

PRAGMATIC NORMS OF
REQUEST MAKING OF SPOKEN BUSINESS ENGLISH IN
HONG KONG

By

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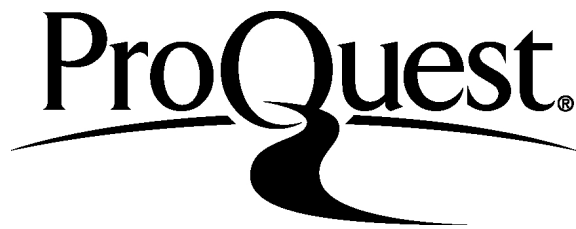
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God has endowed in us to fulfil our role and do the best we can within our limitations. Thanks for tolerating my imperfections, and let us all support each other with this serenity prayer:

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.”



ABSTRACT



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Abstract

The present study investigates the pragmatic patterns of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business Context. The research conceptual framework is derived based on the two significant politeness models in the field, the one by Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) and the one by Blum-Kulka et. al (1989) with adaptations and modifications to fit the specific purpose of the present study. The notions of Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics of Leech (1983 & 2014) are applied to account for both the fixed and the varied request patterns. While it is agreed that some fixed/universal/inherent pragmalinguistic patterns do exist for request making, the present study more concurs with the rising view in the past two decades that the use of the inherent request patterns varies and it is subject to sociopragmatic context. In addition to confirming that the common sociopragmatic factors such as speech situation and power distance are also influential in the Hong Kong Spoken Business Context, the present study takes a further emic step to challenge the general view that politeness is most likely achieved through indirectness. It is found in the present study that such general view does not apply to some sociopragmatic contexts and whether a request is interpreted and accepted as polite or appropriate heavily depends on the notion of face embraced by a particular community. A pragmalinguistically direct request may not be sociopragmatically interpreted as not polite in collectivistic cultures but rather as an appropriate gesture for solidarity. In addition to controlling potential aggression and reducing imposition between social parties as viewed by Brown and Levinson (1987, p.1), politeness may as well have a positive function of strengthening the social bonding between potentially cooperative parties for the good of the whole community. This study also contributes to the field through identifying a broader discourse pattern of request making which are the serial use of external modifications and follow-up requests and the use of request scaffolding among requesters in a dialogue.



Chapter One

INTRODUCTION



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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background to and Rationale for the Study

This thesis investigates the pragmatic norms of request making of Spoken Business English in Hong Kong for both theoretical and practical reasons.

When English as a world language is in contact with local culture, unique pragmatic patterns may develop to help speakers achieve the social functions in a particular socio-cultural context (Crystal, 1997). In addition, there is a belief that second language speakers can become successful if they make use of their second language variety appropriately to achieve the social/pragmatic purposes in their social community, and such a perspective has become better received in the linguistic field (Kachru, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2010; Ranta, 2009; Bolton, 2002; Cheng, Greaves & Warren, 2008; Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007; Meierkord, 2000).

Hong Kong is an important international business centre, and this is being internationally recognised. According to International Institute for Management Development's "World Competitiveness Scoreboard" (IMD, 2015), Hong Kong is the second most competitive economy after the United States out of 61 economies. Hong Kong is ranked the 3rd out of 82 cities/countries globally in both 2009-2013 and 2014-2018 in Economist Intelligence Unit's "Business Environment Rankings" (EIU, 2015). In addition, Hong Kong is ranked the 2nd out of 146 cities/countries globally in 2014 in Forbes's "Best Countries for Business Rankings" (Forbes, 2015).

Since Hong Kong is an international business centre, the international language English is heavily used in daily communication and such situation has not changed after the handover of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997. Evans and Green (2003) found that English as MOI still enjoys a higher status for Chinese Professionals in workplace after 1997.

Importance of business communication in English in Hong Kong is shown by the Hong Kong Government initiative to launch Workplace English Campaign in 2000 (SCOLAR, 2005). Such campaign is still supported by the Hong Kong Government, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research and many big corporations such as Bank of China Group (Workplace English Campaign, 2015).

Since Workplace/Business English is important in Hong Kong, scholars have been actively researching on Business English in Hong Kong. Syntactic and semantic studies have been done on semantic fields, metaphors and lexicogrammar (Cheng & Ho, 2015; Handford and Matous, 2011). In terms of pragmatics, general studies have also been done on pragmatic/communicative competence, professional discourse, rhetoric patterns, language use, language skills and politeness (Cheng, 2009; Cheng, 2011; Cheng, 2013; Cheng & Mok, 2006; Chew, 2005; Evans, 2010; Evans, 2011; Evans, 2013; Huang, 2010; Kong, 1998; Kong, 2008; Kong & Cheng, 2008; Ladegaard, 2011; Lundelius, 1997). At the same time, pragmatic studies specifically focusing on speech acts have been done on promise and commitment, self-correction, disagreement and assertive with some of the studies using authentic/naturally-occurring business discourses (Bilbow, 1997; Cheng & Cheng, 2010; Cheng & Warren, 2005; Cheng & Warren, 2006; Yeung, 1997; Victor, 2011; Pilegaard, 1997). For example, Cheng and Warren (2005) studied the pragmalinguistic realisations and the discourse intonation in the disagreements of spoken business discourse in their compiled Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE). Regarding studies on the speech act “request”, most are on written contexts such as emails and letters (Pilegaard, 1997; Kong, 1998a; Kong, 2006; Yeung, 1997; Victor, 2011). For example, Pilegaard (1997) studied the linguistic perspective of politeness in written requests, and Kong (2006) investigated the use of accounts (justifications) to make requests in the internal emails of a business firm. It is worthwhile to note that only a few request studies (Kong, 1998b; Lee, 2009) are on spoken contexts and using authentic/naturally-occurring spoken discourses at the same time. For example, Lee (2009) studied extended requesting identified in a corpus of telephone calls to an airline service in South Korea but there is a lack of similar studies. Since request is an important speech act in Business English and there is a lack of Asian/Hong Kong studies on request making in authentic/naturally-occurring spoken context, the present study endeavours to address such research gap and contribute to the local pragmatic studies of Business English in relation to request making in spoken contexts.

Most previous research studying requests has adopted the perspective of Interlanguage Pragmatics that treats second language (L2) patterns as learner errors or learners’ developmental patterns because of insufficient L2 resource (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Hill, 1997). The present study, on the other hand, focuses on the pragmatic patterns of advanced non-native speakers of English because advanced speakers are

more likely to have transcended the developmental patterns of language learners (Selinker, 1972; Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2009), and this allows the present study to focus on the pragmatic patterns and the sociopragmatic background of language users. In other words, this study does not focus on learner errors but language use in the business communication of Hong Kong.

The data of the present study, the dialogues of the corpus Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (Business) (HKCSE (Business)) were conducted in business settings (e.g.: hotel service encounter and internal business meeting) in the workplace but not in language learning contexts (e.g.: classroom group discussions for language learning), so the present study focuses on the investigation of pragmatic patterns of adult English language users/speakers in workplace but not of language learners.

The present study is an inter-cultural study but not a cross-cultural or intra-cultural one. Whether it is an intercultural study or a cross-cultural one depends on the perspective that a researcher has taken in studying the interactive patterns in request making. Lustig & Koster (2012, Ch.2) clearly distinguish the differences between intra-cultural communication, cross-cultural communication and inter-cultural communication. First, intra-cultural communication refers to the interaction between people who have culturally similar backgrounds and orientations. For example, the present study would have been an intra-cultural study if only the intra-cultural communication patterns in terms of request making between Cantonese-speaking business people in Hong Kong were studied. Second, cross-cultural communication does not focus on interaction between people of the same or different cultures but on the comparison of communication styles of people across cultures. For example, the study of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) is a cross-cultural study because it compares the communication styles in relation to face-threatening acts in three languages and cultures, Tamil of South India, Tzeltal of Mayan Indians in Mexico and English of USA. The study of Blum Kulka and House (1989) is also a cross-cultural one because it studies how the situational variation influences the request patterns in five languages and cultures, Hebrew, Canadian French, Argentinean Spanish, Australian English and German. Last, inter-cultural communication refers to the interaction between people who have culturally different backgrounds and orientations. The present study has been an inter-cultural study because it studies the inter-cultural interaction patterns in terms of request making between Cantonese-speaking business people and English-speaking counterparts through the

lingua franca of English in the business community of Hong Kong (and the factors underlying the various patterns). Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris (1997), Cheng et al. (2008, pp.7-8) and Spencer-Oatey (2000, p.4) also explained that studies on people of two cultures interacting either in a lingua franca or a native language are inter-cultural in nature.

1.2. Preview of Study Objectives and Research Methods

The researcher of the present study is interested in pragmatics, speech act and request in particular among all types of speech acts. The first step towards understanding requests will be exploring the general pragmalinguistic patterns of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business Context. This gives rise to the first research question of the present study.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): “What are the salient pragmalinguistic patterns of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English?” with the sub-questions as below:

- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component Internal Modification (M) (e.g. “please” being the politeness marker) used to realise request making?
- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component politeness strategies on the scale of Directness Level (D) (e.g. Interrogative mood with the auxiliary “May” of Conventionally Indirect Level”) used to realise request making?
- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component Perspective Imposition (H) (e.g. Speaker Dominance in the request “May I have your signature please?”) on the scale of the illocutionary force posed by perspective used to realise requests?

Hypothesis of RQ1:

Default/general pragmalinguistic forms for realising requests are also present in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

It may not be adequate to understand merely the general linguistic patterns of requests. Pragmatics stresses that language should be studied in socio-cultural contexts (will be detailed in Chapter 3 “Literature Review”), so how the contextual factors of the local business setting affect request making are also researched in the present study. Therefore, I put forward the second research question as below.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): “How do various contextual factors sociopragmatically affect

request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English?” with the below sub-questions:

- How does the factor “Gender (G)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Situation (S)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “First-language Group (C)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Power Distance (P)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Rank of Imposition (RI)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?

Hypothesis of RQ2:

The various contextual factors do sociopragmatically affect the linguistic realisation of requests in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

The pragmalinguistic perspective of RQ1 and the sociopragmatic perspective of RQ2 complement each other and should be able to reveal a complete picture of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

The data for the present study is the HKCSE (Business). HKCSE (Business) is the biggest sub-corpora among the four in HKCSE in terms of number of words. It consists of 246,816 words (27.42% of HKCSE) in 112 authentic/naturally occurring recordings.

The main research method for the present study is discourse analysis and the research sub-methods are Statistical Analysis, Corpus Linguistics and Conversation Analysis with Prosodic Study. This study first identifies specific pragmalinguistic patterns of request head acts and traces their variability in relation with the sociopragmatic factors through Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis. This is then supplemented by Conversation Analysis (CA) with Prosodic Study on five extracts from the HKCSE (Business). CA is to trace the illocutionary force of request making in broader sense (beyond head acts) which includes external modifications supporting head act, the perlocutionary act of responses to request and the paralinguistic intonation. The influence of an additional sociopragmatic factor “Rank of Imposition” on request making is also studied in CA. All these are expected to give a comprehensive picture of the pragmatic norms of request making in the Spoken Business English of Hong Kong.

1.3. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters including a literature review, design of research framework, findings, discussion of such findings and finally a conclusion with suggested ways of future research in request making.

Chapter 1 herein has provided the background of the present study. Chapter 2 “Literature Review” examines the previous research and literature on which the scope of the present study is focused and defined. Chapter 3 “Research Design and Methods” moves from the theoretical perspective to the practical perspective to elaborate on the data and the research design for conducting the present study. Chapters 4 to 6 report findings of the study generated by the three research methods, namely Statistical Analysis, Corpus Analysis and Conversation Analysis with Prosodic Study. Chapter 7 discusses the significances of findings and interprets such findings by linking and comparing them with those of previous research. Chapter 8 lastly concludes with the suggested ways forward for future research in this field.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW



Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews the research and literature on which the scope of the present study is focused and defined, and it is divided into 7 sections. The first section starts with a macroscopic view of language in the trinity of perspectives, namely Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics. It also shares Leech's important notions of Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics for accounting the fixed and varied linguistic patterns. From the broad perspective of Pragmatics, the scope of literature review gradually narrows down first to speech acts and finally to requests as one of the important types of speech act in the second section. Next, important politeness theories related to request making including the work of Brown and Levinson (1987) and the coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1984, 1989) are highlighted and the pragmalinguistic components constituting the directness of a request are reviewed in the third and the fourth sections. Section 5 discusses the common sociopragmatic factors affecting request patterns as revealed in the past studies. Section 6 discusses an important notion revealed by recent request studies. That is, politeness may not necessarily equal to pragmalinguistic indirectness and it is subject to interpretation under the sociopragmatic factors and the notion of face embraced by a certain social community. The last section reviews the rising trend in impoliteness studies.

2.1. Linguistic Study: From Syntax, Semantics to Pragmatics

2.1.1 Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Trinity

According to Crystal (1990), Linguistics is the scientific study of a language. Although Leech (1980) commented that it is difficult to draw a line between meaning conceived as an abstract property of the sentence and meaning conceived based on a context, he (1983) tried to contemplate systematically linguistic studies in three levels:

1. Syntax: Study of the structural way of combination of words and their parts in clauses or sentences;
2. Semantics: Inherent meaning (as “default meaning” termed in Leech (2014)) of utterances in a given language coded by its syntactical forms in terms of grammar and lexicon/vocabulary; and
3. Pragmatics: Study language by putting Syntax and Semantics in context.

To better illustrate the differences between Pragmatics and Semantics, Pragmatics and Semantics are further compared with other scholars' thoughts in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Comparison between Semantics and Pragmatics

Semantics	Pragmatics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of relation of words to which they refer (Morris, 1938) • Concerned with meaning (Lyons, 1977) • Semanticists adopt a narrower scope to analyse the meaning of words and how they combine to constitute meaning <i>within text</i> (Bianchi, 2004) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study of the relationship between words, the interlocutors and the context (Morris, 1938) • Concerned with language use (Levinson, 1983) • Pragmaticists adopts a wider scope <i>beyond text</i> itself to consider contextual factors such as the speaker's authority over the hearer to interpret that utterance (Bianchi, 2004)

Mey (1993) highlights the importance of context in Pragmatics by stating that Pragmatics studies the ways in which contexts contribute to the meaning of a language. Kasper (1997) defines pragmatic context as extra-linguistic information such as social distance or status between speakers. Although Pragmatics and Semantics seem different to certain extent, they are not completely separated from each other. Pragmatics is partly based on Syntax and Semantics, but it focuses on the use of such linguistic elements in context to verify or modify the inherent syntactic and semantic meaning of an utterance. A number of linguists see Pragmatics being linked to Semantics and Syntax. For example, Recanati (2004) sees Semantics and Pragmatics as complementary and (Bianchi, 2004) states that complete interpretation of any utterance requires reconciliation of Pragmatics with Semantics.

Leech (2014, p.63) further explains meaning in three levels, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels as described in Table 2.2. As seen, the three levels are not separated from each other but rather a gradual evolution that builds from inherent meaning to contextual meaning.

Table 2.2. Leech's terminology differentiating syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels (2014, p.63)

Meaning level	Type I	Type II	Type III	Cover term for that meaning level
Syntactic	Declarative	Interrogative	Imperative	Sentence
Semantic	Proposition	Question	Mand	Propositional
Pragmatic	Assertive	Rogative	Directive	Illocution

Such evolution from inherent meaning to contextual meaning is further illustrated with the example that follows.

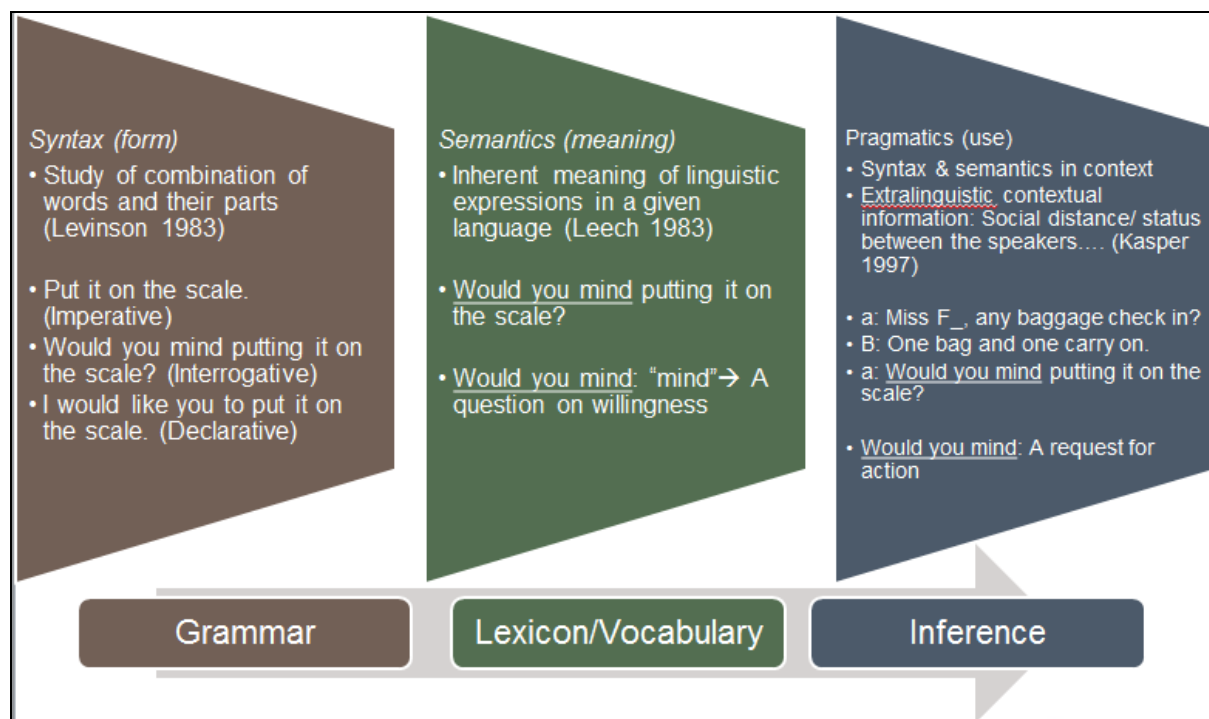
A: Could you open the door?

B: Sure, my pleasure.

First, the syntactic “Interrogative” of A’s utterance is derived on grammatical structure with the mood of inversion of subject and predicate (auxiliary). Second, the semantic meaning “Question” is derived on the inherent meaning of words and their combination. In such sense, A’s utterance is literally seeking an answer to an “information gap” on the ability of B to open the door. Last, based on the context that a normal human should be able to open a door, B pragmatically interprets A’s utterance as an implicature which is an indirect request to open the door in this case.

Figure 2.1 summarises the Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Trinity of perspectives of studying language based on the propositions of Levinson (1983), Leech (1983) and Kasper (1997) with examples of utterances. The present study is inspired by Pragmatics because it is meaningful to understand the authentic meaning of language by putting it in a broader social context.

Figure 2.1. The Syntax-Semantics-Pragmatics Trinity of Perspectives of Studying Language



2.1.2. Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics

Based on the conception of Pragmatics and Semantics as being connected as further elaborated by Leech (1983 & 2014), Pragmatics is conceptualised as a continuum in two ends, namely Pragmalinguistics which is the continuum's more semantic end stressing inherent meaning within text and Sociopragmatics which is the continuum's more pragmatic end stressing meaning in context.

Pragmalinguistics

Leech (1983) defined Pragmalinguistics as the "particular resources that a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (p.11). Putting in the perspective of request making, such resources include:

1. Request strategy in terms of directness level which is the degree to which the requester's illocutionary intent of requesting is apparent from the locution;
2. Range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften such speech act such as Internal Modification, the Politeness Marker "Please" for softening the linguistic force of a request;
3. Orientation to linguistic realisations of politeness, being more concerned in "form" and more "context-free" (Leech, 2014, p.13); and
4. The frequencies of such strategies and linguistic forms used may lead to

pragmaticalisation, formation of formulaic expressions as “presumptive/default interpretation” over time (Leech, 2014; Levinson, 2000).

Scholars such as Weizman (1989) has studied the pragmalinguistic patterns of request making in Australian English, Canadian French and Israeli Hebrew. As revealed in the study, Hints accounted for low proportions (less than 10%) of requests in the three languages. Weizman (1989) states that Hints are the least common because Hints are opaque and thus are of low efficiency in getting the requests fulfilled.

Sociopragmatics

Sociopragmatics was defined as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983, p. 10) which include:

1. Participants’ interpretation and performance of speech acts are subject to social determinants (e.g. Relative Power (P), Social Distance (D), Rank of Imposition (RI) of Brown & Levinson’s Politeness Model in 1978 and 1987); and
2. Being more concerned in “function” and “context-sensitive” (Leech, 2014, p.13).

Neo-Gricean Levinson (2000) reworks on Grice’s Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1969 & 1975) and highlights “Presumptive Meaning” which is the default interpretations of utterances. Leech (2014, pp.73-74) elaborates on such default/defeasible thinking:

1. Cooperative Principle (CP) is in operation as default and “Presumptive Meaning” first applies. Only when CP seems not to be observed, one looks for non-default interpretation; and
2. “Defeasible Reasoning” works out the most appropriate non-default interpretation when a default interpretation does not apply in the current context. Such notion concurs with Grice’s Conversational Implicature (1969 & 1975).

Putting Presumptive Meaning and Defeasible Reasoning in the perspective of Pragmalinguistics and Sociolinguistics (Leech, 1983 & 2014), on one hand, Presumptive Meaning is the default meaning derived on Pragmalinguistics. For example, the naming of “conventional” for conventional indirectness of request in interrogative mood such as “May I borrow your notes?” by Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) and Blum-Kulka et. al (1989) indicates that request in question form by default is generally an indirect/polite request in speech communities. On the other hand, Defeasible Reasoning is the meaning derived on

Sociopragmatics that puts the interpretation of pragmalinguistic forms under the influence of social contexts. For example, “May I borrow your notes?” may sound too remote and not necessarily polite in a dialogue between two close friends.

2.2. Speech Act and Pragmatics

Speech act theory is one of the most important topics of Pragmatics that has emerged since the late 1960s. Austin (1962) argues that people speak not just for saying words but also for doing things with their saying. He introduced the notion of performative utterances that do something in the world rather than describing something. He states that each speech act comprises three levels, namely locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act refers to the literal meaning comprising the phonetic/syntactic/semantic elements. Illocutionary act refers to the utterance’s illocutionary force that is the intended pragmatic meaning. The performative is the performance of an illocutionary act. Perlocutionary act refers to the actual effect of the utterance.

Searle (1969, 1975a) extends Austin’s work by stating that the basic unit of human communication is the illocutionary act produced within social situations and he classifies speech acts into a typology of five categories. Assertives such as beliefs commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. Directives such as enquiries cause the hearer to take a particular action. Commissives such as promises commit a speaker to some future action. Expressives such as congratulations express the speaker’s attitudes and emotions towards the proposition. Declarations such as baptisms change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration. Request is a common speech act that belongs to the type of directives.

Searle (1975b) also introduces another important concept that is the Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. A direct speech act happens when the illocution is the same as the locution, while an indirect speech act happens when the illocution is different from locution. For example, the direct request “switch on the light” can be rephrased as an indirect request “it’s dark here”.

Hymes (1972) suggests a further distinction regarding speech situations, speech events and speech acts. Speech situations such as parties and conferences exist in speech community, and there may not be consistent rules to govern them. Speech events such as lectures are governed by rules of speech. Speech acts such as requests referred to acts performed by

speaking and governed by discourse functions. Speech acts encode social norms in linguistic form.

2.3. Politeness Theories

Grice (1969, 1975) introduces the Cooperative Principle and describes how people could speak cooperatively to achieve effective conversation. He argues that rational people would follow the Cooperative Principle in conversation to achieve effective communication. The principle is divided into four Gricean Maxims. Maxim of Quality states that people would be truthful. They do not say what they believe to be false or for what they lack adequate evidence. Maxim of Quantity states that people would give the right quantity of information. They would make their contribution as informative as is required but not more informative than is required. Maxim of Relevance states that people would be relevant in conversation. Maxim of Manner states that people would be clear. They would avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity, be brief and be orderly. Gricean Maxims generate “implicatures”. If the surface meaning of a sentence does not seem to be consistent with the Gricean Maxims and yet the circumstances lead people to think that the speaker is obeying the Cooperative Principle, people will generally investigate the indirect meaning implied by the sentence.

Lakoff (1973, 1977) describes politeness as a system of interpersonal relations designed for conflict avoidance. She conceptualises pragmatic competence or rules of politeness as something in addition to Grice’s Cooperative Principle. She renames Cooperative Principle as Rules of Conversation and keeps emphasising that conversation needs to be true, in right quantity, be relevant and be clear. In addition, she adds rules of politeness that emphasise that a speaker should not impose but should give options and be friendly to the hearer. By such an emphasis, she associates politeness with indirectness more explicitly. She (1973, p.297) makes it clear that when clarity (Rules of Conversation) conflicts with politeness (Rules of Politeness), in most cases politeness supersedes.

Leech (1983) elaborates on the models of Grice and Lakoff. He conceptualises his General Pragmatics as the combination of Textual Rhetoric and Interpersonal Rhetoric. Textual Rhetoric stresses clarity, so it is similar to Grice’s Cooperative Principle and Lakoff’s Rules of Conversation. Interpersonal Rhetoric includes the Politeness Principle that further elaborates on Lakoff’s Rules of Politeness. The Politeness Principle comprises six maxims that rational people should follow. Tact Maxim is similar to Lakoff’s “should not impose”,

while Approbation Maxim, Agreement Maxim and Sympathy Maxim are similar to Lakoff's "be friendly to the hearer". Leech adds Generosity Maxim and Modesty Maxim to elaborate on the duty of the speaker. Generosity Maxim minimises the expressions implying benefit to oneself and maximises the expressions implying cost to oneself, while Modesty Maxim minimises the praise of self.

As seen in the previous three paragraphs, the theories of Grice (1969 & 1975), Lakoff (1973 & 1977) and Leech (1983) are mainly conceptual or theoretical in nature. For example, they have not delineated the decision-making process of a speaker. For example, how a speaker decides which principle among the many to follow first or more and how contextual factors affect the decision process have not been illustrated. Brown and Levinson (1978) addressed such research gap and launched their easily understood yet articulated theory that has been widely adopted ever since until the end of 1980s. They concretely conceptualise politeness as specific linguistic strategies that could be universally applied across different languages. The purpose of politeness strategies is to reduce the threat of loss of negative face (one's freedom from imposition) and positive face (one's self-image being appreciated) posed by intrinsically face-threatening speech acts (FTAs) such as "request". The decision making process for choosing a certain politeness strategy is also articulated, and one needs to consider the social distance between speaker and hearer, the relative power of hearer over speaker and the rank of imposition of the act on the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1978) propose five main types of politeness strategies which are Bald On-record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Off-record and Don't Do the FTA with the last being the most indirect. Bald On-record does not attempt to minimise the threat to the hearers' face. Using such a strategy may shock or embarrass the addressee. Many of the examples given (1987, pp. 94-98) are requests in the imperative mood as seen below:

(1) When maximum efficiency is very important, mutually known to the both speaker and hearer, e.g.:

"Help!"

(2) Speaker speaking as if maximum efficiency is very important, e.g.:

"Listen, I've got an idea."

(3) Where communication difficulties exert pressure to speak with maximum efficiency, e.g.:

“Come home right now (speaker calling across a distance)!”

(4) Task-oriented, e.g.:

“Give me the nails.”

(5) When the speaker is powerful and does not fear retaliation, or in teasing/joking, e.g.:

“Bring me wine, Jeeves.”

(6) Doing the FTA is in the interest of the hearer, sympathetic advice or warnings, e.g.:

“Careful! He’s a dangerous man.”

The Positive Politeness Strategies seek to minimise the threat to a hearer’s positive face when asserting one’s want. Such strategies of attending to the hearer’s interests, wants and needs is similar to Lakoff’s “be friendly to the hearer”. One could emphasise mutual benefit to the hearer when making requests (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp.103-117). For example:

(1) Attend to hearer’s interests, wants, needs, goods, e.g.:

“You must be hungry, it’s a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?”

(2) Exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with hearer, e.g.:

“What a fantastic garden you have!”

(3) Intensify interest to hearer by using the vivid present, e.g.:

“I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? A huge mess all over the place...”

(4) Use in-group identity markers, e.g.:

“Here mate, I was keeping that seat for a friend of mine.”

(5) Seek agreement for those aspects of topics on which it is possible to agree, e.g.:

“Isn’t your new car a beautiful colour (even when you want to state later that it is pollution-producing)?”

(6) Avoid/Hide disagreement, e.g.:

“Yes, it’s permanent, but permanent until I finish college.”

The Negative Politeness Strategies orient towards a hearer’s negative face and minimises imposition/intrusion on the hearer. It is similar to Lakoff’s “should not impose”. For example, one could be conventionally indirect when making requests (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp.132-189). For example:

(1) Be conventionally indirect, e.g.:

“Can you shut the door?”

(2) Question, hedge, e.g.:

“Won’t you open the door?”

(3) Be pessimistic, e.g.:

“Could you open the door?”

(4) Minimise the imposition on hearer, e.g.:

“I just want to ask you if I can borrow a tiny bit of paper.”

(5) Give deference, the speaker humbles himself or herself, e.g.:

“We look forward very much to dining with you.”

(6) Apologise, indicating one’s reluctance to the hearer, e.g.:

“I’m sure you must be very busy, but can you do me a favour?”

Off-record is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act (1987, pp. 211-227).

(1) Invite conversational implicatures, e.g.:

“It’s cold in here (shut the door please)!”

(2) Be vague or ambiguous, e.g.:

“A penny saved is a penny earned (proverb, generalised advice).”

2.4. Pragmalinguistic Components constituting Directness of Request

Directness in request making has been an important and common topic for pragmatics, and requests can be made in different forms of pragmalinguistic directness. Searle (1975b) introduces the concept of indirect speech acts and asserts that indirectness is often used in making requests. For example, “Can you open the window” may be literally a question but actually a request in terms of the illocutionary perspective. Leech (1983) states that indirectness implies optionality for the hearer and the pragmalinguistic indirectness is increased “by using a more and more indirect kind of illocution” (p.108) through, for example, making utterances longer with vaguer focus.

2.4.1. Request Strategies in Order of Directness, Request Perspective, Internal Modification and Supportive Move

House and Kasper (1981) provide a detailed scale of directness by putting the different request strategies into a tidy order. They distinguish eight levels of directness for request making, with Level 1 being the most indirect and Level 8 being the most direct type of request (pp.163-164). The levels of directness in the order of increasing pragmalinguistic directness are Mild Hint, Strong Hint, Query Preparatory, State Preparatory, Scope Stating, Locution Derivable, Hedged Performative and Explicit Performative (combined as one level with two sub-levels 7a and 7b) and Mood Derivable. Therefore, the scale of House and Kasper actually consists of nine levels as set out below:

(1) Mild Hint: Proposition expressed in the locution is distinct from the proposition to which the illocutionary point refers, but clearly, some implicational relationship must be discoverable for the hearer, e.g.:

“It’s very cold in here.”

(2) Strong Hint: Proposition expressed in the locution is not identical to the proposition to which the illocutionary point refers but is related to it in that both have referential elements in common other than reference to either of the interlocutors, e.g.:

“Why is the window open?”

(3) Query Preparatory: Locution queries a preparatory condition holding for the execution of the action denoted in the proposition, e.g.:

“Can you close the window?”

(4) State Preparatory: Locution asserts a preparatory condition holding for the execution of the action referred to in the proposition, e.g.:

“You can close the window.”

(5) Scope Stating: Locution expresses the speaker’s intention, desires, or feelings through the proposition he/she expresses, e.g.:

“I would prefer it if you closed the window.”

(6) Locution Derivable: Illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of locution, e.g.:

“You should close the window.”

(7a) Hedged Performative: The speaker names the illocutionary intent he or she wishes his or her locution to be understood by the hearer as having, but hedges by using a modal auxiliary, e.g.:

“I must ask you to close the window.”

(7b) Explicit Performative: The speaker explicitly names the illocutionary intent he or she wishes his or her locution to be understood by the hearer as having, e.g.:

“I ask you to close the window.”

(8) Mood Derivable: The grammatical mood of the locution conventionally determines its illocutionary point as a request, e.g.:

“Close the window.”

With such directness scale, House and Kasper (1981) studied the directness of requests of the native speakers of English and German and they found that Germans select higher levels of directness of requests than English speakers do. Germans’ most frequent level is Level 6, while English speakers’ most frequent level is Level 3.

They also studied the distribution of modality markers in each directness level. The list of modality markers consists of two types, namely Downgraders and Upgraders (pp. 166-170):

Downgraders

(1) Politeness Marker: Optional elements added to an act to show deference to the interlocutor and to bid for cooperative behaviour, e.g.:

“Please...”

(2) Play-down: Syntactic devices used to tone down the perlocutionary effect an utterance is likely to have on the addressee, e.g.:

“I wondered if (past tense) ...”

“I was wondering (durative aspect marker) ...”

“Mightn’t it be a good idea (negation)...?”

“Mightn’t it be a good idea (interrogative)...?”

“Could (past modal) you....”

(3) Consultative Device: Optional devices by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer and bid for the hearer’s cooperation; frequently these devices are ritualised formulas, e.g.:

“Would you mind if...”

(4) Hedge: Adverbials excluding sentence adverbials by means of which the speaker avoids a precise propositional specification, thus circumventing the potential provocation such a specification might entail; the speaker leaves the option open for the hearer to complete his or her utterance and thereby imposes his or her own intent less forcefully on the hearer, e.g.:

“...kind of...”

“...sort of...”

“...somehow...”

(5) Understater: Adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker under-represents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition, e.g.:

“...a little bit...”

“...a second...”

“...not very much...”

“...just a trifle...”



(6) Downtoner: Sentence modifiers that are used by the speaker in order to modulate the impact his or her utterance is likely to have on the hearer, e.g.:

“...just...”

“...simply...”

“...possibly...”

“...perhaps...”

“...rather...”

“Couldn’t you just move over a bit?”

(7) “Minus” committer: Sentence modifiers that are used to lower the degree to which the speaker commits himself or herself to the state of affairs referred to in the proposition. The speaker thus explicitly characterises his or her utterance as his or her personal opinion, e.g.:

“I think...”

“I guess...”

“I believe...”

“I suppose...”

“In my opinion...”

(8) Forewarn: A kind of anticipatory disarmament device used by the speaker to forewarn the hearer and to forestall his or her possible negative reactions to the speaker’s act. Typically, a forewarning is a meta-comment about what the speaker is about to do, a compliment paid to the hearer as a preliminary to a potentially offensive utterance, or an invocation of a generally accepted Cooperative Principle which the speaker is about to flout, e.g.:

“...far be it from me to belittle your efforts, but...”

“...you’re a nice guy, Jim, but...”

“...this may be a bit boring to you, but. . .”

(9) Hesitator: Deliberately employed malformulations, used to impress on the hearer the fact that the speaker has qualms about performing his or her ensuing act, e.g.: “erm”

(10) Scope-stater: Elements in which the speaker explicitly expresses his or her



subjective opinion through the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of his or her utterance, e.g.:

“I’m afraid you’re in my seat...”

“I’m a bit disappointed that you did (a certain proposition) ...”

“I’m not happy about the fact that you did (a certain proposition) ...”

(11) Agent Avoider: Syntactic devices by means of which it is possible for the speaker not to mention either himself/herself or the hearer as agents, thus for avoiding direct attack, e.g.: passive, impersonal constructions using “people”, “they”, “one” and “you” as neutral agents

Upgraders

(1) Overstater: Adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker over-represents the reality denoted in the proposition in the interests of increasing the force of his or her utterance, e.g.:

“...absolutely...”

“...purely...”

“...terribly...”

“...frightfully...”

“I’m absolutely disgusted that you left the bathroom in such a state.”

(2) Intensifier: Adverbial modifier used by the speaker to intensify certain elements of the proposition of his or her utterance, e.g.:

“...very...”

“...so...”

“...really...”

“I’d be really pleased if you could help me.”

(3) “Plus” Committer: Sentence modifiers by means of which the speaker indicates his or her heightened degree of commitment through the state of affairs referred to in the proposition, e.g.:

“I’m sure...”

“...certainly...”

“...obviously...”



“...really...”

“You should certainly have informed me.”

(4) Lexical Intensifier: Lexical items that are strongly marked for their negative social attitude, e.g.:

“That’s bloody mean of you.”

(5) Aggressive Interrogative: Employment by the speaker of the interrogative mood to involve explicitly the hearer and thus to intensify the impact of his or her utterance on the hearer, e.g.:

“Why haven’t you told me before?”

(6) Rhetorical Appeal: In using a rhetorical appeal, the speaker attempts by claiming or implying the non-possibility of not accepting that proposition, to debar the hearer from not accepting that proposition, e.g.:

“You must understand that...”

“Anyone can see that...”

“It’s common knowledge that...”

“You must understand that this is public property...”

House and Kasper (1981) found that upgraders have been rarely used with requests in general and Germans use fewer downgraders than English speakers. For both Germans and English speakers, more downgraders are used for lower directness levels of requests probably because the speakers of the two languages want to “play it doubly safe” (House & Kasper, p.182).

Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1984, 1985, 1987 & 1989) extend the work of House and Kasper (1981) and study request making in a series of studies with data from both native speakers and non-native speakers. They assert that requests include four pragmalinguistic components, namely Alerters, Head Act, Internal Modification and External Modification. In Figure 2.2, the four such request components are illustrated with an example.

Figure 2.2. Components constituting a request

“Colleagues¹, today is the deadline for the training nomination⁴, so please³ forward your nomination form to our HR office by the end of today².”

- (1) “Colleagues”: Alerters to alert hearer’s attention to the ensuing request
- (2) “please forward your nomination form to our HR office by the end of today”: Head Act being the minimal unit to realise the request
- (3) “please”: Internal Modification happening within the Head Act to herein mitigate the degree of coerciveness
- (4) “today is the deadline for the training nomination”: Supportive move to mitigate the degree of coerciveness with the provision of justification for the request

Request Head Act is “the request proper”, “the minimal unit which can realise a request” and can be isolated from “the two “nonessential parts we term Alerters and Supportive Moves” (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, pp.17 & 275). In other words, request head act is the minimal unit/clause in direct relation to the request illocution. Referring to Figure 2.2, the request head act is “please forward your nomination form to our HR office by the end of today”. House and Kasper (1981) state that request head acts vary with directness levels, while Blum-Kulka et al. (1984, 1989) add that request head acts also vary with request perspectives. Directness Level is “the degree to which the speaker’s illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution” (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, p.278). Request Perspective refers to whether a request is realised from the viewpoint of the hearer or the speaker or both. It consists of four types, namely Hearer Dominance, Speaker Dominance, Speaker & Hearer Dominance and Impersonal Perspective.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1984, 1989) term the modality markers Downgrader and Upgrader collectively as Internal Modification. Internal modification happens within a request head act/request proper to adjust the degree of coerciveness of a request (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, p.19). As stated, House and Kasper (1981) found that downgraders instead of upgraders are generally used in request making in English and German so House (1989) continued to focus her study on the usage of the downgrader in request making, please/bitte, in English and German. Similar to the studies conducted by House and Kasper (1981) and House (1989), Blum-Kulka (1989) also focused on downgraders when studying internal modifications because upgraders have been generally less used with request making. Blum-Kulka (1989) compared the proportions of downgraders in the conventionally indirect level in Australian English, Canadian French, Hebrew and Argentinean Spanish. Twice as



many downgraders have been used in Australian English than in Canadian French and Hebrew while least downgraders were found in Argentinean Spanish. In addition, Blum-Kulka et al. (1984 & 1989) add that Supportive Move, such as the reason of a request, can also adjust the degree of coerciveness of a request. Supportive move, being external to request head act, either precede or follow a request head act. Referring to Figure 2.2, the external modification is “today is the deadline for the training nomination” which is external to the request head act “please forward your nomination form to our HR office by the end of today”.

Based on the empirical work on the speech act of request making (Searle, 1975b, 1979; Ervin-Tripp, 1976; House & Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka, 1983), Blum-Kulka et al. (1984 & 1989) conclude that requests in different languages mainly display three major levels of directness, that are, the Direct/Explicit Level, the Conventionally Indirect Level and the Non-conventional Indirect Level. A number of the studies of Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1985 & 1989) are based on these three levels. They believe that the three-level structure could allow simplicity and clarity for comparing requests across languages. While in some other studies, they subdivide the three main levels back into the nine mutually exclusive sub-levels and created a more detailed scale of directness so as to facilitate requests being coded in greater subtlety and detail for comprehensive cross-cultural comparisons. The Direct/Explicit Level is expanded into Mood Derivable, Performative, Hedged Performative, Obligation Statement and Want Statement. The Conventionally Indirect Level is expanded into Suggestory Formula and Query Preparatory. Lastly, the Non-conventional Indirect Level is expanded into Strong Hint and Mild Hint. The details of the scale with sub-levels are presented below with concrete examples for each sub-level.

Direct/Explicit level (Impositive)

(1a) Mood Derivable: Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force, e.g.:

“Clean up that mess.”

(1b) Performative: Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named, e.g.:

“I am asking you to clean up the mess.”

(1c) Hedged Performative: Utterances in which the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions, e.g.:

“I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled.”

(1d) Obligation Statement: Utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act, e.g.:

“You’ll have to move that car.”

(1e) Want Statement: Utterances which state the speaker’s desire that the hearer carries out the act, e.g.:

“I really want you to stop bothering me.”

Conventionally Indirect Level

(2a) Suggestory Formula: Utterances which contain a suggestion to carry out a proposal, e.g.:

“How about cleaning up?”

(2b) Query Preparatory: Utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions such as ability and willingness as conventionalised in any specific language, e.g.:

“Would you mind moving your car?”

Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Hint)

(3a) Strong Hint: Utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act, e.g.:

“You have left the kitchen in a right mess.”

(3b) Mild Hint: Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests from context, e.g.:

“I am a nun (in response to a persistent hassler)”.

Each of the above utterance examples consists of a number of common pragmalinguistic components. For instance, example 2b can be extended as “Your car blocks the exit of the car park. Would you mind moving your car, please?”, in which “moving” is the request head act that denotes the request, while “you” is the request perspective denoting the request is made



in the perspective of requestee. “Would you mind” is the preparatory condition of willingness denoting the sub-level “Query Preparatory”. For internal modification, “Would” is the syntactic downgrader of past modal that helps moderate the illocutionary coercion of the request within the level, while “please” is the lexical and phrasal downgrader of politeness marker. With regard to supportive move, “Your car blocks the exit of the car park” is the grounder, providing the reason for the request that also helps moderate the illocutionary coercion of the request. As mentioned earlier, internal modifications happen within the request head act/request proper, while supportive moves such as grounder or promise of reward either precede or follow a request head act. The pragmalinguistic forms of the other three components Request Perspective, Internal Modification and Supportive Move are listed below:

Request Perspective (avoidance to name the hearer can reduce coerciveness)

(1) Hearer Dominance, e.g.:

“Could you tidy up the kitchen soon?”

“Clean up that mess.” (no explicit subject but “you” implied since the request is being addressed to the hearer)

(2) Speaker and Hearer Dominance, e.g.:

“Could we begin now?”

(3) Speaker Dominance, e.g.:

“Do you think I could borrow your notes from yesterday?”

(4) Impersonal Perspective, e.g.:

“As an employee, one needs to come back on time every day.”

Internal Modification

Syntactic Downgraders

(1) Modal Verb, e.g.:

“May I borrow your notes?”

(2) Conditional Clause, e.g.:

“I was wondering if you could present your paper a week earlier than planned.”

Lexical and phrasal Downgraders

(1) Politeness Markers, e.g.:

“Clean the kitchen, please.”

(2) Hedge (Adverbial: Impreciseness), e.g.:

“I’d kind of like to get a lift if that’s all right.”

(3) Downtoner (Adverb: Modulation of impact on the hearer), e.g.:

“Could you possibly lend me your notes?”

(4) Cajolers, e.g.:

“You know...”

(5) Appealers, e.g.:

“Okay?”

Supportive Move

(1) Preparator (asking about the potential availability of the hearer for carrying out the request or asking for the hearer’s permission to make the request but without stating the content of the request), e.g.:

“I’d like to ask you something.”

