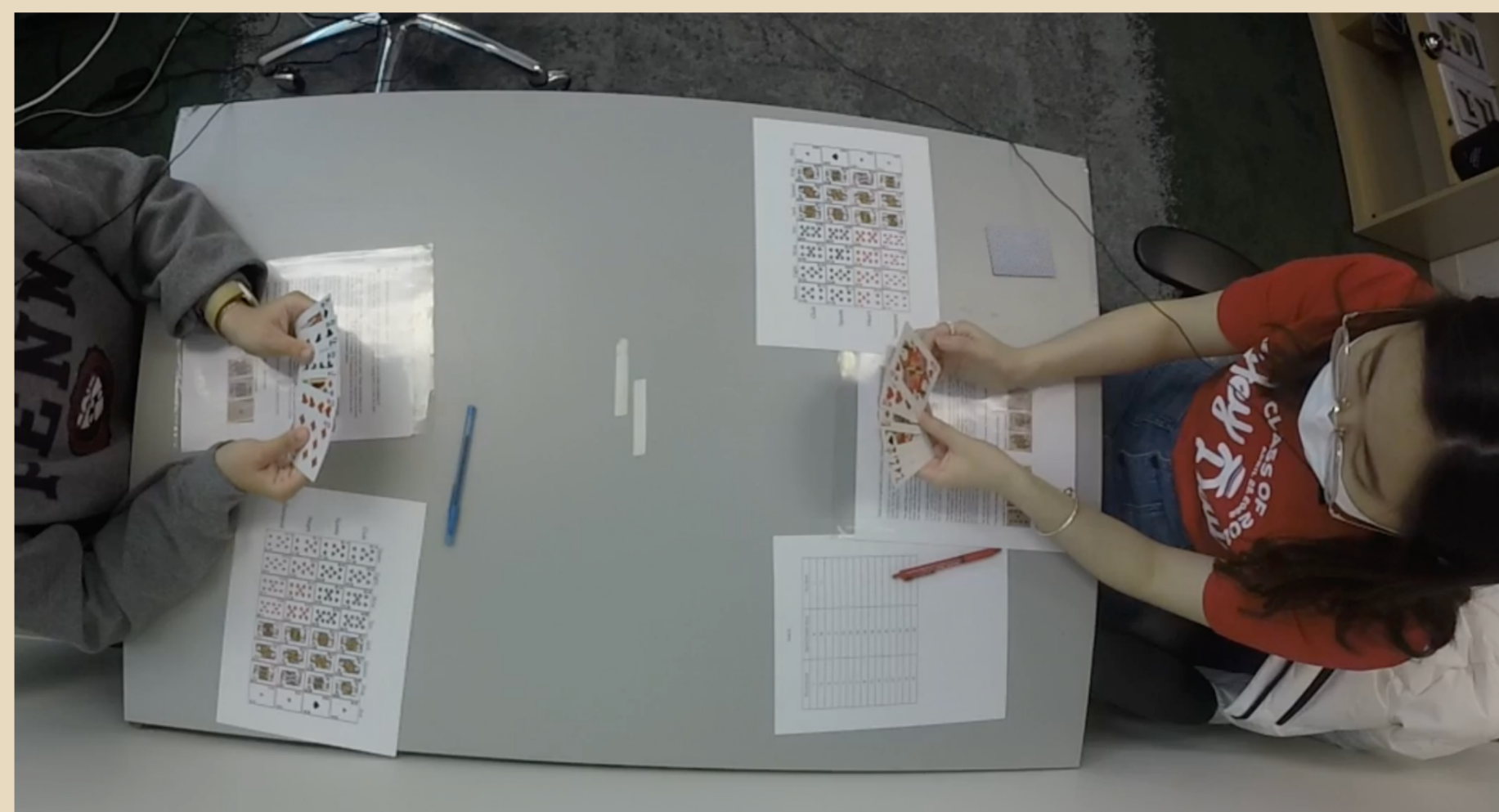


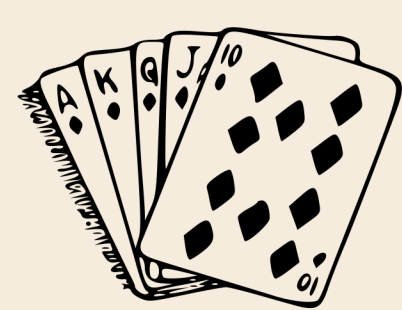
Interpreting Questions in Conversation

Introduction

People use **language** to **accomplish things together**. They must **coordinate** at multiple levels, most critically at the level of what the **speaker means** when producing an utterance and what their **addressee takes them to mean** (ex. "What are you doing tonight?"). **What is said** and **what is meant** depends on what the speaker and addressee take to be the **context** and **goal** of their exchange. These **complex beliefs** are **mentally represented** and thus **inaccessible to inspection**. We explore the idea that people's **verbal behavior** reflects their **understanding of the activity** and the **plan (steps they need to take) for advancing the activity**.



Design



Goal: director forms as many combinations of 3 or more cards of the **same type** (ex. 3 Jacks) or a sequence of 3 or more cards of the **same suit** (ex. Jack of Hearts, Queen of Hearts, King of Hearts) using their own hand and the helper's hand

[type] of [suit]?

any [suit]?

any [type]?

The director is a confederate and always asks one of these three questions to gain an understanding of the helper's hand and create combinations.

