

## **Participants' orientations to material and sensorial features of objects: looking, touching, smelling and tasting while requesting products in shops**

**Lorenza Mondada**

### *Abstract*

The ways participants treat an object vary, depending on the type of activity they are involved in, and the way the object features in it, making relevant a diversity of orientations towards its location, its materiality, its qualities and its specificities. The object's features ultimately depend on the relevance set by the action dealing with them, and are revealed by the way this action is formatted.

In this paper, I examine how the object's features are revealed and at the same time established within the action of requesting it – on the basis of a video recorded corpus of shop encounters in which customers request a food product. Requests are multimodally formatted in such a way that they include not only verbal formats and embodied conducts, but also sensorial orientations towards the object. The paper discusses first requests made without any orientation to the location or visibility of the object, contrasted with requests co-occurring with visual actions such as searching for, looking at, examining, bending on the object. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on requests to touch, smell, and taste the object, revealing the relevance of sensorial features for the achievement and progression of the course of action. In this way, the paper shows how the material, spatial, and sensorial features of an object relevantly emerge within a situated course of action. This invites to a multi-modal approach of objects in action that integrates not only movements of the body but also its multisensoriality.

*Keywords:* Conversation Analysis – social interaction – objects – materiality – multimodality – multisensoriality.

### *German Abstract*

InteraktionsteilnehmerInnen gehen unterschiedlich mit Objekten um. Der Umgang mit dem Objekt hängt von der Aktivität ab und wie das Objekt in die Aktivität eingebunden ist. Auf diese Weise werden räumliche und materielle Eigenheiten des Objekts relevant gemacht. Das Sichtbarmachen von Eigenschaften beruht auf Relevanzen, die durch die Einbindung des Objekts in eine Aktivität entstehen und die durch die Art und Weise, wie die Aktivität von den Teilnehmenden formatiert wird, aufgezeigt werden.

Auf der Grundlage eines Korpus von Videoaufzeichnungen von Verkaufsinteraktionen, in denen Kunden nach einem Lebensmittel fragen, wird untersucht, wie die Eigenschaften des Objekts in der Handlung des Kunden verdeutlicht und gleichzeitig festgelegt werden. Die Handlungen der Kunden sind multimodal so formatiert, dass sie nicht nur verbale Formate und verkörpertes Verhalten, sondern auch sensorische Herangehensweisen zum verlangten Lebensmittel umfassen.

Der Beitrag diskutiert zuerst Fragen der Kunden, die weder auf die räumliche Position noch auf die Sichtbarkeit des Lebensmittels Bezug nehmen. Sie stehen im Gegensatz zu Anfragen, welche gleichzeitig mit sichtbaren Handlungen, wie suchen, betrachten, untersuchen, sich über das angeforderte Lebensmittel beugen,

formuliert werden. Darüber hinaus konzentriert sich die Analyse auf Sequenzen, in denen die Kunden darum bitten, das gewünschte Lebensmittel zu berühren, zu riechen und zu schmecken. Auf diese Weise werden sensorische Merkmale für das Ziel und den weiteren Fortschritt des Handlungsverlaufs relevant gemacht. Dieser Beitrag lädt zu einer multimodalen Herangehensweise an Objekte ein, die nicht nur das körperliche, sondern auch das multisensoriale Verhalten der Teilnehmenden berücksichtigt.

*Keywords:* Konversationsanalyse – soziale Interaktion – Objekte – Materialität – Multimodalität – Multisensorialität.

1. Introduction
  - 1.1. A praxeological view on objects in EMCA
  - 1.2. Data and settings
  - 1.3. Sketch of the analysis
2. Requests without any gaze/any orientation towards the product
3. Requests with body orientation and walking towards the location of the product
4. Requests with pointing
  - 4.1. Requesting products by naming and pointing at them
  - 4.2. Requesting with deictic expressions and pointing
5. Requesting by grabbing, touching and smelling the product
6. Requesting to taste
7. Discussion and conclusion
8. Conventions
9. Acknowledgements
10. References

## 1. Introduction

The way participants treat an object varies depending on the type of activity they are involved in, and the way the object features in it, making relevant a diversity of orientations towards its location, its materiality and its specificities. The object's features ultimately depend on the relevance set by the action dealing with them, and the way this action is formatted.

Shops represent a perspicuous setting for exploring these variations: they represent an ecology densely populated with objects, in which participants engage in activities such as buying/selling, centrally featuring objects that are products. This paper shows how customers and sellers alike might orient very differently to the same objects in the shop, depending on a variety of circumstances. For instance, they might treat an object as well-known in advance and taken-for-granted or as something to discover and explore; they might see and treat the object under various aspects, as pricey vs. cheap, rare vs. ordinary, known vs. unknown, desirable, as well as touchable, smellable and tastable ... The paper deals with the variations of objects in action by focusing on how they are oriented to, referred to and bodily treated in various request formats in shops. It reveals how a product can be considered as taken-for-granted, as something to be spotted, seen, and visually inspected, or as a *sense-able* object to be experienced sensorially. This not only contributes to the understanding of how people treat "products" in economic exchanges, but also more generally to the study of different ways in which the relation to objects can

be praxeologically, multimodally and multisensorially instantiated in social interaction (cf. also Mondada 2019a). This opens up a broader conceptual discussion about how to articulate action and objects in interaction.

### 1.1. A praxeological view on objects in EMCA

Within current discussions about how to handle materiality in social action – such as within Actor Network Theory's approaches to science (Latour 1996) and to the market (Calvignac/Cochoy 2016), ontological approaches (Mol 2003), as well as new-materialist approaches (Kissmann & van Loom 2018) – ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (EMCA) have provided for an original way to tackle objects in social interaction (see Nevile et al. 2014 for a range of studies). Thanks to its specific praxeological perspective, focusing on the primacy of action in order to understand social order, language, culture and cognition, EMCA treats materiality by considering how participants – and crucially participant's bodies – encounter, manipulate, utilize, transform a diversity of materials in the course of their situated activities. Materiality includes objects, artifacts, tools, technologies, and documents. These are not approached *per se*, as static materials in isolation, which would have particular features, affordances or even agentivity; quite the opposite, objects are studied as they are mobilized and used moment by moment in relevant and timed ways within a course of action.

In particular, objects have been analyzed as resources for the organization of social interaction (Day/Wagner 2015, 2019; Mondada 2007; Robinson/Stivers 2001), as indispensable tools for achieving specific activities (such as instruments in surgery, Mondada 2011; Heath et al. 2018; or the Munsell chart in archeology, Goodwin 1994), as well as being the very focus of the activity itself (like objects within museum visits, Heath/vom Lehn 2004). Particular objects such as documents and texts have also enabled important studies of textuality in action (see Mondada/Svinhufvud 2016 for a review).

This paper deals with a specific type of objects, products for sale. Products are often manipulated in shop encounters, being taken, inspected, negotiated, and eventually selected (see De Stefani 2014 about supermarkets; Fox/Heinemann 2015 about shoe repair shops; Mondada/Sorjonen 2016 and Sorjonen/Raevaara 2014 about kiosks). Objects can be manipulated in a commercial transaction in a way that radically transforms them, for instance from sellables/buyables to possessables and possessed. Streeck draws a "history of things in a situation of interaction" (1996: 367), showing how in a business negotiation, objects such as cookies and their packages can undergo several practical transformations, changing from objects of use into things-at-hand, from exemplars into symbolic artifacts, affording various practices such as inspecting, comparing, and evaluating. Likewise, Mondada (2019a) shows how in the course of a short shop encounter the same object, a cheese, can be seen and manipulated as a buyable/sellable piece, as an epistemic object referring to culture, heritage and geography, as a sample to be touched, smelled and tasted, as an object to wrap and unwrap, each of these aspects being made relevant by distinct usages, manipulations and sensory practices. Food items constitute a particular type of materiality, which crucially involves multiple senses, and more specifically taste. While taste has been discussed by studies of eating

practices (Keating 2000; Ochs/Pontecorvo/Fasulo 1996; Sneijder/te Molder 2005; Wiggins 2004), it has most often been tackled through language, as it is talked about, rather than in embodied and sensorial ways. More recently, papers focused in taste as a sensorial practice have begun to describe its embodied aspects, namely in tasting activities. These activities are a perspicuous setting in which to observe how descriptors of taste are collectively discussed (Fele 2016), how they rely on the use of tools and artifacts like aroma wheels and color measurement standards (Mondada 2018c, 2019b), how, on the basis of standard and normative repertoires of tasting categories, they contribute to an objectivization of tasting and taste (Lieberman 2013). Selection and decision-taking in commercial encounters typically also involve methodic practices of tasting, which explore and assess the sensorial qualities of the product (Mondada 2018a).

