (e.g. all members, mum and two children, just adults and dad and one child), the goal was to be inclusive and try to capture as much of the rich diversity of family interaction as was possible within the constraints of the project.

3. The reader will notice that in the excerpts presented here the adult participants are referred to as Mum and Dad. This was a deliberate choice, not to expose the category bound entitlements of the social role of parents, but rather to represent participants with the name most commonly used to address them during the interaction (cf., Watson, 1997). Overwhelming children were addressed using their first name (which was replaced with a pseudonym with the same number of syllables) and adults were referred to as Mum and Dad (or variations such as mummy and daddy).

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