(2) Getting a Pre-commitment, e.g.:

“Could you do me a favour?”

(3) Grounder (reasons, explanations, justifications for the request), e.g.:

“I missed class yesterday. Could I borrow your notes?”

(4) Disarmer (removing potential objections), e.g.:

“Could you make an exception this time?”

(5) Promise of Reward, e.g.:

“Could you give me a lift home? I’ll pitch in on some gas.”

(6) Imposition Minimiser, e.g.:

“Could you drive me home, but only if you’re going my way?”

In terms of directness level, Blum-Kulka (1989) found that the conventionally indirect level accounts for the highest proportion of requests in Australian English, French, Hebrew and Canadian French. Blum-Kulka and House (1989, p.134) found that German and Argentinean Spanish also demonstrate similar patterns.

Contrastively, though not the mainstream view, studies of some other scholars found that higher directness may be preferred in some situations, especially in the business context. For example, Charles (1996) studied the relation between the spoken business negotiation patterns and the relationships among negotiators and found that even bald-on-record strategies can be used positively to express trust in sellers in established business relationships. Tamarit and Skorzynska (2014) found that the repetition of verbal moves such as assertives and directives helped make communication effective in argumentative oral business discourse.

Regarding Request Perspective, Blum-Kulka (1989) found that “you” accounts for the highest proportion of requests in Australian English, Hebrew, Canadian French and Argentinean Spanish while “I” accounts for the second highest proportion of requests of Australian English and Canadian French. Regarding Supportive Move, Faerch and Kasper (1989) studied the request patterns of native and non-native speakers of British English and found that supportive moves have been generally less frequently used than internal modifications.

The contribution of Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1984, 1985, 1987 & 1989) is substantial, and many other scholars studying request making adopt their request coding manual (Hassall, 1999; Youssef 2012). For example, Ogiermann (2009) used the coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. to compare the directness of Polish/Russian requests with English requests. Compared to English requests, both Polish and Russian requests use a lot more imperatives and hearer dominances of request perspective because requests may not be regarded as threats to the hearer’s face in Slavic (Indo-European) cultures.

2.4.2. Paralinguistic Component: Prosodic Feature

While Phonology studies sound in consonant phonemes and vowel phonemes, Pragmatics, being broader and contextual in nature, more employs Prosody that is the study of suprasegmental phonology, dealing with the sound features across segments such as phonemes and syllables. In reviewing the trend of past prosodic or phonological studies and also the trend of recent prosodic studies, Wichmann (2006) stated that “the vocal resources that are collectively known as Prosody include four main components, pitch, loudness, tempo and voice quality, the most studied being pitch, or intonation. All these can characterise an entire utterance or a single syllable (of a tone unit)”. Intonation plays an important role and works hand-in-hand with the literal content of an utterance in conveying meanings, and systematic prosodic studies on the language English trace back to 1960s. Crystal (1969 & 1975) and Crystal and Quirk (1964) studied how various prosodic features are used contrastively to communicate different meanings in authentic and spontaneous speeches of English, for example, the use of high and low pitch to differentiate if an utterance is a statement or a question with the same literal content. In addition, as Shintel and Keysar (2009) pointed out, literal contents are “notoriously ambiguous” and interlocutors need to use additional cues such as prosodic features to resolve ambiguity. While estimating speaker’s intention consumes much of the hearer’s cognitive resource, the prosodic information, being naturally present in interaction, could provide multiple cues to aid interpretation without putting the hearer into “deliberative inferential processes”.

There are various approaches to study intonation. On one hand, Chomsky and Halle (1968) view intonation as sentence-based grammatical devices to be applied with different syntactic structures. For example, rise tone is usually associated with yes/no question. O’Connor and Arnold (1973) on the other hand do not view intonation as mainly a grammatical pattern but as having its major role in expressing speaker’s attitude in one’s speech. For example, a rising tone is usually associated with the warm and reassuring attitude. Both the approach of Chomsky and Halle (1968) and that of O’Connor and Arnold (1973) see intonation as secondary to the literal contents of words, in Wichmann’s term (2006), a “paralinguistic overlay” on an utterance. A third approach, discourse intonation, is introduced by Brazil (1975) who builds on the three hierarchical system of intonation of Halliday (1970). Instead of focusing on sentence as a unit for intonation, Halliday (1970) divides speech into tone groups and the three hierarchies of intonation system consist of tonality, tonicity and tone. Tonality is dividing utterances into intonation/tone groups with a single unit of information.



Tonicity is the allocation of stressed syllable in a tone group. Tone is the pitch movement within a tone group. Discourse intonation goes beyond sentence-based units and instead focuses on the intonation within and between tone units. In addition to signalling syntactic structures and attitudes, discourse intonation also, in a broader sense, structures information/utterances or interaction within discourse through distinguishing between references to old/shared information and proclamation of new information. Discourse intonation can also indicate the relative status of participants in a conversation (e.g. teacher-pupil) and regulate conversational turn-taking (e.g. inviting response or not) (Brazil et al., 1980). Discourse intonation can be contemplated as branching from discourse analysis, in which discourse structure can also be deciphered through intonation. Brazil et al. also commented that although intonation appears to function as signalling syntactic structure or attitude by other scholars such as Chomsky and Halle (1968) and O'Connor and Arnold (1973), it actually happens due to other situational factors but not simply because of intonation alone.

Reviewing extensively the prosodic studies done across cultures, Cutler, Dahan and van Donselaar (1997) concluded that prosody has moved towards “abandonment of previously held deterministic views of the relationship between prosodic structure and other aspects of linguistic structure”. That is, a fixed/general prosodic pattern or formula may not exist across cultures. Nevertheless, general patterns seem to exist in one of the prosodic elements, intonation. Linguistic studies of intonation patterns of utterances are common in politeness research. Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987, p.187) pointed out that one can soften the impact of an FTA, not only by linguistic politeness strategies, but also by paralinguistic means such as pitch (intonation). For example, in Tzeltal spoken by Mayan Indians in Mexico, a high pitch indicates self-humbling. In addition, women’s pitch is generally much higher than men’s is. After 14 years, Wichmann (2004) verified that the intonation patterns identified by Brown and Levinson also well apply to “please-requests”. When a please-request is only a softened command where the hearer is constrained to comply, such “speaker orientation” or speaker control, is usually signalled by a falling tone. A “Yes, please” response to an offer is usually signalled by a rising tone to indicate the “hearer orientation” because the success of the offer counts on the will of hearer. Currie and Kenworthy (1980) studied intonation contour and found that falling tone is usually associated with the end of a topic where a speaker has no more to say on a topic while a rising tone is usually associated with the continuation of a topic. Similarly, a conducive question usually carries a falling tone, “closed” intonation pattern,



because the proposition behind conducive question is assumed to be accepted by hearer and it only requires confirmation. Oppositely, a non-conductive question usually carries a rising tone, an “open” intonation pattern, because the hearer may choose to confirm or deny the proposition behind non-conductive questions.

Brazil (1997) focused on intonation in his prosodic research and generated comprehensive findings of tone (pitch movement) in tone units. His greatest contribution lied in identifying and analysing the natures of “referring tone” and “proclaiming tone”. On one hand, referring tone (rise tone/fall-rise tone) conveys a “social connotation” (p.77) of solidarity and closeness between interlocutors who both refer to “common ground” which indicates that some information or stance is already present in the interaction discourse between the interlocutors. Both speaker and hearer command equal status of further sharing on information or stance and the response(s) could be “negotiated” (p.107). He provided an example that a service assistant may say “May I help you” in a rising tone (p.95) to make one’s offer of assistance appear warmer or closer to the hearer. Another example is related to declarative-mood questions such as “John prefers that one?” (p.100). On one hand, if speaker says in a referring tone (rise/fall-rise tone), the question would sound more tentative, warm and invite the hearer to concur with or adjudicate the validity of contents. Such declarative-mood question is regarded as an authentic question seeking concurrence or further information on hearer’s will. On the other hand, proclaiming tone (fall tone/rise-fall tone) declares speaker’s control/convergence (p.74), putting forward world-changing news being currently not present in the interaction discourse and no concurrence or adjudication is expected from the hearer. In other words, the response from the hearer is “so far unnegotiated” (p.107). Back to the example of declarative-mood question “John prefers that one?”, if the speaker says with a proclaiming tone (fall/rise-fall), he/she intends to change the hearer’s “world view”. That is, the declarative-mood question functions similarly as a declarative statement/declaration/proclamation, with the speaker proclaiming his/her news or stance for hearer’s mere confirmation. Last, the “level tone” is used when the speaker has no desire to make “either/or” choice of referring or proclaiming orientation (p.132). In other words, the speaker does not assume for the current understanding between the interlocutors and thus frees oneself from immediate interaction.

Pitch/intonation also plays an important role in conveying impoliteness. As Culpeper et al. (2003) and Culpeper (2011) commented, impolite aggression can be conveyed by

paralinguistic means such as pitch of voice. Culpeper (2011) highlighted the prosodic features being strongly associated with the two common emotions engaged in impoliteness, “anger” and “disgust” as identified in the work of Murray and Arnott (1993, qtd. in Culpeper 2011). The pitch was found to be averagely higher for “anger” while averagely lower for “disgust”.

In Hong Kong, a series of extensive discourse intonation studies have been carried out by Cheng et al. since their compilation of the prosodic Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE) in 1990s and the HKCSE was the “first large-scale attempt to use the categories and conventions of discourse intonation in its transcription” with “forty-five percent of the 2-million-word HKCSE has been prosodically transcribed” (Cheng et al., 2008, p.3). That is, 0.9 million words of HKCSE were prosodically transcribed. Before that, there had been corpora with prosodic transcription but they were of smaller scale. For example, the London-Lund Corpus is with prosodic transcriptions indicating, for example, tone units and onsets but it just consists of half a million words. Cheng and her colleagues made use of HKCSE to conduct a number of important discourse intonation studies to understand the Spoken English of Hong Kong. For example, Cheng (2002) studied the intonation of indirectness in intercultural communication, the intonation of “yes/no” questions and declarative questions in hotel (2004a), the intonation of addressing others in public discourses (2004b) and the intonation of Q&A sessions in public discourses (2004c). Cheng and Warren (2002) studied the intonation of declarative-mood questions, the intonation of disagreement in business discourses (2005) and the intonation of word associations/collocations (2008). Warren (2004) studied speaker’s choice of intonation to exert control in Spoken Business English and the intonation of vague language (2007). Adding on what had been researched with HKCSE in discourse intonation since mid-1990s and with the availability of the computer-mediated discourse intonation software iConc developed by Greaves, Cheng et al. (2008) conducted a macroscopic study on the communicative role of discourse intonation in the Spoken English of Hong Kong with the full-scale HKCSE which consist of four sub-corpora namely conversations, academic discourses, business discourses and public discourses. They based on discourse intonation framework developed by Brazil (1995 & 1997) to transcribe the prosody and analyse the prosodic patterns present in the discourses of HKCSE. Brazil’s discourse intonation framework divides discourse into tone units and the last prominent syllable “tonic syllable” of each tone unit carries one of the five tones (pitch movements) which are rise-fall, fall, rise, fall-rise and level. As detailed in the previous paragraph, rise-fall and fall refer to “proclaiming tones” while rise and fall-rise refer to



“referring tones”. Cheng et al. (2008) identified insightful discourse intonation patterns in cultural groups (termed on p.7), sexes and sub-corpora. First, level tone is the most used of the five tones in case of Hong Kong Chinese while fall tone is most used by Native English Speakers. Second, males and females were found to demonstrate similar intonation patterns with level tone being most used in both sexes. Third, comparing the four sub-corpora, level tone is most used and fall tone being second most used in the business sub-corpus. To conclude, the level tone is generally most used across cultural groups, sexes and sub-corpora because speakers’ “constructing longer telling and asking increments” is a common discourse pattern in speaking and speakers “typically say with level tone to achieve the target state”. Another reason is that speakers may have encountered a higher incidence of “encoding problems” in authentic dialogues compared to planned speeches and the level tone is used to divert from “direct discourse” (p.158).

2.5. Sociopragmatic Factors Influencing Request Making

The fact that First Language has influence on patterns of speech acts and request making is documented in a number of pragmatic studies (House & Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Ogiermann, 2009). Such influences apply to request patterns of both native speakers and non-native speakers. For example, Tannen (1981) found that Greek-Americans retain Greek’s cultural norms for indirectness when speaking English. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) found that the non-native speech acts often show the cultural norms of the mother tongue. Takahashi (1996) found that Japanese learners of English judge the contextual appropriateness of the indirect English request strategies based on how similar strategies are used conventionally in Japanese with regard to status relationship. Japanese people generally follow the Japanese rules when refusing requests in English. The previously mentioned scholars argue that the first language of the non-native speakers of English will make them request differently in English compared to native speakers of English.

Many scholars consider power distance and social distance as influential factors accounting for the use of different politeness strategies in request making. Although Hofstede (1984, 2001 & 2010) has not specifically studied request making, he is the keynote scholar researching on the notions of power distance and social distance. He has conducted his cultural dimension study in relation to power distance and social distance and has used factor analysis to examine the results of a worldwide survey of employee values of the different

IBM branches to derive the indexes of the different cultural dimensions. According to Hofstede, Power Distance Index (PDI) and Individualism Index (IDV) are two of the important cultural dimensions. PDI is the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions accepted and expected that power be distributed unequally. A high PDI suggests that a society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. IDV is the degree to which people are considered as separate individuals. A low IDV suggests that the ties between individuals in groups are strong. That is, people have small social distance with in-group members. The PDI of Hong Kong is 68 and its IDV is 25, and this indicates that Hong Kong is highly hierarchical and collectivistic (Hofstede, 2010). Hofstede (1984, 2001 & 2010) observes from his research that IDV is highly correlated with PDI. In other words, highly collectivistic societies tend to be also high in power distance such as the previously mentioned case of Hong Kong. People with strong bonding with one and other may also be more sensitive to the position/status of each other in a community. Collectivistic cultures tend to rely on "high-context communication style" which is indirect and conveys messages implicitly and interpretation is based on shared context and relationship among people (Hall, 1981).

There have been some studies on the influence of Power Distance and Social Distance on request making. For example, Leech (1983, p.126) argues that the use of Cooperative Principle depends on vertical distance and horizontal distance. The vertical distance measures the power distance or authority of one speaker over another, while the horizontal distance measures social distance. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that power distance and social distance determine the use of politeness strategies in their model. Scollon and Scollon (1995) suggest power difference (similar to power distance) and social distance and the interaction of the two give rise to the three politeness systems, namely Symmetrical Deference (-P, +D), Symmetrical Solidarity (-P, -D) and Asymmetrical Hierarchical (+P, +/-D). In the Symmetrical Deference System, the two interlocutors are equal in power, that is, with no power distance (-P) but they are remote from each other in terms of social distance (+D). Independence Strategy is used for deference in such politeness system. In the Symmetrical Solidarity System, the two interlocutors are equal in power, that is, with no power distance (-P) and being close to each other with no social distance. Involvement Strategy is used for solidarity in such system. In the Asymmetrical Hierarchical System, one interlocutor has power over the other. The more powerful one would use Involvement Strategy and the less powerful one would use Independence Strategy because of the power difference between

them, and it does not matter if there is social distance between the two interlocutors. Scollon and Scollon (1995) later defined Social Distance as the horizontal familiarity or closeness between speakers.

Lee-Wong (1996) found that the social dimensions of power distance and social distance have significant influence on the linguistic behaviours of the Chinese people in Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan. Speakers of greater power were found to prefer direct requests, and greater social distance between the speakers causes greater use of indirect strategies. Pilegaard (1997) found in the British business letters that power plays a central role in the choice of request strategies. For example, the amount of facework undertaken by sellers is relatively much more than that undertaken by the buyers who are of higher power status. Kong (2006) investigated the use of accounts to make requests in the internal emails of a business firm and found that subordinates provide reasons for their requests most frequently when they make requests to their superiors probably because of the power distance between subordinates and superiors.

Yet social distance may have been perceived differently in Chinese politeness. Scollon and Scollon (1991) found that Chinese politeness occurs differently in inside relations and outside relations in request making. Inside relations (D-) are those of intimate and regular contacts such as family relations while outside relations (D+) are those of temporary contacts such as one-off service encounter. Kong (1998) comments that the current social distance between speakers may not be the most influential, but the expectation of continuous/repetitive/long-term relationship between them instead may be the most influential because current outside members may become inside members and vice-versa in the future. Instead, he replaces social distance or inside/outside relations with Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). In his study of the politeness of request making in the service encounters of Hong Kong, speakers with higher power position (+P) are more likely to use bald-on-record, while speakers with high expectation of relationship continuity (+R) on the hearer are more likely to use involvement strategies.

On top of social distance and power distance, Rank of Imposition (RI) is also important for a speaker to estimate the face loss posed by a face-threatening act according to Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) because FTAs such as “request” are basically imposing in nature. Following the work of Brown & Levinson, studies have been conducted to study the influence

of such sociopragmatic factor (Blum-Kulka et. al, 1989; Yeung, 1997).

2.6. Directness, Face and Politeness

Directness is merely one of the pragmalinguistic components in realising the linguistic force of a request, and pragmalinguistic directness may not necessarily be perceived as being not polite. By default or presumptive meaning, a pragmalinguistically direct request (e.g.: “Open the door!” in imperative mood without internal modification/tone softener) may lead to people of some speech communities (e.g. an Anglo-community) interpreting that request as being not polite (Leech, 2014). However, whether a direct request is interpreted by participants as being polite or not polite in a naturally occurring situation depends on the sociopragmatic context in which the request is made and the notion of face embraced by a particular social community. On top of the sociopragmatic factors discussed, past studies show that the notion of face embraced by a particular community also plays an important role in the interpretation of politeness/appropriateness.

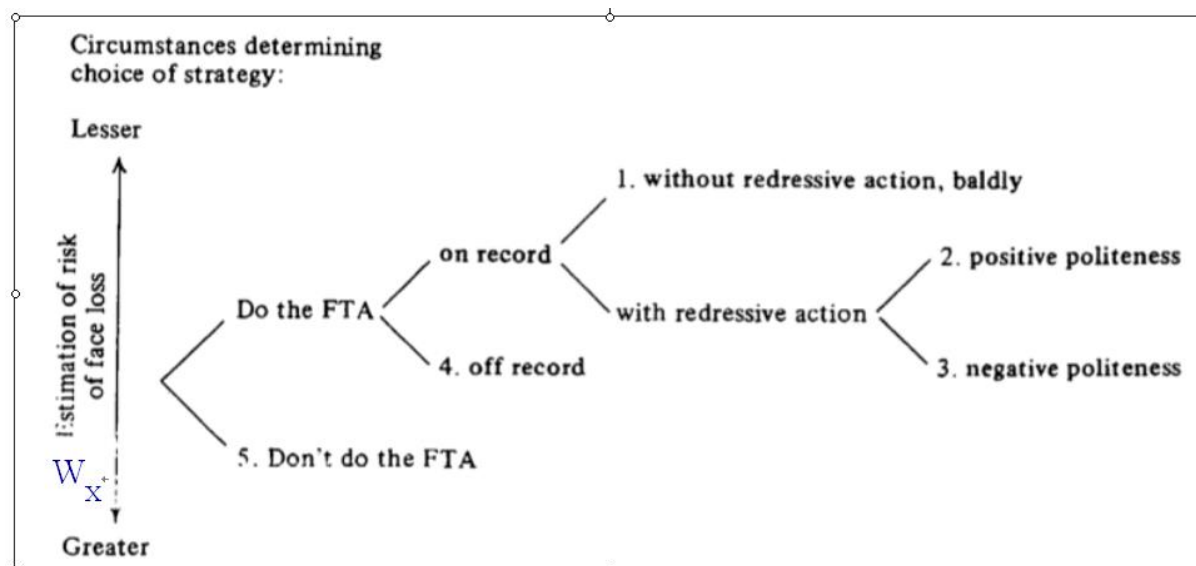
2.6.1. Politeness based on Individual Notion of Face

Goffman (1967) defined “face” as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. Grice (1975) postulated in his Cooperative Principle that conversationalists are rational beings who speak cooperatively to achieve effective conversation, and this implies that maintenance of face, harmony and cooperation is important in social interaction. Brown and Levinson (1978) built their politeness theory on Goffman’s notion of face and Gricean foundation and intended to find pragmatic rules governing and explaining language patterns in social interaction. Their politeness theory aimed at explaining what factors motivate people to adjust their language patterns in different situations. “Universals in language use” are derived based on the study of three unrelated languages and cultures, Tamil of South India, Tzeltal of Mayan Indians in Mexico and American English. Brown & Levinson’s Model sought to account for the “extraordinary parallelism (based on the study of the three previously mentioned unrelated languages) in the linguistic minutiae of the utterances with which people choose to express themselves in quite unrelated languages and cultures”. Under their theory, rational agents will universally choose the same politeness strategy as any other would under the same circumstance for maintaining the face of each other. Brown (2015) reflected that it is a ground-breaking, pioneering and articulated politeness model that helps systematic studies of politeness move forward. Even Watts, who seriously criticises Brown & Levinson’s Politeness

Model, admits that his theory is not a “better theory” than theirs is (2003, p.262).

Although Brown and Levinson (1978) followed the notion of face of Goffman (1967), they were the first to introduce a definition of face in the contrasting aspects of Positive Face and Negative Face in politeness studies. To recapture here, under their theory, the motivation of maintaining “face” is a human universal nature, but some speech acts are intrinsically and inevitably face-threatening in nature. For example, a request may impede requestee’s autonomy to act in one’s will. Brown and Levinson conceptualised “politeness strategies” as pragmatic tactics to reduce the impact of such face-threatening acts (FTAs) for maintenance of harmony in human society as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3. Politeness strategies employed to reduce face threats posed by face-threatening acts (FTAs) based on the estimation of face loss (Brown and Levinson, 1978 & 1987)



Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987, p.61) divided “face” into two aspects, namely “Negative Face” and “Positive Face”:

1. Negative face (Independence): Basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, that is, to freedom of action and freedom from imposition; and
2. Positive face (Involvement): Positive consistent self-image or personality, crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of.

Speaker (S) and Hearer (H), as Model Persons (MPs), are rational agents who have both negative and positive face. Brown and Levinson (1978) focus on S’s want to maintain H’s

face through minimising the threat of his/her FTAs to H so the focus is not on S's face but on H's face according to the delineation of Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987, p.68). As mentioned previously, some speech acts are intrinsically face-threatening in nature. Brown and Levinson categorised "request" as threatening H's negative face because request impedes H's freedom from imposition. For example, the direct request "Shut the door" could be re-phrased in negative politeness as a conventionally indirect question "Could you shut the door?" to reduce imposition on H. At the same time, they classified some speech acts such as "disapproval" and "criticism" as threatening H's positive face because such FTAs impede H's desire of his/her self-image being appreciated and approved of by others. For examples, the disapproval "It's my friend's seat, you should not sit here" could be re-phrased in positive politeness with the use of in-group identity marker as "Here mate, I was keeping that seat for a friend of mine" to save H's self-image of being appreciated (Brown and Levinson, 1978; 1987, p.108). As illustrated by the previous two examples, Brown and Levinson treat S and H as individuals, with S initiating a speech act such as request or disapproval for the good of S and at the same time a threat to H's negative or positive face.

Brown & Levinson (1978) made much contribution to politeness research. In addition to the contributions discussed earlier under Section 2.3, Brown and Levinson have also expanded politeness research from merely linguistic perspective to the perspective of social interaction ("particular contact" in Goffman's term) and culture. They thought that their sociolinguistic study raised the "interdisciplinary interest in politeness" by linking the "linguistic details" of utterances to the "parameters of social structure" and integrated them in the domain of "social interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.47). Such linkage is in line with pragmatics' emphasis in the contextual use of language. Second, the notion of face was re-conceptualised in an easily-understood and applicable construct which are the universal needs of individual self-esteem (1978; 1987 p.2) consisting of the need to be free from imposition (negative face) and the need to have one's self-image being appreciated (positive face). Face is treated as an individual property and facework is mitigation of face-threat posed by FTAs. As Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987, p.1) generalised, "the problem for any social group is controlling its internal aggression... politeness... presupposes that potential for aggression...and makes possible communication between potentially aggressive parties." They (1978) boldly claimed that their notion of face and politeness theory could be universally applied to all cultures because as mentioned, extraordinary parallelism were found in three unrelated languages and cultures in their study. Since the launch in 1978, Brown and



Levinson has become the mainstream theory/model for politeness studies and many other studies that follow are based on their work and notion. For example, Blum-Kulka (1987) studied request making in Hebrew and English and found that conventional indirectness is judged as the politest because it strikes the balance between the need for “pragmatic clarity” (giving more needed information than hints) and the need to reduce “coerciveness” (imposing less than direct request strategies). In addition, as Blum-Kulka and House (1989, pp. 138-139) pointed out, politeness studies (until the end of 1980s) are generally associated with negative politeness in the western world where deference is expressed to leave the requestee the option for non-compliance. Hence, conventional indirectness is especially frequent when individual autonomy (negative face) is more emphasised.

2.6.2. Politeness based on Collectivistic Notion of Face

Despite the previously mentioned contribution made by Brown and Levinson, their politeness theory and the associated universal claim received different criticisms after they first published their work in 1978. As quoted by Watts (2010), there have been two major criticisms. First, Schmidt and Richards (1980) criticised that the work of Brown and Levinson merely focuses on the “pessimistic view of social interaction” and treats politeness only as reducing aggression in FTAs. Second, while acknowledging the “insightfulness” of the work of Brown and Levinson, Coupland, Grainger and Coupland (1988) launch an even more acute criticism, proposing that Brown and Levinson should “ontologically” construct “positive face” and “negative face” instead of only conceiving them as hierarchical politeness strategies or two sides of the same coin. Brown and Levinson should consider social or contextual factors more in detail.

Brown and Levinson were aware of the limitations and the criticisms of their work, so they (1987) reissued their work of 1978 with an introduction detailing their overhaul of the various politeness studies since their work in 1978 and revisiting their notions on face and sociopragmatic factors. As Coupland, Grainger and Coupland (1988) stated, “there are some significant retreats and reinterpretations” in the introduction by Brown and Levinson (1987) and this is indicated by a substantial change in the title from the more absolute “Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena” to the more tentative “Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage”. Brown and Levinson (1987) expressed reservation about the “precision and falsifiability” of their model. They thought that they had “over-claimed about the precision of their system as an ethnographic tool”. First, in terms of sociopragmatic factors,

they admitted their “short shrift given to cultural variations, the minimisation of factors” had underplayed factors other than Relative Power (P) of H over S, Social Distance (D) between S and H and Ranking of Imposition (R). For example, “the presence of third parties” and “one needs to know a lot about the particular cultural factors involved in the assignment of R-values” have not been comprehensively explored (1987, pp.12 & 47).

Second, while Brown and Levinson (1987, p.13) still argued that their universal notion of face in terms of negative face and positive face is the “bare bone” of their work, they at the same time also expected that such notion is subject to much “cultural elaboration”. Brown and Levinson were aware that their notion of face “perhaps reflects the bias of a culture obsessed with individual rights and wants” which implied that it was a more western notion of face, so they did not totally rule out the validity of other scholars accounting for a different notion, a more collectivistic notion of face, in other cultures. For example, they quoted Leech’s Politeness Principle and his account of Japanese’s notion of face (Leech, 1983) suggesting that “Japanese makes it impossible to agree with praise by others of oneself, indicating that the maxim of modesty takes precedence in Japan over the maxim of agreement” (qtd. in Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.15). They seemed not resisting such alternative notion of face and estimated that “only further cross-cultural work in this alternative framework will test its utility” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.15). They (1987, p.48) further concluded that there had been only a few researchers conducting politeness studies (until 1987) which were “outside western cultural dominance; and of those, few have native cultural competence” and they hoped to “receive from anthropologists further intensive studies of how politeness is thought of in particular societies” such as “folk theories of face, deference and demeanour”. After such invitation from Brown and Levinson to go beyond the scope of their work, quite a number of other scholars shift to explore an alternative, a more collectivistic notion of face that supplements Brown and Levinson’s more individualistic notion of face. More politeness studies since then have moved away from identifying all-inclusive or universal patterns of politeness to exploring the subtle/fluid differences in the perception of politeness in different social communities or cultures.

2.6.2.1. Chinese/Asian Cultures

Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989, 2006) study the discernment/honorific system and argues that Japanese people are obliged, in every utterance, to use addressee honourifics such as “-desu” so as to maintain appropriate relations with seniors. Japanese people can scarcely



select Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies on individual basis/will in the Japanese system. Therefore, Brown and Levinson's theory may not totally provide accurate predictions for Japanese politeness phenomena.

Gu (1990) stated that the Chinese face is not threatened by speaker's impedance of hearer's freedom to act but by ill fame or reputation perceived in ones' social group. Face is something belonging to society rather than individual. The "principle of reciprocity" is stressed. That is, when making a request, the requester assumes the obligation to repay the requestee (to the requestee's benefit) many times over so the imposition of the current request sounds "less" in the perspective of the positive future repayment to the requestee. Similarly, Yang (1987) and Yeung (1997) concurred that the "principle of reciprocity" in Chinese society reduces the burden of imposition of request. After one's request is accepted, the requester will express and emphasise gratitude as a commitment to repay the requestee in the future. Therefore, Chinese requestees may see imposition of a request more positively than westerners may. In analysing Chinese and English routine business request letters, Kong (1998) also found that Chinese letters carry fewer face-threatening moves but more solidarity-building strategies than English letters.

Spencer-Oatey (2000) expanded the notion of face to social/interpersonal aspects that are "identity face" as social role and "association right" which is about relation with other people. She and Jiang (2003) pointed out that Chinese people put relation or solidarity with other people on high priority. Fukushima (2000) also defined politeness as the communication strategies to maintain mutual face and human relationship.

Lee-Wong (2000) identified a preference for on-record direct strategies stressing clarity, explicitness and sincerity in daily face-to-face and probably in-group requests among the Chinese people. Request and response to request could construct a reciprocal process to build the social and mutual identity of face between the requester and the requestee.

Yu (2003) analysed Chinese's compliment responses and confirmed that Chinese people place much greater emphasis on "solidarity politeness" and tend to deem negative face desires as negligible or irrelevant to their politeness.

Kong (2006) found that the use of accounts (similar to the concept of External

Modification as detailed in the research conceptual framework of the present study in Chapter 3.3) in emails of business firms in Hong Kong is frequent but subordinates use accounts more when requesting from superiors than peers do to justify requests among themselves. This highlights that business people in Hong Kong are aware of the greater face threat posed by the power differences in the hierarchical and collectivistic culture.

Rue & Zhang (2008) found that, compared to Korean people, Chinese people use longer and more turns and provide reasons and justifications for request (more indirect) because Korean's honorific system may mitigate the illocutionary force of direct requests so the more direct requests may not sound impolite or inappropriate in Korean culture.

Gao (2009, p.183) found that face enhancing is common in China and people practise face-giving as an important social communication skill. Through enhancing face, the social identities of the interlocutors are strengthened.

He & Zhang (2011) adopted Spencer-Oatey's face and identity theory to analyse Chinese face with the data collected from a modern Chinese TV drama and found that Chinese face is foregrounded in social interactions and the importance of "group miànzi" is highlighted in the Chinese concept of face.

Wang and Spencer-Oatey (2015) studied the gains and losses of face perceived by Chinese government officials in a delegation visit to the United States of America and found that the Chinese officials saw face-enhancement as the most important objective of the visit. They did not just endeavour to enhance their own face as delegation, but also the collective face of their Ministry and their American host.

2.6.2.2. Collectivistic Cultures other than Chinese/Asian Cultures

Wierzbicka (1985) argued that Polish direct requests could carry positive meanings and are not deemed impolite because the concern for solidarity might override deference or unnecessary remoteness in Polish culture. She (1991) later supplemented that the welfare of the hearer is most important in Slavic/Mediterranean cultures, and it may not sound impolite when the speaker is directly imposing if such imposition is in the interest of the hearer.

While Blum-Kulka and House (1989) admitted that politeness studies (until the end of

1980s) are generally associated with negative politeness in the western world as explained before, they at the same time pointed out in their request study on five languages (English, German, French, Hebrew and Spanish) that non-imposition norm may not be the “universally” most valued interactional norm when other situational factors such as “clarity in expressing intentions” and “show of sincerity” are preferred over non-imposition or deference. They termed that as “Relativity of Social Meanings” (qtd. in Blum-Kulka et. al, 1989, pp.138-139).

Lakoff (1989, 1990 & 2005) argued that there is a new trend to adopt “Camaraderie” as strategy of solidarity/solidarity enhancement. For example, when a speaker uses familiar form of address (e.g. “Buddy” instead of “Sir”) and familiar greetings (e.g. “Hi” instead of “Good morning”), the speaker uses directness to claim solidarity with the hearer and implies that the reduced social distance/closeness makes formulaic/pragmalinguistic indirectness between speaker and hearer unnecessary.

Fraser (1990) pointed out that it is not valid to equate indirectness with politeness for all cultures because there should not be a fixed linguistic form for politeness that could apply to all cultures at all times.

Nwoye (1992) found that Igbo of Nigeria conceptualises face in a dual manifestation as both “group” and “individual” and impositions in western societies are regarded differently in Igbo society. Marti (2006) found that Turkish monolinguals and bilinguals adopt quite direct strategies in their collectivistic culture and such direct strategies are not perceived as being not polite.

Spencer-Oatey (2008) re-conceptualised face in three levels, namely individual level, relational level and national level and argues that speech acts traditionally perceived as imposing such as “request” are not necessarily face-threatening and can be face-enhancing in some cultures and situations. For example, a request on requestee could also be seen as a confirmation on the close relation between the requester and requestee and on the requestee’s capability to help.

Along the face-enhancement orientation of Spencer-Oatey (2008), Hernández-Flores (2004 & 2008) observed politeness as face enhancing in a relatively more collectivistic

country in Europe, Spain (as indicated by the study of Hofstede on individualism vs. collectivism across countries in 2010). She observed conversations of friends and families and conversations in TV debates, and she conceptualised face enhancement or “face-giving” as maintaining a mutual balance between the speaker’s face and addressee’s face but not just focusing on addressee’s face as Brown and Levinson (1978) did.

Ogiermann (2009) found that direct requests in the form of imperative constructions are frequent in the Russian Culture and the Polish Culture because “in Slavic cultures, requests are not regarded as threats to the hearer’s face”.

As detailed above, scholars studying request making in collectivistic cultures point out that direct requests could carry positive meanings and are not interpreted as being not polite because the concern for solidarity and connection may override deference or unnecessary remoteness in collectivistic cultures. The individualistic notion of face of Brown and Levinson (1987), stressing the individual desires such as freedom, autonomy and self-image but somehow neglecting social desire for solidarity and connection, may not account for the politeness in collectivistic cultures. First, face may not be an individual property in collectivistic cultures. Second, politeness strategies may not be just pessimistic tactics to reduce the threat of FTAs for “face-saving” of hearers. Politeness strategies could also be enhancing the collective face in collectivistic cultures and FTAs such as request may instead be perceived as Face-enhancing Act (FEA) for “face-giving” to collective beings/members in such cultures. Hence, pragmalinguistically direct requests such as imperatives, being perceived as an FTA that threatens the negative face of hearer under the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978), could indeed sociopragmatically enhance the solidarity and connection in collectivistic cultures and be perceived as culturally polite.

As Locher, Bolander and Hohn (2015, p.3) point out, politeness studies have recently moved “from a theoretical, etic understanding of the concept of politeness (second order) to an interest in understanding what the interactants themselves consider polite (first order, emic)”. The previously mentioned recent politeness studies illustrate how the notion of face is contemplated in collectivistic cultures. Politeness does not only pessimistically reduce face-threat but also enhances solidarity between speaker and hearer.

Leech’s defined characteristics of politeness (2014, Ch.1) are herein borrowed for making

a final note of this section:

1. Not obligatory;
2. Varying gradation of polite behaviour;
3. Often a sense of normal;
4. How far or if politeness occurs depends on situation;
5. Reciprocal asymmetry;
6. Manifesting itself in repetitive behaviour;
7. Transaction of value between speakers; and
8. Preserving balance of value between speakers.

Item 4 “How far or if politeness occurs depends on situation” is of great importance. If politeness occurs, in other words, if face-threat is reduced or face is enhanced, depends on the social context and how the notion of face is contemplated in a certain culture and there should not be too many fixed pragmalinguistic pattern(s) which could be universally interpreted as sociopragmatically polite in all cultures.



2.7. Impoliteness

Along with politeness research, the scope of research has expanded to impoliteness that has been receiving increasing interest in the last two decades. Research on impoliteness mainly builds on the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987), mirrors their politeness strategies into impoliteness strategies and conceptualises impoliteness as the opposite of politeness. The most influential work traces back to Culpeper's theory of impoliteness, and he mirrors Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies into (1996, p.356):

1. Bald on record impoliteness: The FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised;
2. Positive impoliteness: The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants;
3. Negative impoliteness: The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants; and
4. Sarcasm or mock politeness: The FFA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realisations.

The most frequently quoted definition of impoliteness is also Culpeper's one and impoliteness occurs when (2005, p.38):

1. The speaker communicates face-attack intentionally; or
2. The hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking; or
3. Combination of (1) and (2).

Although impoliteness has received more attention as a research topic, the amount of impoliteness studies has still been lower than that of politeness studies due to some reasons. First, studies on politeness/impoliteness have generally followed the substantial influence of Grice (1969, 1975), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and focused on the constructive side of politeness which is to reduce aggression in Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) and enhance social harmony but not on the destructive side of impoliteness which is to launch or handle face-attack. As Leech (2014) pointed out, some degree of cooperation and politeness is generally regarded as norm in normal societies so impoliteness is rarely regarded as "marked", "normal" or "everyday" social phenomenon. Leech (2014, p.234) supported such argument by searching in the British National Corpus and found that "*I agree* occurs



more than five times than the combination of its negative counterparts *I disagree*, *I don't agree* and *I do not agree*". Second, there are not many authentic situations where impoliteness can be found as marked or normal. The major studies on impoliteness in the past two decades are confined to a few social situations where impoliteness is expected, for example, in army recruit training because of great power inequality between the trainers and trainees and the training philosophy (Culpeper, 1996), in drama, fiction, and TV programmes because of aggression constituting an entertainment source (Culpeper, 1996, 2005 & 2011; Bousfield, 2008; Leech, 2014) and in political debates because of such situation overtly empowering people to attack on opponents (Millis, 2003). Other than the previously mentioned restrained situations, politeness is generally accepted as marked and normal in most other social situations.



Chapter Three

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS



Chapter 3. Research Design and Methods

In the last chapter, the theoretical concepts on which the present study is based have been reviewed. In this chapter, the focus will move from the theoretical perspective to the practical perspective to elaborate on the research design for conducting the present study. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first sub-section revisits the notions of Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics and introduces the research questions and the scope of the present study. The second section describes the data for the present study. In the third section, the research conceptual framework will be portrayed in detail that includes the working definition of request, the pragmalinguistic components and the sociopragmatic factors. The last section will discuss how the research conceptual framework is actually applied in the various research methods to generate meaningful results for the present study.

3.1. Research Questions and Scope of Present Study

As explained in Chapter 3 “Literature Review”, Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) subdivided Pragmatics into Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics. Since “Politeness” is both a linguistic and a social phenomenon, the two research questions are re-conceptualised in the perspectives of Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics (the notions of Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics are explained in detail in Section 2.1.2).

3.1.1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The two research questions and hypotheses are recaptured here as below.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): “What are the salient pragmalinguistic patterns of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English?” with the sub-questions as below:

- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component Internal Modification (M) used to realise request making?
- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component politeness strategies on the scale of Directness Level (D) used to realise request making?
- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component Perspective Imposition (H) on the scale of the illocutionary force posed by perspective used to realise requests?

Hypothesis of RQ1:

Default/general pragmalinguistic forms for realising requests are also present in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): “How do various contextual factors sociopragmatically affect request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English?” with the below sub-questions:

- How does the factor “Gender (G)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Situation (S)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “First-language Group (C)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Power Distance (P)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Rank of Imposition (RI)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?

Hypothesis of RQ2:

The various contextual factors do sociopragmatically affect the linguistic realisation of

requests in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

The pragmalinguistic perspective of RQ1 and the sociopragmatic perspective of RQ2 complement each other and should be able to reveal a complete picture of request making in the local Business English.

3.1.2. Scope: Politeness vs. Impoliteness

The present study focuses on politeness rather than on impoliteness because of the reasons substantiated in literature review. In addition, as evident in the requests identified from the HKCSE (Business) for corpus analysis and conversation analysis, business people were found to be generally making requests for cooperation and harmony. Intentional face-attack, for example, the use of taboo words or derogatory nominations as classified by Culpeper (1996) as impoliteness, did not exist in the requests identified for the present study.

3.2. Data

The data used in the study are authentic/naturally occurring dialogues of local Spoken Business English from the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE) (Cheng et al., 2008). HKCSE, which contains about 0.9 million words with the dialogues dating from 1997 to 2002, is the largest local spoken corpus available in Hong Kong. As stated by Cheng et al. (2008, p.3), HKCSE (prosodic) “is the first large-scale attempt to use the categories and conventions of discourse intonation in its transcription” and it originally consists of two million words, of which 0.9 million has been prosodically transcribed. The compilation of HKCSE started in mid-1990s with first half a million words of “authentic, naturally occurring conversations” (Cheng & Warren, 1999), and it developed into the full scale of two million words in 2002 with four sub-corpora namely conversations, academic discourses, business discourses and public discourses. While the sub-corpora “conversations” is more free-flow and not divided into sub-discourse types (just one discourse type as “conversation”), academic discourses, business discourses and public discourses are all divided into different sub-discourse types with the speakers specifically “engaging in different communicative or discursive events and practices, and for different communicative purposes” (Cheng et al., 2008, p.2). For example, the business discourse is divided into different discourse types such as “service encounter” and “meeting”. Such dialogues were not totally natural or free-flow as they were conducted with a specific communicative purpose such as reporting the different aspects of service in a hotel meeting. Since three-fourth of HKCSE’s dialogues (academic



discourses, business discourses and public discourses vs. conversations) are discourses with specific communicative purposes to fulfil but not free-flow conversations, HKCSE in general is not a corpus of “natural conversations” but more a corpus of naturally occurring/authentic specialised discourses.

The data for the present study is just the HKCSE (Business). HKCSE (Business) is the biggest sub-corpora among the four in HKCSE in terms of number of words, and it consists of 246,816 words (27.42% of HKCSE) in 112 authentic/naturally occurring recordings with recording duration ranging from 20 seconds to 109 minutes. The distributions of words by categories of speakers are as follow.

Table 3.1. Basic demographic information originally contained in HKCSE (Business)

Category \ Freq	Frequency (Proportion)	Frequency (Proportion)
First language groups	Hong Kong Chinese 174,135 words (70.54%)	Native English Speakers 68,807 words (27.88%)
Gender	Males 122,598 words (49.67%)	Females 124,314 words (50.33%)

HKCSE (Business) consists of nine discourse sub-types but the discourse types of monologue such as “Announcement and Q&A” are excluded for the present study because they do not provide interactions between speakers and hearers in relation to requesting and responding to request. The distribution of discourse types in the 95 recordings used for the present study is as follow.

Table 3.2. Composition of discourse types in HKCSE (Business)

Discourse type in HKCSE		
(Business)	Proportion in HKCSE (Business)	
for the present study	(in terms of word counts)	Number of Recordings
Job and placement interview	31.00%	25
Meeting	13.98%	9
Informal office talk	10.54%	4
Service Encounter	5.57%	52
Conference call/video conferencing	2.32%	2
Workplace telephone talk	0.58%	3
Total number of recordings used for the present study		95

The HKCSE (Business) is chosen as the data for this study because it serves the purposes of the study. HKCSE (Business) is a corpus of Spoken English and it carries coded information about “Cultural Group” (termed in Cheng et al, 2008, pp.7-8), “Sex” and “Discourse Type/Sub-type” in addition to prosodic features, so HKCSE (Business) provides the reliable sociopragmatic information for answering both the first and second research questions of the present study. In addition, the speakers of the dialogues in HKCSE (Business) are advanced users of English. As mentioned previously, the present study focuses on pragmatic patterns of advanced speakers of English who are more likely to have transcended the developmental patterns of language learners. This allows my study to focus on the pragmatic patterns and the sociopragmatic background of language users instead of learner errors.