In this paper, I demonstrate how food items as products to sell are variously treated as objects having different qualities and properties – epistemic, institutional, material and sensorial. By examining a diversity of formats through which customers request a food product, I reveal how this object is locally praxeologically treated in its relevant qualities. More specifically I show the importance of embodied practices orienting to these qualities, as well as sensorial practices such as touching, smelling and tasting.

## 1.2. Data and settings

The data analyzed in this paper come from the *int-counter corpus*, which has been collected in cheese shops in 15 European cities and in 12 different languages. Economical transactions in these shops have been video-recorded with 2 cameras and additional microphones, enhanced by field studies, with the formal agreement and even the collaboration of the participants.

Cheese shops represent an exemplary case of an ecology densely populated with objects. Although their design might vary, the disposition of the products in different refrigerated window cases tends to reproduce the basic taxonomies of cheeses (soft vs. hard vs. blue, cow vs. goat vs. sheep). They are cultural objects coming from different countries and regions, and representing local identity features. Cheese products are objects considered as organically alive and unique – each of them has a particular degree of maturation and evolves in specific ways, for example – escaping from the standardization and homogeneization of many Western industrial products, including food. Moreover, they are considered as objects to be assessed by the 5 senses (including hearing, which is used by professionals to assess the maturation of some hard cheeses). This makes them exemplary products to be studied for understanding how participants – customers and sellers – establish the relevant features of an object *hic et nunc* within the course of the interaction. This also constitutes a perspicuous setting to investigate the multisensorial practices exploring the qualities of these objects and how they are emergently and situatedly established, attributed and recognized in social interaction.

### 1.3. Sketch of the analysis

In order to reveal how participants orient to, identify, attribute and accomplish relevant features of the objects at hand, the paper focuses on a specific sequential environment and type of action, recurrent in the setting studied, by examining how customers request a product in the cheese shop.

Requests are actions that have been largely studied in the EMCA literature (see Drew/Couper-Kuhlen 2014 for a set of representative studies and discussions). More specifically, requests in shops have been studied within different perspectives, concerning their sequence organization (Merritt 1976), their syntactical format (Fox/Heinemann 2016), their adjustment to the embodied approach of the counter (Sorjonen/Raevaara 2014), and the rapport and service they achieve through politeness (Placencia 2004). The embodied relation to products as material objects has been less investigated (but see De Stefani 2010, 2014, Fox/Heinemann 2015; Mondada 2016, 2018a, and, for business to business communication, Streeck 1996).

Here, I focus on the fact that customers manifest different ways to orient to products in their requests, which display how they treat the object, how they exhibit their knowledge and expertise, as well as their category as a customer (e.g. as a regular), and how they locally shape and categorize their purchase (as planned vs. as occasioned). Moreover, requests also display how customers orient to and establish the relevant material features of the object considered – i.e. as a visually inspectable object, or as a tastable, smellable, touchable object. The analysis shows that these relevant features are not only said in so many words, but are incarnated in the embodied postures of the participants, manifesting their sensorial engagements. In this sense, and more generally, the analysis offers a praxeological approach to objects that considers multimodally organized conducts – paying special attention to the embodied orientations of the participants – as well as multisensorial practices – paying special attention to the ways participants do not only *manipulate* objects (with their hands) but also *sense* them (with different parts of their bodies).

Thus, the analysis shows how requests for products orient to a diversity of features of the objects: the local geography of objects (their location), their materiality and their sensorial properties. Although some requests are uttered without any embodied orientation to the requested object, in a purely verbal way (typically by naming the product without looking at it) (section 2), requests are generally formatted in a multimodal way. The analysis discusses embodied orientations to the materiality of products, from spatiality to sensoriality. First, it examines the location of the products as being related to their taxonomic distribution, revealing knowledge of the object and the category it belongs to (section 3). It also shows how customers typically request a product by turning to, pointing, and sometimes leaning over and inspecting the object (section 4). This demonstrates the relevance of having a visual access to the referent in these actions. Nonetheless, visibility is neither the only and nor the most fundamental dimension of these objects: other forms of sensoriality are involved, although often restricted, by clients requesting to touch and smell (section 5) or to taste (section 6) the product in order to decide whether to buy it or not. By taking into account not only the multimodality of orientations to objects,

but also the multisensorial engagements of participants with objects, the paper reflects on the relevance, situatedness and specificity of embodied sensorial access to materiality.

## 2. Requests without any gaze/any orientation towards the product

Even in the materially dense ecology of the cheese shop, requests can be made without looking at all at the products. This constitutes a simplest case, which I contrast with the most frequent cases in which customers indeed orient to the objects they request (see the next sections). Customers not gazing at the product they request manifest they know in advance what to buy, and they suppose the product is available. This often concerns either common products or regular customers used to the products sold by the shop (cf. Laurier 2013).

Extract 1, recorded in Finland, shows how clients display that they are requesting some pre-planned product. Both customers, approaching the counter, look at the list she holds (1, Figure 1.1), rather than at the cheese in the showcase. This displays that the purchase has been planned ahead, possibly with other things to buy in the market. The customer reads aloud the name of the cheese to buy (2), in a way that is addressed to his wife, rather than to the salesperson, who is approaching the counter: >°parmesan(ia)°< (2) is uttered at fast pace and with a lower voice, but also by accentuating the beginning of the word. This constitutes the last coordination between the two customers, before engaging in the shop encounter with the salesperson (there is another salesperson at the counter, but during this encounter she is busy on the phone, see Figure 1.2, and does not participate to this interaction):

### (1) (FRO\_FIN\_HEL\_170415\_cli7\_883\_35.02\_parmesaania)

```

1          (1.8)          *£•   # (0.4)
cus1      >>walks along counter*
cus2      >>walks holding a listf
cus1          •looks at the list->
fig          #fig.1.1

```

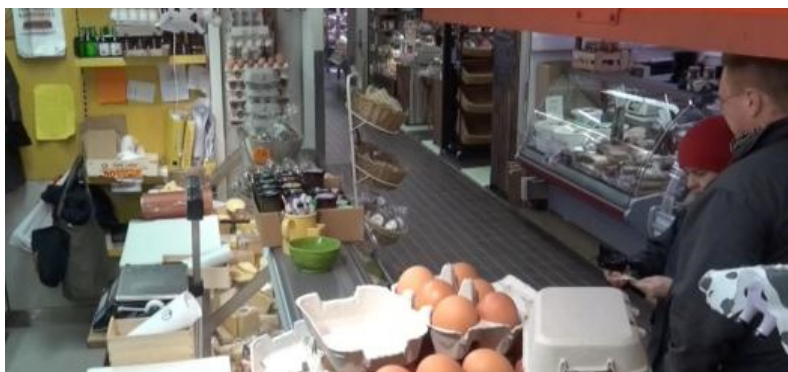


Figure 1.1

```

2  CUS1      >°parme•saa+n(ia)°<
          >°parmesan°<
          ->•looks at SAL->
sal      >>walks---+looks at CUS->
3          (0.4)

```

4 CUS1 \*[#mo•i\*  
[hi  
5 SAL \*[#hei  
[hi  
cus1 \*1 step twd counter\*  
cus1 ->•looks at showcase->  
fig #fig.1.2



Figure 1.2

6 (0.2)  
7 CUS1 **parmesaania**  
parmesan  
8 (0.3)  
9 SAL **joo,•+**  
yes  
cus1 ->•looks at SAL-->>  
sal +walks along counter-->>

The salesperson – who might have overheard the previous turn– approaches the counter, facing the customer, and they exchange mutual gaze as the customer moves his gaze from the list to the salesperson, just before engaging in mutual greetings, produced at the same time, in overlap (4-5) (Figure 1.2). In this way, they achieve a perfectly coordinated face-to-face positioning, displaying reciprocal availability to engage in the exchange.