While all three question categories consist of yes/no questions, do participants respond to them in the same way? Their responses reveal what they take the director to ask them for.

yes, handing the card

Pre-condition for request for action

yes + info

Pre-condition for request for information

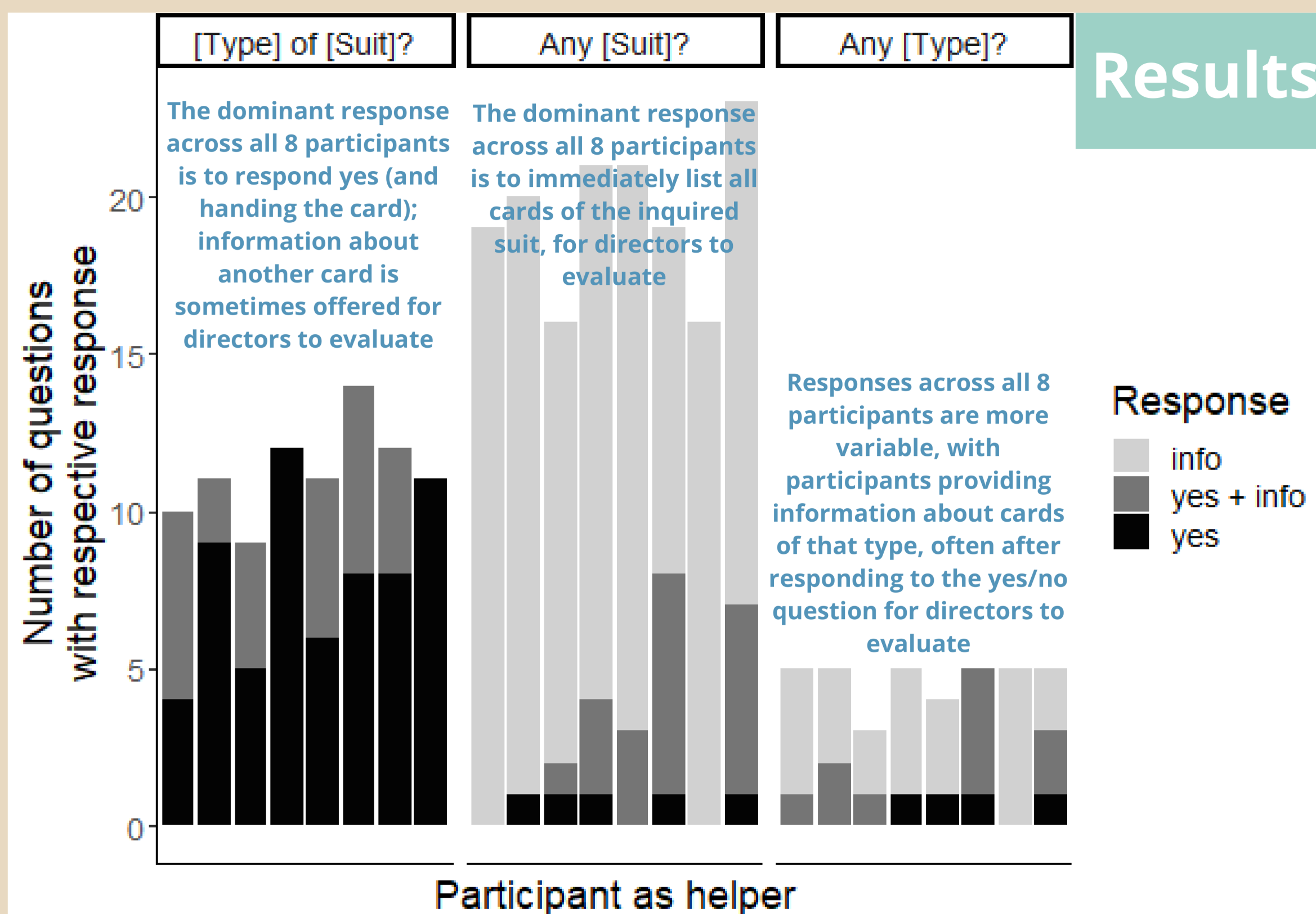
info only

Request for information (with yes/no question as pro forma)

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Questions

	[Type] of [Suit]?	Any [Suit]?	Any [Type]?
	Do you have the 7 of ♥?	Do you have any ♥s?	Do you have any 7s?
yes	I do	yes I do	yes
yes + info	yes, and also the 8	yes, I have the 7 and 8	yes, the 7 of ♥
info	I have all four 7s	I have the 7 and 8	I have the 7 of ♥ and the 7 of ♠



Analysis

Request for action

[Type] of [Suit] questions

[Type] of [Suit] questions seem to be interpreted as **requests for action** ("give me the card I am asking for").

The participants seem to represent these questions as part of a **specific project** (the director just needs this specific card to complete a specific combination they have in mind).

Participants hold mental representations of the role of the current question in advancing a joint project (for which they hold mental representations for as well).

Request for information

Any [Suit/ Type] questions

Any [Suit/ Type] questions seem to be interpreted as **requests for information** ("give me information about the suit/ type I am asking for").

The participants seem to represent these questions as part of a **larger project** (the director wants information about this Suit/ Type of cards to decide on what combinations to form).

Further Study

Analysis of the types of questions the participants ask when the participants are the director would provide further insight into their understanding of the types of plans directors may mentally represent and execute.

The kinds of information the participants offer in the current study seem to reflect only a roughly computed representation of the director's plan (they offer cards based on Type/ Suit overlap with a bias towards Type). Will **having the participant take on the director role earlier** in the study lead to a better understanding of the goal of the game and thus more precision?

Analyzing the **timing of when the participants extend their cards** could give added insight into their understanding of the director's plan/ joint project.