The HKCSE (Business) was originally compiled to analyse how the Hong Kong spoken English’s discourse intonation (such as prominence, tone, key and termination of tone units, pitch concord and discord between speakers) varied with the sociopragmatic factors (such as Cultural Groups of Hong Kong Chinese and Native English Speakers, Sex, Discourse Type and Sub-type such as the Hotel Service Encounter) (Cheng et al., 2008). Since the present study focuses on the literal/content side of pragmatics and it is not an in-depth prosodic/discourse intonation study on all the tone units of an utterance, most intonation symbols are removed except that the last tone unit of each utterance is kept for a small-scale prosodic study in the conversation analysis of Chapter 7. The speakers of HKCSE (Business) are business executives, service providers, customers and academics.

From HKCSE (Business), 439 request head acts/request proper are identified based on the conceptual framework that follows and on the thorough reading of each whole dialogue to understand the interaction context and speakers’ roles. The 439 request head acts form the corpus “Request” for specific and relevant analysis of request making patterns in the present study. Compared to HKCSE (Business) having 0.25 million words, the 439 request head heads of the corpus “Request” only consists of about 9000 words. The distributions of request head acts in terms of frequency counts by categories of speakers are as follow.

Table 3.3. Composition of the 439 request head acts by sociopragmatic factors in the specific corpus for the present study “Request”

Category \ Freq	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1. Gender	Female (202)	46.0%	Male (237)	54.0%	NA	NA
2. Situation (consolidated)	Service encounter (105)	23.9%	Meeting (182)	41.5%	Interview (152)	34.6%
3. First Language	Cantonese (257)	58.5%	Non-Cantonese (182)	41.5%	NA	NA
4. Power Distance	Without power (154)	35.1%	With power (285)	64.9%	NA	NA
5. Relationship Expectation (R)	Without R (109)	24.8%	With R (330)	75.2%	NA	NA

3.3. Research Conceptual Framework

3.3.1. Working Definition of Request for Present Study

The conceptual framework for the present study begins with a working definition of request. The working definition of request for the present study is based on the generally accepted definition for request (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). The propositional content condition of request is that the act is to be performed by the hearer, and the sincerity condition of request is that the speaker wants the hearer to perform the act. Since the act desired by the speaker and be performed by hearer could be broad in nature, some other scholars have narrowed down the scope of request. For example, Stenström (1994, p.40) defines “request” as asking somebody to do something” and differentiate it from “question” which ask for information, confirmation and clarification. The directness scale of request of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) on which the present study is based aligns with Stenström’s definition. As shown by the examples such as “clean up that mess” and “menu please” in the directness scale of request of Blum-Kulka et al., their model focuses on asking someone to do something (including “request someone to give something” in one of the examples which is also an act) but not on asking someone for information, confirmation and clarification. Building on such line of thoughts, the present study’s working definition of request is also “asking someone for action but not for information”.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1987 & 1989) provided a working definition of Request Head Act/Request Proper as “the minimal unit which can realise a request (illocution)” and can be isolated from the two “nonessential parts we term Alerters and Supportive Moves” (1989,

p.275). Under such working definition, request head acts carry three dimensions namely “request strategies”, “perspectives” and “internal modifications”. It includes Directness Level which is the degree to which the speaker’s illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution, Request Perspective which realises a request from the perspective of the hearer, the speaker or both and Internal Modification which adjusts the degree of coerciveness of a request within Head Act. Supportive Move is external to Request Head Act, and it either precedes or follows a request head act to adjust the degree of coerciveness of a request as well. The examples provided for illustrating the different request strategies of head act are recaptured as follow.

Direct/Explicit level (Impositive)

(1a) Mood Derivable: Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force, e.g.:

“Clean up that mess.”

(1b) Performative: Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named, e.g.:

“I am asking you to clean up the mess.”

(1c) Hedged Performative: Utterances in which the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions, e.g.:

“I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled.”

(1d) Obligation Statement: Utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act, e.g.:

“You’ll have to move your car.”

(1e) Want Statement: Utterances which state the speaker’s desire that the hearer carries out the act, e.g.:

“I really want you to stop bothering me.”

Conventionally Indirect Level

(2a) Suggestory Formula: Utterances which contain a suggestion to carry out a proposal, e.g.:

“How about cleaning up?”

(2b) Query Preparatory: Utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions such as ability and willingness as conventionalised in any specific language, e.g.:

“Would you mind moving your car?”

Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Hint)

(3a) Strong Hint: Utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act, e.g.:

“You have left the kitchen in a right mess.”

(3b) Mild Hint: Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests from context, e.g.:

“I am a nun (in response to a persistent hassler)”.

Although it was not stated explicitly, based on the examples provided by Blum-Kulka et al. (1987 & 1989) as illustrated above, the level of directness of a request head act/request proper is mainly demonstrated by the “verb mood” and the associated grammatical structure and request head act/request proper is usually a clause. For example, pragmalinguistically speaking, the “imperative mood” shows the highest directness level and makes the illocutionary intention of request most explicit, followed by “declarative mood” with naming of illocutionary force of request with “ask”, “declarative mood” with obligatory statements such as “have to” or want statements such as “want to” and lastly “interrogative mood” showing the conventional indirectness. The role of verb and its mood is important in showing the level of directness, so a request head act/request proper must involve Head Act Verb. Furthermore, according to Blum-Kulka et al., the subject of the request, whether the request is directed from the speaker or to the hearer (subject), is also important. Therefore, a request head act/request proper must minimally be a clause consisting of at least its own subject and verb and could not be merely a phrase. For instance, in the example “You’ll have to move your car” provided by Blum-Kulka et al., the noun phrase “your car” alone could not form a request and it must be the whole clause realising the request. Although a request head act/request proper is minimally a clause, it can be more than one clause in some occasions. For instance, in the example “I really want you to stop bothering me”, “you to stop bothering me” is the infinite clause and being also the dependent clause or object of the other clause “I really want”.

3.3.2. Pragmalinguistic Components constituting Linguistic Force of Request

3.3.2.1. Request Strategies of Head Act in Order of Directness

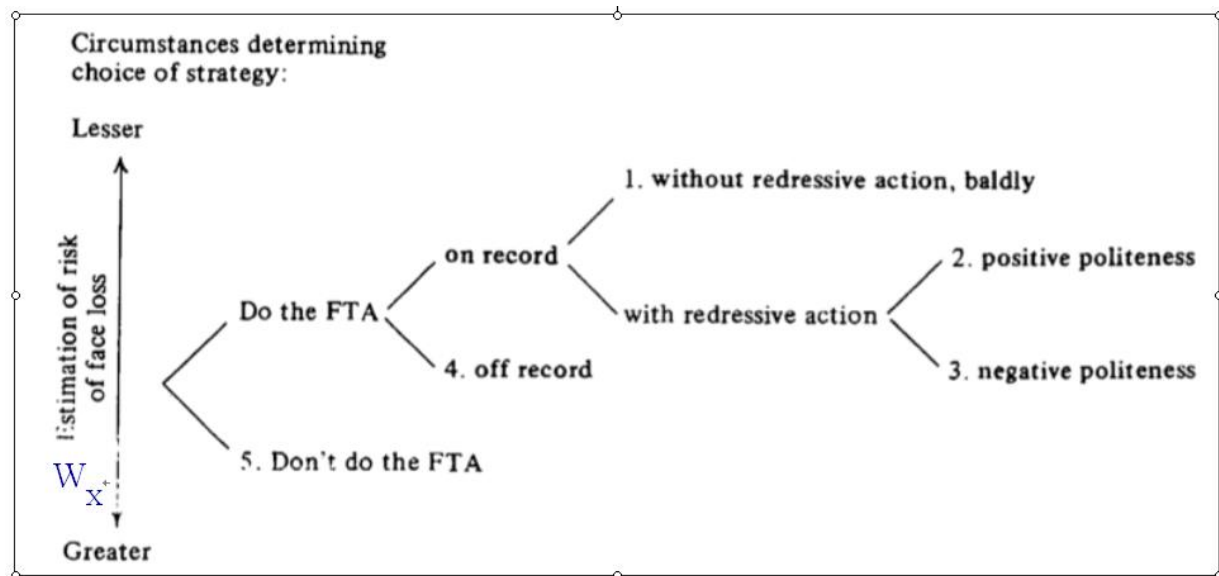
The model for the present study is developed based on the politeness theory of Brown & Levinson (1978 & 1987) and the coding manual of Blum Kulka et al. (1989) with modifications to fit the specific purpose of this study. Although the three models are slightly different in terms of the number of levels, the main levels and sub-levels are mostly parallel across the three models as illustrated in the Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Comparison between the request directness models of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987), of Blum Kulka et al. (1989) and of Chiang (2016, for the present study)

Model of Brown & Levinson (1978 & 1987)	Model of Blum Kulka et al. (1989)		Model of Chiang for the present study	
Level/Rank	Main Level	Sub Level	Main Level	Sub Level
Bald-on-record “Give me the nails.”	Direct/Explicit Level	Mood Derivable “Clean up that mess.”	Most Direct Level	Mood Derivable “Make our location be a bit more flexible...”
		Performative “I am asking you to clean up the mess.”	Direct Level	Performative “We would ask you to supervise the student or students once the term starts.”
		Hedged Performative “I would like to ask you to give a presentation.”		
		Obligation Statement “You’ll have to move that car.”		
		Want Statement “I really want you to stop bothering me.”		
Negative Politeness “Can you shut the door?”	Conventionally Indirect Level	Suggestory Formula “How about cleaning up?”	Conventionally Indirect Level	Suggestory Formula “Maybe you can use the memo or something like that to cover all the payment voucher.”
		Query Preparatory “Would you mind moving your car?”		Query Preparatory “Would you mind putting it on the scale?”
Off-record “It’s cold in here (shut the door please)!”	Non-conventionally Indirect Level	Strong Hint “You have left the kitchen in a right mess.”	Non-conventionally Indirect Level	Hint “I don’t know which other locations are OK (hint the request of asking others to check...).”
		Mild Hint “I am a nun (in response to a persistent hassler).”		

The subtle similarities and differences of the three directness models and the rationales behind are elaborated as follow.

Figure 3.1. Politeness strategies employed to reduce face threats posed by face-threatening acts (FTAs) based on the estimation of face loss (Brown and Levinson, 1978 & 1987)



As recaptured in Figure 3.1, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978 & 1987), there are five politeness strategies which are on ordered levels of directness "as to the intrinsic ranking of politeness strategies in terms of a cost/benefit analysis" (1978; 1987, p.17). For example, bald-on-record's imperative mood is pragmalinguistically more direct than negative politeness such as conventional indirectness' interrogative mood. Politeness strategies ranking from the most direct to the most indirect are detailed with examples as below (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pp.94-227).

- Bald-On-Record Strategy

E.g.: (Task-oriented) "Give me the nails!"

- Positive Politeness

E.g.: (Use in-group identity markers) "Here mate, I was keeping that seat for a friend of mine."

- Negative Politeness

E.g.: (Be conventionally indirect) "Can you shut the door?"

- Off-record

E.g.: (Invite conversational implicatures (Grice, 1975) “It’s cold in here (shut the door please)!”

- Don’t do the FTA

The 5 politeness strategies rank from “Don’t do the FTA” to “Bald-on-record” according to the cost of FTA, in other words, the Estimation of Risk of Face Loss or Weightiness of the FTA (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pp.17 & 60). Estimation of weightiness/face loss is projected based on the formula as follow.

Figure 3.2. Brown & Levinson’s formula for Weightiness of FTA

$$W_X = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_X$$

- W_X : Weightiness of the FTA_X
- $D(S, H)$: Social distance between Speaker (S) and Hearer (H)
- $P(H, S)$: Measure of power that H has over S

R_X : Rank of imposition measures the degree to which the FTA_X is rated an imposition in the agents’ culture as interfering agent’s negative- and positive-face wants. For example, with P and D being constant between S and H and in Anglo-American culture, asking for a substantial amount of money without recompensing is much more of an imposition than a request to search in one’s pockets for change (B&L, 1987, p.81)

Speaker (S) will estimate the risk of face loss/weightiness of an FTA in order to choose an appropriate politeness strategy. Given the set of 5 politeness strategies, the more an act is estimated to threaten H’s face, the more S will want to choose a less imposing strategy ranking from “don’t do the FTA” to “bald-on-record” strategy.

Considering the facts that requesting is really doing the FTA and Brown and Levinson classifying “request” as only threatening H’s negative face (1978; 1987, p.65-66), politeness strategies of “request” thus exclude positive face and only consist of three levels (or “ranks” in Brown and Levinson’s term) from bald-on-record without redressive action, negative politeness with redressive action to off-record under the model of Brown and Levinson, with sub-strategies provided in each main politeness strategy. Take negative politeness as an example (1987, pp.132-189):

(1) Be conventionally indirect, e.g.:

“Can you shut the door?”

(2) Question, hedge, e.g.:

“Won't you open the door?”

(3) Be pessimistic, e.g.:

“Could you open the door?”

(4) Minimise the imposition on hearer, e.g.:

“I just want to ask you if I can borrow a tiny bit of paper.”

(5) Give deference, the speaker humbles himself or herself, e.g.:

“We look forward very much to dining with you.”

(6) Apologise, indicating one's reluctance to the hearer, e.g.:

“I'm sure you must be very busy, but can you do me a favour?”

However, as shown above, Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) did not order the sub-strategies into ranks of pragmalinguistic directness within each main strategy. They neither divided requests into respective pragmalinguistic components or analysed such components accordingly in each main or sub-strategy. For example, the requests have not been decomposed or analysed in terms of their pragmalinguistic components such as the request strategy itself “Can you shut the door?”, the tone softener “just”, the subject of the request “you” and “I” and the supports for putting forward of the request such as “I just want to ask you if... (asking about the potential availability of the hearer for carrying out the request)”, “I'm sure you must be busy (removing potential objection)” and “can you do me a favour (getting a pre-commitment)”.

House and Kasper (1981) and later Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) were in line with the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987). As shown in Table 3.4, they built on the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson to expand into a more sophisticated pragmalinguistic directness coding manual so as to better portray the dynamics of the

different pragmalinguistic components in deriving the overall pragmalinguistic force of a request. They endeavoured in systematically decomposing and analysing request in terms of its various pragmalinguistic components, namely the request strategy itself as Directness Scale, tone softener as Internal Modification, request subject as Request Perspective and support for request as Supportive Move. Under such detailed coding manual, the contributions of the respective pragmalinguistic components to the overall pragmalinguistic force of a request could be studied in a more detailed and systematic way. In addition, the main politeness strategies/directness levels were further divided into hierarchical sub-levels within each of the main levels. While Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) focus on imperative mood in bald-on-record strategy, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) supplemented other direct sub-levels to follow the imperative mood, from “Performative” to “Want Statement”. Also, for the negative politeness of Brown and Levinson, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) renamed that as “Conventionally Indirect Level” and subdivided that main level into two hierarchical sub-levels, namely Suggestory Formula such as “How about cleaning up?” being more direct than the Query Preparatory such as “Would you mind cleaning up?”.

The directness coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) is based on but more detailed than the one of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987). It can clearly portray the pragmalinguistic force of a request in terms of its pragmalinguistic components namely Directness Level, Internal Modification, Request Perspective and Supportive Move, so the present study is generally based on the directness coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) with minor modifications in two aspects.

As shown in the Table 3.4, on one hand, the main level “Direct Level” of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) is broken into two main levels “Most Direct Level” and “Direct Level” in the present study. The “Direct Level” of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) covers a variety of sub-levels from “Mood Derivable”, “Performative” to “Want Statement”, but “Mood Derivable” is very different from the rest of sub-levels because the imperative mood goes the most straightforward way for requesting through not explicitly naming the request perspective such as in “Clean up that mess”. In this aspect, the author of the present study more concurs with Brown and Levinson’s singling out the the most direct imperative structure as “bald-on-record strategy” and he renames that as “Most Direct Level” while keeping the other less direct sub-levels from “Performative” to “Want Statement” to another main level “Direct Level” in the present study.

On the other hand, as shown in Table 3.4, some of the sub-levels of the directness coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) are simplified and consolidated for the present study because of the natures of the requests identified in the HKCSE (Business). First, regarding the sub-levels “performative” and “hedged performative”, out of the 439 request head acts identified from the HKCSE (Business), there are just one performative and four hedged performatives with “would” or “will”. Based on such small number of requests identified, I therefore combined the two sub-levels “performative” and “hedged performative” into a single sub-level “performative”. Second, according to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Strong Hint contains partial reference to the object or component needed for the implementation of the act. For example, in “You have left the kitchen in a right mess”, “kitchen” and “mess” constitute an implicature requesting H to tidy up the kitchen. Mild Hint makes no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but could be interpretable as requests with a broader context. For example, a nun may request a persistent hassler to stay away by “I am a nun” which has not any reference to the “persistent hassler” or the request proper of “stay away”. Due to the emphasis in efficiency and effectiveness in business communication, most of the hints identified have at least partial reference to the object or component needed for the implementation of the request. For example, in “I don't know which other locations are OK” from HKCSE (Business), partial reference is made by a boss in a hotel meeting to “locations” to request colleagues to check for other acceptable locations. Therefore, the two sub-levels “Strong Hint” and “Mild Hint” of the Non-conventionally Indirect Level are combined into one sub-level “Hint” in the present study.

In short, the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987), the directness coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and the present study’s directness scale are consistent with each other, and the evolution to the directness model of the present study has been detailed. The resulting scale of Directness Level (D) derived for the present study is listed as follow, with seven sub-levels supporting four main levels.

Request for action or object: Directness levels (D) from the most Direct Level (4) to the least Direct Level (1)

(4) Most Direct Level

Mood Derivable

Imperative mood in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force, e.g.: “Switch on the light”, “Let’s switch on the light” and “Menu please” (ellipsis included)

(3) Direct Level

Performative

Declarative mood in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named, e.g.: “I’ll ask you to go back outside” and “We’ll ask you to transcribe the recording”

Obligation Statement

Declarative mood with obligatory modal verbs or obligatory expressions, e.g.: “You have to/need to move the table”, “You (need to) check the light”, “I expect you to have professional manner”, “It’s your job to check the enquiry” and “One of your job duties would be transcribing spoken data”

Want Statement

Declarative mood with structure of want/wish, e.g.: “I’d like to borrow your notes”, “I need your notes”, “I am interested in the RA job” and “I prefer front office”

(2) Conventionally Indirect Level

Suggestory Formula

Interrogative or declarative mood with structure of suggestion, e.g. “How about cleaning up the kitchen?”, “I think we can clean up the kitchen”, “You may clean up the kitchen”, “Maybe the hotel can send me to housekeeping department”

Query Preparatory

Interrogative or declarative mood with preparatory condition such as ability, willingness, possibility or other relevant opener which prepare for the request, e.g. “Would you mind putting it on the scale?”, “Can you put it on the scale?”,

“If you can put it on the scale, please”, “I wonder if you could present your paper a week earlier than planned”

(1) Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Hint)

Hint

No explicit request head act verb is present, e.g. “I don't know which other locations are OK (want others to check other available locations...)”

3.3.2.2. Internal Modification of Request Head Act

As stated in Section 2.4.1 of literature review, scholars mainly focus on downgraders when studying internal modifications in request making because upgraders have been generally less used in such a type of speech act (House & Kasper, 1981; House 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1989). The present study verifies if such view applies to the requests identified in HKCSE (Business). Of the 439 request head acts of about 9000 words identified (mechanism detailed in the later Section 3.3.4) in HKCSE (Business), it is found that upgraders are also rarely used for request making in HKCSE (Business). For example, only a frequency count of 6 (0.07% of the 9000 words) for the common upgrader “really” results, versus the frequency of common downgraders for “just” being 58 (0.64%) and for “please” being 37 (0.41%). Therefore, the present study focuses on downgraders when researching on Internal Modification and the sub-categories of downgraders are reduced for simplicity of analysis. As explained, Internal Modification happens within Request Head Act and mitigates the illocutionary force of the request in each directness level. Compared to the coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1984, 1985, 1987 & 1989), the revised framework of the present study does not include Cajolers such as “You know” or Appealers such as “Okay” because of their weak mitigating effects, and they are rather for buying time to continue one’s speech. The conceptual framework of Internal Modification for the present study is derived as below.

Syntactic Downgrader

- (1) Past/polite modal verb, e.g.: “Could/May I borrow your notes?”
- (2) Past tense for mitigating the force of request but not denoting the notion of “past”, e.g.: “I was wondering how you see the future of the industry”
- (3) Passive voice, e.g.: “You will be asked to transcribe the spoken data”
- (4) Negation, e.g.: “Couldn't you lend me your notes?”

Lexical and Phrasal Downgrader

- (1) Politeness marker, e.g.: “Clean the kitchen, please.”, “Mr./Ms./Dr. XX”, “Sir, come here”, and “Can you provide the operating data, thank you?”
- (2) Hedge (adverbial of impreciseness), e.g.: “I’d kind of like to get a lift if that’s all right”, “Could you explain the procedure a bit?”
- (3) Downtoner (Adverb that modulates the impact on the hearer), e.g.: “Could you possibly/just/perhaps lend me your notes?”

3.3.2.3. Perspective Imposition of Request Head Act

Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1984, 1985, 1987 & 1989) originally conceptualised Request Perspective in nominal categories that are Impersonal Perspective such as “one”, Speaker Dominance such as “I” or “we”, Speaker and Hearer Dominance such as “we” and Hearer Dominance such as “you”.

The present study renames “Request Perspective” as “Perspective Imposition” and puts the different perspectives in ordered levels for a more practical interpretation of results. Such renaming and re-conceptualisation is reasonable because the different request perspectives can actually be ordered into levels of imposition on the requestee. Logically speaking, the Impersonal Perspective constitutes the lowest level of imposition on the requestee because it avoids addressing the requestee. Next, the Speaker Dominance “I” or “we” constitute a higher level of imposition on the requestee. Although it does not address the requestee, it puts indirect pressure on the requestee by relating the request head act to the requester but not anyone else. Then the Speaker and Hearer Dominance “we” constitutes the next higher level of imposition on the requestee because it partly addresses the requestee. Last, the Hearer Dominance “you” constitutes the highest level of imposition on the requestee because it directly addresses the requestee. Therefore, it is reasonable to conceptualise perspectives as ordered levels of imposition on the requestee.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1984, 1985, 1987 & 1989) classified request perspectives into four different categories, but they did not explicitly tell which category or categories cause more imposition on the requestees. The revised framework of the present study better delineates which category or categories cause(s) more imposition on the requestee. As explained in the previous paragraph, the Level 4 Hearer Dominance such as “Can you give me your ticket” is explicitly shown in the revised framework of causing more imposition on



the requestee than the Level 2 Speaker Dominance such as “May I have your ticket?” because the former “you” directly addressed the request at the requestee and the latter “I” did not directly address the request at the requestee.

In addition, the revised framework for “Perspective Imposition” of the present study allows more analyses that are comprehensive. With perspective impositions being in ordered levels, the analyses can show how sociopragmatic factors increased or decreased imposition on requestees in HKCSE (Business). The conceptual framework of Perspective Imposition derived for the present study is as below.

Perspective Impositions (H) from the highest imposition (4) to the lowest imposition (1)

(4) Hearer Dominance, e.g.:

“Clean the floor (you implied)”, “Could you tidy up the kitchen soon?”, “Judy, please come here”

(3) Speaker and Hearer Dominance, e.g.:

“Could we begin now?”, “Let’s begin”

(2) Speaker Dominance, e.g.:

“Do you think I/we could borrow your notes from yesterday?”

(1) Impersonal Perspective, e.g.:

“Every employee needs to come back on time.”

3.3.2.4. External Modification

The coding manual of Blum-Kulka et al. (1983, 1984, 1985, 1987 & 1989) on Supportive Move is totally adopted for the present study except that “Supportive Move” is renamed as “External Modification” to contrast more explicitly with “Internal Modification”. As explained in Section 2.4.1, External Modification/Supportive Move also serves to modify/mitigate the pragmalinguistic directness of request like Internal Modification but it is external to Request Head Act, either preceding or following a request head act. The totally adopted coding manual for External Modification is recaptured as below.

(1) Preparator (asking about the potential availability of the hearer for carrying out the request or asking for the hearer's permission to make the request but without stating the content of the request), e.g.:

"I'd like to ask you something."

(2) Getting a Pre-commitment, e.g.:

"Could you do me a favour?"

(3) Grounder (reasons, explanations, justifications for the request), e.g.:

"I missed class yesterday. Could I borrow your notes?"

(4) Disarmer (removing potential objections), e.g.:

"Could you make an exception this time?"

(5) Promise of Reward, e.g.:

"Could you give me a lift home? I'll pitch in on some gas."

(6) Imposition Minimiser, e.g.:

"Could you drive me home, but only if you're going my way?"

3.3.2.5. Paralinguistic Prosodic Feature

As explained in Section 2.4.2 of literature review, intonation is an important prosodic feature and it may play an important role in conveying politeness for request making. Since the present study's focus is on linguistic/literal components of request making and paralinguistic prosodic analysis only serves as a supplement in conversation analysis, intonation will be analysed in a simplified manner. Yavaş' (2006) perspective is adopted for the prosodic analysis for the present study. As Yavaş stated, "since in the usual cases in English, the utterance-initial position is reserved for shared/old information, and the new information is placed in utterance-final position" (2006, p.168), the most common pattern is to have the tonic syllable (syllable in an utterance which carries the major pitch change) in the utterance-final position, the last tone unit. Therefore, in the present study, only the tone of the last prominent syllable in an utterance of request or response to request will be referenced and analysed, but not every single tone unit of an utterance will be analysed.



3.3.3. Sociopragmatic Factors influencing the Politeness of Request

Sociopragmatic Factors may influence requests patterns constituted by the pragmalinguistic components namely Directness Level, Internal Modification and, Perspective Imposition, External Modification and Prosodic Features (detailed in the previous section). The present study examines how the various sociopragmatic factors influence the request patterns in terms of the previously mentioned pragmalinguistic components, and this is addressing Research Question 2. The six sociopragmatic factors to be researched in the present study are Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P), Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) and Rank of Imposition (RI).

As explained, the scripts of HKCSE (Business) have originally been coded with the sex of speaker and the discourse type. The present study will follow the way of Cheng et al. (2008) in using HKCSE for sociopragmatic analyses. That is, the requests identified will be analysed by categories of sex and discourse type because sex is a basic demographic factor and discourse type is the speech context for a dialogue to happen so both could be important sociopragmatic factors in influencing the linguistic patterns of request making. To avoid similar codings with those of other sociopragmatic factors, “Sex” is retitled as “Gender (G)” and “Discourse Type” is retitled as “Situation (S)” for the present study.

The third sociopragmatic factor potentially affecting request making is First Language, and this has already been highlighted in Section 2.5. The term “First Language” is derived from the term “Cultural Group” of Cheng et al (2008, pp.7-8) but with modification for the present study. The HKCSE (Business) has originally coded the speakers into two groups, namely Hong Kong Chinese (HKC) and Native English Speakers (NES) and the two cultural groups are based on “distribution of speaker groups by first language in HKCSE” (Cheng et al, 2008, pp.7-9). The mother tongue of HKC is Cantonese while that of NES is English. NES are not distinguished into different national groups, but they mainly come from Britain, the United States of America and Australia. HKC with English as mother tongue should be put to NES. Although NES is mostly likely a mixed group consisting of native speakers of English from different places such as the U.S., Britain or even Hong Kong, the group could be viewed and renamed as the first-language group of “Non-Cantonese Speakers of English” to provide reference/benchmark for better understanding the patterns of English requests made by the interested first-language group “Cantonese Speakers of English”. “Cultural Group” may sound too broad and the label may not clearly portray the grouping criterion (e.g.: not sure if



the grouping is based on first language, ethnicity or geographical location). Therefore, “Cultural Group” is re-titled as “First-language Group” for the present study to better illustrate the nature of categorisation. The re-titling of the two categories as “Cantonese Speakers of English” and “Non-Cantonese Speakers of English” under “First-language” also helps capture the grouping criterion “mother tongue” more explicitly in the category labels.

The fourth potentially influencing sociopragmatic factor, as highlighted in Section 2.5 of literature review, is Power Distance (P). Power distance refers to the difference in power between the requester and the requestee due to different social statuses. For simplicity of analysis, the way of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) in treating request is adopted and the focus will be on the requester, that is, if the requester has power over the requestee.

The fifth potentially influencing sociopragmatic factor, as highlighted in Section 2.5 of literature review, is Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) that is the degree of the requester expecting to be close or familiar with the requestee now and in the future. I concur with the view of Kong (1998) that expectation on long-term relationship may even be more important than the current relationship in Chinese culture. For example, the interviewer and interviewee of a placement interview may be shallow in relation at the time of interview but their expectation of potentially working together in near future may affect how they conduct the dialogue at the time of interview. For Expectation of Relationship Continuity, binary coding instead of multiple coding such as without expectation (R-), with some expectation (R mid) and with high expectation (R high) is used in the present study because in the business contexts of the HKCSE, namely hotel service encounter, internal meeting, airport service encounter, placement interview and job interview, the requesters either have no expectation (R-) of relationship continuity with the requestee (e.g.: a customer requests a front-desk clerk to help him or her check out in a one-off service encounter) or just some expectation (R+) of relationship continuity with the requestee (e.g.: a placement interviewer requests an interviewee who may work temporarily with the interviewer for internship). High expectation of relationship continuity should be more frequent in friendship and family relationships but less in the business relationships found in the HKCSE.

Lastly, Rank of Imposition (RI), as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987), is an important factor affecting request patterns because request making is imposing in nature. According to Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987), the estimation of weightiness of FTA is

based on Relative Power (P), Social Distance (D) and Rank of Imposition (RI). Rank of imposition (RI) refers to the measure of degree to which a request is rated an imposition in a culture as interfering requestee's negative or positive face wants. For example, with gender, situation, first language, power distance and expectation of relationship continuity being held constant for a requester, borrowing \$10,000 should be rated as much more of an imposition than borrowing \$100.

HKCSE (Business) mainly categorises speakers by sex, discourse type and first language but it does not explicitly provide speakers' profession or organisation. This is one of the limitations of the present study, and it will not be able to study sociopragmatic factors such as requester's profession or organisation because such information is not available in the data.

The six mentioned sociopragmatic factors will be studied in detail to answer the second research question, and the coding manual for the sociopragmatic factors except Rank of Imposition (RI) in the present study are listed below.

(1) Gender (G)

Female 01 (speakers labelled in "A_" or "a_" as originally in HKCSE (Business))

Male 02 (speakers labelled in "B_" or "b_" as originally in HKCSE (Business))

(2) Situation (S)

Service Encounter (01)

Meeting (02)

Interview (03)

**The categories of S have been collapsed from five to two with rationales provided in Section 5.1 of Statistical Analysis.

(3) First Language (C)

Cantonese Speaker of English (C+, speakers originally labelled in small letters in HKCSE (Business))

Non-Cantonese Speaker of English (C-, speakers originally labelled in capital letters in HKCSE (Business))

(4) Power Distance (P)

Without Power over Requestee (P-)

With Power over Requestee (P+)

**The categories of P have been collapsed from three to two with rationales provided in Appendix A3.

(5) Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

Having No Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (R-)

Having Some Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (R+)

There is no coding manual for Rank of Imposition (RI) for the present study and it will only be studied in Chapter 7 “Conversation Analysis with Prosodic Study” because of the reason that follows. While RI is commonly taken into account in studies involving Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs) with hypothetical and easily-controlled request situations such as the one done by Blum-Kulka et. al (1989). However, it is difficult to code ranks of imposition objectively in the present study, especially when the 439 requests head acts identified are of various and diverse natures in HKCSE (Business).

Some request researchers have attempted to code ranks of impositions for requests identified in naturally occurring discourses, but the coding might not have been totally valid or objective. For example, Yeung (1997) attempted to code the requests identified in English and Chinese letters/memos in a “0-1-2” scale for ranks of imposition (RI) and asked two raters to rate such ranks of imposition for the requests identified. One coding reference for the raters to follow is provided as below:

“As for R, a request by the manager asking the staff to put in extra work on a holiday would be rated as “2”. A request by an outsider to an organisation asking the manager to arrange a visit to the work units would be given a rating of “1”. A reminder asking a hearer to call in case of any problems would be rated as 0 on the R scale” (Yeung, 1997, p.514).

The previously mentioned coding reference might not have been able totally to uphold validity and reliability of rating because:

1. How can one be sure that the rater and the requestee are having the same perception on the rank of imposition? For example, some people may find a demanding outsider scarier than an over-time work on a holiday.
2. Let us assume that the three requests in the example are put in right order along the scale. However, when there are voluminous requests which may be different in nature from those provided in the coding reference, how could they be objectively and systematically be ordered in such linear 0-1-2 scale?

It will be extremely difficult to objectively rate the rank of imposition for the present study because the authentic requests in HKCSE (Business) are of many discourse types and thus greatly diverse in nature. For example, it should be easy to compare the rank of imposition of the request of borrowing \$10,000 to that of the request of borrowing \$100; but it may be difficult, if not impossible, to objectively compare, for example, the rank of a request of asking a subordinate to check the ventilation in a hotel and the rank of a request of asking an interviewee to take up a certain job duty in a job interview. RI is important, but based on such observed limitation, RI will not be coded or studied in statistical analyses and corpus analyses. Rather, the influence of such factor is studied qualitatively in Chapter 6 “Conversation Analysis with Prosodic Study”.

3.3.4. Identifying and Coding Request Head Acts in HKCSE (Business) for Constructing the Specific Corpus “Request”

The original corpus HKCSE (Business) is edited to remove most of the intonation codes because the present study primarily focuses on pragmatic patterns but not discourse intonations except that the intonation codes of the last tone unit of each utterance are kept for conducting small-scale prosodic study in the conversation analysis. With the research conceptual framework of the present study developed in the previous section, the 95 dialogues in HKCSE (Business) used for the present study are wholly read so that the complete context of each dialogue together with the detailed research conceptual framework laid in Sections 3.3.1 – 3.3.3 of this chapter will allow accurate identification of requests and also appropriate coding of pragmalinguistic components and sociopragmatic factors. The 439 request head acts identified from HKCSE (Business) form the corpus “Request” for specifically studying the linguistic patterns of request making.

The identification and coding process is illustrated with four contextualised dialogue extracts. The first example is Dialogue 001 that is a service encounter in a hotel as in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. Dialogue B001 from HKCSE (Business)

B001
1. B: I want to check out eight two two one, Mr. G_.
2. b: Let me see, it's eight one two two.
3. B: Er, eight one two two, right.
4. b: Yeah ...
5. B: Right, sorry....
...

- The header “B___” refers to the index of the dialogue in the corpus HKCSE (Business).
- The names of people such as “G_” are made anonymous in the corpus HKCSE (Business).

Since the context of the dialogue is service encounter in a hotel, Turn 1 is obviously a common check-out request made by a customer of the hotel. Based on the research conceptual framework of Section 3.3, “want to check out” shows that this request head act is a want statement at direct level (level 3) without any internal modification such as “please” or past modal. “I” shows that the request is made in the perspective of the requester, so the perspective imposition of this request head act is speaker dominance at level 2. Therefore, this request head act will be coded “D3”, “M1” and “H2” in terms of pragmlinguistic components.

Next, the sociopragmatic factors will be coded based on the research conceptual framework in Section 3.3. First, “B” shows that the gender of the requester is male because all male speakers are coded in “B_” or “b_” in HKCSE (Business), so “G02” will be coded for Gender. Second, the dialogue is a service encounter in hotel so the “S01” will be coded for Situation. Third, the capital letter “B” shows that the speaker is a non-Cantonese speaker of English because all native English speakers are labelled in capital letters in HKCSE (Business), so “C-” will be coded for First Language. Fourth, since the requester is the customer of the hotel who should have power over the front desk officer (customers generally being more powerful in service transaction) but should have no expectation of relationship continuity with requestee (most probably a one-off deal with the front-desk clerk), “P+” is coded for Power Distance and “R-” is coded for Expectation of Relationship Continuity. The

beginning code <...> and ending code </...> allowed a request to be extracted by the concordancer Wordsmith from the rest of the dialogue for further analysis. The resulting coding for this request is as below, and all the 439 requests will be identified in this manner.

G: 02 S: 01

<C-><P+><R->(D3-M1-H2) B: I want to check out eight two two one, [/ Mr. G_].
</C-></P+></R->

The second contextualised example in Figure 3.4 is another example provided to show how requests are coded for all the pragmalinguistic components and all the sociopragmatic factors based on the research conceptual framework in Section 3.3 and the context of the dialogue.

Figure 3.4. Extract from the dialogue B016 about an internal meeting at hotel

- | |
|--|
| ... |
| 1. a1: Yes, there were four outstanding staff entry cases that we cannot submit entry details today. Which department...They started taking the statement to the Security Department (EM). |
| 2. <C+><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) a1-2 S2: I'd appreciate if P_ could remind G_ and L_ from your department (w EM). </C+></P-></R+> |
| ... |
| 3. a1: And today is the deadline for the training nomination (EM). |
| 4. <C+><P-><R+>(D4-M2-H4) a1-2 S2: So please forward your nomination form to our office by the end of today (w EM). </C+></P-></R+> |
| ... |
| 5. b1: That's all. Thank you. |

For Turn 2 in Figure 3.4

For the request head act identified at Turn 2, the pragmalinguistic components of request making and the associated sociopragmatic factors are coded as below for analysis:

Pragmalinguistic components of the request head act

- Internal Modification: “’d” and “could” are past modals for softening the request so coded with M2 (a request head act with internal modification)
- Directness Level: “I’d...if...” is the structure indicating that it is “Suggestory Formula” of Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) because this is declarative mood with the structure of suggestion

- Perspective Imposition: The requestee “P_” is named so it is “Hearer Dominance”
- External Modification: Turn 1 (coded with “EM”) provides the grounder/reason for the request made at Turn 2 (coded with “with EM”). The requester tells her colleagues that she still wants more nominations and details for the outstanding staff award

Sociopragmatic factors

- Gender: The requester is female (1) because all female speakers are labeled “a_” of “A_” in HKCSE (Business)
- Situation: It is an internal meeting at hotel, so it belongs to S02 “Meeting”
- First Language: Speakers with Cantonese as mother tongue are in small letters so the requester is labeled as “Cantonese Speaker of English” with the code “C+”
- Power Distance: The boss/coordinator is the speaker b1 as indicated by, for example, Turn 5 that is the last Turn for closing up the meeting. Therefore, a1 is most likely a peer who has no power over other colleagues (requestees), so coded as “P-”
- Expectation of Relationship Continuity: The interlocutors are colleagues, so they have high expectation of relationship continuity with one and another (coded as “R+”)

Turn 4 in Figure 3.4

For the request head act identified at Turn 4, the pragmalinguistic components of request making and the associated sociopragmatic factors are coded as below for analysis:

Pragmalinguistic components of request

- Internal Modification: “please” so coded with M2 (with internal modification)
- Directness Level: The imperative “please forward” indicates that it is the Most Direct Level (Level 4) because this imperative mood clearly signals the illocutionary force
- Perspective Imposition: The requestee “you” is implied, so it is “Hearer Dominance”
- External Modification: Turn 3 (coded with “EM”) provides the grounder/reason for the request made at Turn 4 (coded with “with EM”). The requester tells her colleagues that the deadline for training nomination is today

Sociopragmatic factors (same context)

- Gender: Same as above
- Situation: Same as above

- First Language: Same as above
- Power Distance: Same as above
- Expectation of Relationship Continuity: Same as above

The third contextualised example is provided in Figure 3.5 to illustrate how the complete context of a dialogue can help code the sociopragmatic factor Power Distance (P).

Figure 3.5. Dialogue B023 from HKCSE (Business)

- B023
1. B1: Good morning all. Let me introduce again Doctor K_ from the University of Hong Kong and her associate P_ G_. They want to record our meeting again.
 2. B1: And er they want to, I'm not quite sure why, but anyway, if we just go round the table and you introduce yourselves again, starting with C_.
 3. B1: Okay, good, thank you, let's go ahead, okay.
 4.
 5. B1: Okay, F_ B_ (Food & Beverage).
 6. B1: D_, 607, just have a look at that.
 7. B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there before break.
 8. B1: Can you follow up with them (TVs in hotel) today?
 9.
 10. B1: D_, do you have anything?
 11.
 12. B1: Okay, thanks anything.
 13. B1: Good, alright, that's all for now, thanks very much, have a good day.

The turns in Figure 3.5 are extracted from the dialogue B023, and the full dialogue is in Appendix A.1. Turns 1 and 2 show that the speaker B1 introduces the meeting at the beginning. Turns 3, 4 and 8 show that the speaker B1 regulates turn-taking by inviting other speakers to share in the meeting. Turns 4 to 7 show that the speaker B1 makes a series of requests on other speakers. Turns 9 and 10 show that the speaker B1 gives the final compliment and finishes the meeting at Turns 12 and 13. To conclude, the one regulating the turn-taking, beginning the first turn and finishing the last turn in a meeting dialogue should possess more power, so “P+” will be coded for Power Distance in the requests made by the speaker B1.

The fourth and also the last contextualised example in Figure 3.6 illustrates how the complete context of a dialogue can help code the sociopragmatic factor Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R).

Figure 3.6. Dialogue B114 from HKCSE (Business)

B114 (Job Interview)	
...	
1.	a1: Just mainly explain to you the project, the nature of work that is expected of you, and er and some other information, right.
...	
2.	a1: Um, I ex, as I explained to you in my email, right, you would be employed not by, not really by us, not really by M_ and W_, but by er bigger project, an umbrella project...
...	
3.	a2: Er n not really because er you have explained very clearly, and er on top of that, I have er experienced some part of the job duties so.
...	

The above turns are extracted from the dialogue B114, and the full dialogue is in Appendix A.1. Turns 1 and 2 in Figure 3.6 show that the interview may be a final one, and the interviewer “a1” communicates the high possibility of employing the interviewee in the expressions “the nature of work that is expected of you” and “you would be employed”. Turn 3 “have er experienced some part of the job duties” shows that the interviewee “a2” expected to work in that position in the future. All those hints indicate that the speakers of the dialogue B114 have some expectation of relationship continuity with each other, so “R+” will be coded for Expectation of Relationship Continuity in the requests made by them.

3.3.5. Second Coding

Although a detailed coding manual has been developed for the pragmalinguistic components and the sociopragmatic factors in the present study, the coding may still involve subjectivity and speculation and there may be issues with regard to the reliability of coding.

In order to check the reliability of coding based on the derived coding manual, a second-coding exercise has been performed. Five dialogues were sampled randomly from different speech contexts of HKCSE (Business), and the samples were B001 of service encounter (hotel), B023 of meeting (hotel), B029 of service encounter (airport), B062 of

placement interview (hotel) and B114 of job interview. The full dialogues are in Appendix A.1. A second coder, who have studied for four years, attained his bachelor degree in Canada and later worked as a programmer in a multinational corporation, has been invited after several training sessions to code the pragmalinguistic components and the sociopragmatic factors. The sociopragmatic factors Gender, Situation and First Language have not been covered in the second-coding exercise as they have already been coded in the HKCSE (Business). The dialogue B001 in Figure 3.7 is provided as an example to illustrate the second coding process.

Figure 3.7. Dialogue B001 from HKCSE (Business) for second coding

B001 Service Encounter

NCS: B / CS: b

(R1) B: I want to check out 8221, (it's) Mr. G_.

b: Let me see, it's 8122.

B: Er, 8122, right.

b: Yeah.

B: Right, sorry.

b: You are too tired.

B: Yeah, 8122, that's stupid, but I was in the right room.

(1) "R1" refers to the first request sampled for second coding.

(2) The header "B__" refers to the index of the dialogue in the corpus HKCSE (Business).

(3) The names of people such as "G_" are made anonymous in the corpus HKCSE (Business).

R1 was the randomly selected request for the second coder to code, and the request head act verb was underlined for the second coder because all requests are interpreted in relation to the request head act verb. The research conceptual framework and the coding manual of the present study had been explained to the second coder before the coding. The coding with remarks done by the second coder are shown in Table 3.5 on the next page, and it is compared with the coding of the author of the present study (the differences are in bold) in Table 3.6.