As soon as the greeting sequence is completed, the customer briefly looks down at the refrigerated showcase, and utters the request – composed by a unique word, the name of the cheese (7). His gaze displays the transition from the mutual orientation in the opening to an orientation to the products, initiating business. However this gaze is very brief – since the customer looks back at the salesperson just after she positively responds (*joo*, 9) to the request. The customer does not actively search for the named product; the use of the name is enough to complete the request without having actually spotted the corresponding product in the showcase (the product is located at the opposite end of the counter).

After the agreeing *joo* (9), which is usually produced as a first and early response to requests, before the actual compliant response that might take some more time (Mondada/Sorjonen 2016), the salesperson moves to grant the request by walking towards the location of the product.

Although customers might not have a shopping list to read, the multimodal formatting of their request manifests it as concerning an object known in advance, as in this fragment recorded in France:





Contrary to these cases, the requests in these specialized shops are most often formatted as a different multimodal Gestalt that incorporates various resources referring to the products in the local environment: pointing gestures, gaze, body orientations, as well as deictic expressions and demonstratives. In this latter case, to which we turn now, the material spatial visual features of the object are made relevant.

### 3. Requests with body orientation and walking towards the location of the product

Shops are a rich material environment in which numerous products are exhibited. In all shops, products are spatially distributed according to marketing and classificatory schemes; in cheese shops, the localization of products within space corresponds to a taxonomic order, usually distinguishing between textures (hard vs. soft, vs. blue cheeses), as well as animals (cow vs. goat vs. sheep milk cheeses). This distribution of objects defines a particular epistemic geography of the products in the shop, to which both sellers and customers orient to.

The customer displays her knowledge of the product by orienting towards its location when uttering the request. Contrary to the cases analyzed in extracts 1-2, in which the seller was initiating a movement toward a cheese located at some distance, in the case at hand, it is the customer who orients towards the product's location. This spatial knowledge might be derived from the customer having inspected the shop before the request or from previous visits.

We join a first case in France, as seller is typing ("beep" sounds) the price of the first requested product (1). With *oui:?* ('yes:?', 3), she invites the customer to produce her second request:

#### (3) (FRO\_F\_STL\_100415\_01.01.08)

```

1  SEL      beep beep beep
   cus      >>looks at SEL->
2  (0.4)
3  SEL      oui±:?? bip bee#e[eeep+
   yes:??
4  CUS
   [et +puis #euh$# (. ) un selles sur ch+er:
   [and then ehm (. ) a selles sur cher
   ->±looks on her left->
   ±chin pointing±
   +steps to the left-----+walks->
   $walks slowly to the left->
ast
fig      #fig.3.1
5  (0.4) * (1) $ (3.7) * (0.2) + (0.3)
ast      ->$
sel      *walks to left*
sel      ->+

```



Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2

```

6 CUS      ( ) (bien fra*is/ferme)
           ( ) (well fresh/firm)
sel
           *extends RH in fridge->
7         (0.3) *          (0.3) #          *          (0.4)          *          (0.2)
sel
           ->*touches SsC1/ScC2/*palpates SsC1*takes SsC1->>
fig
           #fig.3.2
    
```

The customer ties her request with the previous one within a and-prefaced turn (Heritage/Sorjonen 1994; Mondada/Sorjonen 2016) (*et puis*, 'and then', 4) and asks for a *Selles sur Cher*. The name is preceded by a *eu*h ('ehm', 4), adjusting to the timing of the turn but also the movement of the customer. Already upon the solicitation of the seller (*oui*?:?, 'yes:?', 3), the customer shifts her head/gaze towards her left (Figure 3.1); she does one step in that direction while uttering *et puis*, she points with her chin on *eu*h and finally she decidedly walks towards the left, while uttering the name of the cheese. This initiates and organizes the progressive transition of all participants from the till to the opposite side of the counter. The seller and her assistant adjust to and align with it, so that everybody reaches the relevant position (5) and leans over the fridge, looking at the cheese (Figure 3.2) before a specification of the request is uttered. This specification – which is not well audible on the recording but refers to the quality of the texture – displays the orientation of the customer to the features of a specific item (vs. the generic type of cheese) and grounds the need to have a visual access to the object. Moreover this specification works as an instruction for the seller, who does not merely fetch the product in the fridge, but actually selects one among two items: she briefly touches their top with one finger and then haptically explores the selected one with her entire hand, palpating it. So, what the customer can witness is not just the visual appearance of the product, but also the haptic features that are possibly revealed by the professional touch of the seller (Mondada in press a) – to whom the customer also delegates the ultimate choice of the best item responding to the specification. The tangible palpable quality of the cheese is here asymmetrically established, touched by the professional and visually monitored by the client, in a form of complementary sensorial access distributed between them.

In similar ways, in the next fragment, from another French shop, the client has been waiting for a while. When the seller comes to serve him, he orients to her (gaze and head orientation) and at the same time to the product he is about to request (steps towards the eggs, 1) (Figure 4.1). Likewise, he projects the request of a second product very early on, by turning his body towards its location (the hard cheese fridge).





## 4. Requests with pointing

Customers might request products by identifying and referring to them not only verbally but also by precisely pointing at them and leaning towards them. By so doing, customers manifest the relevance of visually accessing the object be it for checking its availability, or quality, for searching for it, or for having discovered it. These practices embedded in the request and making it referentially intelligible, treat the material environment as an important resource. I distinguish two requests formats, both involving pointing, but displaying different types of knowledge concerning the object: the former refers to the product by its name and the second with demonstratives.

### 4.1. Requesting products by naming and pointing at them

Requests mentioning the name of the cheese display a form of knowledge about the product. This can be acquired locally, on the spot, by reading the label, or can rely on some more general expertise. Although knowing the name of the cheese, the participants multimodally format their request by adopting a body orientation towards the object requested, as they look at and check the product that is actually picked up by the seller. This multimodal format displays the relevance of a *visual access* to the referent.

The inspection of the cheeses while waiting/prior to the request is observable in the way the request is formatted, as in the following case, recorded in a cheese shop in Basel (Switzerland), in Swiss German. The customer has been waiting and has spent a bit of time in front of the products, clearly inspecting portions of the fridge.

#### (5) (BS 01.29.07\_CLI14)

```

1  SEL      grüezi:
           hello
           cus    >>enters the shop and moves forward along the counter->
           sel    >>busy with un/wrapping cheeses on counter->
2  CUS      grüezi:
           hello
3          (4.7)
4  SEL      was+ hätte si gärn?
           what would you like?
           cus    ->+stops and looks at products in front of her->
5          (1.3)
6  CUS      eh:: (0.3) gärn± e vieux #gruyère,±
           eh:: (0.3) please an old Gruyère
           fig    ±points-----±, , , , ±
                   #fig.5.1
7          (0.3) + (6.1)
           cus    ->+looks at her belongings->
8  SEL      hum hum

```



Figure 5.1

9 (5.5) + (0.5) \* (5) \* (0.8) +  
 cus ->+inspects counter-----+looks at knife->  
 sel ->\*fetches Gr\*shows with knife->  
 10 SEL wie vill öbbe?  
 how much do you want?  
 11 (0.6)  
 12 CUS dasch guet+ (so;jo).\*  
 that's fine  
 cus ->+inspects counter->  
 sel ->\*,,,cuts and wraps->  
 13 (0.2)  
 14 SEL m`rci  
 thanks  
 15 (13.7)\*  
 sel ->\*weights and prints price->  
 16 SEL süsch no tōbis?  
 something else?  
 cus ±...->  
 17 CUS denn:: vom: tapp#ezätller,± (0.6) sélection maison  
 then an Appenzeller (0.6) house selection  
 ->±points±,,,,,±  
 fig #fig.5.2



Figure 5.2

18 (4.0) + (20.0) + (7.0)  
 sel ->+arranges previous cheese+fetches Appzll->>

When the customer enters the shop, the seller is busy with rearranging some cheese and this occasions some delay in the service (Harjunpää/Mondada/Svinhufvud 2018). Still busy, the seller invites the customer to utter her request (4) and the latter does so only after some time (5), looking at the cheeses on the counter. Her request begins with a *eh::* further delaying the choice (6). She finally points at a piece of cheese, and utters its name (*e vieux gruyere*, 6, Figure 5.1). This pointing gesture is the result of an intensive look at the counter.



Likewise, while the seller is fetching and wrapping the Gruyère, the customer has some time for further inspecting the counter: she then chooses an Appenzeller (17). In both cases, she points and tells the name (Figure 5.2). The way she names the cheese, using some specific appellation, in French (*vieux gruyère*, *appänzeller* (0.6) *sélection maison*) displays that she has read its label.

So, the action consisting in requesting by pointing supposes a preliminary visual inspection of the environment (Goodwin 2003), identifying and selecting the chosen item.

This action is also observable in the following example, from a French shop:

(6) (tho18\_cli50\_24.10 tamié)

```

1      (2.0) #      (3.8)      + (0.4)
sel    >>busy with previous cheese->
cus    >>stares at the refig.showcase, bending his knees+at SEL->
fig    #fig.6.1
2  SEL  et voi+l+à:,
      here we are
sel    •looks at CLI->
cus    ->+looks at showcase->
3      (0.5)
4  CUS  ±le •p'tit± bout# du+ tamié• +là?
      the little bit of Tamié there?
      ±.....±points---+finger touches glass±,,->
sel    ->•looks at TAM-----•
fig    #fig.6.2
5  SEL  le+ p'tit morceau d'tamié,
      the little piece of Tamié
cus    ->+

```



Figure 6.1



Figure 6.2

```

6      (5) * (5)
sel    ->>*fetches TAM->>

```

Waiting to be served for the next request, the customer clearly inspects the window case (Figure 6.1); when the seller turns to him (2), he looks again at the cheeses and points while asking for the Tamié (4, Figure 6.2). The seller sees him and his pointing (2-4). Interestingly, she confirms the request with a different turn format than the customer: the customer uses a precise identification of that piece of Tamié (with *du*: *le p'tit bout du tamié*, 4), further highlighted by the final *là* (there, 4), whereas the seller uses a more generic identification (with *de*: *le p'tit morceau d'tamié*, 5). Furthermore, the seller uses the more formal *morceau* vs. the customer the more familiar *bout*. In this way, the customer is treated as having identified the item to

buy by inspecting the fridge –rather than as having the project of buying/knowning that type of cheese.

While in the previous two excerpts the client had some time before producing his request, in which s/he looked, identified and selected at the product to ask for, in the next excerpts the customer displays his/her ongoing search for the product to buy *during* the request itself. This results in some delays in producing the name of the product, as here in Basel, in Swiss German:

(7) (FRO\_CH\_BS\_110415\_13.18)

1           (4.3)+ (0.7)  
cus           +walks in->  
2 CUS       gu[ete tag  
              good morning  
3 SAL       [griezi  
              hello  
4           (0.4)\*± (0.7) \* (0.7) + (0.4) #  
sal           \*.....\*walks along counter->  
cus           ±gazes at cheese-->  
cus                               ->+stops, standing at distance-->  
fig   #fig.7.1



Figure 7.1

5 SAL       was dörfs [sein?  
              what can that be  
6 CUS       [ich hä+tti \*gärn (0.3) e±+hm                       +  
              [I would like (0.3) ehm  
sal                               -->\*stops at counter facing CUS->  
cus                               -->±gazes at SAL-----±gazes at cheese---->>  
cus   ---->+1 step twd ctr+stands-->>  
7           (1.4) † (0.2) †acht:# so:: (0.7) boutons: ±†  
              (1.6)           eight so (0.7) ((name 1st part))  
cus           †.....†points, tapping glass-----†  
cus   -->†at SEL->  
fig   #fig.7.2



Figure 7.2



8 †<die hebe jo bed guet? (.) zwei drei wuche?  
*they stay fine (.) two three weeks?*  
 cus †holds pointing at the windowcase->  
 (1.1)  
 9 SEL bouton de culotte?  
 ((complete name))  
 10 CUS jä,  
 yes  
 11 (0.3)  
 12 SEL die † wärde nur riifer eifach.  
*they just become more mature*  
 cus ->†  
 13 (0.2)  
 14 CUS >jo da`sch< gu[et ]  
*fine that's good*  
 15 SEL [kräf]tiger  
 [stronger]  
 16 CUS hm hm†  
 ->†at cheese->>  
 17 (0.7)  
 18 CUS hhh gärn acht stuck  
*hhh please eight pieces*  
 19 (0.6)  
 20 SEL gä:rn  
*with pleasure*

The customer enters the shop (1) and approaches the counter (1-4). She begins to look at the window case before stopping in front of it, still at some distance and in silence (Figure 7.1). The invitation of the seller (5) probably orients to this slight delay in the request. The customer responds (6) in overlap, but her turn format further delays the name of the product. She continues to gaze at the cheese, steps closer to the window and finally begins to point (7), tapping the glass with her finger (Figure 7.2), before she utters, rather hesitantly, the incomplete name of the product (7). The pointing is held, as she inserts a question-answer sequence, concerning the maturation and conservation of the cheese (8-16).

Contrary to the previous cases, in which the request was uttered without any delays or hitches, in this case, the request is formatted in a hesitant way, and displayed as emerging during the scrutinization of the cheeses in the fridge.

A similar case is the following, recorded in Paris (France), in which the customer explicitly formulates his action as an ongoing search (1-2):

### (8) (PA1007\_cli18\_2.03.48 soumaintrain)

1 CUS alors, +j`vais vous pren:dre euh: -tendez parce que  
*so, I will take from you ehm: wait cos*  
 +moves left looking at shelf->  
 2 j`re:+ga::rde,# tac tac >pardo.h:n<+  
*I am looking tac tac >excuse me<*  
 ->+comes back to right-----+  
 fig #fig.8.1



delays and produces a turn without any discontinuities. In this case, pointing supposes a preliminary visual inspection of the fridge, possibly including the reading of the labels on the pieces, which is typically occasioned and facilitated when the customer is waiting. In the second format, the customer points in a slower, less decided, way, and the requesting turn is characterized by hitches, hesitations, self-repairs and suspensions. In this case, the visual inspection is made during the request, and displays an ongoing search. This might warrant the attribution of a K-stance to the customer.