Table 3.5. Coding by second coder

Dialogue Request	First Language	Power Distance	Expectation of Relationship Continuity	Directness Level	Internal Modification	Perspective Imposition
B001 R1 B:	C: C- Non-Cantonese	P: <u>P+</u> Remark: A client is requesting check out in front desk.	R: <u>R-</u> Remark: one off situation	D: <u>3</u> Remark: Want Statement.	M: <u>1</u> Remark: No “IM”	H: <u>2</u> Remark: S dominance
B023 R2 B1:	C: C- Non-Cantonese	P: <u>P+</u> Remark: Leading a meeting.	R: <u>R+</u> Remark: Both are colleagues	D: <u>3</u> Remark: Obligation Statement	M: <u>2</u> Remark: With “IM”	H: <u>3</u> Remark: S & H dominance
B029 R3 a:	C: C+ Cantonese	P: <u>P-</u> Remark: Helping the client to check in at the airport	R: <u>R-</u> Remark: One off situation	D: <u>2</u> Remark: Query Preparatory	M: <u>2</u> Remark: With “IM”	H: <u>2</u> Remark: S dominance
B062 R4 a:	C: C+ Cantonese	P: <u>P-</u> Remark: Having an interview only	R: <u>R+</u> Remark: May become colleagues if the candidate will be hired	D: <u>3</u> Remark: Want Statement	M: <u>1</u> Remark: No “IM”	H: <u>2</u> Remark: S dominance
B114 R5 B:	C: C- Non-Cantonese	P: <u>P+</u> Remark: Interviewing the candidate	R: <u>R+</u> Remark: May become colleagues if the candidate will be employed	D: <u>3</u> Remark: Obligation Statement	M: <u>2</u> Remark: With “IM”	H: <u>4</u> Remark: H dominance

(1) B001 Service encounter // Speech context: A tourist is requesting the front-desk clerk to help him or her check out of the hotel room

(2) B023 Meeting// Speech context: A manager is chairing a hotel meeting.

(3) B029 Service encounter // Speech context: A person is checking in at the service counter of an airport

(4) B062 Placement interview // Speech context: An interviewer is interviewing a candidate

(5) B114 Job interview // Speech context: A candidate is applying for a job and having an interview

Table 3.6. Coding by first coder (the author of the present study)

Dialogue Request	First Language	Power Distance	Expectation of Relationship Continuity	Directness Level	Internal Modification	Perspective Imposition
B001 R1 B:	C: C- Non-Cantonese	P: <u>P+</u>	R: <u>R-</u>	D: <u>3</u>	M: <u>1</u>	H: <u>2</u>
B023 R2 B1:	C: C- Non-Cantonese	P: <u>P+</u>	R: <u>R+</u>	D: <u>3</u>	M: <u>2</u>	H: <u>2</u>
B029 R3 a:	C: C+ Cantonese	P: <u>P-</u>	R: <u>R-</u>	D: <u>2</u>	M: <u>2</u>	H: <u>2</u>
B062 R4 a:	C: C+ Cantonese	P: <u>P-</u>	R: <u>R+</u>	D: <u>3</u>	M: <u>1</u>	H: <u>2</u>
<u>B114</u> <u>R5 B:</u>	<u>C: C-</u> <u>Non-Cantonese</u>	<u>P: P+</u>	<u>R: R+</u>	<u>D: 3</u>	<u>M: 2</u>	<u>H: 4</u>

- (1) B001 Service encounter // Speech context: A tourist is requesting the front-desk clerk to help him or her check out of the hotel room
- (2) B023 Meeting// Speech context: A manager is chairing a hotel meeting.
- (3) B029 Service encounter // Speech context: A person is checking in at the service counter of an airport
- (4) B062 Placement interview // Speech context: An interviewer is interviewing a candidate
- (5) B114 Job interview // Speech context: A candidate is applying for a job and having an interview

As seen in Tables 3.5 and 3.6, the codes given by the second coder and the codes given by the author of the present study (the first coder) are consistent in Power Distance, Expectation of Relationship Continuity, Directness Level, and Internal Modification. Apart from the codes of Cantonese Speaker of English and Non-Cantonese Speaker of English that could be traced in the corpus, there were altogether 25 codes assigned by the second coder and the first coder in coding exercise. 24 out of the 25 codes assigned were consistent, and the percentage of alignment of the first coding and the second coding is satisfactory at 96%. There is only one inconsistency in Perspective Imposition. For the request “The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there before break” in the meeting dialogue (B023), I coded the Perspective Imposition as “2” (Speaker Dominance), while the second coder coded that as “3” (Speaker and Hearer Dominance).

The inconsistency was discussed between the second coder and the author of the present study to see if any amendments were needed for the derived coding manual. The second coder assigned the following code of perspective imposition to the below request:

(R2) B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there before break. → H3 (Speaker & Hearer Dominance)

The second coder forgot that one needs to refer to the request head act verb when coding perspective imposition. For Request 2 (R2), he coded that as “Speaker and Hearer Dominance” because of the presence of “you”, “me” and “we”. The second coder agreed with the author of the present study after he was reminded of the importance of coding in relation to head act verb “know”.

In general, the second coder commented that the research conceptual framework, the derived coding manual and the dialogue contexts are generally clear and reliable enough for coding the pragmalinguistic components and the sociopragmatic factors. Both the second grader and I agreed that there is no need to amend the coding manual, and the coding would be reliable enough because the author of the present study is the only person coding the 439 requests identified from HKCSE (Business) so there should not be any issues in consistency and the author of the present study must be familiar with the coding manual he develops.

Although there is second coding and the coding manual is detailed, difficulties/ambiguities have been encountered during the actual coding process. Such problem and ways of handling are illustrated with the below contextualised example in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8. Extract of the Dialogue B023 about hotel internal meeting from HKCSE (Business)

B3: G_ P_, Front Office Manager.
b2: D_ W_, Chief Engineer.

...

1. B3: Because I'm not aware of whether we're getting complaints, because they always cite the Dickens Bar as a poor transmission area, but I think it's with the standards [? that should be maintained are so] (EM)

...

2. B3: And M_ says it's going for the Dickens Bar because they're getting, they are getting a [large number of engagements, I think...] (EM).

3. <G1><S2><C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: Could install [= further ones] (w EM).
<G1><S2></C-></P-></R+>

....

4. b2: Because we have a few areas in hand and an appointment at ten, [? er, one is definitely (inaudible)]

...

By merely looking at the structure in Turn 3 in Figure 3.8, it seems to be a declaration, telling that the hotel has capacity to install more receivers. Therefore, to code or identify requests accurately, the first step is referring to the conceptual framework of request making in Section 3.3 of the present study. Another important step is to read thoroughly the whole dialogue to understand the interaction context before coding the requests in a dialogue. Turn 3 has been finally identified as a request but not as a declaration because of the following observations:

- The role of B3 as Front Office Manager being likely to request service from the Chief Engineer who belongs to one of the central supporting units in the hotel;
- Grounders / reasons for requesting (external modifications) provided at Turns 1 and 2, “they always cite the Dickens Bar as a poor transmission area” and “they are getting a large number of engagements”; and
- Turn 4 “we have a few areas in hand and an appointment at ten” as a tentative rejection of the request.

Although the author of the present study has done the whole study and read all the 95 dialogues himself, in case of ambiguities such as the one stated above, he has always approached and discussed with his voluntary second coder for verification or advice.

3.4. Research Methods

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative method. Qualitative-wise, other than Surveys, Ethnography, and Experiments, only the research method of Discourse/Textual Analysis is used for the present study with its subsumed Corpus Analysis and Conversation Analysis (with prosodic study). Quantitative-wise, Statistical Analysis with its subsumed Chi-square Test and Logistic Regression is used to study the patterns of the identified pragmalinguistic components of request making and their relation with the sociopragmatic factors.

3.4.1. Statistical Analysis

3.4.1.1. Coding Data for Analysis in SPSS

As detailed in the research conceptual framework in Section 3.3, the pragmalinguistic components of request are Internal Modification, Directness Level and Perspective Imposition, and they become the dependent variables in statistical analyses. The sociopragmatic factors are Gender, Situation, First Language, Power Distance and Expectation of Relationship Continuity, and they become the independent variables in statistical analyses. The “+/-” codes are all converted to numbers and the variables are further coded for SPSS analysis as below.

Dependent variables: Internal Modification, Directness Level, Perspective Imposition

(1) Internal Modification (M)

Without Internal Modification (1)

With Internal Modification (2)

(2) Directness Level (D)

Non-conventionally Indirect Level (1)

Conventionally Indirect Level (2)

Direct Level (3)

Most Direct Level (4)

(3) Perspective Imposition (H)

Impersonal Perspective (1)

Speaker Dominance “I” or “we” (2)

Speaker and Hearer Dominance “we” (3)

Hearer Dominance “you” (4)

Independent variables: Sociopragmatic factors

(1) Gender (G)

Female requester (1)

Male requester (2)

(2) Situation (S)

Service encounter (1)

Meeting (2)

Interview (3)

(3) First Language (C)

C+ Cantonese Speaker of English (1)

C- Non-Cantonese Speaker of English (2)

(4) Revised Power Distance (P)

P- Without power over requestee (1)

P+ With power over requestee (2)

(5) Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

R- Having no Expectation of Relationship Continuity with requestee (1)

R+ Having Expectation of Relationship Continuity with requestee (2)

Although the levels of Directness Level (D) and Perspective Imposition (H) will be treated as ordered for interpretation of results, D and H will be treated as nominal/categorical variables for running statistical analyses because four levels may not be valid enough to make a variable truly ordinal. Together with D and H, all the dependent and independent variables will be treated as nominal/categorical variables for running statistical analyses.

3.4.1.2. Framework of Statistical Analysis

Some of the previous studies on request making merely analyse the influence of the independent variables on request making separately with each independent variable at a time. In other words, they stay at the level of Bivariate Analysis, but the integrated effect and the interactions among independent variables have not been comprehensively explored. For example, when Blum-Kulka and House (1989) studied the request patterns of three directness levels, namely Impositives, Conventionally Indirect Level and Hints in different cultures and situations, they just focused on descriptive plots and Chi-square analysis of variations of patterns in different categories of requests sub-divided according to the different factors one at a time. Yet Multivariate Analysis has not been conducted. Contrastively, in addition to Univariate Analysis and Bivariate Analysis, Multivariate Analysis will also be conducted in the present study for generating an integrated picture on request patterns.

Univariate analyses such as descriptive statistics and frequency distributions mainly address Research Question 1. For example, the frequency distributions of the variable Directness Level could indicate which of the four directness levels is most frequently or least frequently used. While bivariate analyses and multivariate analyses serve to address Research Question 2. The simpler bivariate analyses such as chi-square tests focus on revealing the standalone correlation between one sociopragmatic factor (independent variable) and one pragmalinguistic component of request making (dependent variable), but they could not show the relative influence of each sociopragmatic factor when there are a few sociopragmatic factors at the same time. Therefore, multivariate analyses such as logistic regressions are also conducted to explore the relative significance/influence of each sociopragmatic factor on request making by putting all the sociopragmatic factors (independent variables) together in the analyses. Not only the sociopragmatic factors (independent variables) but also their interactions are analysed because the sociopragmatic factors (independent variables) may interact on affecting request making (dependent variable). In other words, the effect of one of the sociopragmatic factors on request making may not be constant but differs in different categories of the other sociopragmatic factor.

3.4.2. Corpus Analysis of Word/Word Cluster Patterns of Request Head Acts

While a statistical analysis can generate descriptive statistics and reveal statistically significant correlations between request patterns and sociopragmatic factors, it cannot reveal what specific words or word clusters are frequently used for making requests. This shortcoming will be addressed by Corpus Analysis.

Corpus linguistics weaves its way back to the 1950s when Zellig Harris introduced the term “Discourse Analysis” (qtd. in Ajimer and Stenstrom 2004, pp.1-5). For much of the 20th century, linguists mainly focused on studying linguistic systems but not the actual use of language due to the influence of Chomskyan linguistics which assumes that language “should be studied for itself and the highest unit of analysis was sentence” and language study should focus on “intuitive” data (ibid, p.2). Zellig and some other scholars challenged Chomsky and proposed discourse analysis that goes beyond the sentence and studies the texts instead. “Text and functions of language in context” are stressed (ibid, p.2). Corpus linguistics is a powerful tool for conducting discourse analysis. It enables scholars to obtain “quantitative data from wider textual bases” (ibid, p.5). Instead of relying on intuitive data, corpus analyses generate more reliable and objective language patterns from a large number of texts.

Corpus Analysis, through exploration of semantic units, reveals pragmatic patterns to a certain extent. Sinclair (1991, 1996) argues that there is no distinction between form and meaning, and language functions are part of the meaning that could be identified by corpus analyses. Sinclair (1991, pp.109-112) prefers Idiom Principle to Open-choice Principle. Idiom Principle states that the organisation of language contributes to the non-randomness restricted by register choices (social choices), while Open-choice Principle states that language is just the result of a very large number of random choices only restricted by grammaticality. The former principle corresponds more to the pragmatic perspective because the non-randomness restricted by register choices (social choices) is stressed. Leech (1983) argues that Semantics and Pragmatics are complementary and the illocutionary force is partly encapsulated in its semantic or syntactic structure.

It may be effective to select corpus linguistics as research method subsumed under discourse analysis for addressing the two research questions in the present study. The use of corpus linguistics to study language patterns in naturally occurring data in order to find out

associated social phenomena of communities has been common and it traces its origin back to 1930s. Firth's lexical semantics (1935) studied in context the "sociologically important words" whose meanings help characterise a community. Williams (1976) analysed contemporary culture through studying "cultural keywords" such as "capitalism". Wierzbicka (1999 & 2006) explored the cultural underpinnings of a language and counteracted the mistaking of Anglo English as universal human norm. For example, "reasonableness" may be the most effective persuasive strategy in anglophone cultures but may not be able to account, for example, the way of persuasion by power in hierarchical society. As Bondi (2010) and Culpeper (2009) pointed out, the task that computer/concordancer identifying statistically significant words/clusters does not in itself constitute an interpretation of the corpus but it points to elements and puts them forward for interpretation in pragmatic and cultural context. Corpus linguistics will be a very useful research method for the present study, and it helps point to pragmalinguistic components of request making for interpretation in sociopragmatic context.

In order to analyse specifically and accurately the patterns of request making, not the whole HKCSE (Business) is analysed. Instead, 439 request head acts/request proper have been identified and extracted based on the research conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3 and the thorough reading of each whole dialogue to understand the interaction context and speakers' roles. The 439 request head acts identified form the new corpus "Request" specifically for the purpose of this study. Therefore, the request head acts/request proper identified are the units of analysis but not every utterance in HKCSE (Business). As a result, all the concordances drawn just cover requests.

Also, keywords are not necessarily single words and they can be keyword clusters, in other words, extended units of meaning (Sinclair, 1996) and Phraseology is booming in corpus research (Huston, 2004). Although wordlist and word cluster analyses are basically lexical analysis, they will be relevant for the present study because such words/word clusters from the request head acts are actually the pragmalinguistic components constituting the request head acts/request proper, as detailed in conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3. For example, word such as "please" is internal modification and "may" is the polite modal in interrogative mood indicating the "query Preparatory" of the conventionally indirect level (level 2) while the word cluster/phrase "I want you to..." shows that the request head act is a "want statement of the direct level (level 3).

Corpus analyses address both research questions. On one hand, word/word cluster analysis could show the general patterns of request making in terms of pragmalinguistic components in the Hong Kong Spoken Business Context and this has addressed Research Question 1. For example, frequency count and concordances of the keyword “please” show that “please” is frequently used as internal modification in the requests made. On the other hand, when the request head acts of the corpus “Request” are divided into categories of requesters by the sociopragmatic factors, how the pragmalinguistic components are used in the different categories of requestors could be revealed and compared and this has addressed Research Question 2. For example, on top of the finding that “please” in general is frequently used in request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business Context, “please” is also found to be used more frequently (in terms of proportion) in the without-power-over category of requesters compared to the with-power category of requesters. In other words, requesters tend to more use “please” if they do not have power over requestees. Bondi (2010) and Culpeper (2009) state that keywords are those whose frequencies in a corpus are statistically significant when compared to another corpus. Therefore, in Section 6.2, the specific corpus “Request” for the present study will be divided into two sub-corpora under each factor to compare the uses (in terms frequencies and proportions) of linguistic components in the two factorial categories of speakers (e.g.: the use of “would” for making requests in males and females are compared). The programme Wordsmith 5.0 is used to conduct corpus analyses for the present study.

3.4.3. Conversation Analysis with Prosodic Study

Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis are frequency-driven and they are able to reveal salient patterns of request making in the descriptive level; however, they may not be able to portray the full picture because the unit of analysis is only the request head act/request proper in relation to the head act verb. External Modification, Response to Request and Intonation are not analysed. In order to better answer Research Question 2 (how sociopragmatic factors influence request patterns), conversation analyses with prosodic study are conducted in Chapter 6 for five extended dialogues.

Based on the concepts of Ethnomethodology, the Sociologist Sacks and his associates Schegloff and Jefferson developed Conversation Analysis (CA) in the early 1970s (Sacks et al., 1974) as a branch of Ethnomethodology. Markee (2000) establishes four aims of CA that are similar to the four principles stated by Seedhouse (2004):

- (1) There is order and structure at all points in conversational interactions;

- (2) Conversational interactions are context-shaped and context-renewing;
- (3) CA requires naturally occurring dialogues; and
- (4) The analysis is bottom-up and inductive.

Nowadays, CA is not only applied in sociology but also in linguistics. Researchers are keen to make use of CA to study intercultural pragmatics of speech acts, and a number of local studies have been done. For example, Cheng and Warren (1999, 2001a, 2001b & 2003), who applied CA to identify and exemplify the inappropriate level of inexplicitness manifested by the Hong Kong Chinese Speakers of English, analysed the use of vague language such as the use of noun phrases and general vocabulary in the natural conversations between native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English. They also analysed the use of “actually” in intercultural conversation and highlighted the differences between Indirectness, Inexplicitness and Vagueness through examples of natural dialogue turns. Cheng and Tsui (2009) used CA to study how Hong Kong Chinese and Native Speakers of English disagree differently in English. However, the use of CA to study request making is limited, and most studies on request making apply Discourse Completion Test (DCT) or role-play instead (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Hassall, 1999; Marti, 2006; Ogiermann, 2009). DCT provides theoretical situations to elicit utterances of requests and responses to request. The advantage of DCT is that it specifically collects responses in accordance with the research design, but the scope of situational context in which the responses are elicited may be less complete or natural than that of authentic conversations. Filling such a research gap, the present study explores request patterns existing in authentic/naturally-occurring conversations.

CA is the study of both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of talk in everyday interactions. CA generally attempts to describe the structure and sequential patterns of interaction, whether institutional in e.g.: business communication or in casual conversation. Conversation is mutually constructed and negotiated between speakers and CA focuses on unplanned and natural conversations. CA is also applied to study other paralinguistic areas such as Phonetics. For example, Kelly and Local (1989) applied the CA techniques of sequential analysis to explore the phonetic details of speech.

In the conversation analyses of the present study, the author will go beyond Request Head Act to cover a broader context including External Modification and the perlocutionary act Response to Requests to understand better the patterns. Adjacency pairs or extended

exchanges involving three or more turns are the units of conversation analyses. The responses to request such as acceptance, rejection and acknowledgement with neither acceptance nor rejection are explored. One sample dialogue is selected from each of the five situations included for the present study, namely hotel service encounter, internal meeting, airport service encounter, placement interview, and job interview. Thus, a total of five extended dialogues will be studied in depth.

The present study took the human behaviour accounts of etic and emic (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2010; Pike, 1967) into account when doing conversation analyses and interpretation. An etic account is a description of a behaviour or belief by an observer, in terms that can be applied to other cultures; that is, an etic account attempted to be culturally neutral. An emic account is a description of behaviour or a belief from a person within the culture. The author of the present study was brought up in Hong Kong. He once worked in the business sector and was once a lecturer of Business English for Associate Degree students. The author's background provides an emic account to interpret the different request patterns of Hong Kong's variety of Spoken Business English. For example, Cantonese speakers of English may tend to use "may I" and "please" in request making probably because Chinese people value "modesty" and the aforesaid formulaic expressions have been taught right from primary school in the English textbooks in Hong Kong.

The model of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) covers what is said but not the paralinguage. As explained in Section 2.4.2 of literature review and Section 3.3.2.5 of this chapter, prosodic features such as intonation may also play an important role in conveying politeness for request making, so the prosodic features are also analysed in CA. As a result, the CA in the present study contains two parts, analysis of linguistic features and analysis of paralinguistic prosodic features.

For easier reading, the dialogues have been edited to remove the non-verbal vocalisations. For example, when Speaker A is sharing his or her point and another Speaker B is making filler sounds such as "mm" or "mhm", these sounds made by Speaker B are removed to show A's point in a more continuous flow. The coding of requests for CA is the same as those for Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis except that the intonation of the last tone unit of each utterance is coded for studying the prosodic features. The complete coding system for CA is listed as follow.

Basic coding

- (1) EM: External Modification
- (2) w EM: Request with External Modification

Sociopragmatic factors

- (1) Gender (G)
 - Female 01 (speakers originally labelled as “A_” or “a_” in HKCSE (Business))
 - Male 02 (speakers originally labelled as “B_” or “b_” in HKCSE (Business))
- (2) Situation (S)
 - Service Encounter (01)
 - Meeting (02)
 - Interview (03)
- (3) First Language (C)
 - Cantonese Speakers of English (C+, speakers originally labelled in small letters in HKCSE (Business))
 - Non-Cantonese Speakers of English (C-, speakers originally labelled in capital letters in HKCSE (Business))
- (4) Power Distance (P)
 - Without Power over Requestee (P-)
 - With Power over Requestee (P+)
- (5) Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)
 - Having No Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (R-)
 - Having Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (R+)
- (6) Rank of Imposition (RI)
 - Less Imposing Request
 - More Imposing Request

Pragmalinguistic components

- (1) Directness Level (D)
 - Non-conventionally Indirect Level (1)
 - Conventionally Indirect Level (2)
 - Direct Level (3)
 - Most Direct Level (4)

- (2) Internal Modification (M)
 - Without Internal Modification (1)
 - With Internal Modification (2)
- (3) Perspective Imposition (H)
 - Impersonal Perspective (1)
 - Speaker Dominance "I" or "we" (2)
 - Speaker and Hearer Dominance "we" (3)
 - Hearer Dominance "you" (4)
- (4) External Modification (EM)
- (5) Response to Request
- (6) Prosodic Feature: Intonation

Format: [Intonation (“ / ” or “ = ” or “ \ ”)_Last Tone Unit of the Utterance]

Tone unit refers to the minimum unit of intonation in an utterance delimited internally by the first and the last prominent syllables and externally by the pause which marks the end of a tone unit (Cheng, Greaves & Warren, 2008, pp.15-16). The last tone unit of each utterance is marked with intonation for analysis in the present study. The general interpretations of the intonation symbols are detailed as below:

- (1) “/”: Rising tone indicates openness which may provide cushioning to mitigate the Directness Level and Perspective Imposition;
- (2) “=”: Flat tone indicates a neutral attitude;
- (3) “\”: Falling tone indicates resoluteness which strengthens the Directness Level or Perspective Imposition;
- (4) “?”: indicates that the researcher transcribing the HKCSE is uncertain about the tone; and
- (5) [...]: Shows that a speaker’s turn has not completely finished because another speaker interrupts so the turn is continued with another turn number after that another speaker’s turn finishes.

Chapter Four

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS RESULTS



Chapter 4. Statistical Analysis Results

4.1. Univariate Analysis of Request Head Acts

This section describes the amounts and proportions of requests in categories of pragmalinguistic components constituting the linguistic force of a request head act, namely Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D) and Perspective Imposition (H) and also in categories of sociopragmatic factors, namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). Such descriptive statistics denote the most basic and general request patterns that lay the foundation for the later more complicated Bivariate Analysis and Multivariate Analysis. Below is the recap of the codes for statistical analyses.

Pragmalinguistic Components of Requests

(1) Internal Modification (M)

- Without Internal Modification (1)
- With Internal Modification (2)

(2) Directness Level (D)

- Non-conventionally Indirect Level (1)
- Conventionally Indirect Level (2)
- Direct Level (3)
- Most Direct Level (4)

(3) Perspective Imposition (H)

- Impersonal Perspective (1)
- Speaker Dominance “I” or “We” (2)
- Speaker and Hearer Dominance “We” (3)
- Hearer Dominance “You” (4)

Sociopragmatic Factors

(4) Gender (G)

- Female (1)
- Male (2)

(5) Situation (S)

- Hotel Service Encounter (1)
- Meeting & Office Communication (e.g.: phone conversation, video conference) (2)
- Airport Service Encounter (3)
- Placement Interview (4)
- Job Interview (5)

(6) First Language (C)

- C+ Cantonese Speaker of English (1)
- C- Non-Cantonese Speaker of English (2)

(7) Power Distance (P)

- P- Without Power over Requestee (1)
- P+ With Power over Requestee (2)

(8) Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

- R- Having No Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (1)
- R+ Having Some Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (2)

As explained in the previous chapter of research conceptual framework, a total of 439 request head acts were identified from HKCSE (Business) and they formed the specific corpus “Request” for the present study. The 439 request head acts were divided into categories according to the pragmalinguistic components of a request and the sociopragmatic factors affecting the request making patterns. All are nominal variables, but they were just treated as scale ones for merely compilation of descriptive statistics to illustrate the rough distributions of the different levels. The proportions of the categories of each variable and the means and standard deviations of the variables were portrayed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Dependent Variables

Variable\Code	1		2		3		4		Total no. of request head acts	Mean	Mode	SD
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%				
M (Nominal)	246	56%	193	44%	NA	NA	NA	NA	439	NA	NA	NA
D (Ordinal)	38	8.7%	152	34.6	185	42.1%	64	14.6%	439	2.63	3	0.84
H (Ordinal)	39	8.9%	126	28.7%	56	12.8%	218	49.7%	439	3.04	3	1.07

M: Internal modification

D: Directness Level

H: Perspective Imposition

SD: Standard Deviation

Table 4.1 shows that the use of Internal Modification (Category 2, M+) was common (44%) for request making. For Directness Level (D), the most common level was Level 3 (Performative, Obligation Statement and Want Statement, 42.1%), followed by Level 2 (Suggestory Formula and Query Preparatory, 34.6%). For Perspective Imposition (H), the most common level was Level 4 (Hearer Dominance “you”, 49.7%), followed by Level 2 (Speaker Dominance “I”, 28.7%). The standard deviations indicate that the levels were wider spread in H than in D. For D, the directness of request making concentrated at Levels 2 and 3, but perspective impositions of H were widely spread to Level 2 and Level 4.

Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics for the Independent Variables

Variable\Code	1		2		3		4		5		Total no. of request head acts
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
G (Nominal)	202	46.0%	237	54.0%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	439
S (Nominal)	36	8.2%	182	41.5%	69	15.7%	68	15.5%	84	19.1%	439
C (Nominal)	257	58.5%	182	41.5%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	439
P (Nominal)	154	35.1%	285	64.9%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	439
R (Nominal)	109	24.8%	330	75.2%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	439

G: Gender

S: Situation

C: First Language

P: Power Distance

R: Expectation of Relationship Continuity

Table 4.2 shows that a higher proportion of requests (54.0%) were made by Males (Category 2), while the rest (46.0%) were made by Females (Category 1). For First Language (C), a higher proportion of requests (58.5%) were made by the Cantonese Speaking Category (Category 1, C+), while the rest (41.5%) were made by the Non-Cantonese Speaking Category (Category 2, C-). For Power Distance (P), a major proportion of requests (64.9%) were made by the With-power-over Category (Category 2, P+) while the rest (35.1%) were



made by the Without-power-over Category (Category 1, P-). For Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R), a major proportion of requests (75.2%) were made by the With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity Category (Category 2, R+) while the rest (24.8%) were made by the No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity Category (Category 1, R-).

As seen in Table 4.2, for Situation (S), much less requests were made in Hotel Service Encounter (Category 1, 8.2%), Airport Service Encounter (Category 3, 15.7%), Placement Interview (Category 4, 15.5%) and Job Interview (Category 5, 19.1%) compared to Meeting and Office Communication (Category 2, 41.5%). To enhance the validity and also the reliability of the statistical tests which follow, Categories 1 (Hotel Service Encounter) and 3 (Airport Service Encounter) being similar in nature were collapsed into the combined Category 1 (Service Encounter) while Categories 4 (Placement Interview) and 5 (Job Interview) being similar in nature were collapsed into another combined Category 3 (Interview) as shown in Table 4.3. After collapsing the categories of S, there were more requests in each category of S for analyses.

Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for Situation (S) after collapsing categories

Variable\Code	1		2		3		Mean	Mode	SD
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%			
S (Nominal)	105	23.9%	182	41.5%	152	34.6%	NA	NA	NA

S1: Service Encounter (Hotel and Airport)

S2: Meeting (and Office Communication)

S3: Interview (Placement Interview and Job Interview)

4.2. Bivariate Analysis of Request Head Acts

In addition to the basic and general patterns identified in the Univariate Analysis (Descriptive Statistics), the next two sections explain how the sociopragmatic factors Gender, Situation, First Language, Power Distance and Expectation of Relationship Continuity affected the request patterns in HKCSE (Business) in terms of pragmalinguistic components namely Internal Modification, Directness Level and Perspective Imposition. That is, the correlations between the request patterns and the underlying factors are explored. Moreover, the significances and magnitudes of effects are demonstrated.

Although Bivariate Analysis only studies the influence of a single independent variable on a dependent variable, it is necessary because it paves way for Multivariate Analysis. If an independent variable is insignificant by itself on a dependent variable, it will be even more insignificant on the dependent variable when being put together with other independent variables. Therefore, such insignificant variable can surely be excluded from Multivariate Analysis.

Though the dependent variables Directness Level and Perspective Imposition were conceptually ordinal as delineated in Chapter 3, both variables only had four ordinal levels technically which might make them insufficient to be treated as valid ordinal scales for statistical analyses. Hence, together with Internal Modification, all the dependent variables were treated as nominal variables for Bivariate Analysis and also Multivariate Analysis and only non-parametric statistical tests were applied. Chi-square tests were applied in this section to analyse the relation between the dependent variables and each of the sociopragmatic factors at one time. Two-tailed significance level of 0.05 is adopted in all the statistical tests for interpretation of results.

4.2.1. Influence of Each Factor on Internal Modification (M)

Parametric T-test shows if there is a relation between dependent and independent variables, by comparing the mean scores of the dependent variable, in the two categories of the independent variable. T-test can only be used when the dependent variable is interval or scale because mean scores of the dependent variable need to be calculated.

When the dependent variables are nominal, no mean scores can be compiled, so non-parametric Chi-square Tests instead of T-tests were conducted to analyse all the three

dependent variables namely Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D) and Perspective Imposition (H) because they were all treated as nominal variables as mentioned previously. While T-test works by compiling means of the dependent variable, Chi-square Test works by compiling frequencies and proportions for the categories of the dependent variable. The null hypothesis of Chi-square statistics here is that the dependent variable had no dependence on the independent variable. In other words, the categories of the independent variables had equal proportions of the dependent variable categories. For example, the dependent variable about the use of internal modification or not for request making was only categorical but not ordinal/internal/scale, only proportions of using internal modification (vs. not using internal modification) could be calculated. For example, whether internal modifications were used for request making by the two categories of speakers of two different first languages (the third sociopragmatic factor / independent variable), namely Cantonese Speakers of English (1) and Non-Cantonese Speakers of English (2), were coded and the proportion of using internal modifications (vs. not using) for request making by each category of speakers was calculated. The null hypothesis is that the proportions of using internal modification for request making by the two first- language categories were the same.

The Chi-square value equals the difference between the observed/actual proportions and the expected proportions calculated based on the null hypothesis. Chi-square Tests were applied to test the dependences of the dependent variable Internal Modification (M) on each of the five independent variables, namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). When an independent variable is significant, the Chi-square value will increase with the magnitude of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The results of the effect of each of the independent variables on Internal Modification are shown in Tables 4.4 to 4.9.

Table 4.4. Results of Chi-Square Tests of Each of the Independent Variables on Internal Modification (M)

M vs. Factor \ Chi-Sq Statistics	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Significance
G	5.53	0.019
S	17.04	0.000
C	4.62	0.032
P	25.98	0.000
R	14.45	0.000

M: Internal Modification

G: Gender

S: Situation (categories collapsed)

C: First Language

P: Power Distance

R: Expectation of Relationship Continuity

Table 4.5. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Gender (G) on Internal Modification (M)

Crosstab

			G (Gender)		Total
			1 (Female)	2 (Male)	
M	1 (M-) Count		101	145	246
		% within G	50.0%	61.2%	56.0%
	2 (M+) Count		101	92	193
		% within G	50.0%	38.8%	44.0%
Total	Count		202	237	439
	% within G		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.6. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Situation (S) on Internal Modification (M)

Crosstab

			S (Situation)			Total
			1 (Service Encounter)	2 (Meeting)	3 (Interview)	
M	1 (M-) Count		44	121	81	246
		% within SN	41.9%	66.5%	53.3%	56.0%
	2 (M+) Count		61	61	71	193
		% within SN	58.1%	33.5%	46.7%	44.0%
Total	Count		105	182	152	439
	% within SN		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Table 4.7. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable First Language (C) on Internal Modification (M)

Crosstab

			C		Total
			1 (Cantonese speaking)	2 (Non-Cantonese speaking)	
M	1 (M-)	Count	133	113	246
		% within C	51.8%	62.1%	56.0%
	2 (M+)	Count	124	69	193
		% within C	48.2%	37.9%	44.0%
Total	Count		257	182	439
	% within C		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.8. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Power Distance (P) on Internal Modification (M)

Crosstab

			P		Total
			1 (Without power over)	2 (With power over)	
M	1 (M-)	Count	61	185	246
		% within P	39.6%	64.9%	56.0%
	2 (M+)	Count	93	100	193
		% within P	60.4%	35.1%	44.0%
Total	Count		154	285	439
	% within P		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.9. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Expectation of Relationship Continuity on Internal Modification (M)

Crosstab

			R		Total
			1 (Without relation expectation)	2 (With relation expectation)	
M	1 (M-)	Count	44	202	246
		% within R	40.4%	61.2%	56.0%
	2 (M+)	Count	65	128	193
		% within R	59.6%	38.8%	44.0%
Total	Count		109	330	439
	% within R		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The significances of the Pearson Chi-squares as shown in Table 4.4 indicate that each of the independent variables namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) individually had a significant effect on Internal Modification (M), while the values of Pearson Chi-square indicate that P

had the greatest effect on M, followed by S and R. As shown in the crosstabulations of Tables 4.5 to 4.9, Gender Group 1 (females), Situation 1 (service encounters), First Language Group 1 (Cantonese speakers of English), Power Group 1 (without-power-over requestees) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity Group 1 (without relationship expectation on requestees) were more likely to use Internal Modification in request making.



4.2.2. Influence of Each Factor on Directness Level (D)

Chi-square Tests were applied to test the dependence of the dependent variable Directness Level (D) on each of the five independent variables, namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). The results of the effect of each of the independent variables on Directness Level are shown in Tables 4.10 to 4.15.

Table 4.10. Results of Chi-Square Tests of Each of the Independent Variables on Directness Level (D)

D vs. Factor \ Chi-Sq Statistics	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Significance
G	24.11	0.000
S	137.40	0.000
C	0.99	0.805
P	7.563	0.056
R	61.63	0.000

D: Directness Level

G: Gender

S: Situation (categories collapsed)

C: First Language

P: Power Distance

R: Expectation of Relationship Continuity

Table 4.11. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Gender (G) on Directness Level (D)

Crosstab

			G		Total
			1 (Female)	2 (Male)	
D	1 (Hint)	Count	24	14	38
		% within G	11.9%	5.9%	8.7%
	2 (Con. indirect)	Count	69	83	152
		% within G	34.2%	35.0%	34.6%
	3 (Direct)	Count	96	89	185
		% within G	47.5%	37.6%	42.1%
	4 (Most Direct)	Count	13	51	64
		% within G	6.4%	21.5%	14.6%
Total		Count	202	237	439
		% within G	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Table 4.12. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Situation (S) on Directness Level (D)

Crosstab

			S			Total
			1 (Service Encounter)	2 (Meeting)	3 (Interview)	
D	1 (Hint)	Count	7	5	26	38
		% within SN	6.7%	2.7%	17.1%	8.7%
	2 (Con. indirect)	Count	65	73	14	152
		% within SN	61.9%	40.1%	9.2%	34.6%
	3 (Direct)	Count	14	66	105	185
		% within SN	13.3%	36.3%	69.1%	42.1%
	4 (Most Direct)	Count	19	38	7	64
		% within SN	18.1%	20.9%	4.6%	14.6%
Total	Count	105	182	152	439	
	% within SN	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 4.13. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable First Language (C) on Directness Level (D)

Crosstab

			C		Total
			1 (Cantonese speaking)	2 (Non-Cantonese speaking)	
D	1 (Hint)	Count	25	13	38
		% within C	9.7%	7.1%	8.7%
	2 (Con. indirect)	Count	87	65	152
		% within C	33.9%	35.7%	34.6%
	3 (Direct)	Count	107	78	185
		% within C	41.6%	42.9%	42.1%
	4 (Most Direct)	Count	38	26	64
		% within C	14.8%	14.3%	14.6%
Total		Count	257	182	439
		% within C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.14. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Power Distance (P) on Directness Level (D)

Crosstab					
			P		Total
			1 (Without power over)	2 (With power over)	
D	1 (Hint)	Count	19	19	38
		% within P	12.3%	6.7%	8.7%
	2 (Con. indirect)	Count	58	94	152
		% within P	37.7%	33.0%	34.6%
	3 (Direct)	Count	61	124	185
		% within P	39.6%	43.5%	42.1%
	4 (Most Direct)	Count	16	48	64
		% within P	10.4%	16.8%	14.6%
Total		Count	154	285	439
		% within P	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.15. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) on Directness Level (D)

			R		Total
			1 (Without relation expectation)	2 (With relation expectation)	
D	1	Count	7	31	38
		% within R	6.4%	9.4%	8.7%
	2	Count	68	84	152
		% within R	62.4%	25.5%	34.6%
	3	Count	15	170	185
		% within R	13.8%	51.5%	42.1%
	4	Count	19	45	64
		% within R	17.4%	13.6%	14.6%
Total	Count	109	330	439	
	% within R	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The significances of the Pearson Chi-squares as shown in Table 4.10 indicate that each of the independent variables except First Language (C) and Power Distance (P) had a significant effect on Directness Level (D), while the values of Pearson Chi-square indicate that the factor Situation (S) had the greatest effect on D, followed by R and G. As shown in the crosstabulations of Tables 4.11 to 4.15, Gender Group 1 (females), Situation 1 (service encounters), Power Group 1 (without-power-over requestees) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity Group 1 (without relationship expectation on requestees) were more likely to go for lower directness levels in making requests.

4.2.3. Influence of Each Factor on Perspective Imposition (H)

Chi-square Tests were applied to test the dependence of the dependent variable Perspective Imposition (H) on each of the five independent variables, namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). The results of the effect of each of the independent variables on Perspective Imposition are shown in Tables 4.16 to 4.21.

Table 4.16. Results of Chi-Square Tests of Each of the Independent Variables on Perspective Imposition (H)

H vs. Factor\Chi-Sq Statistics	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Significance
G	31.28	0.000
S	108.60	0.000
C	25.85	0.000
P	110.70	0.000
R	38.39	0.000

H: Perspective Imposition

G: Gender

S: Situation (categories collapsed)

C: First Language

P: Power Distance

R: Expectation of Relationship Continuity

Table 4.17. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Gender (G) on Perspective Imposition (H)

Crosstab

		G		Total
		1 (Female)	2 (Male)	
H 1 (Impersonal)	Count	22	17	39
	% within G	10.9%	7.2%	8.9%
2 (Speaker dominance)	Count	79	46	125
	% within G	39.1%	19.4%	28.5%
3 (Speaker & Hearer dominance)	Count	13	43	56
	% within G	6.4%	18.1%	12.8%
4 (Hearer dominance)	Count	88	131	219
	% within G	43.6%	55.3%	49.9%
Total	Count	202	237	439
	% within G	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Table 4.18. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Situation (S) on Perspective Imposition (H)

Crosstab

		S			Total
		1 (Service Encounter)	2 (Meeting)	3 (Interview)	
H 1 (Impersonal)	Count	6	13	20	39
	% within SN	5.7%	7.1%	13.2%	8.9%
2 (Speaker dominance)	Count	51	15	59	125
	% within SN	48.6%	8.2%	38.8%	28.5%
3 (Speaker & Hearer dominance)	Count	0	50	6	56
	% within SN	.0%	27.5%	3.9%	12.8%
4 (Hearer dominance)	Count	48	104	67	219
	% within SN	45.7%	57.1%	44.1%	49.9%
Total	Count	105	182	152	439
	% within SN	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.19. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable First Language (C) on Perspective Imposition (M)

Crosstab

		C		Total
		1 (Cantonese speaking)	2 (Non-Cantonese speaking)	
H 1 (Impersonal)	Count	22	17	39
	% within C	8.6%	9.3%	8.9%
2 (Speaker dominance)	Count	94	31	125
	% within C	36.6%	17.0%	28.5%
3 (Speaker & Hearer dominance)	Count	21	35	56
	% within C	8.2%	19.2%	12.8%
4 (Hearer dominance)	Count	120	99	219
	% within C	46.7%	54.4%	49.9%
Total	Count	257	182	439
	% within C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.20. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Power Distance (P) on Perspective Imposition (H)

Crosstab

		P		Total
		1 (Without power over)	2 (With power over)	
H 1 (Impersonal)	Count	11	28	39
	% within P	7.1%	9.8%	8.9%
2 (Speaker dominance)	Count	91	34	125
	% within P	59.1%	11.9%	28.5%
3 (Speaker & Hearer dominance)	Count	12	44	56
	% within P	7.8%	15.4%	12.8%
4 (Hearer dominance)	Count	40	179	219
	% within P	26.0%	62.8%	49.9%
Total	Count	154	285	439
	% within P	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.21. Cross-tabulation of the Independent Variable Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) on Perspective Imposition (H)

Crosstab

		R		Total
		1 (Without relation expectation)	2 (With relation expectation)	
H 1 (Impersonal)	Count	9	30	39
	% within R	8.3%	9.1%	8.9%
2 (Speaker dominance)	Count	52	73	125
	% within R	47.7%	22.1%	28.5%
3 (Speaker & Hearer dominance)	Count	0	56	56
	% within R	.0%	17.0%	12.8%
4 (Hearer dominance)	Count	48	171	219
	% within R	44.0%	51.8%	49.9%
Total	Count	109	330	439
	% within R	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The significances of the Pearson Chi-squares as shown in Table 4.16 indicate that each of the independent variables namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) had a significant effect on Perspective Imposition (H), while the values of Pearson Chi-square indicate that P and S had the greatest effect on H, followed by R. As shown in the crosstabulations of Tables 4.17 to 4.21, Gender Group 1 (females), Situation 1 (service encounters), First Language Group (Cantonese speakers of English), Power Group 1 (without-power-over requestees) and Expectation of



Relationship Continuity Group 1 (without relationship expectation on requestees) were more likely to go for weaker perspective imposition (“Impersonal” and “I”) in making requests.



4.3. Multivariate Analysis of Request Head Acts

Multivariate Analysis studies multiple variables simultaneously. The relative significance and the interaction(s) of the different independent variables on the dependent variable can be shown. As mentioned in the previous section, Bivariate Analysis laid the foundation for Multivariate Analysis. Independent variables identified as insignificant in Bivariate Analysis were excluded for Multivariate Analysis. In addition, one very important assumption of binary/multinomial logistic regression is that there should be no multi-collinearity. That is, the independent variables should not be highly correlated with each other. Hence, the correlation between the independent variables were explored through Chi-Square Tests and Cramer's V Coefficients, which work well in both 2x2 and 2x3 tabulations, were portrayed in Table 4.22 to demonstrate the correlations among the five independent variables. The measure of Cramer's V Coefficient ranges between 0 and 1 with higher values meaning a stronger association.