These two multimodal Gestalts show the importance not only of the verbal format and of the trajectory of the pointing gesture, but also of visual practices such as looking, inspecting, exploring, and seeing, which are essential for the public display of one or another Gestalt and for the adoption of contrasted embodied orientations towards the object.

## 4.2. Requesting with deictic expressions and pointing

Very differently than when they name a product, customers can request it by just using a demonstrative and point at it. In this case, a recurrent sequence is observable, as shown by 3 occurrences from a shop in Madrid (Spain):

### (9) (MDR\_0401-sel1-2.09.18-cli10)

1 CUS y: también:: +de+ **este** medio# por fa[vor]  
*and also from this in the middle please*  
 +..+ **points->**

fig #fig.9.1

2 SEL [del:  
 [from

3 del +afuega'l pi[tu? muy bien  
*from afuega'l pi[tu? perfect*

cus ->+

4 CUS [°°si'°°  
 [°°yes°°



Figure 9.1

(10) (MDR\_0401-sel2-1.43.00-cli6)

- 1           +(1.0)  
 cus       +points->  
 2 CUS       cien grami#llos de **este**  
             100 grams of this one  
             fig                   #fig.10.1  
 3 SEL       quieres un+ poquito de comté?  
             do you want a bit of comté?  
 cus       ->+  
 4 CUS       sí  
             yes



Figure 10.1

(11) MDR\_0401-sel1 (sel2 pour son)-3.10.20-cli19 este

- 1 CUS       mira +y **este** trozo me pones# a+ mí  
             look and give me this piece  
             +points-----+  
             fig                                   #fig.11.1  
 2 SEL       también te pongo este tro[zo de: de de de la chivita?  
             I give you this piece too   of of of of chivita?  
 3 CUS   [sí  
   [yes  
 4 CUS       sí.  
             yes



Figure 11.1

In these sequences, the customer requests a cheese by pointing at it, while uttering a demonstrative (*este*, this one, 2) (Figures 9.1, 10.1, 11.1). There are no delays, no hitches, and the request is smoothly produced. The customer does not mention the name of the cheese. In second position, in response, the seller regularly produces a request for confirmation, producing the name of the cheese. This format constitutes

a skilled manner a) to introduce the name, b) to produce a turn that projects a possible confirmation by the customer. In this way, the customer, who was displaying a lower epistemic stance by using the demonstrative, is now treated as the one who responds to the interrogative turn, thereby as having a higher epistemic stance. In these sequences the reference to and choice of the cheese are unproblematic; what is negotiated is rather the epistemic authority of the customer.

## 5. Requesting by grabbing, touching and smelling the product

In the previous sections, I dealt with requests of products that either rely on pre-existing knowledge and expectations concerning its availability (requests without any gaze nor pointing at the product) or that make spatio-visual access to the requested item relevant (requests with a body orientation or a pointing towards the object).

In the next sections, I deal with another type of request, in which the customer is not only claiming the right to *see* the product before deciding to buy it, but also the right to engage in other forms of *sensorial* access, namely touching and tasting. Material objects as cheese are not abstract and standardized products; rather, they are unique items that can be assessed on the basis of all the senses (mainly sight, touch, smell, and taste). In this sense, cheese represents a perspicuous setting to examine how not only *reference* is at stake, not only *visual resources* might be exploited, but also other *sensorial aspects* – as a crucial basis for accessing and evaluating the product (Mondada 2018c).

Sensorial access to cheese is recognized and valued as fundamental by professionals and amateurs; nonetheless, it is normatively regulated, restricted and policed in shops as far as customers are concerned – for obvious reasons of hygiene and preservation of the product. This asymmetry between forms of sensorial access to the object between customer and seller normatively excludes customers' direct self-initiated sensorial engagements other than visual, and also makes requests to taste and to touch relatively seldom in the data. By contrast, offers to taste, touch and smell are clearly more frequent. This shows that sensorial access to object are hierarchically ordered, normatively constrained and socially orchestrated by the seller rather than by the customer, within an unequal distribution of right to sense among the participants.

In what follows, I focus on one (rare) instance of touching and smelling initiated by the client self-fetching a cheese in a refrigerated shelf, and then on some instances of requests to taste. We join the next extract in a shop in London (UK), after the customer has been offered a first choice, which she has rejected. The seller offers a second option (1-2), but the customer focuses her gaze on another cheese (1, Figure 12.1), which she grabs from the fridge (4, Figure 12.2):

(12) (FRO\_UK\_LDN\_04\_1-13-28 CLI35)

1 SEL and:, that's that that could be another option.  
 cus >>looks at SEL-----+looks at cheese->  
 2 a little bit +stronger,# but still+ in the  
 cus ->+approaches cheese--+advances H->  
 fig #fig.12.1



Figure 12.1

3 (0.3)  
 4 CUS → I +like the way this# looks  
 fig ->+grasps a piece of cheese->  
 #fig.12.2



Figure 12.2

5 SEL ok+ay, [alright+  
 6 CUS [#((laughter))#  
 fig ->+palpates it--+smells it-->  
 #fig.12.3 #fig.12.4



Figure 12.3



Figure 12.4



Figure 12.5

7 (0.6) \* (0.6) + \*  
 sel \*comes closer to her\*  
 cus ->+palpates it-->  
 8 CUS [that's [that's it's [not [too  
 9 SEL [i- [i- [if [if you don't# mind I take  
 fig #fig.12.5  
 10 the cheese+ myself  
 cus ->+gives cheese to SEL->

11 CUS       sorry+ ye[ah (.) sorry °sorry °°I x[x°°  
 12 SEL               [uhm and  
               ->+  
 13 SEL   [I \*can give you a\* taste  
   \*pts chabichou\*  
 14               of the chabichou so you can also uh:[:::  
 15 CUS   [I can` t  
 16               eat cheese [haha  
 17 SEL                       [you don` t eat cheese? alright

By saying *I like the way this looks* (4) the customer displays herself relying on her *sight* to unilaterally select the cheese, indifferent to seller's offers. She not only turns away from him and disregards his offer, but she grabs one piece of cheese from the fridge (4, Figure 12.2). Furthermore, she engages in a tactile examination, palpating it (6, 7, Figures 12.3-12.5) as well an olfactory one, smelling it (6, Figure 12.4). The outcome of this sensorial examination is an emergent assessment (*that's that's it's not too* 8), which is left unfinished, since the seller, progressively coming closer to her, brings her examination to an end.

The format used by the seller (9-10) is not – as in other cases – focused on directly forbidding the customer's action (Mondada in press a), but rather focused on claiming his right to manage the products. Moreover, the seller offers an alternative course of action, in which he is the one proposing something to taste (that is, an alternative type of sensorial access to the product). This occasions a rejection from the customer (15-16), which retrospectively accounts for her privileged focus on touching and smelling (given that she does not eat cheese, and thus does not taste nor know it by its taste).

In this case, the identification, selection and assessment of the product to buy is based on a *direct sensorial access* to that product – facilitated by the design of the shop, in which refrigerated shelves are openly accessible, although normatively restricted by the seller.

## 6. Requesting to taste

Another form of sensorial access to the object is tasting, initiated by customers' requests to taste – much less frequent than sellers' offers to taste (systematically explored in Mondada in press b). The customer requests to taste in the same sequential environment as the one in which s/he generally requests for a product or asks a question about the product.

We join the first instance of tasting in Thonon (France). The request for tasting is uttered as the seller is still processing the previous purchase. The request (*est-ce qu'on peut goûter le bleu de bonneval ou::?, 3*), with an interrogative format, the modal verb "pouvoir" ('can'), and the final particle *ou* ('or') projecting a possible negative alternative) as well as the following jokes initiated by the seller, show that this action is not straightforward and lies beyond the rights of the customer/obligations of the seller. Before uttering her request turn, customer1 looks at the targeted product and begins to point at it (1), displaying that she had spotted it beforehand (see section 3).







18 CUS2 \$mefrci\$#  
*thanks*  
 \$stakes-\$puts in mouth->  
 fturns to CUS1->  
 fig #fig.13.4



Figure 13.4



Figure 13.5

19 (0.6)\$ € (0.4) € (3.2) ± (0.3)#(0.3) £(0.4)±  
 cus2 ->\$  
 cus2 €looks finger€rubs fingers---->  
 cus2 ->flooks into dist->  
 cus1 ->±looks at CUS2-----±into dist->  
 fig #fig.13.5  
 20 SEL ( )  
 21 (1.1)  
 22 SEL v' \*voulez goûter le bleu de bon\*neval?  
*do you want to taste the Bleu de Bonneval?*  
 \*.....\*gives a sample to CUS3->  
 23 (0.9)  
 24 SEL connaissez pas le fromage savoyard hein?  
*you don't know the savoyard cheese right?*  
 25 (0.5) \*(0.3)  
 sel ->\*  
 cus3 %takes and puts in mouth->>  
 26 CUS3 [ab±solfument p\$as .hh]  
*[absolutely not .hh]*  
 27 CUS1 [( ± )£ (autre mor\$+ceau)] +mais il+ est pas mauvais\$ hein  
*[( ± ) (other piece) but it's not bad right*  
 ->±looks around----±at BdB---->  
 cus1 +points+  
 cus2 \$points at BdB-----\$  
 cus2 ->fat BdB---->  
 28 CUS2 il est bon hein  
*it is good uh*  
 29 CUS1 \$ouais\$ (.) on prend un morceau ±comme ça?  
*yeah (.) do we take a piece like this?*  
 cus2 \$nods\$  
 cus1 ->±looks at cus2->  
 30 CUS2 \$ouais\$  
*yeah*  
 \$looks at CUS1\$  
 31 CUS1 outais  
*yeah*  
 cus1 ->±  
 32 SEL un p'tit morceau de bleu de bonnev[al]  
*a little piece of Bleu de Bonneval?*  
 33 CUS1 [ouais  
*[yeah*

Although the seller responds by jokingly resisting the request, she walks towards the requested cheese (6), projecting its granting. She moves towards serious tasting on line 14, after having fetched a knife; she prepares some samples and hands over

the first bit to Customer1 (15, Figure 13.1), who puts it in her mouth while thanking (16 – notice the elaborate and rather formal format of the thanking, retrospectively orienting to the non-straightforward granting of the request).

The way Customer1 embodies it reveals how tasting is not just a matter of eating a piece of food: she puts the entire sample in her mouth, looks at her finger where some remaining cheese is sticking and leaks and sucks her fingers (Figures 13.2-13.3), while adopting a distant and unfocused gaze. This posture enables her to fully concentrate on the sensorial experience (see Mondada 2018c for a systematic analysis, see Mortensen/Wagner this issue making the same observation).

In the meanwhile, the seller has prepared a sample for Customer2 (17), who puts it in his mouth too. He immediately turns to Customer1 (18, Figure 13.4), who at that moment has already progressed in her tasting, and turns to him (Figure 13.5), before both look into distance, continuing to chew (19). Customer2 also looks at his finger after having put the sample into his mouth; he does not suck it but rubs the fingers for a while (this is visible in Figure 13.5). So, after a brief exchange of mutual gaze, the customers continue their tasting individually and in silence.

During this time, the seller offers a sample to taste to another customer, unrelated to the previous couple (22), who seems to be a regular customer and with whom she initiates another joke, to which he aligns (24-26).

The couple initiates a collective evaluation of the cheese (27): their visual attention is refocused on the location of the tasted cheese in the fridge and they produce some convergent assessments (27, 28). This leads to the decision to buy, taken with mutual gaze and agreement (29-30). The seller overhears their conversation and merely requests a confirmation of their decision (32) before proceeding to the final cut.

In sum, tasting leads to deciding to buy in case of a positive assessment. Requesting to taste constitutes a specific way to access the peculiarities of the cheese, to assess them, and to take a decision. This sensorial access to the object is organized in a methodic way, characterized by a special attention to the sensorial experience and a withdrawal from other activities (Mondada 2018c). It also enables both customers to coordinate their judgment: the fact that they taste together gives them an access to the same sample, and constitutes the basis on which to elaborate a common assessment – as visible in the mutual gaze and in the collaborative production of the evaluation. Tasting thus constitutes an elaborate way to access the object, and to decide whether to buy it or not.

Another instance of requesting to taste, by an individual customer, is observable in the next fragment, which presents some similarities with the previous. We join the action in Madrid (Spain) at the completion of the previous request sequence by the same customer:

**(14) (FRO\_E\_MDR\_3012\_cam2\_3.08.00 CLI21 req to taste mahon)**

1 SEL alguna \*cosita más querí#as?  
you wanted some more thing?  
sel \*walks away from till, twd next cheese->  
cus †looks on her L/Mahón->  
2 (0.7)

3 CUS #y:: podría probar #este?  
*and could I try this one?*  
 #two steps to the L-->  
 #points->

4 (0.5) # (0.3) ± (0.3)  
 cus ->#  
 cus ->#

5 SEL cuál?  
*which one?*

6 (0.3)

7 CUS #este:#  
*this one*  
 #points#

8 (0.3)

9 SEL ah \*el: el mahón ahu[mado]?  
*oh the the smoked Mahon?*

10 CUS [sí  
 [yes  
 sel ->\*. . .->

11 SEL este de\* aquí\* tam#bién  
*that from here too*  
 ->\*takes\*puts on the counter->  
 cus #two steps twd counter->

12 (0.8)

13 SEL ya veo que te gustan los quesos: #cu\*rados  
*I already see that you like the mature cheeses*  
 ->\*cuts->  
 cus --->#

14 CUS sí[:  
*yes*

15 SEL [este tiene también doce #meses  
*[this one is twelve months old*  
 cus #leans over the cheese->

16 (0.6)

17 CUS vale  
*right*

18 (0.2)

19 SEL este es un queso que se elabora en: en menorca,  
*this is a cheese that is produced in in Menorca*

20 (0.3)

21 CUS a#há#  
 ->#,,,#

22 (0.3)

23 SEL .h:: y bueno tiene la corteza lavada  
*.h:: and right it has a washed rind*

24 (0.3)

25 SEL con aceite y pimento  
*with oil and chilli*

26 ±(0.3)±  
 cus #nods±

27 CUS ah vale  
*oh right*

28 SEL entonces le da un saborcillo muy agradable  
*so that it gives it a very nice flavor*

29 ya \*verás te va a gustar  
*you'll see that you'll like it*  
 ->\*hands over the sample->

30 CUS muchas gracias (sí)+\*  
*many thanks (yes)*  
 cus +takes->  
 sel ->\*

31 (0.6) + (3.1)  
 cli ->#puts in mouth and chews->line 42

32 CLI mh ±hm±  
±nod±

33 (0.2)

34 CUS ±hum:,± se puede comprar solo la mitad?  
hum can one buy only the half?  
±H on mouth±'cutting' gesture->

35 (0.5)

36 CUS ( [ ] )

37 SEL [sí: ±sí claro  
[yes yes sure  
cus ->±

38 (1.3)

39 SEL por ahí, por ejemplo?  
like this for example?

40 CUS sí[:  
ye[s

41 SEL [vale muy bien  
[right very good

42 (1.4)+  
cus ->±

43 CUS hum pensé que estaba más fuerte hum  
hum I thought it was stronger hum

The format of Customer's turn *y:: podría probar este?* (3) shows low entitlement (use of the conditional, modal verb, interrogative format) is a request for permission to taste rather than a more entitled request to taste, displaying that this action goes beyond the rights of the customer and obligations of the seller. The customer's turn is preceded by a gaze towards the targeted cheese, and co-occurs with some steps towards it – manifesting that she had spotted it before (very similar to the cases examined in section 2 supra). After a repair concerning the identification of the cheese (5-7), the seller asks for confirmation, naming the cheese and the customer confirms (10) (cf. section 3.2 supra).