Table 4.22. Cramer's V Coefficients between independent variables resulting from Chi-Square Tests

	G	S	C	P	R
G	--	0.378	0.582	0.298	0.192
S	0.378	--	0.257	0.273	0.915
C	0.582	0.257	--	0.541	0.073
P	0.298	0.273	0.541	--	0.207
R	0.192	0.915	0.073	0.207	--

G: Gender

S: Situation (categories collapsed)

C: First Language

P: Power Distance

R: Expectation of Relationship Continuity

Table 4.23. Cross-tabulation between Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) and Situation (S), Cramer's V at 0.915

Crosstab				
Count				
		S		
		1 (Service Encounter)	2 (Meeting)	3 (Interview)
				Total
R	1 (Without relation expectation)	100	9	0
	2 (With relation expectation)	5	173	152
Total		105	182	152
				439



Table 4.24. Cross-tabulation between First Language (C) and Gender (G), Cramer's V at 0.582

Crosstab			
Count			
	G		
	1 (Female)	2 (Male)	Total
C 1 (Cantonese speaking)	181	76	257
2 (Non-Cantonese speaking)	21	161	182
Total	202	237	439

Table 4.25. Cross-tabulation between First Language (C) and Power Distance (P), Cramer's V at 0.541

Crosstab			
Count			
	P		
	1 (Without power over)	2 (With power over)	Total
C 1 (Cantonese speaking)	146	111	257
2 (Non-Cantonese speaking)	8	174	182
Total	154	285	439

As shown in Table 4.22, Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) was highly correlated with Situation (S) while First Language (C) was highly correlated with Gender (G) and Power Distance (P). Table 4.23 shows that requesters without expectation of relationship continuity on requestees (R1) were more likely to be in service encounters (S1) while those with relationship expectation (R2) were more likely to be in meetings and interviews (S2 and S3). Tables 4.24 and 4.25 show that Cantonese speakers of English (C1) were more likely to be females (G1) and without power over requestees (P1) while non-Cantonese speakers of English (C2) were more likely to be males (G2) and with power over requestees (P2). Linking such findings of correlations between independent variables with the findings in the previous bivariate analyses, when both Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) and Situation (S) were significant on a dependent variable in bivariate analyses, the more significant Situation (S) would be selected for multivariate analyses because S and R are highly correlated and similar in nature. In the same token, when both First Language (C) and Gender (G) or Power Distance (P) were both significant on a dependent variable in bivariate analyses, the more significant Gender (G) or Power Distance (P) would be selected for multivariate analyses.

Parametric statistical tests such as Factorial ANOVA are excluded because of the nominal nature of all the dependent variables. Only the non-parametric statistical test Logistic Regression is applied in Multivariate Analysis.



4.3.1. Influence of all Sociopragmatic Factors put together on Internal Modification (M)

As found in Bivariate Analysis, each of the five factors namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) was individually significant on influencing Internal Modification (M). Since S and R were highly correlated as indicated by the Cramer's V Coefficient (0.915), only the more significant S as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 17.04 versus 14.45 of R) would be included for Multiple Analysis. In the same token, since C was highly correlated with G as indicated by Cramer's V Coefficient (0.582) and also with P as indicated by Cramer's V Coefficient (0.541), only the more significant G as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 5.53 versus 4.62 of C) and the more significant P as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 25.98 versus 4.62 of C) would be included for Multivariate Analysis.

Since the dependent variable M only consisted of two categories (without and with internal modification in making request), Binary (Binomial) Logistic Regression was conducted with the inclusion of G, S and P. For Binary Logistic Regression, multiple independent variables are used simultaneously for predicting the outcome of the nominal dependent variable with just two categories while the independent variables could be either nominal/ordinal or interval/scale. The results are shown in Tables 4.26.

Table 4.26. Binary Logistic Regression of Internal Modification (M, dependent variable) vs. the independent variables Gender (G), Situation (S) and Power Distance (P)

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	28.947	3	.000
	Block	28.947	3	.000
	Model	28.947	3	.000

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	G	-.318	.227	1.957	1	.162	.728
	S	-.209	.144	2.102	1	.147	.812
	P	-.920	.219	17.626	1	.000	.399
	Constant	2.193	.564	15.139	1	.000	8.958

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: G, S, P.



The Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients in Table 4.26 show that the independent variables collectively had significance in predicting M, but here it cannot show which particular independent variable(s) were significant or more significant. The statistics for the Step, Model and Block are the same because neither stepwise nor blocking was used.

“Variables in the Equation” contains parameter estimates of the model, and it shows that only Power Distance (P) was significant in predicting M when putting all the independent variables into account. For every one-unit increase in P score, we expect a 0.920 decrease in the log-odds of M, holding all other independent variables constant. In other words, the with-power-over-requestee category was less likely than the without-power-over-requestee category to use Internal Modification for request making.

4.3.2. Influence of all Sociopragmatic Factors put together on Directness Level (D)

As found in Bivariate Analysis, three of the five factors namely Gender (G), Situation (S) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) were individually significant on influencing Directness Level (D). Since S and R were highly correlated as indicated by the Cramer's V Coefficient (0.915), only the more significant S as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 137.40 versus 61.63 of R) would be included for Multivariate Analysis.

Since the dependent variable D consisted of more than two categories (four directness levels), Multinomial Logistic Regressions were conducted with the inclusion of G, S and the interaction of G and S. For Multinomial Logistic Regression, multiple independent variables are used simultaneously for predicting the outcome of the nominal dependent variable of more than two categories while the independent variables could be either nominal/ordinal or interval/scale. The results are shown in Tables 4.27 and 4.28.

Table 4.27. Multinomial Logistic Regression of Directness Level (D, dependent variable) vs. the independent variables Gender (G) and Situation (S)

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	239.166			
Final	69.794	169.371	9	.000

Likelihood Ratio Tests

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	69.794 ^a	.000	0	.
G	87.833	18.039	3	.000
S	213.619	143.825	6	.000

- The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.
- This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.

Parameter Estimates

D ^a		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Intercept	.617	.548	1.271	1	.260			
	[G=1.00]	1.041	.512	4.135	1	.042	2.832	1.038	7.721
	[G=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[S=1.00]	-1.813	.658	7.586	1	.006	.163	.045	.593
	[S=2.00]	-2.933	.666	19.402	1	.000	.053	.014	.196
	[S=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
2	Intercept	-.285	.525	.294	1	.587			
	[G=1.00]	1.393	.373	13.973	1	.000	4.029	1.940	8.366
	[G=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[S=1.00]	1.207	.567	4.526	1	.033	3.343	1.100	10.164
	[S=2.00]	.499	.529	.891	1	.345	1.648	.584	4.648
	[S=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
3	Intercept	2.301	.446	26.609	1	.000			
	[G=1.00]	.651	.379	2.945	1	.086	1.918	.912	4.034
	[G=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[S=1.00]	-2.710	.550	24.254	1	.000	.067	.023	.196
	[S=2.00]	-1.903	.461	17.033	1	.000	.149	.060	.368
	[S=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is: 4.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The Model Fitting Information in Table 4.27 shows that the independent variables Gender (G) and Situation (S) collectively had significance in predicting Directness Level (D), but it could not show which particular independent variable(s) were significant or more significant. To supplement that, the Likelihood Ratio Tests show that both G and S were significant on D with S having greater effect on D as indicated by the much larger Chi-Square value.

The Parameter Estimates show the significant effects of Gender (G) and Situation (S) on Directness Level (D) at a particular level of D. As shown in the highlighted parameter estimates, females compared to the reference group (Group 2 of males) were more likely to have requests made at lower directness levels (Level 1 “Hints” and Level 2 “Suggestory Formula” and “Query Preparatory”).

As for S, Situation 1 (Service Encounter) and Situation 2 (Meeting), compared to the reference category (Interview) were less likely to have requests made at Level 1 of directness

(“Hints”). At Level 2 of directness (“Suggestory Formula” and “Query Preparatory”), Situation 1 (Service Encounter) compared to the reference category (Interview) was more likely to have requests made at that directness level. At Level 3 of directness (“Performative”, “Obligation Statement” and “Want Statement”), Situation 1 (Service Encounter) and Situation 2 (Meeting) compared to the reference category (Interview) were less likely to have requests made at that directness level. Such findings are consistent with the cross-tabulation results in Bivariate Analysis.

Table 4.28. Multinomial Logistic Regression of Directness Level (D, dependent variable) vs. the independent variables Gender (G), Situation (S) and additionally the Interaction of G and S

Likelihood Ratio Tests

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	64.067 ^a	.000	0	.
G	64.067 ^a	.000	0	.
S	64.067 ^a	.000	0	.
G * S	69.794	5.727	6	.454

- a. The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.
- b. a. This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.

Next, the Interaction G*S of the two independent variables Gender (G) and Situation (S) was additionally put to Multinomial Logistic Regression. As shown in the Likelihood Ratio Tests of Table 4.28, the overall model became not valid because no significance could be compiled for G and S and also the Interaction G*S was not significant in affecting Directness Level (D).

4.3.3. Influence of all Sociopragmatic Factors put together on Perspective Imposition (H)

As found in Bivariate Analysis, each of the five factors namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) was individually significant on influencing Perspective Imposition (H). Since S and R were highly correlated as indicated by the Cramer's V Coefficient (0.915), only the more significant S as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 108.60 versus 38.39 of R) would be included for Multivariate Analysis. In the same token, since C was highly correlated with G as indicated by Cramer's V Coefficient (0.582) and also with P as indicated by Cramer's V Coefficient (0.541), only the more significant G as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 31.28 versus 25.85 of C) and the more significant P as identified in Bivariate Analysis (Pearson Chi-Square value of 110.70 versus 25.85 of C) would be included for Multinomial Analysis.

Since the dependent variable H consisted of more than two categories (four perspective imposition levels), Multinomial Logistic Regressions were conducted with the inclusion of G, S, P and their interactions. For Multinomial Logistic Regression, multiple independent variables are used simultaneously for predicting the outcome of the nominal dependent variable of more than two categories while the independent variables could be either nominal/ordinal or interval/scale. The results are shown in Tables 4.29 and 4.30.

Table 4.29. Multinomial Logistic Regression of Perspective Imposition (H, dependent variable) vs. the independent variables Gender (G), Situation (S) and Power Distance (P)

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	396.361			
Final	180.590	215.770	12	.000

Likelihood Ratio Tests

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	1.806E2 ^a	.000	0	
G	189.242	8.652	3	.034
S	272.517	91.927	6	.000
P	246.448	65.858	3	.000

- The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.
- This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.

Parameter Estimates

H ^a		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Intercept	-1.541	.368	17.484	1	.000			
	[G=1.00]	.335	.393	.728	1	.394	1.398	.647	3.018
	[G=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[S=1.00]	-.766	.542	1.994	1	.158	.465	.161	1.346
	[S=2.00]	-.765	.401	3.633	1	.057	.466	.212	1.022
	[S=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[P=1.00]	.472	.422	1.253	1	.263	1.603	.702	3.662
	[P=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
2	Intercept	-1.254	.307	16.654	1	.000			
	[G=1.00]	.234	.321	.533	1	.465	1.264	.674	2.370
	[G=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[S=1.00]	.029	.353	.007	1	.936	1.029	.515	2.056
	[S=2.00]	-1.590	.375	18.011	1	.000	.204	.098	.425
	[S=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[P=1.00]	2.255	.298	57.300	1	.000	9.533	5.317	17.092
	[P=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
3	Intercept	-2.057	.462	19.820	1	.000			
	[G=1.00]	-.881	.366	5.794	1	.016	.415	.202	.849
	[G=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[S=1.00]	-20.482	.000	.	1	.	1.273E-9	1.273E-9	1.273E-9
	[S=2.00]	1.476	.469	9.928	1	.002	4.377	1.747	10.967
	[S=3.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[P=1.00]	.568	.407	1.943	1	.163	1.764	.794	3.920
	[P=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is: 4.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The Model Fitting Information in Table 4.29 shows that the independent variables Gender (G), Situation (S) and Power Distance (P) collectively had significance in predicting Perspective Imposition (H), but it could not show which particular independent variable(s) were significant or more significant. To supplement that, the Likelihood Ratio Tests show that G, S and P were all significant on H with S having greatest effect on H as indicated by the highest Chi-Square value followed by P and G.

The Parameter Estimates show the significant effects of Gender (G), Situation (S) and Power Distance (P) on Perspective Imposition (H) at particular level of H. As shown in the highlighted parameter estimates, at Level 2 of perspective imposition ("I"), Situation 2

(Meeting) compared to the reference category (Interview) was less likely to have requests made with “I” while without-power-over category compared to the reference category (Category 2 of with-power-over the requestee) was more likely to have requests made with “I”. At Level 3 of perspective imposition (“we”), females compared to the reference category (Category 2 of males) were less likely to have requests made with “we” while Situation 2 (Meeting) compared to the reference Category (Category 3 of Interview) was more likely to have requests made with “we”. Such findings are consistent with the cross-tabulation results in Bivariate Analysis. Next, the 2-way interactions of the significant independent variables Gender (G), Situation (S) and Power Distance (P) were additionally put to Multinomial Logistic Regression and the results are shown in the Table 4.30.

Table 4.30. Multinomial Logistic Regression of Perspective Imposition (H, dependent variable) vs. the independent variables Gender (G), Situation (S), Power Distance (P) and additionally their Interactions

Warnings

Unexpected singularities in the Hessian matrix are encountered. This indicates that either some predictor variables should be excluded or some categories should be merged.
The NOMREG procedure continues despite the above warning(s). Subsequent results shown are based on the last iteration. Validity of the model fit is uncertain.

Likelihood Ratio Tests

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
G	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
S	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
P	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
G * S	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
G * P	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
S * P	77.557 ^a	.000	0	.
G * S * P	79.978	2.421	6	.877

- a. The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The null hypothesis is that all parameters of that effect are 0.
- b. This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom.

As seen in the Table 4.30, SPSS warned that the overall model might be probably invalid. The Likelihood Ratio Tests of Table 4.30 show that no significance could be compiled for the main effects and interactions except the Interaction G*S*P which was shown to be insignificant in affecting perspective imposition. In other words, the interactions were not significant in affecting perspective imposition.

4.4. Summary of Statistical Analysis Results

Table 4.31. Summary list of results of statistical analysis

Univariate Analysis	Bivariate Analysis (Chi-Square Test)	Multivariate Analysis (Logistic Regression)
G: G(F)<G(M)	<u>M vs. G/S/C/P/R</u>	<u>**S being highly correlated with R → S used</u>
S:	(1) G/S/C/P/R being sig.	<u>**C being highly correlated with G or P → G or P used</u>
C: C+ > C-	(2) P>S>R>G>C	
	(2) G(F)/S1/C+/P-/R- → M+	<u>M vs. G & S & P & Interactions</u>
P: P+ > P-	<u>D vs. G/S/C/P/R</u>	(1) only P being sig., P+ → M-
R: R+ > R-	(1) G/S/R being sig, C & P not	<u>D vs. G & S & Interaction of G and S</u>
M: M- = M+	(2) S>R>G	(1) G & S being sig., S>G, interaction being insignificant
D: D3 > D2 > D4 > D1	(3) G(F)/S1/R- → D-	(2) G(F) more likely for D1 and D2, S(1) & S(2) less likely for D1 and D3, with S(1) more likely for D2
H: H4 > H2 > H3 > H1	<u>H vs. G/S/C/P/R</u>	<u>H vs. G & S & P and their Interactions</u>
	(1) G/S/C/P/R being sig	(1) G, S & P being sig., S>P>G, their interactions being insignificant
	(2) P>S>R>G>C	(2) S(2) less likely for H2 but more likely for H3, G(F) less likely for H3
	(3) G(F)/S1/C+/P-/R- → H-	

1. G: Gender (G(F) refers to females)
2. S: Situation (S1 refers to service encounter, S2 refers to meeting and other office communication and S3 refers to interview)
3. C: First Language (C+ refers to Cantonese Speakers of English)
4. P: Power Distance (P+ refers to having power over requestee)
5. R: Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R+ refers to having relationship expectation on requestee)
6. M: Internal Modification (M+ refers to using internal modification in request making)
7. D: Directness Level (D- refers to the likelihood of using lower directness level in request making)
8. H: Perspective Imposition (H- refers to the likelihood of using lower level of perspective imposition in request making)
9. >: One independent variable being more influential on dependent variable than another independent variable

Table 4.31 summarises the descriptive statistics and demonstrates the linkage between Bivariate Analysis and Multivariate Analysis. The independent variables identified as significant in Bivariate Analysis were put to Multivariate Analysis to analyse their relative influence on a dependent variable. The assumption of Logistic Regression that the independent variables should not be highly correlated was well noted so only the more significant variable was put to Logistic Regression Analysis when two highly correlated independent variables were identified as significant in Bivariate Analysis.

As shown in the Multivariate Analysis, Power Distance (P) was influential in affecting the use of Internal Modification (M) in request making, with the with-power-over-requestee category being less likely in the use of Internal Modification. Situation (S) was the most influential in affecting the use of Directness Level (D), with Situation 1 (Service Encounter) being more likely in the use of Directness Level 2 (Conventional Indirectness with Suggestory Formula and Query Preparatory) compared to the reference category of Situation 3 (Interview). Again, Situation (S) was the most influential in the use of Perspective Imposition (H) in request making, with Situation 2 (Meeting) being less likely in the use of “I” but more likely in the use of “we” compared to the reference category of Situation 3 (Interview). In short, Power Distance (P), Situation (S) and Gender (G) were found to be the most influential factors underlying request patterns, but it does not mean that other factors were not influential because Power Distance (P) and Gender (G) were highly correlated with First Language (C) while Situation (S) was highly correlated with Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R).



Chapter Five

CORPUS ANALYSIS RESULTS



Chapter 5. Corpus Analysis Results

The previous chapter first identifies general patterns of request making with descriptive statistics. For example, the most common Directness Level was Level 3. It next identifies the significance of the influences of the sociopragmatic factors on request making. Situation (S) and Power Distance (P) were found to be the most influential on request patterns in general.

While the previous chapter is able to reveal patterns in terms of proportion or frequency and also correlations between sociopragmatic factors and request patterns, it does not reveal what exact language expressions (words/word clusters) are frequently used in the Hong Kong Spoken English Context. To complement the last chapter, this chapter identifies the words or phrases (word clusters) being frequently used in the request making under such context.

Since it is not feasible to put all the factors together in lexical/cluster/concordance analysis (versus the fact that Multinomial Logistic Regression can put all the sociopragmatic factors together for analysis), the corpus “Request” built from the 439 request head acts identified and extracted for corpus analysis is divided into two sub-corpora to analyse each sociopragmatic factor at one time. For example, when the influence of power distance on request making is studied, the corpus “Request” will be divided into two sub-corpora namely “With-power-over” and “Without-power-over” to see if the two categories of requestors, the category having power over requestees versus the category having no power over requestees, demonstrated different request patterns as demonstrated in the wordlists, the word-cluster lists and the concordance list of request head acts drawn from the respective sub-corpora. Chi-square Tests of Proportions will be used to verify the significantly different uses of words in request making between the two categories of requestees (the two sub-corpora divided from the corpus “Request”) under each of the sociopragmatic factors, namely Gender (Males vs. Females), Situation (Meeting vs. Service Encounter vs. Interview), First Language (Cantonese Speakers of English vs. Non-Cantonese Speakers of English), Power Distance (Without power over requestee vs. With power over requestee) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (Having no expectation of relationship continuity with requestee vs. Having expectation of relationship continuity with requestee).

The words and words clusters are objectively and relevantly selected based on the research conceptual framework in Chapter 3.3 that lays the foundations and directions for the

whole study. For example, the two-to-seven clusters identified such as “you have to” and “I want to” in Section 5.1.4 “Analysis of Directness Level (D)” are the pragmalinguistic components (declarative mood with associated grammatical structure) specified as “Obligation Statement” and “Want Statement” of Direct Level under the directness level scale of the present study as specified in Chapter 3.3.



5.1. Overall Analysis of Request Head Acts

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus “Request”. The general patterns of the use of pragmalinguistic components namely Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D) and Perspective Imposition (H) in request making are here explored and this addresses the Research Question 1.

5.1.1. Analysis of Internal Modification (M)

Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into two sub-corpora, “M-” of 246 requests without internal modifications and “M+” of 193 requests with internal modifications.

Wordlists have long been popularly used as one of the standard methodologies in Corpus Linguistics. As Sinclair (1991, p.30) points out, “anyone studying a text is likely to need to know how often each different word form occurs in it” while Tribble and Jones (1997, p.36) state that wordlists could serve as the best starting point to understand a text. According to Baron, Rayson and Archer (2009, p.41), wordlist “records the number of times that each word occurs in the text” and thus highlights the most commonly-occurring words in the text. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Internal Modification” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3 and the one-word wordlists are compiled for the sub-corpora M+ and M- as in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. One-word wordlists of the sub-corpora M- and M+

N	Word (M-)	Freq.	N	Word (M+)	Freq.
8	YOU	114	9	YOU	99
16	WE	66	10	WOULD	95
17	CAN	65	20	JUST	41
36	WILL	33	22	PLEASE	36
42	WANT	19	27	WE	28
48	THINK	16	30	COULD	22
61	SHOULD	13	36	MAY	19
73	MAYBE	10	44	THINK	16
			55	WANT	12
			70	I'D	8
			89	MIND	7
			101	SIR	6
			137	MAYBE	4

(1) “M-” stands for the sub-corpus of 246 requests without Internal Modifications, while “M+” stands for the sub-corpus of 193 requests with Internal Modification.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word, while “N” is the rank of the word based on such frequency.

As seen in Table 5.1, the M- requests used stronger modal verbs such as “can”, “will” and “should”, while the M+ requests used weaker modal verbs such as “would”, “could” and “may”. “Just” and “please” were the two most common internal modifications. Next, two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the two sub-corpora M- and M+ as in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora M- and M+

N	Word (M-)	Freq.	N	Word (M+)	Freq.
16	HAVE TO	30	22	WOULD LIKE TO	19
19	CAN YOU	17	23	I WOULD LIKE TO	16
20	CAN I	16	26	WOULD YOU	16
23	I THINK	14	28	MAY I	15
30	WANT TO	13	37	I THINK	11
33	NEED TO	12	38	WANT TO	10
34	YOU HAVE TO	12	42	CAN I	9
41	WE NEED	10	56	IF YOU COULD	8
49	I WANT TO	8	76	COULD YOU	6
66	I NEED	6	81	I'D LIKE TO	6
73	WE HAVE TO	6	83	LIKE YOU TO	6
74	WE NEED TO	6	90	WOULD YOU MIND	6
106	WE SHOULD	5	91	WOULD YOU PLEASE	6

(1) “M-” stands for the sub-corpus of 246 requests without Internal Modifications, while “M+” stands for the sub-corpus of 193 requests with Internal Modification.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a phrase, while “N” is the rank of the phrase based on such frequency.

The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.2 show that the use of weaker modal verbs was more associated with the lower sub-level of requests in the with-internal-modification requests for Direct Level (level 3). As shown above, with-internal modification requests were the weaker Want Statements of Direct Level such as “would like to” (frequency count of 19) while the no-internal-modification requests were the stronger Obligation Statements of Direct Level such as “have to” (frequency count of 30). That means, when people made lower sub-level requests (Want Statements instead of Obligation Statements), they tended to use more internal modifications for weakening the directness. Conversely, when people made higher sub-level requests (Obligation Statements instead of Want Statements), they tended to use less internal modifications for strengthening the directness.

For Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2), with-internal-modification requests more frequently used weaker modal verbs such as “would”, “may” and “could”, but no-internal-modification requests more frequently used stronger modal verbs such as “can”.

5.1.2. Analysis of Directness Level (D)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into four sub-corpora, “D1” of 38 requests at Directness Level 1 (Non-conventionally Indirect Level), “D2” of 152 requests at Directness Level 2 (Conventionally Indirect Level), “D3” of 185 requests at Directness Level 3 (Direct Level) and “D4” of 64 requests at Directness Level 4 (Most Direct Level). The pragmalinguistic forms of “Directness Level 1” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were first generated for the sub-corpus D1 as in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora D1 (Non-conventionally Indirect Level)

One-word wordlist			Two-to-seven cluster wordlist		
N	Word (D1)	Freq.	N	Word (D1)	Freq.
2	I	27	27	I HAVE	6
9	YOU	21	29	KIND OF	5
20	WOULD	9			
31	JUST	6			
40	KIND	7			
47	WE	5			

(1) “D1” stands for the sub-corpus of 38 requests at Directness Level 1.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word or phrase, while “N” is the rank of the word or phrase based on such frequency.

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.3 shows that “I” (frequency count of 27) was used more than “you” (frequency count of 21) and “we” (frequency count of 5) as the perspective for request making at Directness Level 1 (Non-conventionally Indirect Level). “Would” and “just” were also used to make the requests less direct. The 2-to-7 cluster wordlist in Table 6.3 showed that “I have” (frequency count of 6) and “kind of” (frequency count of 5) were frequently used. Related concordances were drawn in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 for further analysis. The use of “I have” might have stated one’s situation to narrow down the scope for the

requestee to guess about the request. The phrases “that kind of” and “the kind of” might have performed similar function.

Figure 5.1. Concordances of “I have” in the sub-corpus D1

constitutes a major part of your duties and er because I have er my impression that you you are quite an active
 < <I-><C-><P+><R->(D1-M1-H2) B: I have a computer in here so?
 "<I-><C-><P+><R->(D1-M1-H1) B: Yeah, I have just a question, you see our flight to Zurich is in
 a3: I really enjoy doing it (transcribing) if I have so much time given (hints). "<
 a3: It (the job) would involve a lot of paper work, in fact I have just done a paper on transcription (hints). " "<
 a2: It's a great opportunity if I can apply what I have learned into practice (hint) (w EM). < "<

Figure 5.2. Concordances of “kind of” in the sub-corpus D1

B: Okay how do you feel about that kind of methodology would mean, a lot of small group
 B: How would you feel about that kind of intense one to one or small group interview
 B: But do you think you got the kind of temperament to to sit and do transcription for
 a3: I think so, I'm quite interested in that kind of duties (transcribing, researching) (w EM). " <
 a3: But I may say I can cope with that kind of work (boredom of transcribing) er quite well

While most of requests, those being at Most Direct Level, Direct Level and Conventionally Indirect Level, can be clearly shown by a request head act or a single concordance/turn (demonstrated in the concordance examples in the sections which follow, illustrating the patterns in the other three levels, namely Conventionally Indirect Level, Direct Level and Most Direct Level), the Hints (the type of request at the most indirect level) may not appear totally clear in a single concordance or turn because there is no explicit request head act verb present as defined under the scale of directness level of the present study in Chapter 3.3. A broader context with for example, External Modification such as Grounders and Response to Request, is required for identifying and interpreting Hints. Why the concordances in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 are identified as requests is illustrated with the sample concordance in Figure 5.1 “Yeah, I have just a question, you see our flight to Zurich is in...” in the context of the dialogue extract B030 as below.

B030

1. a: Good evening, Can I help you Sir?
 2. **B: Yeah, I have just a question, you see our flight to Zurich is in three hours, and she's told us there is no place in the aisle or at the window.**
 3. **a: er let me check it for you.**
 4. B: And now just a question for us. It's not that we don't can't understand it er up to when we we can er go in...
 5. A: check in.
 6. B: Check in er five six or more hours before.
 7. a: Actually for Cathay Pacific we have er er er specials er **early check in service** for for passengers at the airport we start check in at four thirty this afternoon.
 8. A: At four thirty?
 9. a: Yes, for all our evening long haul flight we start check in at four thirty this afternoon.
 10. B: oh.
 11. **A: It's not our problem that we're late.**
 12. B: Is that right that we are the the two hundred and eighty person that who are checked in, is that right?
 13. a: Yes, this is your boarding number that means you are the two hundred and eight.
 14. B: Person who are who were.
 15. a: Yeah, exactly yes.
 16. B: Aha. Okay.
 17. a: **Yeah, because sometimes er some of our passenger contact our city check in which is in the town office a day before so they can check in earlier er may be. All of them prefer the window seat** that's why at this moment we cannot give you back the window seat.
-

For instance, in the above cited example “Yeah, I have just a question, you see our flight to Zurich is in...”, the whole utterance is at Turn 2. Reading Turns 1 to 17 in detail, one could understand that Turn 2 was actually not a question for information or confirmation. Turn 2 was indeed a request made by two passengers at airport for aisle or window seats with justifications “our flight to Zurich is in three hours (we haven’t checked-in too late, Turn 2)”



and “It’s not our problem that we are late (Turn 11)”. The passenger service agent responded to and rejected such request also with justifications “early check in service for other passengers (Turn 7)” and “sometimes er some of our passenger contact our city check in which is in the town office a day before (Turn 17)”.

Second, D2 (Conventionally Indirect Level) is one of the sub-corpora derived from the corpus “Request”, and it contains 152 requests at Directness Level 2. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Directness Level 2” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the sub-corpus D2 as in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4. One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora D2 (Conventionally Indirect Level)

One-word wordlist			Two-to-seven cluster wordlist		
N	Word (D2)	Freq.	N	Word (D2)	Freq.
6	YOU	89	7	CAN I	24
9	CAN	67	18	CAN YOU	21
10	I	63	20	MAY I	15
17	WE	24	27	WOULD YOU	13
18	IF	23	42	I THINK	7
19	PLEASE	22	51	COULD YOU	6
23	COULD	20	52	IF YOU COULD	6
29	MAY	18	56	WOULD YOU MIND	6
31	JUST	16	57	WOULD YOU PLEASE	6
35	WOULD	17			
44	MAYBE	9			
45	MIND	9			
50	THINK	8			

(1) “D2” stands for the sub-corpus of 152 requests at Directness Level 2.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word or phrase, while “N” is the rank of the word or phrase based on such frequency.

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.4 shows that Query Preparatory (“can”, “if”, “could”, “may”, “would”, “mind”) were more frequently used than Suggestory Formulae (“maybe”, “think”) at Directness Level 2 (Conventionally Indirect Level). “You” was most frequently used followed by “I” and “we” as the perspective at Directness Level 2. The 2-to-7 cluster wordlist in Table 5.4 confirms that Query Preparatory such as “can I” (frequency count of 24)

were more frequent than Suggestory Formulae such as “I think” (frequency count of 7). For Query Preparatory, direct questions with stronger modal verb “can” (frequency count of 45) were more frequent.

Third, D3 (Direct Level) is one of the sub-corpora derived from the corpus “Request”, and it contains 185 requests at Directness Level 3. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Directness Level 3” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the sub-corpus D3 as in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5. One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora D3 (Direct Level)

One-word wordlist			Two-to-seven cluster wordlist		
N	Word (D3)	Freq.	N	Word (D3)	Freq.
2	I	97	29	I WOULD LIKE TO	16
9	YOU	89	40	YOU HAVE TO	11
12	WOULD	74	50	I WANT	8
17	WE	62	57	WE NEED	8
22	LIKE	43	78	I NEED	6
26	NEED	31	81	LIKE YOU TO	6
29	JUST	26	95	I WANT TO	5
30	WILL	32	97	I'D LIKE	5
46	THINK	18	98	I'D LIKE TO	5
54	SHOULD	15	113	WE HAVE TO	5
59	CAN	13	114	WE NEED TO	5
			115	WE SHOULD	5

(1) “D3” stands for the sub-corpus of 185 requests at Directness Level 3.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word or phrase, while “N” is the rank of the word or phrase based on such frequency.

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.5 shows that Want Statements (“would”, “like”) were slightly more frequent than Obligation Statements (“need”) at Directness Level 3 (Direct Level). “I” and “You” were most frequent as the perspective. The 2-to-7 cluster wordlist in Table 5.5 confirms that Want Statements such as “I would like to” (frequency count of 16) were slightly more frequent than Obligation Statements such as “you have to” (frequency count of 11).

Fourth, D4 (Most Direct Level) is one of the sub-corpora derived from the corpus,

“Request”, and it contains 64 requests at Directness Level 4. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Directness Level 4” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the sub-corpus D4 as in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6. One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora D4 (Most Direct Level)

One-word wordlist			Two-to-seven cluster wordlist		
N	Word (D4)	Freq.	N	Word (D4)	Freq.
14	PLEASE	15	18	GIVE ME	4
17	JUST	10	20	SO PLEASE	4
71	LET'S	3	22	TALK TO	4
			27	FIND OUT	3
			33	KEEP THE	3
			36	SHOW THEM	3
			45	ASK THEM TO	2
			56	CHECK THE	2
			64	GET THEM IN AND SHOW THEM	2
			66	GIVE ME BUSINESS CLASS	2
			71	GO TO THE OVERSEAS COMPANY ACCOUNT	2
			74	HAVE A LOOK AT THAT	2
			84	KEEP THE TICKET	2
			88	LOOK INTO THAT	2
			89	MAKE SURE	2
			97	PLEASE CHECK	2
			100	PLEASE KEEP THE TICKET	2
			102	PLEASE TAKE A	2
			103	PUT IT	2
			104	PUT YOUR	2
			105	TAKE A LOOK	2
			106	TAKE A SEAT	2
			133	TURN IT OFF	2

(1) “D4” stands for the sub-corpus of 64 requests at Directness Level 4.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word or phrase, while “N” is the rank of the word or phrase based on such frequency.

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.6 shows that people frequently used Internal Modifications such as “please” (frequency count of 15) and “just” (frequency count of 10) to make the requests less direct at Directness Level 4 (Most Direct Level). For Mood Derivable requests, apart from starting requests straight with Request Head Act, people also made

requests with “let’s” (frequency count of 3). The 2-to-7 cluster wordlist in Table 5.6 confirms the use of “please” for making requests less direct. In addition, the above phrases showed the imperative mood began requests straightforward with head act verb.

5.1.3. Analysis of Perspective Imposition (H)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into four sub-corpora, “H1” of 39 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 1 (Impersonal), “H2” of 126 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 2 (Speaker Dominance), “H3” consisting of 56 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 3 (Speaker and Hearer Dominance) and H4 consisting of 218 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 4 (Hearer Dominance).

The pragmalinguistic forms of “Perspective Imposition Level 1” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and related concordances were first generated for the sub-corpus H1 as in Table 5.7, Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4.

Table 5.7. One-word wordlist of the sub-corpora H1 (Impersonal)

N	Word (H1)	Freq.
14	WOULD	12
15	WILL	11
29	LIKE	6
57	COULD	3
62	JUST	3
81	CAN	2

(1) “H1” stands for the sub-corpus of 39 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 1 (Impersonal).

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word, while “N” is the rank of the word based on such frequency.

Figure 5.3. Concordances of “would be” in the sub-corpus H1

<p>B: The second thing is would be to interview students through the medium of</p> <p>. < " <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H1) B: One task would be er collecting data, survey data and being</p> <p>. " <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H1) A1: So there would be a little bit of reading (read background</p> <p>project, you would imagine, the major job duty would be collecting data and transcribing data. "</p> <p>data. " <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H1) B: It would be an important part of the post to sometimes</p>
--

Figure 5.4. Concordances of “will be” in the sub-corpus H1

as s said right, transcribing data (though a bit boring) will be er very important, yeah a main, forming a major
B: About the nature of the work, there will be a lot of interviewing. "
a: The research assistant we are looking for now will be working on two projects, the first one is
for both of these projects, er the research assistant will be engaged in doing work like erm doing word
, right. < " "<I-><C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H1) a1: There will be other duties involved such as doing word search,
a1: I would say transcribing spoken data will be a very heavy kind of duties for this job, research

The one-word wordlist and concordances above show that the Impersonal Perspective was used with “will be” (frequency count of 6) and “would be” (frequency count of 5) to state job requirements that required compliance from job interviewees (requesting interviewees to fulfil/deliver the job requirements in the near future after the interviewees report duties).

Second, H2 (Speaker Dominance) is one of the sub-corpora derived from the corpus “Request” and it contains 126 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 2. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Perspective Imposition Level 2” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the sub-corpus H2 as in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8. One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora H2 (Speaker Dominance)

N	Word (H2)	Freq.	N	Word (H2)	Freq.
2	I	136	17	CAN I	25
14	CAN	37	23	I WOULD LIKE TO	16
16	LIKE	32	29	MAY I	13
18	WOULD	36	30	MAY I HAVE	13
23	WANT	19	53	I WANT TO	7
28	MAY	15	54	IF I	7
32	THINK	14	68	I THINK I	6
33	JUST	12	90	I NEED	5
34	PLEASE	12	92	I'D LIKE	5
47	NEED	10	93	I'D LIKE TO	5
62	WE	7	94	INTERESTED IN	5
65	I'D	6			
80	I'M	5			
81	INTERESTED	5			
99	MAYBE	4			
102	SIR	4			
108	WILL	5			

(1) “H2 stands for the sub-corpus of 126 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 2 (Speaker Dominance).

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word or phrase, while “N” is the rank of the word or phrase based on such frequency.

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.8 shows that “I” (frequency count of 136) was far more frequent than “we” (frequency count of 7) to put forward Speaker Dominance in request making. Speaker Dominance was mainly applied in Want Statements with “like”, “would”, “want”, “I’m” and “interested” and Query Preparatory with “can”, “would” and “may”. The 2-to-7-word cluster list in Table 5.8 confirms that Speaker Dominance was mainly applied in Query Preparatory such as “can I” (frequency count of 25), “may I” and “I’m interested in” and Want Statements such as “I would like to” (frequency count of 16) and “I want to”. Related concordances are provided in Figures 5.5 and 5.6.

Figure 5.5. Concordances of “interested in” in the sub-corpus H2

doing research in an area that I'm I've always been interested in and um hopefully to learn it a lot
a3: I think so, I'm quite interested in that kind of duties (transcribing,
a2: Mhm mhm mhm, the most area that it I'm interested in is the front office operation (w EM). "
, okay? " <I-><C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H2) a: Yes (I'm interested in working in the front office) (w EM).
a: There are several sections that I would be interested in, but I think from the first area is the front

Figure 5.6. Concordances of “would like to” in the sub-corpus H2

(D3-M2-H2) a3: But what I mean is that, I would like to get that kind of experience er erm of doing research. "
. < "I-><C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a2: I would like to be a part of it (students' learning project), that would be my
R+>(D3-M2-H2) a: Basically, if possible, I would like to go through both the back of the house and the front of the
P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a: If I have chance, I would like to have a try (in food and beverage). "
> " <I-><C-><P+><R->(D3-M2-H2) B: So I would like to stay here tonight (w EM). < <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H2)
< <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H2) A: We would like to get a stamp to Canada. < <I-><C+><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H2)

Third, H3 (Speaker and Hearer Dominance) is one of the sub-corpora derived from the corpus “Request” and it contains 56 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 3. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Perspective Imposition Level 3” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the sub-corpus H3 as in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora H3 (Speaker and Hearer Dominance)

N	Word (H3)	Freq.	N	Word (H3)	Freq.
7	WE	55	21	WE HAVE TO	6
18	NEED	13	22	WE NEED TO	6
23	JUST	9	27	WE SHOULD	5
31	WANT	6	43	CAN WE	3
32	WE'VE	6	46	MAYBE WE	3
33	WOULD	7	55	WE JUST WANT TO	3
37	CAN	5			
43	SHOULD	5			
48	THINK	5			
71	LET'S	3			
72	MAYBE	3			
73	PROBABLY	3			
97	COULD	2			

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.9 confirms that “we” (frequency count of 55, involving both the requester and the requestee) was used in request making for Speaker and Hearer Dominance. Speaker and Hearer Dominance was mainly applied in Direct Level (level 3) with “need”, “want”, “we’ve” and “should”. The 2-to-7-word cluster list in Table 5.9 confirms that Speaker and Hearer Dominance was mainly applied in Direct Level (level 3) especially with regard to Obligation Statements such as “we have to” (frequency count of 6), “we need to” and “we should”. Related concordances are provided in Figures 5.7.

Figure 5.7. Concordances of “we have to” in the sub-corpus H3

<I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) A: But what we have to do absolutely sure is the quality of the sound.
 ><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) A: So on Thursday, we have to decide about how we write the paper for I Lec. "
 d then, it's just after the first paragraph here, we have to prioritize the quotations one two three. < "
 ><R+>(D3-M1-H3) a2: It's very important that we have to have very close communication with each other.
 Brill. < " <I-><C+><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) b1: We have to put some attention and proper segregation material to

Fourth, H4 (Hearer Dominance) is one of the sub-corpora derived from the corpus “Request”, and it contains 218 requests at Perspective Imposition Level 4. The pragmalinguistic forms of “Perspective Imposition Level 4” of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3, and one-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists were generated for the sub-corpus H4 as in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10. One-word wordlist and two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora H4 (Hearer Dominance)

N	Word (H4)	Freq.	N	Word (H4)	Freq.
6	YOU	200	18	CAN YOU	21
16	CAN	44	20	WOULD YOU	16
18	WOULD	47	32	YOU HAVE TO	11
25	JUST	34	42	I THINK	8
31	PLEASE	24	43	IF YOU COULD	8
40	COULD	19	50	NEED TO	7
53	THINK	13	65	COULD YOU	6
66	MIND	10	67	I WOULD	6
69	SHOULD	10	69	LIKE YOU TO	6
78	LIKE	9	72	WOULD YOU MIND	6
79	NEED	10	73	WOULD YOU PLEASE	6
104	MAY	6			
124	MAYBE	5			
134	WANT	5			

The one-word wordlist in Table 5.10 confirms that “you” (frequency count of 200) was used in request making for Hearer Dominance. It was the most common perspective imposition among the four and was diversely applied in different directness levels. For Direct Level (level 3), examples of words used with “you” included “should”, “like”, “need” and “want”; for Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2), “would”, “could”, “think”, “mind”, “may” and “maybe” were used with “you”. Internal modifications “just” (frequency count of 34) and “please” (frequency count of 24) were frequently used with “you”.

The 2-to-7-word cluster list in Table 5.10 confirms that Hearer Dominance was diversely used in different directness levels. For Direct Level (level 3), there were, for example, “you have to”, “need to” and “I would like you to”; for Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2), interlocutors used “can you”, “would you”, “I think”, “if you could”, “would you mind” and “would you please”.

5.1.4. Summary of Corpus Analysis Findings on Pragmalinguistic Components of Request Head Acts

As stated at the beginning of this section, the corpus “Request” was herein divided into sub-corpora of the different levels or categories of the pragmalinguistic components, namely Directness Level, Internal Modification and Perspective Imposition without association with any sociopragmatic factors. The purpose was to first identify the general patterns of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken English Context as a whole while the division of the corpus “Request” into sociopragmatic factors for analyses takes place in the next section.

Table 5.11. Summary of Corpus Analysis Findings for the Pragmalinguistic Components

Pragmalinguistic Component	Finding
Internal Modification	For with-internal modification requests, weaker modal verbs were used more frequently with the lower Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2) than the higher Direct Level (level 3).
Directness level	<p>Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Hints, level 1)</p> <p>(1) The perspective imposition “I” (frequency count of 27) was more common than “you” (frequency count of 21) and “we” (frequency count of 5).</p> <p>(2) “I have” and “the/that kind of” were used to narrow down the scope for the requestees to guess about the Hints.</p> <p>Conventionally Direct Level (level 2)</p> <p>(1) Query Preparatory such as “can I” (frequency count of 24) was more frequent than Suggestory Formula such as “I think” (frequency count of 7).</p> <p>(2) Direct questions with the stronger modal verb “can” (frequency count of 45) were more frequent.</p> <p><u>Direct Level (level 3)</u></p> <p>Want Statement such as “I would like to” (frequency count of 16) were slightly more frequent than Obligation Statement such as “you have to” (frequency count of 11).</p> <p><u>Most Direct Level (level 4)</u></p> <p>(1) Internal modifications such as “please” (frequency count of 15) and “just” (frequency count of 10) were used to make the requests less direct.</p> <p>(2) Imperative mood was realised by starting the requests straightforward with head act verbs or “let’s” (frequency count of 3).</p>



Perspective	<u>Impersonal Perspective (level 1)</u>
Imposition	It was used with “would be” (frequency count of 6) and “will be” (frequency count of 5) to state job requirements.
	<u>Speaker Dominance (level 2)</u>
	(1) “I” (frequency count of 136) was more frequent than “we” (frequency count of 7).
	(2) It was mainly applied in Query Preparatory such as “can I” (frequency count of 25) and Want Statement such as “I would like to” (frequency count of 16).
	<u>Speaker and Hearer Dominance (level 3)</u>
	(1) “We” (frequency count of 55) was used.
	(2) It was mainly applied in Obligation Statement (frequency count of 6), e.g. “we have to”.
	<u>Hearer Dominance (level 4)</u>
	(1) “You” (frequency count of 200) was the most frequently used perspective imposition.
	(2) It was diversely used in different directness levels.
	(3) Internal modifications “just” (frequency count of 34) and “please” (frequency count of 24) were used to moderate this strongest perspective imposition.