The seller grasps the cheese and puts it on the counter to cut it (13-29) – closely observed by the customer (15). During this operation, which is suspended various times, he produces a series of descriptions of the Mahon. First, he does not only categorize it as a *queso curado* ('matured cheese') (13) but attributes the taste for this category to the customer (13). The information concerning the age of the cheese (15) is also formulated by reference to a previous bought product. So, the description builds a relation between the coherent series of purchases by the customer, her taste and the properties of various cheeses. Second, the seller gives some more information about the product (19, 23-25). Third, he concludes by associating again the flavor generated by the specific preparation of the cheese with the taste of the customer (28-29), thereby projecting her positive evaluation. This conclusion is uttered as he hands over the cheese to taste and the customer grabs it for putting it in her mouth (31).

The tasting proper happens during a few seconds of silence (31) (for a more systematic description of these silent moments, see Mondada 2018c). The outcome of tasting is manifested in a first *mh hm* and a nod (32), followed by a question concerning the buyable quantity, projecting a decision to buy. This question is uttered as the client is still chewing (see the hand on her mouth while saying *hum*, 34) and displays a rather quick decision, and therefore the straightforwardness of the choice.

After the completion of the sequence dedicated to the buyable quantity, the customer adds an assessment of the cheese: interestingly, this refers to a contrast with

what she had expected, reflecting upon the way in which the seller had framed the tasting and projected a possible outcome, as opposed to what has been revealed by a direct sensorial access.

Tasting is here treated as a condition for knowing and evaluating the product, and deciding to buy it, beyond the mere visual access to it. Tasting is implemented by the seller giving a sample and by the customer taking it and putting in her mouth, chewing and swallowing it in silence. But tasting is also achieved by the seller uttering descriptions and categorizations of the tasted object while preparing it –in a way that inhabits the temporal slot used for cutting, but also prolongs cutting in order to develop the description. These descriptions reflexively shape and guide tasting, working as instructions for tasting. They do not just build the sensorial profile of the cheese, but also the identity of the taster. The access to the object is both multimodally and multisensorially designed.

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

This paper has examined the relation between object's qualities and action through various formats of requests that suppose and establish very different relations with the requested object, thereby highlighting different aspects under which it is not only talked about but also seen and sensed. It has demonstrated that objects have a potential infinite diversity of features, which are locally and praxeologically made relevant by the orientations of the participants and the specific actions in which they are manifested and implemented.

The request formats can treat the requested object in purely abstract, symbolic, verbal terms, by using its name – sometimes reading it from a list – without orienting to its materiality (that is, without looking or pointing at it, section 2). In this case, the request is mainly built with verbal resources and the object is a discursive referent, which is materialized only within the responsive action of the seller fetching it.

Other multimodal formats, however, show that the request can also embed a strong orientation towards the object considered in its materiality, either as located within the local spatial environment of the shop (section 3) or within a domain of scrutiny in which it is visibly accessible (section 4). In these cases, the customer displays the relevance of the visual features of the product as a warrant for its identification and selection.

These embodied orientations of the customer show that sight and sighting are constitutive of the request – either for just identifying the product, or for searching for it. The visual aspect of the object is even more important for requests made with demonstratives and pointing. In this sense, the analysis of these requests cannot be limited to the verbal turn and the pointing gesture, but has to integrate within the multimodal Gestalt, also visual practices of looking, staring, glancing, exploring, searching, etc. As we have observed, these practices account for the format of the turn (produced with/without hitches, delays and self-repairs), and are consequential for the local understanding of the situation by the seller (categorizing the customer as knowledgeable, regular, novice, occasional, etc.). Moreover, these visual practices do not merely locate and identify objects: they assess their visual features as they are made visibly accessible and accessed. In the case of cheese products, these

visual features are considered as part of the criteria for evaluating its maturity, texture, and composition.

Although the relevance of visual features is *embodied* in the cases studied here –within visual practices that often *precedes* the turns at talk verbally implementing the request–, it can also be *formulated* in so many words, as in the following requests (some of them without any verb), all from the Madrid shop:

**(15a) MDR\_0104\_cam2\_CLI20\_3.12.27**

CUS **pues:: seguro el moluengo este que tiene buena pinta**  
 PRT *for sure the Moluengo this that has a nice appearance*

**(15b) MDR\_0104\_cam1\_CLI9.2\_2.42.46**

CUS **este tiene una pinta no sé por qué me atrae muchísimo esa pieza que está ahí**  
*this one has an appearance I don't know why that attracts me a lot this piece that is here*

**(15c) MDR\_0104\_cam1\_CLI11.1\_3.03.45**

CUS **un poco de: parmesano igual sí que tiene una pinta::**  
*a bit of parmesan right yes which has an appearance*

In these cases, the visual appearance of the cheese (*buena pinta*) is explicitly mentioned as a reason for selecting and requesting it.

Visual appearances and their visible accessibility are not the only perceptive and sensorial aspects that ground the requests. Requests asking to taste (section 6), as well as customers directly proceeding to touch and smell the targeted object (section 5), not only use vision, but also claim the right to rely on additional forms of sensorial access, characterized by a direct contact between the object and the body of the customer.

These last cases show the importance of considering sensoriality when analyzing objects and materiality. The praxeological relation to objects –embedded in the Gestalts defining the holistic format of actions– cannot be reduced either to reference or to usage/mobilization of these objects. Although mobilization is achieved most often as a *manipulation* (a word which refers to the hand, which implies a tactile contact between the hand and the object, Streeck 2009:47), this constitutes a rather implicit form of sensoriality. Requests to taste, touch, smell and practices of tasting, smelling and touching that occur when the request is granted, unfold in a more aware, publicly accountable and focused way. Sensorial moments are methodically organized by the participants (as demonstrated by their practices of palpating, smelling, tasting and looking at their hands, sucking their fingers, etc.), silently focusing on them in an exclusive way, withdrawing from talk with the seller, although unfolding in visible and public ways, accessible for the co-participant (the seller) continuing to observe them (Mondada 2018c).

These methodic practices of tasting, smelling and touching show the interest of integrating within the study of the multimodal formatting of actions in interaction, the relevance of *sensorial practices* –which are organized, made accountable, intelligible and intersubjective thanks to their multimodal displays (Mondada 2016,

2018b, 2018c, 2019a, 2019b). Multisensoriality is thus a dimension that expands current multimodal analyses and that invites to take into consideration aspects of the body that are not only related to the meaningfulness and intelligibility of actions in social interaction, but also to the perceptive and sensorial dimensions of human life.

## 8. Conventions

Talk is transcribed with the conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). Embodied actions are transcribed according to the following conventions developed by Lorenza Mondada (see 2018a) (for a full version and a tutorial see <https://www.lorenzamondada.net/multimodal-transcription>).

## 9. Acknowledgements

Data used for this study have been collected within the project *Multimodality: re-considering language and action through embodiment* funded by the Academy of Finland (2015-2017). Further analyses have been done within the project *From multimodality to multisensoriality: language, body, and sensoriality in social interaction* (intSenses) funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (2018-2022).