As shown in Table 5.11, Internal Modification was used more for Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) than Direct Level (level 3). They were also more used for the highest Most Direct Level and the highest Hearer Dominance to mitigate the pragmalinguistic force of requests. For Directness Level, Direct Level (level 3) and Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2) were the most common with Want Statement and Query Preparatory being the most frequent sub-levels. For Perspective Imposition, “you” was the most frequently used followed by “I”.

5.2. Sociopragmatic Factors influencing Patterns of Request Head Acts

As mentioned in the literature review and the research conceptual framework, the sociopragmatic factors in terms of Gender, Situation, First Language, Power Distance, and Expectation of Relationship Continuity of a requester relative to the requestee may affect how a request is realised in terms of Directness Level, Internal Modification and Perspective Imposition. This section investigates how the request patterns varied with contextual factors in the corpus “Request”, and this addresses Research Question 2.

5.2.1. Analysis of Gender (G)

5.2.1.1. Wordlists of Gender (G)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into two sub-corpora, G1 consisting of 202 requests made by female requesters and G2 consisting of 237 requests made by male requesters. The basic statistics of the two sub-corpora can be found in Appendix A.2.

Pragmalinguistic components of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3 and their uses in male requesters and female requesters were compared. As Baron, Rayson and Archer (2009, p.42) pointed out, “frequencies must be normalised” so that different wordlists can be compared directly. Since frequency involved repeated counts and frequency of unrelated tokens such as punctuation should be excluded, “tokens used for wordlist” in Appendix A.2 were used as the total numbers of word repetitions for calculating proportions. Chi-square Tests were conducted to verify if the observed proportions were significantly different. Since SPSS 16 (SPSS Inc., 2007) could only conduct analyses when data are input case-by-case, the programme Quantitative Skills provided by Consultancy for Research and Statistics (2009) was used instead herein for analyses because the programme allows the frequency count of a word and the total number of words of the sub-corpora to be directly input for analyses. “Two by two table analysis” was applied for Chi-square Tests, and Chi-square Tests of Proportions were conducted for all the identified pragmalinguistic components of request making namely Internal Modification, Directness Level and Perspective Imposition. The linguistic components being significantly different in male requesters and female requesters were summarised in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12. Chi-square Tests of proportions of word repetitions of the sub-corpora G1 and G2

Word	G01			G02			Pearson Chi-Sq	P-value
	Freq. (Y)	Freq. (N)	Pro Y (%)	Freq. (Y)	Freq. (N)	Pro Y (%)		
I	123	4297	2.78%	67	4627	1.43%	20.489	6.00E-06
WOULD	70	4350	1.58%	28	4666	0.60%	20.857	5.00E-06
LIKE	42	4378	0.95%	8	4686	0.17%	25.372	0
THINK	22	4398	0.50%	10	4684	0.21%	5.274	0.021650
NEED	8	4412	0.18%	27	4667	0.58%	9.247	0.002358
SHOULD	2	4418	0.05%	15	4679	0.32%	9.200	0.00242
	Total no. of word repetitions 4420			Total no. of word repetitions 4694				

(1) “G01” stands for the sub-corpus of 202 requests made by female requesters while “G02” stands for the sub-corpus of 237 requests made by male requesters.

(2) The “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpora G01 and G02 are based on the “Tokens used for wordlist” in Appendix A.2.

(3) “Freq. (Y)” refers to frequency of repetition of a particular word, while “Freq. (N)” refers to frequency of repetition of all the words other than that particular word in the sub-corpus that equals to “Total no. of word repetitions” minus “Freq. (Y)”. For example, for the word “Would” in the sub-corpus G01, since the “Freq. (Y)” of “Would” is 70 and the “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpus G01 is 4420, the resulting “Freq. (N)” of repetitions of all the words other than “Would” is 4350 ($4420 - 70 = 4350$). “Pro Y” stands for proportion of “Would” to all the words of the sub-corpus G01, and it is 1.61% ($70 / 4350 = 1.58\%$)

(4) The two-tailed significance level of “P-value” is set at 0.05.

As shown in Table 5.12, regarding Internal Modification, both categories used “would” and “should” as modal verbs for request making, but the patterns were a bit different. The female requesters more frequently used “would” (proportion of 1.58% vs. 0.60% in “males”) while the male requesters more frequently used the pragmalinguistically stronger “should” (proportion of 0.32% vs. 0.05% in “females”). Regarding Directness Level, female requestors might have more frequently used the Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) with “would” and “think” and the pragmalinguistically weaker “Want Statement” of Direct Level with “like” (proportion of 0.95% vs. 0.17% in “males”). The male requesters might have more frequently used the pragmalinguistically stronger “Obligation Statement” of Direct Level (Level 3) with “need” (proportion of 0.58% vs. 0.18% in “females”) and “should”. Regarding Perspective Imposition, the female requesters more frequently used the pragmalinguistically weaker “I” (proportion of 2.78% vs. 1.43% in “males”) than the male requesters did.

5.2.1.2. Word-cluster Lists and Concordances of Gender (G)

Single words without wider concordance context gave limited and less reliable findings, so word-cluster lists were generated for more in-depth analysis. Since it was impossible to calculate the actual total numbers of word clusters because of the unlimited combinations, the

total numbers of sentences were used for calculating approximate proportions for comparison. However, Chi-square Tests were not conducted because the total numbers of sentences were just approximations for measuring the proportions of word clusters. The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists were generated in Table 5.13 to explore the request patterns in the two sub-corpora, male requesters (G01) and female requesters (G02).

Table 5.13. Two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora G01 and G02

Word-cluster (G01)	Freq.	Proportion	Word-cluster (G02)	Freq.	Proportion
I THINK	18	8.96%	I THINK	7	2.86%
I WOULD LIKE TO	15	7.46%	I WOULD LIKE TO	2	0.82%
WOULD YOU	12	5.97%	WOULD YOU	4	1.63%
YOU SHOULD	0	0.00%	YOU SHOULD	3	1.22%
YOU NEED TO	0	0.00%	YOU NEED TO	3	1.22%
Total number of sentences 201			Total number of sentences 245		

(1) “G01” stands for the sub-corpus of 202 requests made by female requesters while “G02” stands for the sub-corpus of 237 requests made by male requesters.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word-cluster (head act clause).

(3) “Total number of sentences” in Appendix A.2 is used as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”. Proportion of a word-cluster was derived through dividing “Freq.” of a word-cluster by “Total number of sentences” (as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”). For example, for the word-cluster “I would like to” in the sub-corpus G01, its “Freq.” is 15 and “Total number of sentences” as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters” in the sub-corpus G01 is 201, so the resulting proportion of the word-cluster “I would like to” in the sub-corpus G01 is 7.46% ($15 / 201 = 7.46\%$).

The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.13 elaborate the use of head act clauses in male requesters and female requesters. While both categories of requesters used Direct Level (Level 3), the female requesters more proportionally used the weaker want statements “I would like to” (proportion of 7.46% vs. 0.82% in “males”) but did not use the stronger obligation statements “you should” or “you need to” (proportion of 0% in “females” for both). On the other hand, male requesters demonstrated just the reverse request patterns. As analysed in the statistical analyses, Gender (G) was found to be highly correlated with Power Distance (P) and females were more associated with the workplace roles of lower power position so they might have tended to use the weaker pragmalinguistic forms in making requests. Sample concordances of the previously mentioned patterns are provided in Figure 5.8 and 5.9.

Figure 5.8. Sample Concordances of “I would like to” in the sub-corpus G01 (female requesters)

-H2) a: I would like to take this challenge (RA job) (w EM). (D3-M1-H2) a: Mhm, I think <
 -H2) a2: I would like to be a part of it (students' learning project), that would be my honou
 is that, I would like to get that kind of experience er erm of doing research. (D4-M1-H4) :
 I think I would like to do it (the job, transcription) (w EM) (D2-M1-H4) a1: Do you mind t
 sically, I would like to go through both back of the house and front of the house (w EM).

Figure 5.9. Sample Concordances of “You should” and “You need to” in the sub-corpus (male requesters)

(D3-M1-H4) B2: From as soon as possible you should be in charge of the calendar. < (D4-M1-H
 ll the liaising with China. < (D3-M1-H4) B2: You should not be liaising with agents or customers
 (D3-M1-H4) B2: Now what it should be is R_, you should be doing all the liaising with China. < (D3-M1-H4)
 < (D3-M1-H4) B: So what you need to do is add up the different things and see what we are short of
 B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there before break

5.2.2. Analysis of Situation (S)

5.2.2.1. Wordlists of Situation (S)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into three sub-corpora, S02 consisting of requests made in the discourse sub-type of HKCSE (Business) “meeting”, S01 consisting of requests made in the discourse sub-type “service encounter” at hotel and airport and S03 consisting of requests made in the discourse sub-type “interview”. The basic statistics of the three sub-corpora can be found in Appendix A.2.

Pragmalinguistic components of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3 and their uses in the three situations were extracted and compared. Chi-square Tests were conducted to verify if the observed proportions were significantly different. “Two by three table analysis” was applied for Chi-square Tests, and Chi-square Tests of Proportions were conducted for all the identified pragmalinguistic components of request making namely Internal Modification, Directness Level and Perspective Imposition. The linguistic components being significantly different in the three situations, meeting, service encounter and interview were summarised in Table 5.14, and sample concordances of the respective request patterns were drawn for illustration in Figures 5.10 and 5.11

Table 5.14. Chi-square Tests of proportions of word repetitions of the sub-corpora S02 (Meeting), S01 (Service Encounter) and S03 (Interview)

Encounter and S03 (Interview)														
Word	S02 (Meeting)				S01 (Service Encounter)				S03 (Interview)				Pearson Chi-Sq	P-value
	Freq. (Y)	Freq. (N)	Pro (%)	Y	Freq. (Y)	Freq. (N)	Pro (%)	Y	Freq. (Y)	Freq. (N)	Pro (%)	Y		
WE	60	3344	1.76%	5	1534	0.32%	26	4145	0.62%	33.11	0.000000			
CAN	35	3369	1.03%	35	1504	2.27%	18	4153	0.43%	40.14	0.000000			
I	34	3370	1.00%	53	1486	3.44%	103	4068	2.47%	36.61	0.000000			
JUST	31	3373	0.91%	14	1525	0.91%	13	4158	0.31%	12.82	0.001640			
HAVE	29	3375	0.85%	29	1510	1.88%	46	4125	1.10%	10.11	0.006370			
NEED	26	3378	0.76%	6	1533	0.39%	3	4168	0.07%	23.46	0.000010			
COULD	21	3383	0.62%	2	1537	0.13%	1	4170	0.02%	26.35	0.000000			
SHOULD	15	3389	0.44%	0	1539	0.00%	2	4169	0.05%	18.99	0.000075			
Like	10	3394	0.29%	6	1533	0.39%	34	4137	0.82%	10.19	0.006120			
WOULD	8	3396	0.24%	20	1519	1.30%	6	4165	0.14%	43.19	0.000000			
PLEASE	6	3398	0.18%	29	1510	1.88%	2	4169	0.05%	100.9	0.000000			
MAY	3	3401	0.09%	16	1523	1.04%	3	4168	0.07%	49.020	0.000000			
Total no. of word repetitions			3404	Total no. of word repetitions			1539	Total no. of word repetitions			4171			

- (1) “S02” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests made in meetings, “S01” stands for the sub-corpus of 105 requests made in service encounters at hotel and airport and “S03” stands for the sub-corpus of 152 requests made in placement interviews and job interviews.
- (2) The “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpora S02, S01 and S03 are based on the “Tokens used for wordlist” in Appendix A.2.
- (3) “Freq. (Y)” refers to frequency of repetition of a particular word, while “Freq. (N)” refers to frequency of repetition of all the words other than that particular word in the sub-corpus that equals to “Total no. of word repetitions” minus “Freq. (Y)”. For example, for the word “We” in the sub-corpus S02, since the “Freq. (Y)” of “We” is 60 and the “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpus S02 is 3404, the resulting “Freq. (N)” of repetitions of all the words other than “We” is 3344 (3404 - 60 = 3344). “Pro Y” stands for proportion of “We” to all the words of the sub-corpus S02, and it is 1.76% (60 / 3404 = 1.76%)
- (4) The two-tailed significance level of “P-value” is set at 0.05.

Figure 5.10. Sample Concordances of “just” in the sub-corpus S02 (Meeting)

sign this for me. (D4-M2-H4) a1: Turn it off, just turn it off. < (D2-M1-H4) a1: (laugh) Next time try doing it (recording) there. (D2-M2-H4) B2: So your job is to deal with China and just keep the office running (w EM). (D3-M1-H4) B2: From as soon as possible you (w EM)? < (D2-M2-H3) B3: We might try and just see the information that we talked about on the airport services case. (D4-M2-H4) B1: Just look into that (fax problem) (w EM). (D3-M2-H4) B1: H_, you just need to follow up on that and stay with it for a next couple of days (w EM). < (D3-M2-H4) B1: H_, you just need to follow up on that and stay with it for a next couple of days (w EM). < (D3-M2-H4) B1: H_, you just need to follow up on that and stay with it for a next couple of days (w EM).

Figure 5.11. Sample Concordances of “I would like to” in the sub-corpus S01 (Service Encounter)

B: Can you request (additional baggage limit) for me, please (w EM)? (D2-M2-H4) B: Could you do that (send a message) (w EM)? (D2-M1-H2) B: I want the smoking place. < (D4-M2-H1) b: Please kindly put your home address here. < (D3-M1-H2) b: Please kindly put your home address here. < (D2-M2-H2) b: May I have your signature once again please? < (D2-M1-H4) B: And you'll make the other one (and stamp first? (D2-M2-H2) b: Can I have your credit card, please? < (D3-M1-H2) b: Now I need your credit card again for the stamp. Sir. (D2-M2-H2) b: Can I have your visa card again please? (D2-M1-H2) b1: Can I have your ID card? (D4-M2-H4) B: Can I have your ID card?

As shown in Table 5.14, regarding Internal Modification, “just” was more frequently used in meetings (proportion of 0.91% vs. 0.31% in “Interview”) and “please” was more frequently used in service encounters (proportion of 1.81% vs. 0.05% in “Interview”). As shown in the Figure 5.10, “just” was commonly used among colleagues in internal meetings. The previous chapter found that Situation (S) was highly and most correlated with Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). Comparing to the situations “service encounter” and “interview”, the interlocutors in “meeting” had the highest relationship expectation with each other, in other words, closest in terms of social relationship. Therefore, such close relations among colleagues and the emphasis in efficiency in business setting might have allowed the requesters to use conveniently “just” to make their request straight to the point on the colleagues and at the same time use “just” as softener for the request (just clearly requesting a certain thing but nothing else). Regarding “please”, it can be seen from Figure 5.11 that requestors frequently used it in the service encounters at both hotel and airport. This aligned with the claim of House (1989) that “please-requests” frequently occur in “standard situations” where the requesters clearly possess the right to request and the requestees clearly

have the obligation to fulfil request. Service encounter is one such typical standard situation. For example, the front desk officer has the right to ask for signature from the customer in check-out and the customer has the obligation to give his/her signature to finish the procedure so the “please-request” becomes a formulaic expression to put forward legitimate requests being allowed under the service encounter situation. For modal/auxiliary verbs, stronger modals such as “need” (proportion of 0.76% vs. 0.07% in “Interview”) and “should” (proportion of 0.44% vs. 0.00% in “service encounter”) were more frequently used in meetings probably because of high collegial expectation of relationship continuity. Weaker modals such as “would” (proportion of 1.30% vs. 0.14% in “Interview”) and “may” (proportion of 1.04% vs. 0.07% in “Interview”) were more frequently used in service encounters probably because of the pragmaticalisation (formation of formulaic expressions for pragmalinguistic politeness) in such standard situation and also of the remoteness between the interlocutors. Regarding Directness Level, on one hand, frequent use of “need” and “should” may indicate that the requests made in meetings might tend to be more at Direct Level (Level 3) and especially on the sub-level “Obligation Statement”. On the other hand, frequent use of “would” and “may” may indicate that requests made in service encounters might tend to be more at Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) and especially at the sub-level “Query Preparatory”. Regarding Perspective Imposition, “I” was most frequently used in the requests made in service encounters (proportion of 3.44% vs. 1.00% in “Meeting”) probably because of formulaic expressions such as requests with “May I” made by the ones who served.

5.2.2.2. Word-cluster Lists and Concordances of Situation (S)

Single words without wider concordance context gave limited and less reliable findings, so word-cluster lists were generated for more in-depth analysis. Since it was impossible to calculate the actual total numbers of word clusters because of the unlimited combinations, the total numbers of sentences were used for calculating approximate proportions for comparison. However, Chi-square Tests were not conducted because the total numbers of sentences were just approximations for measuring the proportions of clusters. The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists were generated in Table 5.15 to explore the request patterns in the three sub-corpora, Meeting (S02), Service Encounter (S01) and Interview (S03), and sample concordances of the respective request patterns were drawn for illustration in Figures 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14.

Table 5.15. Two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora S02, S01 and S03

Word-cluster	S(Meeting)		S(Service Encounter)		S(Interview)	
	Freq.	Proportion	Freq.	Proportion	Freq.	Proportion
Can you	13	6.99%	7	6.42%	1	0.66%
I would like to	0	0.00%	2	1.83%	15	9.93%
You have to	2	1.08%	0	0.00%	11	7.28%
You need to	3	1.61%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Could you	5	2.69%	1	0.92%	0	0.00%
You should	3	1.61%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Would you	1	0.54%	11	10.09%	4	2.65%
May I	0	0.00%	15	13.76%	0	0.00%
Total no. of sentences	186		109		151	

(1) “S02” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests made in meetings, “S01” stands for the sub-corpus of 105 requests made in service encounters at hotel and airport and “S03” stands for the sub-corpus of 152 requests made in placement interviews and job interviews.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word-cluster (head act clause).

(3) “Total number of sentences” in Appendix A.2 is used as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”. Proportion of a word-cluster was derived through dividing “Freq.” of a word-cluster by “Total number of sentences” (as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”). For example, for the word-cluster “Can you” in the sub-corpus S02 (Meeting), its “Freq.” is 13 and “Total number of sentences” as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters” in the sub-corpus S02 is 186, so the resulting proportion of the word-cluster “Can you” in the sub-corpus S02 is 6.99% ($13 / 186 = 6.99\%$).

Figure 5.12. Sample Concordances of “can you”, “could you” and “you should” in the sub-corpus S02 (Meeting)

< (D2-M1-H4) a1: But before doing that, **can you** check this list against this file? (D4-M1-H4) a1: Well, buy sense of the teacher talk. (D2-M1-H4) A: **Can you** give me the data? (D3-M1-H3) A: So on Thursday, we have the numbers on each? < (D2-M2-H4) B5: **Can you** have a little look at the Hong Kong Association (w/EM)? < :hat just to remind them. (D2-M1-H4) b4: **Can you** give a schedule toward the maintenance? (D2-M1-H3) b4: through. < (D2-M1-H4) b1: Okay so, D_, **can you** talk to L_? < (D4-M1-H4) b1: Put a small banner at the an

4) b1: Ah H_ A_, **could you** please come up and er we give you a present but sorry okay okay? (D

). (D2-M2-H4) A: **Could you** get (the date)? (D3-M1-H3) A: In fact, we must get to finish filming bef

: (D2-M2-H4) B1: **Could you** look into that then, P_ (w/EM)? (D4-M1-H4) B1: H_, look into that (filr

. (D2-M2-H4) b2: **Could you** talk to Mister P_? (D2-M1-H3) b2: Can we come over the rate includin

?-M2-H4) B5: H_, **could you** just double check whether it's all downstairs? (D2-M1-H3) B1: Can we

EM). (D3-M1-H4) B2: From as soon as possible **you should** be in charge of the calendar. < (D4-M1-H4) B2:

ing all the liaising with China. < (D3-M1-H4) B2: **You should** not be liaising with agents or customers (w/EM

e. (D3-M1-H4) B2: Now what it should be is R_, **you should** be doing all the liaising with China. < (D3-M1-H

Figure 5.13. Sample Concordances of “would you” and “may I” in the sub-corpus S01 (Service Encounter)

< (D2-M2-H4) a: Mister T_, **would you** mind coming in or opening your baggage for security check please? <

airport tax? (D2-M2-H4) a: **Would you** mind putting it on the scale? < (D2-M2-H2) a: So can I have two hund

side? < (D2-M2-H4) a: So **would you** please sign your name here (on tax refund)? < (D4-M2-H4) a: So pleas

: on my bill? (D2-M2-H4) a: **Would you** mind filling in some comments to our hotel? (D2-M2-H4) A: Would you

: check out. < (D2-M2-H4) b: **Would you** mind coming over this way, Sir? < (D2-M1-H4) B: Can you give me an

(D2-M2-H2) b: **May I** have your credit card please? (D2-M2-H2) b: May I have one hund

(D2-M2-H2) b: **May I** have your signature once again please? < (D2-M1-H4) B: And you

(D2-M2-H2) b: **May I** have your passport? < (D1-M2-H1) b: Excuse me, the airport tax

(D2-M2-H4) b: **May I** have one hundred dollar for the airport tax please? (D2-M2-H2) b:

(D2-M2-H2) b: **May I** have one hundred dollar for the airport tax? < (D2-M1-H4) B: Is it

Figure 5.14. Sample Concordances of “I would like to” and “you have to” in the sub-corpus S04 (Interview)

I would like to get that kind of experience er erm of doing research. (D4-M1-H4) a1: Have a seat, yes. (D3-M2-H4) a1
 I would like to be, and then er concierge will be the er interest area as well and also um maybe to er go and see the
 I would like to go through both the back of the house and the front of the house (w EM). (D3-M2-H2) a: If I have
 I would like to learn more practical skills other from books so that I can consolidate my knowledge (for front office
 I would like to go to the human resources department (w EM) (D3-M2-H2) a: If there are chance, I would like to go
 or initiative yeah all aspects you have to perform better than them. < (D3-M1-H4) b: I want you to bring the element to influence them instea
 work full time at the the poly, you have to get permission from the head of department to have (other) additional work (outside part-time work
 ounder). < (D3-M1-H4) b: So you have to be er cooperative, helpful and do your best to help them (w EM). (D3-M2-H4) b: Therefore, I would
 nt and important part of what you have to do would be to transcribe spoken data. (D3-M1-H4) B: An important part of the job, if you were offe
 s, that not the only thing that you have to do, but a significant and important part of what you have to do would be to transcribe spoken data.

The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.15 show the patterns of head act clauses in making requests in S02 (Meeting), S01 (Service Encounter) and S03 (Interview). First, requests made in meetings frequently used the straightforward modals in “can you” (proportion of 6.99% vs. 0.66% in “Interview”), “could you” (proportion of 2.69% vs. 0.00% in “Interview”) and “you should” (proportion of 1.61% vs. 0.00% both “Service Encounter” and “Interview”). Sample concordances of such request patterns were provided for illustration in Figure 5.12. As explained before, the high collegial expectation of relationship continuity and the emphasis in efficiency in business meetings might have led the requesters to use straightforward modals to make their requests straight to the point. Second, requests made in service encounters frequently used the “would you” (proportion of 10.09% vs. 0.54% in “Meeting”) and “may I” (proportion of 13.76% vs. 0.00% in both “Meeting” and “Interview”) at Conventionally Direct Level (Level 2). Sample concordances of such request patterns were provided for illustration in Figure 5.13. As explained before, such requests in weaker modals and lower directness level might have become formulaic expressions for finishing routines politely in such standard situation. Third, requests made in interviews frequently used the “I would like to” (proportion of 9.93% vs. 0.00% in “Meeting”) and “you have to” (proportion of 7.28% vs. 0.00% in “Service Encounter”). Sample concordances of such request patterns were provided for illustration in Figure 5.14. The weaker “I-would-like-to requests” were particularly used by interviewees for requesting placement or job areas while the stronger “you-have-to-requests” were particularly used by the interviewers for requesting duties or standards in interviewees.

5.2.3. Analysis of First Language (C)

5.2.3.1. Wordlists of First Language (C)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into two sub-corpora, C+ consisting of 257 requests made by Cantonese Speakers of English and C- consisting of 182 requests made by Non-Cantonese Speakers of English. The basic statistics of the two sub-corpora can be found in Appendix A.2. The one-word wordlists were first generated in Table 5.16 to explore the basic request patterns in the two sub-corpora.

Table 5.16. One-word wordlists of the sub-corpora C+ and C-

N	Word (C+)	Freq.	N	Word (C-)	Freq.
2	I	143	2	I	46
9	YOU	117	10	YOU	96
13	WOULD	72	14	WE	54
19	CAN	55	21	JUST	34
22	LIKE	41	22	CAN	33
26	WE	40	26	WOULD	30
30	PLEASE	34	29	IF	26
31	IF	31	31	NEED	24
32	WILL	29	35	COULD	19
37	JUST	24	46	WILL	13
41	MAY	22	47	WORK	13
43	THINK	22	51	SHOULD	11
45	WANT	21	62	THINK	10
67	MAYBE	12	64	WANT	10
78	NEED	11	69	LIKE	8
85	MIND	10	174	PLEASE	3
147	SHOULD	6			
155	COULD	5			
157	EXPECT	5			
162	LET'S	5			
174	SIR	5			

(1) “C+” stands for the sub-corpus of 257 requests made by Cantonese Speakers of English, while “C-” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests made by Non-Cantonese Speakers of English.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word, while “N” is the rank of the word based on such frequency.



Pragmalinguistic components of request making were identified based on the conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3 and their uses in Cantonese Speakers of English and Non-Cantonese Speakers of English were compared. As shown in Table 5.16 in relation to Internal Modification, Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used “would” (frequency counts of 72 vs. 30) and “may” (frequency counts of 22 vs. 0), and Non-Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used “could” (frequency counts of 19 vs. 5). Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used “please” (frequency counts of 34 vs. 3), and Non-Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used just” (frequency counts of 34 vs. 24). Regarding Directness Level, both categories of First Language (C) used Direct Level (level 3), but there were slight differences within levels. For Direct Level, “like” (frequency counts of 41 vs. 8) indicates that Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used Want Statement, and “need” (frequency counts of 24 vs. 11) indicates that Non-Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used stronger Obligation Statement. Regarding Perspective Imposition, Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used “I” (frequency counts of 143 vs. 46) in request making, and the Non-Cantonese Speakers of English frequently used “we” (frequency counts of 54 vs. 40). The results of Chi-square Tests of proportions of words (frequency of a certain word to the total number of words in a certain sub-corpora) in the two sub-corpora C+ and C- are listed in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17. Chi-square Tests of proportions of word repetitions of the sub-corpora C+ and C-

Word	C+ Freq. (Yes)	Freq. (No)	C- Freq. (Yes)	Freq. (No)	Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
Would	72	5284	30	3728	5.949	0.014724
May	22	5334	0	3758	24.545	0.000006
Could	5	5351	19	3739	14.29	0.000157
Please	34	5322	3	3755	16.823	0.000041
Just	24	5332	34	3724	7.283	0.006962
Like	41	5315	8	3750	12.612	0.000383
Need	11	5345	24	3734	10.837	0.000995
I	143	5213	46	3712	22.734	0.000002
We	40	5316	54	3704	10.304	0.001327
	Total no. of word repetitions	5356	Total no. of word repetitions	3758		

(1) “C+” stands for the sub-corpus of 257 requests made by Cantonese Speakers of English, while “C-” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests made by Non-Cantonese Speakers of English.

(2) The “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpora C+ and C- are based on the “Tokens used for wordlist” in Appendix A.2.

(3) “Freq. (Yes)” refers to frequency of repetition of a particular word, while “Freq. (No)” refers to frequency of repetition of all the words other than that particular word in the sub-corpus which equals to “Total no. of word repetitions” minus “Freq. (Yes)”. For example, for the word “Would” in the sub-corpus C+, since the “Freq. (Yes)” of “Would” is 72 and the “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpus C+ is 5356, the resulting “Freq. (No)” of repetitions of all the words other than “Would” is 5284 (5356 - 72 = 5284).



- (4) Proportion of a word is the ratio of the frequency of that word to the total no. of word repetitions of that sub-corpus in which the word appears.
- (5) The significance level of “P-value” is set at two-tailed 0.05.

Regarding Internal Modification, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares in Table 5.17 confirm that the proportions of “would”, “may”, “please”, “could” and “just” were significantly different in the two categories Cantonese Speakers of English and Non-Cantonese Speakers of English, with the Cantonese Speakers of English more proportionally using “would”, “may” and “please” but less proportionally using “could” and “just”. Regarding Directness Level, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares confirm that the proportions of “like” and “need” were significantly different in the two categories, with the Cantonese Speakers of English more proportionally using “like” and less proportionally using “need”. Regarding Perspective Imposition, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares confirm that the proportions of “I” and “we” were significantly different in the two categories, with the Cantonese Speakers of English more proportionally using “I” but less frequently using “we”.



5.2.3.2. Word-cluster Lists and Concordances of First Language (C)

Single words without wider concordance context gave limited and less reliable findings, so word-cluster lists were generated for more in-depth analysis. Since it was impossible to calculate the actual total numbers of word clusters because of the unlimited combinations, the total numbers of sentences were used for calculating proportions for comparison. However, Chi-square Tests were not conducted because the total numbers of sentences were just approximations for measuring the proportions of clusters. The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists were generated in Table 5.18 to explore the request patterns in the two sub-corpora, Cantonese Speakers of English (C+) and Non-Cantonese Speakers of English (C-).

Table 5.18. Two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora C+ and C-

Word cluster (C+)	Freq.	Proportion	Word cluster (C-)	Freq.	Proportion
I WOULD LIKE TO	15	5.91%	I WOULD LIKE TO	1	0.52%
WE WOULD LIKE TO	1	0.39%	WE WOULD LIKE TO	1	0.52%
WANT TO	18	7.09%	WANT TO	5	2.60%
YOU HAVE TO	7	2.76%	YOU HAVE TO	6	3.13%
WE HAVE TO	2	0.79%	WE HAVE TO	3	1.56%
YOU NEED TO	0	0.00%	YOU NEED TO	2	1.04%
WE NEED TO	0	0.00%	WE NEED TO	5	2.60%
YOU SHOULD	0	0.00%	YOU SHOULD	3	1.56%
WE SHOULD	1	0.39%	WE SHOULD	2	1.04%
I THINK	18	7.09%	I THINK	7	3.65%
MAY I	15	5.91%	MAY I	0	0.00%
WOULD YOU	13	5.12%	WOULD YOU	1	0.52%
CAN I	12	4.72%	CAN I	13	6.77%
CAN YOU	11	4.33%	CAN YOU	10	5.21%
IF YOU COULD	0	0.00%	IF YOU COULD	8	4.17%
Total number of sentences	254		Total number of sentences	192	

(1) “C+” stands for the sub-corpus of 257 requests made by Cantonese Speakers of English, while “C-” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests made by Non-Cantonese Speakers of English.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word-cluster (phrase).

(3) “Total number of sentences” in Appendix A.2 is used as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”. Proportion of a word-cluster was derived through dividing “Freq.” of a word-cluster by “Total number of sentences” (as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”). For example, for the word-cluster “I would like to” in the sub-corpus C+, its “Freq.” is 15 and “Total number of sentences” as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters” in the sub-corpus C+ is 254, so the resulting proportion of the word-cluster “I would like to” in the sub-corpus C+ is 5.91% ($15 / 254 = 5.91\%$).

The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.18 elaborate the findings of wordlists. Proportionally, Cantonese Speakers of English more frequently used weaker Want Statement such as “want to” (proportions of 7.09% vs. 2.60%) and “would like to” (proportions of 6.30% vs. 1.04%) but less used stronger Obligation Statement such as “have to” (proportions of 3.55% vs. 4.69%), “need to” (proportions of 0% vs. 3.64%) or “should” (proportions of 0.39% vs. 2.60%) than Non-Cantonese Speakers of English at Direct Level (Level 3) did.



Sample concordances of the previously mentioned patterns are provided for illustration in Figures 5.15 to 5.18.

Figure 5.15. Concordances of “want to” in the sub-corpus C+

>(D3-M2-H3) b: We just want to confirm if your department will extend her contract or not.
 >(D3-M2-H3) b: We just want to confirm your department and then issue the letter. <
 >(D3-M2-H3) b: We just (want to) confirm her last day and nothing else.
 >(D3-M2-H2) a: I would want to get this experience (housekeeping) (w EM)
 think that um er I really want to have a chance to work in these department (w EM).
 >(D3-M1-H2) a1: I also want to have the opportunity to work in the food and beverage

Figure 5.16. Concordances of “would like to” in the sub-corpus C+

(D3-M2-H2) a3: I think I would like to do it (the job, transcription) (w EM)
 ut what I mean is that, I would like to get that kind of experience er erm of doing research.
 a: If there are chance, I would like to go to front and back department.
 the back of the house, I would like to go to the human resources department (w EM)
 ont office of the house, I would like to go through the room department.
 Basically, if possible, I would like to go through both the back of the house and the front of the

Figure 5.17. Concordances of “have to” in the sub-corpus C-

(D3-M1-H3) A: But what we have to do absolutely sure is the quality of the sound.
 d important part of what you have to do would be to transcribe spoken data. "
 t not the only thing that you have to do, but a significant and important part of what you have to do
 ull time at the the poly, you have to get permission from the head of department to have (other)
 what happen is, you would have to go through one more interview with our resident manager (w
 and order acknowledgments have to go out to the customers, all those things which J_ and R_ have

Figure 5.18. Concordances of “need to” in the sub-corpus C-

<I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B1: We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide (w EM). <
 <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B: We need to discuss whether we want to use it (recording) or not.
 ><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H4) B: So what you need to do is add up the different things and see what we are short of
 <P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B1: H_, you just need to follow up on that and stay with it for a next couple of days (w
 ><C-><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B2: So we need to get on to them (vegetarian food) (w EM). <
 P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B2: Therefore, we need to have the road diameter, overall length, overall length hardness

As shown in Table 5.18, while both categories used Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2), Cantonese Speakers of English more proportionally used the weaker options such as “I think” (proportions of 7.09% vs. 3.65%), “may I” (proportions of 5.91% vs. 0%) and “would you” (proportions of 5.12% vs. 0.52%) but less proportionally used stronger options such as “can I” (proportions of 4.72% vs. 6.77%) and “can you” (proportions of 4.33% vs. 5.21%) than Non-Cantonese Speakers of English did. Non-Cantonese Speakers of English particularly used “if you could” (proportions of 4.17% vs. 0%) as Query Preparatory. Sample concordances of the previously mentioned patterns are provided for illustration in Figures

5.19 to 5.22. Concordances like “May I have a look of the ticket” illustrate that requestors such as Passenger Service Agents serving passengers at airport who have no power over requestee often used the “May I” requests at the Query Preparatory of Conventionally Indirect Level as clearly indicated by the pragmalinguistic component (Interrogative mood with the auxiliary “May”) under the Directness Level Scale of the present study in Chapter 3.3.

Figure 5.19. Concordances of “May I” in the sub-corpus C+

<I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have your signature once again please? <
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have one hundred dollar for the airport tax? <
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have your passport, one hundred dollar for the airport tax
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) b: May I have one hundred dollar for the airport tax please?
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: May I have your signature by the cross please? <
 I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a1: May I have a look of the ticket? <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a1:

Figure 5.20. Concordances of “would you” in the sub-corpus C+

<I-><C+><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) a: Would you mind filling in some comments to our hotel?
 e. <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) b: Would you mind coming over this way, Sir? <
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: Would you mind putting it on the scale? <
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: So would you please collect your boarding card at B counter now?
 -><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a1: So would you please check in at least one hour before departure at counter
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: So would you please sign your name here (on tax refund)? <

Figure 5.21. Concordances of “Can you” in the sub-corpus C-

<I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B1: Can you follow up with them (TVs in hotel) today (w EM)? <
 <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Can you give me another one (key) in order to check the room?
). <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) A: Can you give me the data? <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B: If you
 . " <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Can you give me the telephone number?. <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H1)
). <I-><C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B5: Can you have a little look at the Hong Kong Association (w\EM)? <
 <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M2-H4) B: Can you just call them over there and tell them (to cancel the

Figure 5.22. Concordances of “If you” in the sub-corpus C-

<I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B1: If you could ring N_ this morning and just remind her about that (not
 kilos (baggage), would be very good if you could ask for that. " at. "
 > <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B: If you could do that (work out the breakdown).
 " <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) A: If you could check now, I do want at least twelve hours of teaching time. <
 : " <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M2-H4) B: If you can just check that name, late check in. "
 " <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: If you can check also how long the flight will take and I think there's a

5.2.4. Analysis of Power Distance (P)

5.2.4.1. Wordlists of Power Distance (P)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus Request was divided into two sub-corpora, P- consisting of 154 requests made by requesters without power over the requestees and P+ consisting of 285 requests made by requesters with power over the requestees. The basic statistics of the two sub-corpora can be found in Appendix A.2. The one-word wordlists were first generated in Table 5.19 to explore the basic request patterns in the two sub-corpora.

Table 5.19. One-word wordlists of the sub-corpora P- and P+

N	Word (P-)	Freq.	N	Word (P+)	Freq.
2	I	102	8	YOU	175
13	WOULD	43	13	WE	75
15	YOU	38	13	I	75
18	CAN	32	21	CAN	56
20	PLEASE	29	22	WOULD	59
21	LIKE	28	28	JUST	40
27	MAY	20	29	IF	39
28	WE	19	40	WILL	34
30	IF	18	44	NEED	26
31	JUST	18	46	LIKE	21
35	THINK	16	48	COULD	20
38	WANT	15	60	THINK	16
56	NEED	9	61	WANT	16
67	MAYBE	8	69	SHOULD	14
71	MIND	7	107	PLEASE	8
75	WILL	8	145	MAYBE	6
103	SIR	5	169	I'D	5
113	COULD	4	172	LET'S	5
145	I'D	3			
160	SHOULD	3			

(1) “P-” stands for the sub-corpus of 154 requests made by requesters without power over the requestees, while “P+” stands for the sub-corpus of 285 requests made by requesters with power over the requestees.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word, while “N” is the rank of the word based on such frequency.

Pragmalinguistic components of request making were identified based on the conceptual research framework of Chapter 3.3 and their uses in requesters without power over requestees and requesters with power over requestees were compared. As shown in Table 5.19 in relation to Internal Modification, both categories used “would” and “can” as modal verbs for request making, but the patterns were a bit different. The category of Without-power-over more frequently used “would” and the Polite Modal verb “may” than the category of With-power-over. In addition, the category of Without-power-over used “please” and “sir”



more frequently than the category of With-power-over. Regarding Directness Level, both categories similarly used Direct Level (level 3) and Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2). “Like”, “want” and “need” corresponded to Directness Level 3, while “if”, “think”, “maybe” and “mind” corresponded to Directness Level 2. Regarding Perspective Imposition, the category of Without-power-over frequently used “I” (frequency counts of 102 vs. 75), and the category of With-power-over frequently used “you” (frequency counts of 175 vs. 38) and “we” (frequency counts of 75 vs. 19). Chi-square Tests of Proportions (frequency of a certain word to the total number of words in a certain sub-corpora) were conducted to verify the differences in frequency counts, and the results are listed in Table 5.20.

Table 5.20. Chi-square Tests of proportions of word repetitions of the sub-corpora P- and P+

Word	P-		P+		Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
	Freq. (Yes)	Freq. (No)	Freq. (Yes)	Freq. (No)		
Would	43	2985	59	6027	3.711	0.054070
May	20	3008	2	6084	33.078	0.000000
Please	29	2999	8	6078	34.143	0.000000
Sir	5	3023	0	6086	13.394	0.000252
I	102	2926	75	6011	48.454	0.000000
You	38	2990	175	5911	23.264	0.000001
We	19	3009	75	6011	7.247	0.007101
	Total no. of word repetitions	3028	Total no. of word repetitions	6086		

(1) “P-” stands for the sub-corpus of 154 requests made by requesters without power over the requestees, while “P+” stands for the sub-corpus of 285 requests made by requesters with power over the requestees.

(2) The “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpora P+ and P- are based on the “Tokens used for wordlist” in Appendix A.2.

(3) “Freq. (Yes)” refers to frequency of repetition of a particular word, while “Freq. (No)” refers to frequency of repetition of all the words other than that particular word in the sub-corpus which equals to “Total no. of word repetitions” minus “Freq. (Yes)”. For example, for the word “Would” in the sub-corpus P-, since the “Freq. (Yes)” of “Would” is 43 and the “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpus P- is 3028, the resulting “Freq. (No)” of repetitions of all the words other than “Would” is 2985 (3028 - 43 = 2985).

(4) Proportion of a word is the ratio of the frequency of that word to the total no. of word repetitions of that sub-corpus in which the word appears.

(5) The significance level of “P-value” is set at two-tailed confidence 0.05.

Regarding Internal Modification, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares in Table 5.20 confirm that the proportions of “may”, “please” and “sir” were significantly different in the two categories Without-power-over and With-power-over, with the category of Without-power-over more proportionally using “may”, “please” and “sir” than the category of With-power-over. Regarding Perspective Imposition, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares in Table 5.18 below confirm that the proportions of “I”, “you” and “we” were significantly different in the two categories, with the category of Without-power-over more proportionally using “I” but less proportionally using “you” and “we” than the category of With-power-over.

5.2.4.2. Word-cluster Lists and Concordances of Power Distance (P)

Single words without wider concordance context gave limited and less reliable findings, so word-cluster lists were generated for more in-depth analysis. Since it was impossible to calculate the actual total numbers of word clusters because of the unlimited combinations, the total numbers of sentences were used for calculating proportions for comparison. However, Chi-square Tests were not conducted because the total numbers of sentences were just approximations for measuring the proportions of word clusters. The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists were generated in Table 5.21 to explore the request structures in the two sub-corpora, Without-power-over (P-) and With-power-over (P+).

Table 5.21. Two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora P- and P+

Word-cluster (P-)	Freq.	Proportion	Word-cluster (P+)	Freq.	Proportion
I WOULD LIKE TO	15	9.80%	I WOULD LIKE TO	1	0.34%
WE WOULD LIKE TO	0	0.00%	WE WOULD LIKE TO	2	0.68%
WANT TO	14	9.15%	WANT TO	9	3.07%
YOU HAVE TO	1	0.65%	YOU HAVE TO	12	4.10%
WE HAVE TO	0	0.00%	WE HAVE TO	6	2.05%
YOU NEED TO	0	0.00%	YOU NEED TO	2	0.68%
WE NEED TO	1	0.65%	WE NEED TO	4	1.37%
YOU SHOULD	0	0.00%	YOU SHOULD	3	1.02%
WE SHOULD	1	0.65%	WE SHOULD	5	1.71%
MAY I	15	9.80%	MAY I	0	0.00%
WOULD YOU	10	6.54%	WOULD YOU	5	1.71%
CAN YOU	3	1.96%	CAN YOU	18	6.14%
Total number of sentences 153			Total number of sentences 293		

(1) “P-” stands for the sub-corpus of 154 requests made by requesters without power over the requestees, while “P+” stands for the sub-corpus of 285 requests made by requesters with power over the requestees.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word-cluster (phrase).

(3) “Total number of sentences” in Appendix A.2 is used as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”. Proportion of a word-cluster was derived through dividing “Freq.” of a word-cluster by “Total number of sentences” (as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”). For example, for the word-cluster “I would like to” in the sub-corpus P-, its “Freq.” is 15 and “Total number of sentences” as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters” in the sub-corpus P- is 153, so the resulting proportion of the word-cluster “I would like to” in the sub-corpus P- is 9.80% ($15 / 153 = 9.80\%$).