## 10. References

- Calvignac, Cédric / Cochoy, Franck (2016): From "market agencements" to "vehicular agencies". In: *Consumption Markets & Culture* 19(1), 133-147.
- Day, Dennis / Wagner, Johannes (2015): Objects as tools for talk. In: Nevile, M., Haddington, P., Heinemann, T., & Rauniomaa, M. (Eds.). (2015): *Interacting with objects. Language, materiality and social activity*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 101-124.
- Day, Dennis / Wagner, Johannes (Eds.). (2019): *Objects, bodies and work practices*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- De Stefani, Elwys (2010): «Ah petta ecco, io prendo questi che mi piacciono». Agire come coppia al supermercato. Un approccio conversazionale e multimodale allo studio dei processi decisionali. [‘oh wait there, I take those that I like’. Working like a couple at the supermarket. A conversation analytic and multimodal approach to the study of decision processes]. Roma: Aracne
- De Stefani, Elwys (2014): Establishing joint attention towards commercial objects in self-service stores. In: Nevile, M., Haddington, P., Heinemann, T., & Rauniomaa, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Interacting with objects. Language, materiality and social activity*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 275-294.
- Drew, Paul / Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth (eds.) (2014). *Requesting in Social Interaction*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Fele, Giolo (2016): Il paradosso del gusto [The paradox of taste]. In: *Società e Mutamento Politica* 7(14), 151-174.

- Fox, Barbara / Heinemann, Trine (2015): The alignment of manual and verbal displays in requests for the repair of an object. In: *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 48 (3), 342-362.
- Fox, Barbara / Heinemann, Trine (2016): Rethinking format: An examination of requests. In: *Language in Society* 45(4), 499-531.
- Goodwin, Charles (1994): Professional Vision. In: *American Anthropologist* 96(3), 606-633.
- Goodwin, Charles (2003). Pointing as situated practice. In: Kita Sotaro (ed.), *Pointing: Where Language, Culture and Cognition Meet*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 217-241.
- Harjunpää, Katariina / Mondada, Lorenza / Svinhufvud, Kimmo (2018): Coordinated entry into service encounters in food shops: Managing interactional space, availability, and service during openings. In: *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 51(3), 271-291.
- Heath, Christian / vom Lehn, Dirk (2004): Configuring reception: (Dis-) Regarding the 'spectator' in museums and galleries. In: *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, 43-65.
- Heath, Christian / Luff, Paul / Sanchez-Svensson, Marcus / Nicholls, Maxim. (2018): Exchanging implements: the micro-materialities of multidisciplinary work in the operating theatre. In: *Sociology of Health and Illness* 40(2), 297-313.
- Heritage, John (2012): Epistemics in Action: Action Formation and Territories of Knowledge. In: *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 45: 1-29.
- Heritage, John / Sorjonen, Marja-Leena (1994): Constituting and maintaining activities across sequences: and-prefacing as a feature of question design. In: *Language in Society* 23, 1-29.
- Jefferson, Gail (2004): Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In: G. H. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation Analysis: Studies from the first generation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 13-31.
- Keating, Elizabeth (2000): Moments of hierarchy: Constructing social stratification by means of language, food, space, and the body in Pohnpei, Micronesia. *American Anthropologist* 102, 303-320.
- Kissmann, Ulla / van Loom, Johannes (eds.) (2018): *New Materialism and its methodological implications*. Berlin: Springer.
- Latour, Bruno (1996): On interobjectivity. *Mind, Culture, Activity* 3-4, 228-245.
- Laurier, Eric (2013): Encounters at the counter: the relationship between regulars and staff. In: P. Tolmie & M. Rouncefield (eds.), *Ethnomethodology at play*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Liberman, Ken (2013): *The Phenomenology of Coffee Tasting: Lessons in practical objectivity*. In: *More Studies in Ethnomethodology*, New York: SUNY.
- Merritt, Mary (1976): On questions following questions in service encounters. In: *Language in society* 5, 315-357.
- Mol, Anne-Marie (2003): *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*. Duke University Press.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2007): Multimodal resources for turn-taking: Pointing and the emergence of possible next speakers. *Discourse Studies* 9(2), 195-226.



- Mondada, Lorenza (2011): The organization of concurrent courses of action in surgical demonstrations. In J. Streeck, C. Goodwin & C. LeBaron (Eds.), *Embodied Interaction, Language and Body in the Material World*. Cambridge: CUP, 207-226.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2016): Challenges of multimodality: Language and the body in social interaction. In: *Journal of Sociolinguistics*: 20(2), 2-32.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2018a): Multiple temporalities of language and body in interaction. Challenges for transcribing multimodality. In: *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 51(1), 85-106.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2018b): Visual practices: video studies, multimodality and multisensoriality. In: D. Favareau (ed.), *Co-operative Engagements in Intertwined Semiosis: Essays in Honor of Charles Goodwin*. Tartu: University of Tartu Press, 304-325.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2018c): The multimodal interactional organization of tasting: practices of tasting cheese in gourmet shops. In: *Discourse Studies* 20(6), 743-769.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2019a): Contemporary issues in Conversation Analysis. Embodiment and materiality, multimodality and multisensoriality in social interaction. In: *Journal of Pragmatics* 145, 47-62.
- Mondada, Lorenza (2019b): Rethinking bodies and objects in social interaction: A multimodal and multisensorial approach to tasting. In U. Tikvah Kissmann / J. van Loon (eds.), *Discussing New Materialism: Methodological Implications for the Study of Materialities*. Berlin: Springer.
- Mondada, Lorenza (in press a): Sensorial explorations of food: How professionals and amateurs touch cheese in gourmet shops, In: Cekaite, A. / Mondada, L. (eds.). *Touching moments: Touch in Social Interaction* London: Routledge.
- Mondada, Lorenza (in press b): Offers to taste in gourmet food shops: Small gifts in an economy of sale. In: Fox, B., Mondada, L., Sorjonen M.L. (eds). *Encounters at the counter*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mondada, Lorenza / Sorjonen Marja-Leena (2016): Making multiple requests in French and Finnish convenience stores. *Language in Society* 45:5, 733–765
- Mondada, Lorenza / Svinhufvud, Kimmo (2016): Writing-in-interaction: Studying writing as a multimodal phenomenon in social interaction. In: *Language and Dialogue* 6(1), 1-53.
- Nevile, Maurice (2014): The Embodied Turn in Research on Language and Social Interaction, In: *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 48(2), 121-151.
- Ochs, Elinor / Pontecorvo, Clotilde / Fasulo, Alessandra (1996): Socializing taste. In: *Ethnos* 61,7-46.
- Placencia, Maria Elena (2004): Rapport building activities in corner shop interactions. In: *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 8(2), 215-245.
- Robinson, Geoffrey / Stivers, Tania (2001): Achieving activity transitions in primary-care encounters: From history taking to physical examination. In: *Human Communication Research* 27(2), 253-298.
- Sneijder, Petra / te Molder, Hedwig F. M. (2005): Disputing Taste: Foods Pleasure as an Achievement in Interaction. In: *Appetite* 45(1), 51-61.
- Sorjonen, Marja-Leena / Raevaara, Liisa (2014): On the grammatical form of requests at the convenience store: Requesting as embodied action. In: Drew, Paul

- / Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen (eds.), *Requesting in Social Interaction*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 243-268.
- Streeck, Jürgen (1996): How to do things with things: Objets trouvés and symbolization. In: *Human Studies*, 19(4), 365-384.
- Streeck, Jürgen. (2009): *Gesturecraft: The Manufacture of Meaning*. Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Wiggins, Sally (2004): Talking about taste: Using a discursive psychological approach to examine challenges to food evaluations. In: *Appetite* 43(1), 29-38.

Lorenza Mondada  
University of Basel  
Dep. of Linguistics and Literature / French Studies  
Maiengasse 51  
CH 4056 Basel  
Switzerland

lorenza.mondada@unibas.ch

Veröffentlicht am 15.5.2020

© Copyright by GESPRÄCHSFORSCHUNG. Alle Rechte vorbehalten.