The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.21 elaborate the findings of wordlists. While both categories used Direct Level (Level 3), the category of Without-power-over more proportionally used weaker Want Statement such as “would like to” (proportions of 9.80% vs. 1.02%) followed by “want to” (proportions of 9.15% vs. 3.07%) but less proportionally used stronger Obligation Statement such as “have to” (proportions of 0.65% vs. 6.15%), “need to” (proportions of 0.65% vs. 2.05%), “you should” (proportions of 0% vs. 1.02%) and “we should” (proportions of 0.65% vs. 1.71%) than the category of With-power-over did. Sample



concordances of the previously mentioned patterns are provided for illustration in Figures 5.23 and 5.24.

Figure 5.23. Concordances of “would like to” in the sub-corpus P-

<I-><C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a: If I have chance, I would like to have a try (in food and beverage). "

<P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a3: But what I mean is that, I would like to get that kind of experience or term of doing research. "

ce. <I-><C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a: So I think I would like to try front office for one month and the rest of it three months

<C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a: Basically, if possible, I would like to go through both the back of the house and the front of the EM). "

<I-><C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a3: I think I would like to do it (the job, transcription) (w EM) "

a1: Okay, actually this is a research, they would like to see the English communication between the health club or

Figure 5.24. Concordances of “have to” in the sub-corpus P+

to do, but a significant and important part of what you have to do would be to transcribe spoken data. "

n all all the applicants, that not the only thing that you have to do, but a significant and important part of what you have to do

" <I-><C+><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) b1: You practically have to sort of try to be very careful not to bomb into the machine.

e discount. " <I-><C+><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) b1: We have to put some attention and proper segregation material to segregate

we will treat every trainee like our full time staff so they have to follow the the procedure and the rule as well. "

: And on the other hand, I have to remind you that you have to understand not every trainer, they are not regular lecturer in

For Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2), the 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.21 show that the category of Without-power-over more proportionally used “May I” (proportions of 9.80% vs. 0%) and “Would you” (proportions of 6.54% vs. 1.71%) but less proportionally used “Can you” (proportions of 1.96% vs. 6.14%). Sample concordances of the previously mentioned patterns are provided in Figures 5.25 and 5.26.

Figure 5.25. Concordances of “May I” in the sub-corpus P-

" <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a1: May I have a look of the ticket? <I-><C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: So I

se. <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: May I have your signature by the cross please? <

<I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: May I have your tickets, passport and the one hundred for the airport

" <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: May I have your passport, Sir? " <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: Can

e? <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have one hundred for the airport tax please?

? " <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have your credit card please? <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b:

Figure 5.26. Concordances of “Can you” in the sub-corpus P+

. <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) A: Can you give me the data? <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B: If you

<I-><C+><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) a1: Can you transcribe it now? <I-><C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B: We'll

<I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M2-H4) B: Can you just call them over there and tell them (to cancel the

<I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Can you give me another one (key) in order to check the room?

e. <I-><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Can you check (marco polo membership)? <

><C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Now can you confirm that a request was put in for an additional ten kilos of

5.2.5. Analysis of Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

5.2.5.1. Wordlists of Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

The 439 request head acts identified were extracted from the corpus HKCSE (Business) to form the specific corpus on request making “Request”. Herein the corpus “Request” was divided into two sub-corpora, R- consisting of 109 requests made by requesters having no expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees and R+ consisting of 330 requests made by requesters having expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees. The basic statistics of the two sub-corpora can be found in Appendix A.2. The one-word wordlists in Table 5.21 were first generated to explore the basic request patterns in the two sub-corpora.

Table 5.21. One-word wordlists of the sub-corpora R- and R+

N	Word (R-)	Freq.	N	Word (R+)	Freq.
2	I	53	8	YOU	176
9	YOU	37	12	I	116
10	CAN	36	15	WE	89
12	PLEASE	30	18	WOULD	85
19	JUST	16	24	CAN	52
20	MAY	16	25	IF	52
23	WOULD	17	29	JUST	42
46	LIKE	7	30	LIKE	42
50	COULD	6	38	THINK	31
56	SIR	6	40	WILL	39
57	WANT	6	43	NEED	29
61	IF	5	50	WANT	25
62	MIND	5	60	COULD	18
63	NEED	6	65	SHOULD	17
68	WE	5	78	MAYBE	14
			153	PLEASE	7
			168	I'D	6
			169	I'M	6
			170	INTERESTED	6
			173	LET'S	6
			174	MAY	6
			175	MIND	6
			196	EXPECT	5

(1) “R-” stands for the sub-corpus of 109 requests made by requesters having no expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees, while “R+” stands for the sub-corpus of 330 requests made by requesters having expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word, while “N” is the rank of the word based on such frequency.

Pragmalinguistic components of request making were identified based on the research conceptual framework of Chapter 3.3 and their uses in requesters without relationship expectation on requestees and requesters with relationship expectation on requestees were compared. As shown in Table 5.21 in relation to Internal Modification, both categories used “would” and “can” as modal verbs for request making; however, the patterns were a bit



different. Proportionally, the category No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more frequently used “can” and the polite modal verb “may” while the category of With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more frequently used “should”. In addition, the category of No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more frequently used “please” and “sir”. Regarding Directness Level, both categories used Direct Level (Level 3) and Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2). “Like”, “want” and “need” corresponded to Directness Level 3, while “if”, “think”, “maybe” and “mind” corresponded to Directness Level 2. Regarding Perspective Imposition, the category of No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity frequently used “I” while the category of With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity frequently used “we”. Chi-square Tests of Proportions (frequency of a certain word to the total number of words in a certain sub-corpora) were conducted to verify the differences in frequency counts, and the results are listed in Table 5.22.

Table 5.22. Chi-square Tests of proportions of word repetitions of the sub-corpora R- and R+

Word	R- Freq. (Yes)	Freq. (No)	R+ Freq. (Yes)	Freq. (No)	Pearson Chi-Square	P-value
Can	36	1720	52	7306	26.756	0.000000
May	16	1740	6	7352	40.52	0.000000
Should	0	1756	17	7341	7.34	0.006743
Please	30	1726	7	7351	91.259	0.000000
Sir	6	1750	0	7358	30.002	0.000000
I	53	1703	116	7242	16.191	0.000057
We	5	1751	89	7269	11.879	0.000568
	Total no. of word repetitions	1756	Total no. of word repetitions	7358		

(1) “R-” stands for the sub-corpus of 109 requests made by requesters having no expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees, while “R+” stands for the sub-corpus of 330 requests made by requesters having expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees.

(2) The “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpora R+ and R- are based on the “Tokens used for wordlist” in Appendix A.2.

(3) “Freq. (Yes)” refers to frequency of repetition of a particular word, while “Freq. (No)” refers to frequency of repetition of all the words other than that particular word in the sub-corpus that equals “Total no. of word repetitions” minus “Freq. (Yes)”. For example, for the word “Can” in the sub-corpus R-, since the “Freq. (Yes)” of “Can” is 52 and the “Total no. of word repetitions” of the sub-corpus R- is 7358, the resulting “Freq. (No)” of repetitions of all the words other than “Can” is 7306 ($7358 - 52 = 7306$).

(4) Proportion of a word is the ratio of the frequency of that word to the total no. of word repetitions of that sub-corpus in which the word appears.

(5) The significance level of “P-value” is set at two-tailed 0.05.

Regarding Internal Modification, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares in Table 5.22 confirm that the proportions of “can”, “may”, “please” and “sir” were significantly different in the two categories No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity and With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity, with the category of No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more proportionally using “can”, “may”, “please” and “sir” than the category of

With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity. It is interesting to note that the use of “should” was not significantly different in the two categories (p-value of 0.006743) and both categories tended to infrequently use “should”. Regarding Perspective Imposition, the p-values of Pearson Chi-squares in Table 5.22 confirm that the proportions of “I” and “we” were significantly different (p-values of 0.000057 and 0.000568) in the two categories, with the category of No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more proportionally using “I” and less proportionally using “we” than the category of With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity.



5.2.5.2. Word-cluster Lists and Concordances of Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

Single words without wider concordance context gave limited and less reliable findings, so word-cluster lists were generated for more in-depth analysis. Since it was impossible to calculate the actual total numbers of word clusters because of the unlimited combinations, the total numbers of sentences were used for calculating proportions for comparison. However, Chi-square Tests were not conducted because the total numbers of sentences were just approximations for measuring the proportions of clusters. The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists were generated in Table 5.23 to explore the request patterns in the two sub-corpora No-expectation of-relationship-continuity (R-) and With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity (R+).

Table 5.23. Two-to-seven cluster wordlists of the sub-corpora R- and R+

Word-cluster (R-)	Freq.	Proportion	Word (R+)	Freq.	Proportion
ASK YOU TO	0	0.00%	ASK YOU TO	5	1.49%
I WOULD LIKE TO	15	13.51%	I WOULD LIKE TO	15	4.48%
WE WOULD LIKE TO	0	0.00%	WE WOULD LIKE TO	2	0.60%
WANT TO	14	12.61%	WANT TO	19	5.67%
YOU HAVE TO	1	0.90%	YOU HAVE TO	13	3.88%
WE HAVE TO	0	0.00%	WE HAVE TO	6	1.79%
YOU NEED TO	0	0.00%	YOU NEED TO	2	0.60%
WE NEED TO	1	0.90%	WE NEED TO	6	1.79%
YOU SHOULD	0	0.00%	YOU SHOULD	3	0.90%
WE SHOULD	0	0.00%	WE SHOULD	7	2.09%
MAY I	15	13.51%	MAY I	0	0.00%
WOULD YOU	9	8.11%	WOULD YOU	7	2.09%
CAN I	20	18.02%	CAN I	5	1.49%
CAN YOU	8	7.21%	CAN YOU	13	3.88%
Total number of sentences 111			Total number of sentences 335		

(1) “R-” stands for the sub-corpus of 109 requests made by requesters having no expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees, while “R+” stands for the sub-corpus of 330 requests made by requesters having expectation of relationship continuity with the requestees.

(2) “Freq.” refers to frequency of repetition of a word-cluster (phrase).

(3) “Total number of sentences” in Appendix A.2 is used as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”. Proportion of a word-cluster was derived through dividing “Freq.” of a word-cluster by “Total number of sentences” (as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters”). For example, for the word-cluster “Want to” in the sub-corpus R-, its “Freq.” is 14 and “Total number of sentences” as an approximation for “Total number of word-clusters” in the sub-corpus P- is 111, so the resulting proportion of the word-cluster “Want to” in the sub-corpus R- is 12.61% ($14 / 111 = 12.61\%$).

The 2-to-7-cluster wordlists in Table 5.23 elaborate the findings of wordlists. The category of No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more proportionally used Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) than the category of With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity. The category of No-expectation-of-relationship

-continuity more proportionally used “May I” (proportions of 13.51% vs. 0%) and “Would you” (proportions of 8.11% vs. 2.09%). While both categories used Direct Level (Level 3), the category of No-expectation-of-relationship-continuity more proportionally used weaker Want Statement such as “would like to” (proportions of 13.51% vs. 5.08%) and “want to” (proportions of 12.61% vs. 5.67%) but less proportionally used stronger Obligation Statement such as “ask you to” (proportions of 0% vs. 1.49%), “have to” (proportions of 0.90% vs. 5.61%), “need to” (proportions of 0.90% vs. 2.39%) or “should” (proportions of 0% vs. 2.99%) than the category of With-expectation-of-relationship-continuity did. Sample concordances of the previously mentioned patterns are given in Figures 5.27 and 5.28.

Figure 5.27. Concordances of “would you” in the sub-corpus R-

<I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: Would you mind putting it on the scale? <
 ><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: So would you please sign your name here (on tax refund)? <
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: Would you please check in at the opposite counter now?
 ><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: So would you please sign your name by the cross here, thank you? < "
 <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a1: So would you please check in at least one hour before departure at
 <I-><C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) b: Would you mind coming over this way, Sir? < "

Figure 5.28. Concordances of “have to” in the sub-corpus R+

<I-><C+><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) b1: We have to put some attention and proper segregation material to segregate
 it's just after the first paragraph here, we have to prioritize the quotations one two three. < "
 1-H4) b: Also my expectation is that you have to perform a better than our existing staff, let's say no matter
 courtesy or initiative yeah all aspects you have to perform better than them. < " <I-><C+><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H4)
 <R+>(D3-M2-H3) B1: Anyway, we've just have to make sure we've got people in place that can handle the gas
 's take a look whether we have loss, you have to lock it. " <I-><C+><P+><R+>(D4-M1-H4) b1: Get them in and

5.2.6. Summary of Corpus Analysis Results on Significant Request Patterns of Words/Word Clusters caused by Sociopragmatic Factors

The request patterns identified through corpus analyses by the five sociopragmatic factors Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) were summarised in Table 5.24 as below. All the sociopragmatic factors demonstrated distinct request patterns with S and P generally showing the biggest differences in request patterns in their sub-categories of requesters (for example, the requesters having power over requestees more proportionally used obligation statements with “have to” than the requesters having no power over requestees).

Table 5.24. Summary of significant patterns of words/word clusters caused by sociopragmatic factors

Pragmalinguistic Component \ Sociopragmatic factor	Internal Modification	Directness level	Perspective Imposition
G01 (Female)	“would” (proportion of 1.58% vs. 0.60% in “males”)	(1) Direct Level (level 3): Weaker want statements “I would like to” (proportion of 7.46% vs. 0.82% in “males”)	“I” (proportion of 2.78% vs. 1.43% in “males”)
G02 (Male)	“should” (proportion of 0.32% vs. 0.05% in “females”)	(1) Direct Level (level 3): Stronger obligation statements “you should” and “you need to” (proportion of 2.44% summing both vs. 0.00% in “females”)	
S02 (Meeting)	“just” (proportion of 0.91% vs. 0.31% in “interview”)	(1) Direct Level (Level 3) with obligatory statement “you should” (proportion of 1.61% vs. 0.00% both “Service Encounter” and “Interview”) (2) Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2) with straightforward modals in “can you” (proportion of 6.99% vs. 0.66% in “Interview”), “could you” (proportion of 2.69% vs. 0.00% in “Interview”) and “	
S01 (Service Encounter)	“please” (proportion of 1.81% vs. 0.05% in “Interview”).	(1) Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2) with weaker modals in “would you” (proportion of 10.09% vs. 0.54% in “Meeting”) and “may I” (proportion of 13.76% vs. 0.00% in both “Meeting” and “Interview”)	“I”. (proportion of 3.44% vs. 1.00% in “Meetings”)
S03 (Interview)		(1) Direct Level (level 3): Interview candidates’ use of the weaker want statements “I would like to” (proportion of 9.93% vs. 0.00% in “Meeting”) (2) Direct Level (level 3): Interviewers’ use of stronger obligation statements “you have to” (proportion of 7.28% vs. 0.00% in “Service Encounter”)	



Pragmalinguistic Component Sociopragmatic factor	Internal Modification	Directness level	Perspective Imposition
C+ (Cantonese speaking)	“please” (proportions of 0.64% vs. 0.08%)	(1) Not much difference in levels, but differences exist within levels (2) Direct Level (level 3): Weaker Want Statements with “want to” (proportions of 0.32% vs. 0.13%) and “would like to” (proportions of 0.29% vs. 0.06%) (3) Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2): “May I” (proportions of 0.27% vs. 0%) and “Would you” (proportions of 0.23% vs. 0.03%) being more frequently used	“I”
C- (non-Cantonese-speaking)	“just” (proportions of 0.91% vs. 0.45%)	(1) Direct Level (level 3): Stronger Obligation Statements with “have to” (proportions of 0.23% vs. 0.16%) and “need to” (proportions of 0.18% vs. 0%) (2) Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2): “Can I” (proportions of 0.33% vs. 0.21%), “Can you” (proportions of 0.25% vs. 0.20%) and “If you could” (proportions of 0.20% vs. 0%) being more frequently used	“We”
P- (no power)	(1) “please” (proportions of 0.97% vs. 0.13%) (2) “sir” (proportions of 0.17% vs. 0%)	(1) Direct Level (level 3): Weaker Want Statements with “would like to” (proportions of 0.47% vs. 0.05%) and “want to” (proportions of 0.44% vs. 0.14%) (2) Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2): More frequently used with “May I” (proportions of 0.47% vs. 0%) and “Would you” (proportions of 0.31% vs. 0.08%)	“I”
P+ (with power)		(1) Direct Level (level 3): Stronger obligatory statements with “have to” (proportions of 0.28% vs. 0.03%), “need to” (proportions of 0.09% vs. 0.03%), “you should” (proportions of 0.05% vs. 0%) and “we should” (proportions of 0.08% vs. 0.03%) (2) Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2): Less frequently used	(1) “You” (2) “We”
R- (no-Expectation of Relationship Continuity)	(1) “please” (proportions of 1.74% vs. 0.10%) (2) “sir” (proportions of 0.34% vs. 0%)	Conventionally Indirect Level (level 2): Much more frequently used with “May I” (proportions of 0.8% vs. 0%) and “Would you” (proportions of 0.48% vs. 0.09%)	“I”
R+ (with-Expectation of Relationship Continuity)		Direct Level (level 3): Much more frequently used with “ask you to” (proportions of 0.06% vs. 0%), “have to” (proportions of 0.25% vs. 0.05%), “need to” (proportions of 0.11% vs. 0.05%) and “should” (proportions of 13% vs. 0%)	“We”

As shown in Table 5.24, the results of Corpus Analysis are consistent with those of Statistical Analysis. The patterns of R are similar to those of S (highlighted in yellow) while

the patterns of C are similar to those of P (highlighted in blue). For example, requesters not having relation expectation on requestees were mainly in Situation (Service Encounter) so “May I” and “Would you” were more frequently (in terms of proportion) in that standard situation (House, 1989). On the other hand, Cantonese speakers of English were mostly at a lower power position so they tended to more use internal modifications.



Chapter Six

CONVERSTATION ANALYSIS RESULTS



Chapter 6. Conversation Analysis Results with Prosodic Study

In the previous two chapters, Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis identify request patterns in terms of frequencies and common expressions. The significant influences of the sociopragmatic factors on request making have been explored. However, they may not reveal the complete picture of request patterns because the unit of analysis is the Request Head Act/Request Proper (Internal Modification, Directness Level and Perspective Imposition) but the broader scope of request making including External Modification (e.g. ground for the request), Response to Request and the paralinguistic Prosodic Feature has not been covered. In addition, the sociopragmatic factor “Rank of Imposition (RI) has not been studied in Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis. As explained in Chapter 3 “Research Design and Methods”, it is difficult to derive a totally objective coding scale for coding the ranks of imposition for requests of such diversity as identified from HKCSE (Business) so it is only studied in this chapter.

Since the present study’s data are requests extracted from complete dialogues of HKCSE (Business), I can make use of conversation analysis (CA) with prosodic study to analyse requests patterns in the broadest sense, covering the aforesaid omitted items External Modifications, Response to Request, Prosodic Features, the sociopragmatic factor “Rank of Imposition” and even the flow of related requests throughout the whole dialogue. Therefore, in order to answer better Research Question 2 (interpretation of request patterns), CA has been conducted for five selected dialogues, one from each of the situations/speech contexts included in the present study, namely hotel service encounter, airport service encounter (while hotel service encounter and airport service encounter have been combined as the single situation “service encounter” for statistical analyses and corpus analyses), internal meeting, placement interview and job interview (placement interview and job interview have been combined as the single situation “interview” for statistical analyses and corpus analyses). The five exemplary dialogues are selected for two reasons. First, relative to other dialogues in a particular speech context, the exemplary dialogue is relatively longer and provides more requests in terms of quantity and variety made between the requester(s) and the requestee(s) for analysis. Second, the selected dialogue covers most of the requests similar in nature to the requests present in the other dialogues of a particular speech context. Rank of Imposition (RI) has been studied in Conversation Analysis with the sample dialogue of a hotel internal meeting (B023). In that sampled dialogue, the sociopragmatic factors other than RI that are



Gender (S), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) could be kept constant for the single requester, the boss/coordinator B1 of the meeting. Hence, different requests made by that requester could be compared in terms of variation in ranks of imposition. Another reason is that it is only in such lengthy dialogue B1 is able to produce a higher number of requests demonstrating the variations in RI for analysis.

As stated in the literature review, Conversation Analysis (CA) describes the sequential patterns of interaction of the participants in a conversation, and the sequential patterns are revealed by the turn-taking organisation. Participants take turns in adjacency pairs or responsive pairs split over a sequence of turns. In the adjacency pair (the sequence), a main course of action is realised. There could be pre-sequence pair(s)/turn(s) (preliminary or prefatory component to the main course of action) and post-sequence pair(s)/turn(s) (consequence of the main course).

In the present study, CA particularly investigates the sequential patterns of request making in terms of (i) pre-sequence pair(s)/turn(s) that are the External Modification(s) leading to the request, (ii) illocutionary act in terms of Head Act, (iii) perlocutionary act of the request that is the Response to Request (whether the request is accepted) and (iv) associated prosodic features. It also investigates the flow of related requests and External Modifications throughout a dialogue.

To make for easier reading, the dialogues have been edited to remove the non-verbal vocalisations. For example, when Speaker A is sharing his or her point and another Speaker B is making filler sounds such as “mm” or “mhm”, these sounds made by Speaker B are removed to show A’s point in a more continuous flow. The coding of requests for CA is the same as those for Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis. In addition, the intonation of the last tone unit of each utterance is coded for studying the prosodic features. The complete coding system for CA with Prosodic Study is detailed as below.

Basic coding

- (1) EM: External Modification
- (2) w EM: Request with External Modification

Sociopragmatic factors

(1) Gender (G)

- Female 01 (requesters originally labelled as “A_” or “a_” in HKCSE (Business))
- Male 02 (requesters originally labelled as “B_” or “b_” in HKCSE (Business))

(2) Situation (S)

- Service Encounter (01)
- Meeting (02)
- Interview (03)

(3) First Language (C)

- Cantonese Speakers of English (C+, speakers originally labelled in small letters in HKCSE (Business))
- Non-Cantonese Speakers of English (C-, speakers originally labelled in capital letters in HKCSE (Business))

(4) Power Distance (P)

- Without Power over Requestee (P-)
- With Power over Requestee (P+)

(5) Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)

- Having No Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (R-)
- Having Expectation of Relationship Continuity with Requestee (R+)

(6) Rank of Imposition (RI)

- Less Imposing Request
- More Imposing Request

Pragmalinguistic components

(1) Directness Level (D)

- Non-conventionally Indirect Level (1)
- Conventionally Indirect Level (2)
- Direct Level (3)
- Most Direct Level (4)

(2) Internal Modification (M)

- Without Internal Modification (1)
- With Internal Modification (2)

(3) Perspective Imposition (H)

- Impersonal Perspective (1)

- Speaker Dominance "I" or "we" (2)
 - Speaker and Hearer Dominance "we" (3)
 - Hearer Dominance "you" (4)
- (4) External Modification (EM)
- (5) Response to Request
- (6) Prosodic Feature: Intonation

The format is [Intonation (“ / ” or “ = ” or “ \ ”)_Last Tone Unit of the Utterance]

Tone unit refers to the minimum unit of intonation in an utterance delimited internally by the first and the last prominent syllables and externally by the pause which marks the end of a tone unit (Cheng, Greaves & Warren, 2008, pp.15-16). The last tone unit of each utterance is marked with intonation for analysis in the present study. The general interpretations of the intonation symbols are detailed as below:

- (1) “/”: Rising tone indicates openness which may provide cushioning to mitigate the Directness Level and Perspective Imposition;
- (2) “=”: Flat tone indicates a neutral attitude;
- (3) “\”: Falling tone indicates resoluteness which strengthens the Directness Level or Perspective Imposition;
- (4) “?”: Indicates that the researcher transcribing the HKCSE is uncertain about the tone; and
- (5) [...]: Shows that a speaker’s turn has not completely finished because another speaker interrupts so the turn is continued with another turn number after that another speaker’s turn finishes.

6.1. Analysis of Sample 1: Conversation B001 (Service Encounter in Hotel)

Situation: Service Encounter in a Hotel

- Speakers: B (Customer of a hotel, NCS), b (Front-desk clerk of a hotel, CS)
- Context: B is a customer of a hotel, and he/she is a non-Cantonese speaker of English; b is the front-desk clerk, and he/she is a Cantonese speaker of English. B wants to check out, and b is serving him/her at the front desk.

Conversation

1. <C-><P+><R->(D3-M1-H2) B: I want to check out eight two two one, [/ Mr. G_].
</C-></P+></R->
2. b: Let me see, [\ it's eight one two two].
3. B: Er, eight one two two, [= right].
4. b: [\ Yeah].
5. B: Right, [\ sorry].
6. b: [\ You are too tired].
7. B: Yeah, eight one two two, that's stupid, [\ but I was in the right room].
8. b: [/ Did you purchase anything from the mini bar]?
9. B: No, nothing, [\ no].
10. b: Your bill is on the way, [\ it's coming].
11. B: [= Okay].
12. b: Is everything okay, [? within the] ...
13. B: Everything okay, yeah, thanks, [\ I needed some sleep].
14. b: [/ And you're going home now]?
15. B: Yes, [\ home to China].
16. b: For work [? or]?
17. B: For work, yeah, the problem is when you arrive in the morning in Hong Kong, in Europe [\ it's midnight].
18. b: Yeah, [\ so you feel very tired].
19. B: And with the kids at midnight, [\ they want to sleep].
20. b: [= Yeah].
21. B: [\ So, it's very hard].
22. b: [\ Alright].



23. B: Okay, [/ signature]?
24. b: Yes, [\ please].
25. b: And by the way, are you going to handle the account by your [/ visa card] (EM)?
26. B: Yeah, credit, [/ yeah]
27. <C+><P-><R->(D3-M1-H2) b: [= Yeah, I do need your credit card once again] (w
EM). </C+></P-></R->
28. B: Once again, it's a [\ visa].
29. b: [\ Yeah].
30. B: [\ Alright].
31. b: Now, you feel [/ better]?
32. B: Yeah, [\ much better].
33. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have your signature [/ once again please]?
</C+></P-></R->
34. B: Okay, [\ yeah].
35. b: So how long will it take to go to [\ China]?
36. B: Er, [= one hour].
37. b: [\One hour]?
38. B: Just one hour, [\ it's very quick].
39. b: Yeah, alright, [\ here you go].
40. B: Okay, [/ thank you very much].
41. b: [\ No problem].
42. </C-><P+></R->(D3-M1-H4) B: And you'll make the other one (another document
for signature), [? alright]? </C-><P+></R->
43. b: Well, actually [\ this morning] ...
44. B: [/ It's not signed yet]?
45. b: No, this morning we're holding a approval here, [\ now I've used up].
46. B: Yeah, okay, [\ alright].
47. b: Okay, [= have a nice trip huh].
48. B: Okay, [/ good bye].
49. b: [\ Bye].
50. B: [= Yeah].



Analysis

This dialogue is selected as the exemplar for hotel service encounter because it fully covers the checking-out procedure and provides a variety of requests for analysis. At Turn 1, the non-Cantonese speaker of English initiates the request directly at Directness Level 3 without any internal or External Modification:

1. <C-><P+><R->(D3-M1-H2) B: I want to check out eight two two one, [/ Mr. G_].
</C-></P+></R->

This is in line with the findings of the Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis. According to the Multivariate Analysis, Situation (S), being highly correlated with Relationship Expectation (R) has the greatest effect on D. As stated earlier, House (1989) argues that service encounters are typically “standard situations” where formulaic expressions are common. Although the customer has more power over the front-desk clerk, having no R may have moderated the Directness Level so that the request is presented at Directness Level 3, but not at Directness Level 4 (Mood Derivable). In addition, it is the milder form “Want Statement” of Directness Level 3 and not the strong form “Obligation Statement”. Not the most direct pattern is expected because the requester has no Expectation of Relationship Continuity with the requestee. In other words, their remote relationship may not allow the use of the strongest pattern. The rising tone in general signals openness and friendliness, and this further reduces the directness. No Internal Modification is used, and it aligns with the finding of the Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis that requesters with power over requestees are less likely to use Internal Modification.

Turn 2 implies that the front-desk clerk of the hotel accepts the request because “Let me see” indicates that he or she starts processing the customer’s request by first confirming the room number. The request is accepted by the front-desk clerk right away because of the lower power position and the fact that requester clearly has the right to request and requestee has the obligation to fulfil the request in “standard situations” (House, 1989). In other words, the request is a normal one in the context of front-desk clerk service encounter.

Turns 2 to 7 are about the confirmation of the first piece of information, the room number, for processing the check-out request and the chit-chat regarding the tiredness of the customer. At Turn 8, the front-desk clerk proceeds with the request by asking for the second piece of

information with “Did you purchase anything from the mini bar.” A question soliciting a short response such as “Yes” or “No” is usually in falling tone. Contradicting the general tone pattern, a rising tone is realised in the tone unit here possibly because of the front-desk clerk’s lower P and his having no R with the customer.

Turn 10 is the Transitional Marker that links up the previous stages of request to the rest of the coming stages that are the payment and the signing of the bill. Turn 10 indicates that the bill is being printed so they have to wait before they can proceed with the check-out request.

Although most of the requests and acceptances are routine and formulaic in “standard situation” (House, 1989), the front-desk clerk endeavours to show personal care and hospitality while waiting for the bill by initiating chit-chat with the customer and asks most of the questions in a rising tone such as in Turn 14 “[/And you're going home NOW]”. At Turns 15 to 24, they continue their chit-chat on jet lag. At Turn 23, the customer takes the initiative to sign the bill in response to the front-desk clerk handing over the bill.

Turn 25 is another Transitional Marker that provides the linkage between the prior chit-chat and the ensuing request for a Visa card. This is also the External Modification “Preparator” of the request for a Visa card at Turn 27. At Turn 25, the front-desk clerk prepares the customer for the ensuing request by asking about the “potential availability” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, p.287) of the customer for carrying out the request:

25. b: And by the way, are you going to handle the account by your [/ visa card] (EM)?

At Turn 27, although the request is put forward by the front-desk clerk at Directness Level 3 without any Internal Modification, the directness is reduced by the preceding External Modification move at Turn 25 and the flat tone:

27. <C+><P-><R->(D3-M1-H2) b: [= Yeah, I do need your credit card once again] (w EM). </C+></P-></R->

The request is accepted right away at Turn 28 because it is a normal procedure of checking out in a typical front-desk service encounter of “standard situation” (House, 1989) and the

customer has the right to fulfil that request to finish the checking-out process:

28. B: Once again, it's a [\ visa].

The chit-chat at Turns 31 and 32 transits to the request for signature at Turn 33. At Turn 33, the front-desk clerk puts forward the request at Directness Level 3 “Query Preparatory (with preparatory condition of ability)” with the Internal Modification of the Polite Modal “may”:

**33. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) b: May I have your signature [/ once again please]?
</C+></P-></R->**

Indirectness, formed by low Directness Level, application of Internal Modification and the Perspective Imposition “I”, is applied here because of no R with the customer and the lower P of the front-desk clerk. The request here again indicates that R and P were influential in the request pattern. The request is accepted right away at Turn 34 because it is another normal procedure of checking out in a typical front-desk service encounter:

34. B: Okay, [\ yeah].

Turns 35 to 38 constitute the chit-chat filling up the time needed for processing the signature of the visa receipt. The customer makes the last request in the conversation at Turn 42. He/she requests the front-desk clerk to prepare another document for signature with the Obligatory Statement of Directness Level 3 and the high Perspective Imposition “you”. In addition, the request is not moderated by Internal Modification or External Modification. Again, that may not sound too impolite or unreasonable because it is another normal request under the “standard situation” (House, 1989) where the customer clearly has the right to requestee:

42. </C-></P+></R->(D3-M1-H4) B: And you'll make the other one (another document for signature), [? alright]? </C-></P+></R->

Overall observations

This conversation typically illustrates the effect of Situation (S) and the effect of having no Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) in one-off service encounters. Since this is a typical “standard situation” (House, 1989) where requesters clearly have the right to request and the requestees clearly have the obligation in service transactions, the customer makes most of his requests quietly directly at direct level (level 3) and the requests are accepted easily/right away by the front desk officer. Yet, the requests are not put forward in utmost directness or bluntness because the two people are not familiar and not expecting to become familiar with each other in the future and such a distant/remote relationship makes them less likely to put forward their requests in utmost directness. A shallow relationship and understanding between them encourage them to provide more cushioning with indirectness when imposing requests upon the other. For example, at Turn 1, although the customer is in a higher power position, he/she uses a milder “Want Statement” of Directness Level 3 instead of Directness Level 4 (Mood Derivable) and a friendly rising tone. On the other hand, the front-desk clerk does not go for Directness Level 4 either in the whole conversation and his requests are cushioned with internal modification such as the politeness modal “may”. Otherwise, for processing such a simple and routine check-out request, the front-desk clerk and the customer can indicate and fulfil the steps directly with bare imperatives.

In addition to R, Power Distance (P) plays a role in affecting the Directness Level. For example, compared to the customer, the front-desk clerk makes requests at lower Directness Level at Turn 33. P also affects the use of Internal Modification and External Modification. For example, the front-desk clerk with lower power position uses the Polite Modal verb “May” at Turn 33 and External Modification (Turn 25). In addition, the front-desk clerk also uses a rising tone more frequently to moderate the force of the requests. Last, P affects the use of Perspective Imposition. The front-desk clerk tends to use the Speaker Dominance “I” more frequently in order to impose less on the customer because the request is directed from the requester but not at the requestee.

Gender (G) has not been studied in this sampled dialogue because both speakers are males (b1 and B1).

6.2. Analysis of Sample 2: Conversation B023 (Internal Meeting of Hotel Staff)

Situation: Internal Meeting of Hotel Staff

- Speakers: B1-B4 (Hotel staff, NCS), a1-a4/b1-b3 (Hotel, CS)
- Context: Representatives of the different departments of a hotel review the routine operations and discuss the next steps.

Conversation

1. B1: Good morning all. Let me introduce again Doctor K_ from the University of Hong Kong and her associate P_ G_. They want to record our meeting again. And er they want to, I'm not quite sure why, but [\ anyway] ...
2. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H3) B1: If we just go round the table and you introduce yourselves again, [= starting with C_]. </C-></P+></R+>
3. a1: Yeah C_ L_, [\ Public Relations Manager].
4. B2: [? T_ B_ from Food and Beverage].
5. b1: [? E_ N_, Assistant Manager].
6. a2: C_ L_, [\ the Executive Housekeeper].
7. B3: G_ P_, [= Front Office Manager].
8. B4: A_ F_, [= the Marketing Services Manager].
9. a3: M_ L_, [= Executive Services Manager].
10. b2: D_ W_, [? Chief Engineer].
11. b3: H_ W_, [\ Concierge].
12. a4: E_, er, [=Director of Corporate Sales].
13. B1: Okay, good, [? thank you, let's go ahead, okay].
14. B3: In the logbook yesterday, we had an incident. In the lobby yesterday morning, where Mister C_ from Room 904 accidentally walked through a pane of glass next to the side entrance. He received medical attention, and the cut was looked after. And as a gesture of goodwill, I believe all the charges for the clinic and the repair charges were waived. The guest was most grateful for all the attention received. Also, we had a lost report from Mister L_ who is an outsider, who had been having a meeting in the Executive Lounge. Yesterday, he left his luggage in front of a taxi when he left the hotel after he arrived



- from his other destination, and he just asked us that should it be returned to contact him, [\ so left his contact details].
15. B1: [= No news yet].
 16. B3: No. And there was the arrival for Mister M_ from the Mandarin Oriental Jakarta. He was met on arrival at quarter past three yesterday, and was escorted to his room, and was most grateful for the warm welcome [= and the nice room].
 17. B1: Okay, he's doing a tour of the hotel today with V_, and he's here with V_ D_ of Head Office. He may become the personnel director if [\ H_ L_ becomes a (inaudible)].
 18. B3: Last night's occupancy, it was 96.7%, and the rate was 1025. We just had 6 rooms vacant and a couple of [= the rooms were in group doubled-up] (inaudible).
 19. B1: Are those [= 6 rooms guaranteed]?
 20. B4: Oh, we had 4 out of 13 actually [= guaranteed].
 21. B3: Okay, so on the arrivals today, it's quite a quiet day with VIP arrivals, though it's very busy with groups downstairs today. And on page 2, we we can, it's the sixth arrival from Mister H_ from Waterfall Microwave who came for his 25th visit, staying up on the executive floor in superior room. We also have a suite booking for a Mister G_ from Unilever Hong Kong. He's actually VP6 and not VP8. Page 3, we have another VP6 guest Mister U_ K_ from Mitsubishi Double Fortune Travel, staying up the executive floor. In a superior room and in VP8 Mister R_ M_ from Whirlpool, returning for his 47th visit to VP8, also staying on the executive floor. And that's it for the for the VIP visitor highlight. We also have a booking from the Oriental Bangkok, Mister F_, (inaudible) statistician from [\ Bangkok].
 22. B1: [\ Yeah].
 23. B3: Er, so, yeah, as I said, it's a busy day downstairs, we have 9 groups arriving today and 5 departing. Some of them are earlier arrivals, but they're spaced throughout the day really, so it's going to be very busy today. [\ There's a lot of traffic in the lobby].
 24. b1: [\ Can find it worse than this].
 25. B1: [/ M_].
 26. a3: Yeah, yesterday we take in 180,059 room nights, 380 room nights increase in corporate sector, have a drop by 285 room nights [\ in wholesale sector].
 27. B1: How many, [= how many]?
 28. a3: [\ 285].
 29. b4: [\ Very poor].

30. a3: Drop off in wholesale sector, so now we're holding 86.4% with the rate 979, revenue 22.74 million. So we're still 1.73 million behind budget, [= I mean left].
31. B1: Okay, [= F and B].
32. B2: (inaudible) Today, Harbour Room 2 is occupied for O_ P_ for lunch. For 20, Harbour 3 is occupied by a Chinese lunch for M_ Financial Services. 3 tables harbour rooms for tonight. We have a graduation dinner for a 180, that's the first one that we have, one O_ W_ I_ college remaining rooms. Obviously, there's still the coffee shop Gloucester Room. One is S_ C_ Bank, and we do lunch for 21 Gloucester Room, 2 meeting and we do Chinese lunch for 15, and the second preparation in 99 from 95 in the Gloucester Rooms, and P_ and G_ have a meeting with lunch and tea for 21 [\ meeting in Californian and lunch (inaudible)].
33. B1: [= You have a birthday party for...]
34. B2: [? K_]?
35. B1: [? K_].
36. B2: Um, revenue-wise yesterday, we had a pretty good day, the coffee shop is still doing extremely well, it was all digit doubles yesterday. Take on some steps actually, getting rid of the casuals because we sent half the stuff on vacation, cos we have to be careful that we don't spend too much. We did 440 breakfasts yesterday, a 180 lunch and 300 dinners last night, so actually more than we do in the coffee shop downstairs. Besides that, each unit did well yesterday. They came pretty close to their budget. Todd's did extremely well, they did a 130,000 last night. Only a Thursday happy hour with the bar at five, the wine bar at nine [\ and J_ at nine].
37. B1: [\ Yeah] (inaudible).
38. B2: Er, so all in all, it was a good day, [= um].
39. B1: [= Yeah].
40. B2: Considering that the amounts we did was 2.5 million which is lagging behind about 550,000. So far restaurant partners are doing [\ pretty well].
41. B1: Okay. Just a few things, [= we'll start with the comment cards].
42. B1: 1105 guest stayed here for a few days, 31st of May to the 2nd of June, they liked the smooth run service and the high room standards with splendid [views=] (EM).
43. They would have liked to have had a Sunday morning newspaper. Is there anything promoting Hong Kong on activities, daily activities on TV which we don't have? Shoe polishing cloth, they would have like one of them, [= room number eleven o five] (EM).

44. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H4) B1: Is that not [= Standard showing there] (Hint)?
</C-></P+></R+>
45. a2: Well, actually you know [\ every room has one].
46. B1: [= So, you know, they missed that].
47. B1: Complaining about the portion size in the coffee shop, saying they're too large, which is unusual, and [= a small accounting error handled well by cashiers].
48. B1: So now (Room) six o seven, enjoyed all the services of the hotel, I won't read them all out, but er, [= they're very complimentary].
49. B1: Six o seven, the AC (air conditioning) had not been working on one, on one occasion [= check] (EM).
50. <C-><P+><R+>(D4-M2-H4) B1: D_, six o seven, [\ just have a look at that] (w EM).
</C-></P+></R+>
51. B1: And Mister and Mrs K_, 1129, liked everything, nothing at all bad, [\ perfect].
52. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there [=before break]. </C-></P+></R+>
53. B1: For the interior designers S_, D_, did um, [=Mister A_ contact you from Mitsubishi about the televisions] (EM)?
54. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B1: [= Can you follow up with them (TVs in hotel) today] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>
55. B1: Because we, if they don't come, if they don't get [\ organised, then they'll lose their contract, right] (EM)?
56. B1: Erm, [= just a couple of other things].
57. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B1: T_, if you could contact that lady who's apparently very good [\ supervisor]. </C-></P+></R+>
58. B1: I've had a letter from er one of our regular guests in the UK who is making another booking for September to October, letting us know that they looking forward to coming back, they're just also highlighting that they've had a letter from British Airway Holidays, er, outlining all the renovation work that's going on in the hotel. It's quite interesting because [= the room renovations are now on hold] (EM).
59. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B1: [= We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>
60. a2: [\ Yeah].
61. B2: [? Six o seven] (agents)?
62. a1: [= Mhm].

63. <C-><P-><R+>(D4-M1-H1) B2: [\ Through the various sectors and let them (agents) know that it's not on] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>
64. B2: Because if that's the kind of letter going out, we don't have, we're not going to get any business, okay, [\because they're trying to dissuade people from coming here] (EM).
65. B2: Um, article appeared in the Hong Kong Standard, this morning's magazine (passes magazine to F_ B_), it doesn't feature Todd's [= or any of our other outlets about our vegetarian food] (EM).
66. <C-><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B2: [\ So we need to get on to them] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>
67. B2: [= Because we've got certainly a good vegetarian spread] (EM).
68. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H2) B2: And M_, [\ can I see you after the meeting] (w EM)? </C-></P-></R+>
69. B2: Cos I want to talk to you about the 1997. I've thought of some letters [= that we need to draft up finally today] (EM).
70. B2: Okay that's all I have, er, [= C_].
71. a1: [\ I haven't any, thank you].
72. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H1) B2: In the area of the buffet, in the dining room, [\ is there the possibility to isolate the air conditioning above there] (w EM)? </C-></P-></R+>
73. B3: No, [\ that's very much variable (inaudible)].
74. B2: Chillier than downstairs (inaudible), tomorrow, er, this week, I've had a few complaints about food temperature today, [\ so] (EM).
75. B1: D_, [= do you have anything]?
76. b2: Oh, we will have this stand set into O P S room by today with our member's room [\ message] (inaudible).
77. B1: Okay, good, okay that sounds good, thank you. Let's hope [\ he gets that (inaudible) as well].
78. B3: Um, I'm just getting an increasing number of letters from the telephone providers regarding mobile telephone use within our hotel and installing er modulars [= to enable that] (EM).
79. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: So I was just wondering if people (colleagues) can ask their staff um [= if we are getting complaints from the guests] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>

80. B3: Because I'm not aware of whether we're getting complaints, because they always cite the Dickens Bar as a poor transmission area, but I think it's with the standards [? that should be maintained are so] (EM).
81. B1: [? Well, I].
82. B2: [\ That's true].
83. B5: [\ That's true, yeah].
84. B1: Yeah, but [\ some of the guests don't want to be contacted at the Dickens Bar either. I think] ...
85. B2: [= Yeah].
86. B3: And M_ says it's going for the Dickens Bar because they're getting, they are getting a [\ large number of engagements, I think...] (EM).
87. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: Could install [= further ones] (w EM).
</C-></P-></R+>
88. B2: I know we've placed an order, first of all, [\ for one location].
89. B3: How do we do this [\ in relation to this as well]?
90. b2: Because we have a few areas in hand and an appointment at ten, [? er, one is definitely (inaudible)]
91. B1: And it may be good if we could just get one company to come and do this study, [\ and that is to make a decision which areas are improved in].
92. b2: Yes, in Dickens Bar, you need a very strong signal receiver, due to there is a, er there's er [? under].
93. B4: The remaining courses are here. I've talked to Henry this morning, we'll put 3 more out [\ for this morning].
94. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M2-H3) B1: Okay, I just noticed in the advertisement of the TV entertainment times yesterday, [= we've got an error in there].
</C-></P+></R+>
95. B4: Yeah, [\ the error was not on the proof though].
96. B1: [\ Alright].
97. B4: They're investigating why that happened, but on the next subscription [\ it won't happen].
98. B1: [\ Okay].
99. b2: To, today er, I'm a bit concerned about the lights, which light have transmit to the karaoke, [\ we're going to have a meeting over there].
100. B1: Wh, [= what's happening today]?

101. b2: Today, there's a general, they found the fell down piece which was identified by the contractors, and we called the structural engineer to have a look at that piece, and he suggests us to take it out, but it's not his preferred piece; therefore, now they've already started using the jackhammer, so you will expect [\ complaint].
102. B1: Okay, [\ yeah].
103. B2: Next and last week, [\ the excavator (inaudible)].
104. b2: The actual demolition, [/ heavy demolition].
105. B1: [= Started on Monday].
106. b2: Was probably that, so [\ you might expect a lot more complaint].
- 107. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H3) B1: Anyway, we've just have to make sure we've got people in place that can handle the gas pipe, [= okay]. </C-></P+></R+>**
- 108. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H3) B1: Have we had the drawings for the er, kitchen yet, the [\ access to the kitchen]? </C-></P+></R+>**
109. B2: Couldn't find them last night, so I haven't got it yet, [\ got an e-mail last night].
110. b2: You got, [? you got (inaudible)] (EM).
111. B2: [= One thing, I got the e-mail last night].
- 112. <C+><P-><R+>(D1-M1-H2) b2: Because I, I need, I need this information [\ pass it to D_] (Hint). </C+></P-></R+>**
113. B2: [= Okay].
114. B1: And I've confirmed the amazing grace that they close from [\that one week].
115. b2: 17 to 23rd, the other thing is that I will be out at a meeting in the Hong Kong Hotel Association, er, regarding the er switch, [= switch].
116. B1: [= Okay].
117. b3: Mister H_, [\ meeting at one thirty].
118. B1: Okay, thanks, [= anything]?
119. a4: Just now want to let everybody know that you know the corporate and booking sales team, we are conducting a sales starting from next Monday for three days from the tenth to twelfth, so you may not be finding us in the in the [office=] (EM).
- 120. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H1) a4: So anything, [\ must pass it to messengers] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>**
121. B1: Good, okay, good, right, alright, er, that's all for now, thanks very much, [= have a good day].

Analysis

This long excerpt is selected because the work meeting context here provides the greatest abundance of requests in terms of variety and quantity made between the boss and the heads of the different hotel departments for analysis. Turns 1-13 set up the context of an internal meeting of a hotel and describe the roles of the different speakers in the conversation. B1 first remarks that the meeting will be recorded for academic purpose and next requests each of the attendees of the meeting to introduce themselves for the two academics at Turn 2:

2. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H3) B1: If we just go round the table and you introduce yourselves again, [= starting with C_]. </C-></P+></R+>

Speakers B1 to B5 are Non-Cantonese Speakers of English, while the rest are all Cantonese speakers of English. The attendees of the meeting are the heads/persons-in-charge of the different departments of the hotel. This part shows that B1 is most likely the boss having a higher power position over the rest of the attendees because of the following evidence:

- (1) He makes the first turn for the whole conversation at Turn 1;
- (2) He takes up the role of turn allocation at Turn 2, granting other attendees the chance to introduce themselves;
- (3) After the introduction, B1 initiates the meeting at Turn 13.

Turns 14-40 are about the reports from the heads of different departments. Without the Boss B1 requesting or naming, the Front Office Manager B3 first gives his report. This shows that there may be a close relationship and solidarity among the team-mates as well as an expected routine. The meeting follows a tacit procedure, and they know among themselves who should be the one to first report. B3 first reports some incidences of customers such as injury and luggage loss around the front office and next the occupancy rate and the arrival of important customers.

At Turn 25, the Boss B1 takes the floor again and invites the Executive Services Manager a3 to report on the revenue in terms of room nights received yesterday. At Turn 31, B1 allocates the turn to the Person-in-charge of Food and Beverage (F&B) B2 who reports on the business activities and the revenues of the different F&B outlets of the hotel at Turns 32 - 40. Turns 25 and 31 confirms B1's role of turn allocation and also B1's higher power position over the subordinates. In short, Turns 1 to 31 establishes the hierarchy of power, indicating B1



has power over other team-mates/requestees.

After the Front Office, the Executive Services and the Food & Beverage report on their business activities and revenues. Next, the Boss B1 intervenes and transits to his own sharing by the Discontinuity Marker “okay” and the Topic-Initial Utterance “just a few things, we’ll start with the comment cards” at Turn 41.

Turn 42 may serve as the overall External Modification for the requests B1 makes afterwards.

42. B1: 1105 guest stayed here for a few days, 31st of May to the 2nd of June, they liked the smooth run service and the high room standards with splendid [views=] (EM).

The positive comment from the guests of Room 1105 acts as a good start of recognition of team-mates’ service and effort, and this can provide good motivation for team-mates to address B1’s ensuing requests. In addition, since internal business meeting is the most collectivistic situation compared to service encounter and interview, appreciation of one and other’s efforts is a good way to build solidarity.

Turn 43 is the External Modification for B1’s request at Turn 44:

43. They would have liked to have had a Sunday morning newspaper. Is there anything promoting Hong Kong on activities, daily activities on TV which we don't have? Shoe polishing cloth, they would have like one of them, [= room number eleven o five] (EM).

The comment of the guests of Room 1105 “they would like to have had a Sunday morning newspaper” is the Grounder that helps justify B1’s request at Turn 44. Since the guests did not get the newspaper, it is a good ground for requesting subordinates to follow up on the distribution of newspapers to hotel rooms. Interestingly, at Turn 44, B1 makes the request implicitly at Directness Level 1 “Hint” possibly because of the close relationship and solidarity among them:

44. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H4) B1: Is that not [= Standard showing there] (Hint)?

</C-></P+></R+>

The question “Is that not Standard showing there?” is a clear enough Hint for encouraging others to follow up on the distribution of newspapers. Though the request at Turn 44 is addressed to all attendees, because of the close relationship and solidarity and also the division of labour among them, the Executive Housekeeper a2 who should be responsible for the distribution of newspapers to hotel rooms promptly, subtly and indirectly responds to the Boss B1 at Turn 45 with “Well, actually you know every room has one”. The response to request here means that the Executive Housekeeper a2 indirectly rejects the Boss B1’s request of following up on the distribution because newspapers should have been delivered to Room 1105. It was the guests overlooking them because every room used to have one copy of “Standard”. The Executive Housekeeper a2 makes use of the close relationship and solidarity with B1 by the prefatory expression “Well, actually you know” to remind the Boss B1 that the distribution mechanism of newspapers to hotel rooms is in place as usual and there is no need for any additional follow up. Interestingly, the Boss B1 takes back his request and concurs with the Executive Housekeeper a2 by together putting the responsibility on the guests with the expression “So, you know, they missed that” at Turn 46. In short, Turns 44 to 46 show the close relationship, solidarity and also trust among the team-mates.

Turn 49 is the External Modification for the Boss B1’s request at Turn 50:

49. B1: Six o seven, the AC (air conditioning) had not been working on one, on one occasion [= check] (EM).

The failure of the air conditioning discovered on one occasion when there was a check is the Grounder that justifies the request at Turn 50. The failure of a facility is normal grounds for requesting team-mates to follow up and repair the facility. At Turn 50, the Boss B1 requests the Chief Engineer b2 to investigate and repair the air conditioning in the highest Directness Level:

50. <C-><P+><R+>(D4-M2-H4) B1: D_, six o seven, [\ just have a look at that] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

The close relationship and solidarity allows the Boss B1 to put forward the request directly because the Boss B1 expects that there should not be too much resistance from the Chief

Engineer b2 to accept the request. However, it does not mean the Boss B1 does not take care of the subordinate's feeling when putting forward the request. First, as mentioned, the request has been moderated by the External Modification at Turn 49. Second, the Downtoner "just" of Internal Modification is used to moderate the request.

At turn 52, the Boss B1 also requests the setup of Executive Lunch rather directly with Obligation Statement of Directness Level 3 but with slight moderation again by the Downtoner "just" of Internal Modification:

52. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there [=before break]. </C-></P+></R+>

The close relationship and solidarity allows the Boss B1 to put forward the request directly because of the similar reason stated in the previous paragraph.

The question at Turn 53 is the External Modification for the Boss B1's request at Turn 54:

53. B1: For the interior designers S_, D_, did um, [=Mister A_ contact you from Mitsubishi about the televisions] (EM)?

The question acts as "Preparator" which prepares the subordinate for the ensuing request by asking about the potential availability of the subordinate for carrying out the request. At Turn 54, the Boss B1 requests the Chief Engineer to follow up on the TVs is made rather indirectly with Query Preparatory of Directness Level 2:

54. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B1: [= Can you follow up with them (TVs in hotel) today] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>

The request is further moderated by the Grounder of External Modification "they'll lose the contract" at Turn 55.

Turn 56 "Just a couple of other things" is a transition that the Boss B1 provides for the rest of his requests. At Turn 57, the Boss requests the F&B Person-in-charge to contact a woman in an indirect way by applying the Suggestory Formula of Directness Level 2 and the

Internal Modification of the Polite Modal Verb “could”:

57. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B1: T_, if you could contact that lady who’s apparently very good [\ supervisor]. </C-></P+></R+>

However, it is not possible to find out who this “lady” is and why she needs to be contacted from the context of conversation.

Turn 58 is the External Modification for the request made at Turn 59:

58. B1: I've had a letter from er one of our regular guests in the UK who is making another booking for September to October, letting us know that they looking forward to coming back, they're just also highlighting that they've had a letter from British Airway Holidays, er, outlining all the renovation work that’s going on in the hotel. It’s quite interesting because [= the room renovations are now on hold] (EM).

The fact that renovations being put on hold is the Grounder that justifies B1’s request at Turn 59. At Turn 59, the Boss requests directly the PR Manager to notify the travel agents worldwide that the renovations will be postponed and customers could come with the Obligation Statement of Directness Level 3 and high Perspective Imposition of Hearer and Speaker Dominance “we” possibly because of the team spirit among them:

59. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B1: [= We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

The Boss B1 is the person who makes most of the requests in this conversation, and Turns 44 to 59 captures the series of requests made with the subordinates. In general, B1’s high Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) with the requestees and higher Power Position (P) may allow the requests to be made at high Directness Levels in this particular Situation (S). Without taking the dialogue contexts into consideration, B1’s requests appear to be direct and absolute. However, with the contexts in place for analysis, it could be seen that B1 does not go totally direct or absolute because detailed External Modifications are provided for the requests. On the other hand, higher Perspective Impositions “you” and “we” are frequently used possibly because of B1’s high P and R with the subordinates in the S of internal meeting.



At Turn 63, collaborative discourse in request making happens:

63. <C-><P-><R+>(D4-M1-H1) B2: [\ Through the various sectors and let them (agents) know that it's not on] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>

The Food and Beverage Manager B2 concurs with and helps reinforce B1's request with the highest Directness Level (Mood Derivable), but it is moderated by the lowest Impersonal Perspective Imposition and the External Modification at Turn 64 that B2 actually helps supplement an important justification for B1's request made at Turn 59:

64. B2: Because if that's the kind of letter going out, we don't have, we're not going to get any business, okay, [\because they're trying to dissuade people from coming here] (EM).

Turns 65 & 67 are the External Modifications for the request made at Turn 66. The facts that their F&B being not featured in the newspaper and their command of high quality in vegetarian cuisine are the "Grounders" which justify B2's request at Turn 67.

65. B2: Um, article appeared in the Hong Kong Standard, this morning's magazine (passes magazine to F_ B_), it doesn't feature Todd's [= or any of our other outlets about our vegetarian food] (EM).

67. B2: [= Because we've got certainly a good vegetarian spread] (EM).

At Turn 66, B2 requests the PR Manager to follow that up with the press with the Obligation Statement of Directness Level 3 and the high Perspective Imposition of Hearer and Speaker Dominance "we":

66. <C-><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B2: [\ So we need to get on to them] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>

Here, B2 makes a request upon PR Manager who is a peer, so B2 is without power over the requestee. Still, B2 makes the request quite directly probably because of the following reasons:

- (1) B2 is a non-Cantonese speaker of English whose first language tends to be more direct;
- (2) B2 and the PR Manager may be very close with each other. Such high Expectation of Relationship Continuity and the cushioning provided by the External Modifications at Turns 65 & 67 allow B2 to make a slightly more imposing request of the PR Manager

B2 then requests to see the PR Manager a1 at turn 68 with the Query Preparatory of Directness Level 2:

68. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H2) B2: And M_, [\ can I see you after the meeting] (w EM)?
 </C-></P-></R+>

Although the straightforward “can” is used and there is no Internal Modification, the request is moderated by the External Modification at Turn 69 that is about the need to discuss the letters drafted for 1997.

At Turn 72, B2 requests the air conditioning be isolated with the Query Preparatory of Directness Level 2:

72. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H1) B2: In the area of the buffet, in the dining room, [\ is there the possibility to isolate the air conditioning above there] (w EM)?
 </C-></P-></R+>

Interestingly, Impersonal Perspective Imposition is used possibly because the rapport and solidarity among the attendees could direct the request to someone appropriate, and B3 quickly responds to that at Turn 73. The request is moderated by the External Modification that is about the complaints about the low food temperature at Turn 74.

The Front Office Manager B3 requests team-mates to collect information on the reception of mobile use indirectly with the Query Preparatory of Directness Level 2, the Past Tense of Internal Modification and also the Impersonal Perspective Imposition “people” at Turn 79:

79. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: So I was just wondering if people (colleagues) can ask their staff um [= if we are getting complaints from the guests] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>

Furthermore, the request is extensively moderated by detailed External Modifications at Turns 78 and 80 that are about the telecom providers citing that Dickens Bar is a poor transmission area.

The request at Turn 79 paves the way to a succeeding request at Turn 87. Again, the request to further install mobile transmission is made indirectly with the Suggestory Formula of Directness Level 2, the past but straightforward modal “could” of Internal Modification and also the Impersonal Perspective:

87. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: Could install [= further ones] (w EM). </C-></P-></R+>

Furthermore, the request is extensively moderated by the External Modification “large number of engagements” in Dickens Bar at Turn 86.

The request made at Turn 94 again illustrates the close relationship and solidarity among the attendees:

94. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M2-H3) B1: Okay, I just noticed in the advertisement of the TV entertainment times yesterday, [= we’ve got an error in there]. </C-></P+></R+>

The Boss B1 makes the request of following up the error in the press indirectly with Directness Level 1 (Hint) and the Perspective Imposition of Speaker Dominance. Their rapport, solidarity and division of labour allow the Marketing Services Manager B4 to pick up and respond to the request immediately at Turns 95 and 97 to ensure the Boss B1 that the issue has already been followed up. That is, the press is investigating why the error occurred and making sure that the error will not repeated in the next issue.

The Boss B1 makes the request of getting someone to handle the pipe at Turn 107 with “Obligation Statement” of Directness Level 3 and the Perspective Imposition “Hearer and

Speaker Dominance”. However, the request is moderated with the Downtoner of “just” of Internal Modification:

107. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H3) B1: Anyway, we’ve just have to make sure we’ve got people in place that can handle the gas pipe, [= okay]. </C-></P+></R+>

At Turn 108, the Boss B1 makes the request of getting the access drawing to the kitchen indirectly with Directness Level 1 (Hint) the second time:

108. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H3) B1: Have we had the drawings for the er, kitchen yet, the [\ access to the kitchen]? </C-></P+></R+>

Their rapport, solidarity and division of labour allows the Person-in-charge of Food and Beverage B2 to pick up and respond to the request immediately. B2 shares at Turns 109 and 111 that only an email from a related party has been received. Responding to B2’s sharing, the Chief Engineer b2 requests the email indirectly at Turn 112 with Directness Level 1, the Perspective Imposition of Speaker Dominance and the External Modification at Turn 110 (a question of Preparator):

112. <C+><P-><R+>(D1-M1-H2) b2: Because I, I need, I need this information [\ pass it to D_] (Hint). </C+></P-></R+>

The final request is made by the Director of Corporate Sales a4 at Turn 120 in relation to document flow:

120. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H1) a4: So anything, [\ must pass it to messengers] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

Although the request is made at the Obligation Statement of Directness Level 3, it is moderated by the Impersonal Perspective Imposition and the detailed External Modification at Turn 119 that is about the absence of a4’s team for the next few days.

Although there are both female requesters and male requesters present in this dialogue, the requests made by female requesters (named in small capital letter) are far less for analysis of

Gender (G). The request made at Turn 120 shows that female requesters may tend to be less direct, for example, through using impersonal perspective in this case. Such indirectness may also be related to First Language and Cantonese Speakers of English tend to be less direct.

The final closing turn, like the beginning turn for the conversation, is again made by the Boss B1, and this shows his higher P among the attendees.

Special analysis: Influence of Rank of Imposition (RI) on request making

The requests have been extracted from a single requester, the Boss/Coordinator B1, so that all the other sociopragmatic factors Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) can be kept constant for comparing the effects of different ranks of imposition. In addition, this dialogue and the Speaker B01 are selected for analysing RI because it is only in such lengthy dialogue B1 is able to produce a higher number of requests demonstrating variations in RI for analysis.

Such requests are listed as below.

2. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H3) B1: If we just go round the table and you introduce yourselves again, [= starting with C_]. </C-></P+></R+>

44. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H4) B1: Is that not [= Standard showing there] (Hint)? </C-></P+></R+>

50. <C-><P+><R+>(D4-M2-H4) B1: D_, six o seven, [\ just have a look at that] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

52. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there [=before break]. </C-></P+></R+>

54. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B1: [= Can you follow up with them (TVs in hotel) today] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>

57. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B1: T_, if you could contact that lady who's apparently very good [\ supervisor]. </C-></P+></R+>

59. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B1: [= We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

94. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M2-H3) B1: Okay, I just noticed in the advertisement of the TV entertainment times yesterday, [= we've got an error in there]. </C-></P+></R+>

107. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H3) B1: Anyway, we've just have to make sure we've got people in place that can handle the gas pipe, [= okay]. </C-></P+></R+>

108. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H3) B1: Have we had the drawings for the er, kitchen yet, the [\ access to the kitchen]? </C-></P+></R+>

Since it is difficult to put objectively these 10 requests head acts in order of rank of imposition, they are just divided into two broad categories “More imposing” and “Less imposing” with rationales for categorising as below. Please refer to the complete context of the whole dialogue to interpret the request head acts of limited context.

Less imposing requests

2. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H3) B1: If we just go round the table and you introduce yourselves again, [= starting with C_]. </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: Requesting colleagues to introduce themselves for an external person recording their meeting is quite reasonable and not a too big request)

50. <C-><P+><R+>(D4-M2-H4) B1: D_, six o seven, [\ just have a look at that] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: Asking colleague(s) to check an air conditioner that has not worked in just one occasion should not be a too big request.)

54. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B1: [= Can you follow up with them (TVs for decoration in hotel) today] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: Decoration is useful but it would not be disastrous if TVs were not proper in place, so such request is not a too big request.)

57. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B1: T_, if you could contact that lady who's apparently very good [\ supervisor]. </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: The rationale is the same as above because it is a follow-up request of Turn 54.)

94. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M2-H3) B1: Okay, I just noticed in the advertisement of the TV entertainment times yesterday, [= we've got an error in there]. </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: Asking colleague(s) to identify that one minor error should not be a too big request.)

108. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H3) B1: Have we had the drawings for the er, kitchen yet, the [\ access to the kitchen]? </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: Asking colleague(s) to trace an already existing drawing should not be a too big request.)

More imposing requests

44. <C-><P+><R+>(D1-M1-H4) B1: Is that not [= Standard showing there] (Hint)? </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: Asking colleagues to check that newspaper is in place is an important and big request because customer complaints may arise.)

52. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to be doing there [=before break]. </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: This is a big request because "executive lunch" is an important event in hotel.)

59. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B1: [= We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: This is a big and important request because fewer customers are coming because they mistake the situation that the renovation is still taking place in hotel.)

107. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H3) B1: Anyway, we've just have to make sure we've got people in place that can handle the gas pipe, [= okay]. </C-></P+></R+>

(Rationale: This is an important and also a big request because it will be disastrous/extremely dangerous if gas pipe is not handled properly.)

Based on the above categorisation, it is observed that Rank of Imposition does somehow influence request patterns. Comparing to the less imposing requests, the more imposing requests generally employ fewer internal modifications (e.g.: fewer uses of past modal “could”), and higher directness levels (e.g.: Obligations statements with “need to” and “have to” at Turns 52, 59 and 107) but there is no obvious difference in intonation because “flat tone” is commonly used by the speaker B1 throughout the whole dialogue. Another interesting pattern is that “Just” is used frequently in the more imposing requests. “Just” may seem like a tone softener pragmalinguistically (requesting one thing only but nothing else), but it is observed that here “Just” is used sociopragmatically to highlight and point to the area of concern in a more straightforward way particular to this collectivistic situation.

Overall observations

This conversation illustrates how high expectation of relationship continuity (R) in the collectivistic situation S02 (Meeting) greatly affects the directness level (D). Due to the close relationship, rapport and solidarity, requests can go extremely indirect (Directness Level 1, Hints) or extremely direct (Directness Level 4, Mood Derivable). It partly aligns but at the same time partly deviates from the finding of Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis and illustrating that D in general increases with R. Here, Conversation Analysis illustrates that having R can either increase D to maximum (i.e. Directness Level 4 of Mood Derivable) or decrease D to minimum (i.e. Directness Level 1 of Hint). Furthermore, the close relationship between the attendees allows them to make requests collaboratively. For example, at Turn 63, the Food and Beverage Manager B2 echoes his boss’ request of contacting travel agents on the postponement of renovation by repeating with a similar request.

The Boss B1 makes most of the requests, and the requests appear to be quite direct if the request head acts are observed alone. However, when B1’s requests are analysed in broader context, it could be found that B1 is not totally absolute or dogmatic because external modifications are frequently used to provide detailed justification for the requests. For the whole meeting, although the attendees are close and have solidarity with each other, External Modifications are frequently used because the meeting involves many different departments and areas of work. Contexts are needed for clarity before requests are put forward in business setting. In addition, flat tones are used more instead of rising tones possibly because the attendees are close to each other.

Statistical analysis finds that Power Distance (P) is not significantly influencing Directness (D), and the requests in this dialogue help demonstrate this finding. The Food and Beverage Manager B2 directly requests his peer the PR Manager to follow up with the press in relation to the publicity of his excellent vegetarian cuisine with Directness Level 3, high Perspective Imposition and without moderation by any Internal Modification. In this case, the high Expectation of Relationship Continuity, rapport and solidarity with the requestee may have made the requester put forward a very frank and straightforward request to his close colleague even when he has no power over his peer. However, P does affect the use of Perspective Imposition. For example, the Boss B1 frequently uses the Hearer Dominance “you” to impose the requests on subordinates.

Another observation is that Situation (S) does have the most significant influence on the Perspective Imposition. The Hearer and Speaker Dominance “we” is used more frequently relative to other sampled dialogues because of the teamwork and collaboration among the hotel staff in this particularly collectivistic and internal situation.

Although Statistical Analysis and Corpus Analysis find that First Language (C) is insignificant in determining the directness of requests, C plays a role here for this particular conversation. Although Cantonese Speakers of English account for half of the meeting attendees, they make much fewer requests than the Non-Cantonese Speakers of English and the requests are more indirect in terms of Directness Level and Perspective Imposition. However, such an observation can only be made of this sampled dialogue, and this could not be claimed to be a general phenomenon.

6.3. Analysis of Sample 3: Conversation B029 (Service Encounter at Airport)

Situation: Service Encounter in the Airport

- Speakers: “B” (Passenger of an airline, NCS), “a” (Passenger Service Agent serving at an airline’s check-in counter, CS)
- Context: “B” wants to check in and book the return trip, and “a” is serving him/her at the airline check-in counter.

Conversation

1. B: Okay, yeah, Hong Kong Taipei, [= Taipei Hong Kong].
2. a: And [= I guess you have booking already].
3. B: Yeah, I have a booking in yeah ten thirty [= yeah].
4. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: Okay, [= may I have your passport please]?
</C+></P-></R->
5. B: [= yeah].
6. a: [= Thank you].
7. (pause)
8. B: [? Is it]?
9. a: [= Mister D_].
10. B: [/ Yeah].
11. a: [/ Would you like to have one-way ticket or round trip]?
12. B: Erm [\\ round trip, I think, please].
13. a: Okay, may I know how long you will stay in Taiwan? [= Will it be more than three days]?
14. B: It’s cheaper, yeah, yeah I’ll be, erm I will be coming back by the Sunday night [\\ or Monday morning] (EM).
15. a: Would you like to have any booking now or [\\ just leave it open]?
16. <C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Can you book me for last flight [\\ on Sunday night] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R->
17. a: [= Okay].
18. B: I’m not sure but [? I’ve got a].
19. a: [\\ Oh, you can change it in Taiwan]?
20. B: Yeah, [\\ I can change it] ...
21. B: Can you make, can you give me the number please, [\\ the telephone number]?



22. a: So would you like to just make a booking on Sunday first or you just do it [= in Taiwan la]?
23. B: No, make the booking, make the booking, [\ then I can change it].
24. a: Okay, last flight er should be departed at seven thirty in the evening, okay, which get into Hong Kong [\at nine fifteen at night].
25. B: Yeah [= okay].
26. (Pause)
27. a: [\ Okay, this is your passport].
28. B: [= This is a smoking flight tonight]?
29. a: Er [\ no].
30. B: [\ It's not a smoking flight].
31. a: [\ It is a non-smoking flight actually].
32. B: (Inaudible) [? non-smoking].
33. a: So Mister D_, if you just come back on Sunday, we have to charge you a one-year ticket because it's less than three [nights\] (share on the condition).
34. a: Will you come back on [= Monday then er]?
35. B: [= Is it cheaper]?
36. a: [\ Yes].
37. B: [\ How much cheaper]?
38. a: It's two hun, I mean two thousand three hundred and sixty, that means six hundred and sixty Hong Kong dollars, the price difference, cheaper, [\ cheaper].
39. B: Cheaper okay, [\ I'll come back on Monday then] (EM).
40. <C+><P-><R->(D4-M2-H4) B: First flight back on Monday [/ please] (w EM).
</C+></P-></R->
41. a: Okay (laugh), [= okay].

<Turns 42 to 48 are clarifications on the schedule of the first Monday flight back to Hong Kong.>

49. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: [= Would you like to pay by credit card then]?
</C+></P-></R->
50. B: [= Yes please].
51. <C-><P+><R->(D4-M2-H4) B: And [= do the frequent flyer miles as well please].
</C-></P+></R->

52. a: Thank you, yeah [\ sure].

53. (Pause)

<Turns 54 to 63 show that the passenger passes the credit card to the passenger service agent.>

64. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) [/ a: May I have your signature by the cross please]? </C+></P-></R->

65. B: [/ Of course].

66. (Pause)

67. a: [= Thank you].

68. (Pause)

69. a: [= Thank you].

70. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: So would you please collect your boarding card at B counter now [= okay]? </C+></P-></R->

71. B: [= Up where]?

72. a: Just at counter B [\ on the other side].

73. B: Counter B, okay, [= no worries].

<Turns 74 to 77 are mainly the passenger service agent's polite and formulaic closing with "have a nice flight" and "don't forget your passport".>

Analysis

This excerpt belongs to another common type of service encounter in HKCSE (Business), a checking-in at the airport. This dialogue is selected because it covers a wide variety of requests for analysis. Apart from routine requests such as the request of passport for check-in, the dialogue also covers a unique part in which the passenger service agent professionally offers her advice for the passenger to save money and the passenger makes responses and requests quite differently afterwards.

At Turn 1, the non-Cantonese passenger seems to be responding to the passenger service agent's question such as "Sir, do you want to check in?" which may not have been included in the recording. Turns 2 & 3 confirms that the passenger has made a prior booking.

At Turn 4, the passenger service agent makes the first request at Directness (D) Level 2 “Query Preparatory” and Perspective Imposition (H) Level 2 “Speaker Dominance” with the Internal Modification (M) “may”.

**4. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) a: Okay, [= may I have your passport please]?
</C+></P-></R->**

This request is an exemplar being in line with the findings of the statistical analyses and corpus analyses. Situation (S) (being highly correlated with Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) as found in statistical analyses) mostly affects Directness (D) and Perspective Imposition (H) while Power Distance mostly affects Internal Modification (M). Since the passenger service agent has no R and also less power than the passenger, the remote relationship together with the lower power position in this “standard situation” (House, 1989) cause the passenger service agent to request in low D and also low H so as to impose less on the passenger. Furthermore, corpus analyses reveal that Cantonese Speakers of English use the Polite Modal “may” more often than the Non-Cantonese Speakers of English, and Turn 4 is one such example. The request is made in a flat tone probably because such requests have become the passenger service agent’s mechanical and formulaic expression for conducting the check-in. The request is accepted right away at Turn 5 without any resistance and also in a flat tone. This all go very smooth probably because, as House argues (1989), requesters clearly have the right to request and requestees clearly have the obligation to fulfil such request in “standard situations”. The passenger service agent makes the request in a polite and moderate way with M, low D and low H, so the passenger can promptly accept the mild request. Since the request is normal, procedural and also necessary for check-in, there should not be any resistance to accepting such a take-for-granted and routine request, so at Turn 6, the passenger service agent politely expresses gratitude for the passenger’s cooperation. It is also worthwhile to note that Gender (G) and First Language (C) may also contribute to the lower directness made by the speaker “a” because “a” is a female non-Cantonese speaker of English.

Line 7 is a pause but also a Transitional Marker to the second part of the dialogue. Turns 8 to 15 are exchanges of information for processing the check-in and preparing the booking for the return flight from Taiwan to Hong Kong. At Turn 16, the passenger directly requests booking the last flight on Sunday for the return one with the Perspective Imposition Level 4

of “you” without Internal Modification:

16. <C-><P+><R->(D2-M1-H4) B: Can you book me for last flight [\ on Sunday night] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R->

The modal verb used is the plain “Can”. However, the directness is cushioned by Query Preparatory of Directness Level 2 and the External Modification “Grounder” at Turn 14:

14. B: It’s cheaper, yeah, yeah I’ll be, erm I will be coming back by the Sunday night [\ or Monday morning] (EM).

Since it will be cheaper to come back on Sunday night, the passenger has good reason to put forward his request to secure the return flight as early as possible. Moreover, although the request is made with a falling tone, it demonstrates resoluteness for fast securing the return flight rather than imposition. With the request being made with Grounder and the lower P of the passenger service agent, the passenger service agent accepts the request right away at Turn 17 with “Okay”.

Turns 18 to 25 involve clarifications and confirmation of the booking for the return flight, while Turns 28 to 32 involves information exchanges on whether the flight from Hong Kong to Taiwan is smoking or non-smoking. At Turn 33, the “So Mister D_” is a Discontinuity Marker to end the discussion on tonight’s flight and “if you just come back on Sunday” is the Topic-Initial Utterance to switch back the discussion to the booking of the return flight. At Turns 33 to 38, the passenger service agent demonstrates her professionalism and offers the passenger a better alternative that is to come back on Monday instead of Sunday so that the passenger will not be charged a one-year ticket and HK\$660 can be saved, for example:

38. a: It’s two hun, I mean two thousand three hundred and sixty, that means six hundred and sixty Hong Kong dollars, the price difference, cheaper, [\ cheaper].

At Turn 40, the passenger requests booking the first flight back on Monday:

40. <C+><P-><R->(D4-M2-H4) B: First flight back on Monday [/ please] (w EM). </C+></P-></R->

Although the request is made at Directness Level 4 “Imperative Mood”, it is not an imposing request because such request is made with the politeness marker “please” which is not common in requests made by customers who have power over service agents. The imperative here can be interpreted as a prompt and sincere acceptance of the better and professional alternative proposed by the passenger agent and also as the acceptance of good intention demonstrated by the passenger service agent. Furthermore, the request is moderated by the External Modification “Preparator” at Turn 39 that is about the passenger’s awareness of the sum saved. While B tends to use more flat or falling tone in the whole dialogue, B here makes the request exceptionally with a rising tone to show his gratitude to the passenger service agent’s professional and good intention that cannot be taken for granted. At Turn 41, the passenger service agent receives the request in a flat tone but with a laugh because the passenger’s request is actually an acceptance of the passenger service agent’s offer and sincerity in return:

41. a: Okay (laugh), [= okay].

At Turn 49, the passenger service agent requests the passenger to provide his credit card politely at Directness Level 2 “Query Preparatory” with the Internal Modification “would”:

**49. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: [= Would you like to pay by credit card then]?
</C+></P-></R->**

Again, the request is made with a flat tone probably because this is one of the mechanical and formulaic expressions under the check-in context. The request is accepted right away and politely at Turn 50. At Turn 51, the passenger proceeds to request the recording of frequent flyer miles politely with the Internal Modification “please”:

**51. <C-><P+><R->(D4-M2-H4) B: And [= do the frequent flyer miles as well please].
</C-></P+></R->**

Next, the request is accepted right away at Turn 52 with “Thank you, yeah sure”.

At turn 64, the passenger service agent requests a signature from the passenger politely

with Directness Level 2 “Query Preparatory”, the Perspective Imposition “I”, the Internal Modification “may” and the fall-rise tone:

64. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H2) [V a: May I have your signature by the cross please]? </C+></P-></R->

The request is accepted right away with a rising tone and “Of course” at Turn 65.

At Turn 70, the passenger service agent makes the last request in the dialogue. The passenger is requested politely to collect his boarding card at the B counter at Directness Level 2 “Query Preparatory” with Internal Modification “please”:

70. <C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: So would you please collect your boarding card at B counter now [= okay]? </C+></P-></R->

After some confirmation on the location to collect the boarding card, the request is accepted right away at Turn 73 with a flat tone and the response “Counter B, okay, no worries”.

Overall observations

In addition to Sampled Dialogue 1, this conversation again illustrates the effect of having no R in “standard situation” (House, 1989) of one-off service encounter. Similar to the sampled dialogue B01, the distant/remote relationship makes the speakers less likely to put forward their requests in the most direct way in the situation S01 (Service Encounter). For example, although the passenger is in a higher power position, he/she uses a milder “Query Preparatory” of Directness Level 2 with External Modification “Grounder” provided for justifying the request at Turn 16 probably because of having no expectation of relationship on the requestee. In other words, the big social distance may reduce the tendency of putting forward requests directly due to higher power position. At Turns 40 and 51, although the passenger makes the requests in Directness Level 4 “Imperative Mood”, such requests are put forward with Internal Modification that is the Politeness Marker “please”. On the other hand, because of one’s lower power position, the highest Directness Level that the passenger service agent uses is only the “Query Preparatory” of Level 2 frequently with the internal modifications, the polite modal “may” and the politeness marker “please”. As mentioned, Cantonese Speakers of English tend to use both “may” and “please” more frequently. One



probable reason is that students in Hong Kong have been implanted with such textbook English right from primary school.

The dialogue also demonstrates the effect of Power Distance (P) on Perspective Imposition (H). With higher P, the passenger tends to use higher levels of Perspective Imposition such as “you” at Turns 16, 40 and 51, while the passenger tends to use lower levels of Perspective Imposition such as the “I” at Turns 4 and 64

Although check-in encounters are frequent and routine at the airport, this dialogue consists of both formulaic and unique/particular exchanges. Since the passenger and the passenger service agent are familiar with the simple procedures of checking-in, the requests and acceptances at Turns 1 to 32 are concise, formulaic and delivered in flat tone. For example, at Turn 4, the passenger service agent makes the request “Okay, may I have your passport please” concisely and in flat tone, and the passenger also accepts the request concisely in “Yeah” and in flat tone at Turn 5. The exchanges start to be more particular with the passenger service agent offering a professional alternative of returning one day later to save HK\$660. The passenger does not take such offer for granted and in return appreciates the sincerity and professionalism of the passenger service agent. The passenger starts to use more the politeness marker “please” at Turns 40, 50 and 51 and the positive and resolute response “Of course” in rising tone at Turn 65. The passenger service agent also starts to respond in a livelier way then. For example, she responds with a laugh to the passenger’s acceptance of her offer of coming back one day later.



6.4. Analysis of Sample 4: Conversation B062 (Placement Interview in Hotel)

Situation: Placement Interview in a Hotel

- Speakers: “B” (Staff of a hotel being the interviewer, NCS), a (To-be-intern being the interviewee, CS)
- Context: As shown in the dialogue, “a” has been assigned to have an internship in the hotel Hyatt Regency. “B” inquiries of “a” about her area(s) of interest to work in the hotel and makes requests of “a” for the things that are required of an internship.

Conversation

1. B: I would like to first start by introducing myself and the bit of history of the division I sort of take care of within the hotel. And then I'll ask you if you permit me to go into a little more [= details].
2. (Pause)
3. B: First of all, I always like ask people why that they're interested in the industry [\ and second in Hyatt].
4. a: [\Mm].
5. B: So what's your interest in the industry, why you're attracted to a hotel, hotel life [? or hotel career]?
6. a: Um, mm, mm, um, I've choose this er this course hotel and catering management to study It's mainly because I think that er this course is quite practical and useful, and um, and I also know that er the hotel industry in Hong Kong, um the service industry, especially for the hotel industry, will be a blooming industry after 1997. As you know um um, after the construction of the new airport, and there is numerous hotels built around the Chek Lap Kok Airport, and I think that um um er to choose the a career which is working in the hotel industry, um will be a career which is um [\ a good career prospect].
7. B: [\ That is correct].
8. a: And I also er want to choose some kind of career which is service oriented, er which has, er direct contact with the guest, I can learn the interpersonal skills, the communication skills and to learn how to cooperate with others. I think it's [\ quite important].



9. B: It is, I do agree with all of what you said, but I would also like to emphasise that it's not only restricted to our industry to have the relations with others, and to obviously have well a nice and interesting career, one thing I would at least like to, to bring upon is that [/ if you work in this industry] (EM).
10. a: Mm mm mm mm [\ mm].
11. B: Er as you will know we work when others are relaxing in general, meaning that our life turns around the clients, meaning that we do often work [/ on shifts] (EM).
12. a: [\ Mm mm mm].
13. B: And on a schedule which is not very common [? like a nine-to-five] (EM).
14. a: [\ Mm mm mm].
15. B: Normal office hours, as we call it or [\ bank hours] (EM).
16. a: Yes, [\ mm].
17. B: We work very much into shifts and working on Sundays, [= working on Christmas] (EM).
18. a: [\ Yes].
19. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B: Working on all these, [/ are you comfortable with that] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>
20. a: Always, [\ I think so].
21. B: [\ You think so]?
22. a: [\ I will try my best].
23. B: [\That, that's important].
24. a: [\ Mm mm].
25. B: In our industry, it it's quite important to to be focused on. We work on public holidays, we work during hours that are not as common [\ as other industries] (EM).
26. a: Mm [= mm].
27. B: Now I'd like to ask you er my second part of the question which was what you're interested in Hyatt. Or is there any special reason or you just dropped off in the MTR, and you saw Hyatt oh [\ let me walk in [here] (laugh).
28. a: (laugh) Actually, um I'm being assigned to work in the Hyatt, [\Hyatt Regency].
29. B: Oh you're been assigned, [\ it's not your choice].
30. a: Yes (laugh), but er when I'm, I know that I was being assigned to er to apply for the internship trainee to work in the Hyatt Regency, I'm quite happy cos um (laugh) its location is very convenient. It's just near the MTR station, and um I just come here, go here to um by [/ MTR].

31. B: [/ Uhuh].
32. a: And um also, um I know that, er from the brochure of the Hyatt Regency, I know the, I know that er this hotel always emphasise on the staff training, and they treat their staff not like their employee just like their guest, and they have a good and er well organised training programmes for the staff; therefore, I'm quite happy to be assigned to [/ to work here].
33. B: Okay very good, well, that's a good answer. I would just like to know which area of interest do you have, where would you like to train, which area. [/ Do you have a specific area you would like to train in]?
34. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H2) a: **Actually, I want to train in the rooms division department and the flat, the [\ F and B Department] (w EM).** </C+></P-></R+>
35. a: Because I have these subjects in my er when I'm studying in the Hong Kong Polytechnic er er I've taken these subjects such as the accommodations and the food and beverage management [/ during year one and year two] (EM).
36. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H2) a: **We think that um er I really want to [\ have a chance to work in these department] (w EM).** </C+></P-></R+>
37. a: To consolidate my knowledge which I've learnt from textbooks or from my text lecturers to apply what I've learnt from textbooks to apply to [\ into the real hotel situations] (EM).
38. B: Very good, very well, because I'm from Food and Beverage, I'll ask [\ more specifically].
39. a: Mm [= mm mm mm mm].
40. B: Within food and beverage, I see that you have no prior experience within food and beverage division in our hotel, you have or not, [\ no]?
41. a: Er actually um, we have taken the food and beverage management er in year one and year two er, we have two restaurants in the Hong Kong polytechnic name as er [\ namely].
42. B: [\ Okay].
43. a: The Bauhinia Restaurants and the Polytop Restaurant, um um these two restaurants is for the students to have their practicum there to to practise there, [= and].
44. B: Uhuh, [/ okay].
45. a: Um, er our our class have 50 students, [? and we're divided into 2 groups].
46. B: [/ mhm].



47. a: Er er one group will be er doing the kitchen operation in the er back of house, and the other group is [? in the front of house to].
48. B: [/ Uhuh].
49. a: Er to [V to do the service].
50. B: [/ Uhuh].
51. a: To have er the direct contact with the guest. I think the food and beverage management subjects um is quite practical and useful and quite interesting as as [= er].
52. B: [/ Uhuh].
53. a: We need to work together, all 50 of us need to work together, and we cooperate with each other, we learn to, er the interpersonal skills, [= the communication skills].
54. B: [= Mhm].
55. a: And um er, all of us er want to er try our best to to make the menu a success, and um I think it's quite interesting and useful [\ subjects].
56. B: Okay, so when you were doing your practicum in the restaurants of your university, how, [\ what did you do exactly]?
57. a: Mm mm mm mm mm mm [/ what].
58. B: What [\ what].
59. a: [\ What did I learn]?
60. B: Yeah, no, what did you, what were the tasks you had to do, what [\ what did you do]?
61. a: Um um yes it is, actually um, we need to set the price of the menu, um it's because, um they have decide the menu for us, we need to cook this food this er all of them are set menu, er in year two, we need to to to do the two [\ to do three practicum].
62. B: [Mm/] mm.
63. a: Two of them are are western [food\].
64. B: [/ Mm mm].
65. a: And the one of them are Chinese food, and all er three of them are are set menu, we need to set the price to consider the food cost, to calculate the food cost, um and then er, I mean er, it's because um in this semesters, our group are doing the um front of house to have er to do the service [= um].
66. B: [/ Mhm].
67. a: We've we have divided into 3 groups, the management team, the supervisory team [V and the operational team].
68. B: [V Okay].



69. a: The operational team consists of the runner and the waiter waitress, and the supervisory team consist of the captain, and the management team have the er financial controller, receptionist er sales and marketing manager, and manager, they do all the planning, [= and um].
70. B: [/ Okay].
71. a: They, we need to um, firstly we need to set our object objective, may maybe the er the the number of occupancy rate and the er er the the the percentage of the customer satisfaction, and and we also need to design for the service procedure such as um to unfold napkin and then to to pour the water, yes and then um [= erm].
72. B: Yeah, that's very important part, [/ yes].
73. a: Er lastly the guest will fill in a questionnaires to evaluate our ser [\ our service].
74. B: Okay, [/ yeah].
75. a: And then we can get some feedback and then evaluate [\ our service stand standard].
76. B: Okay fine, okay, well, I've seen obviously that well you have [\ some basic knowledge].
77. a: [\ Mm].
78. B: Er the reason for I'm asking you these questions [= and the reason why I would like to insist on].
79. a: [= Mm].
80. B: The practicality of a training is because we do believe [\ very strongly in Hyatt] (EM).
81. a: [\ Mm].
82. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B: That for all trainings any division you have to start at, what we say at the beginning or start from [\ the bottom] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>
83. We do emphasise (practicality) very much especially for the front of the house, and then food and beverage, for example, we do emphasise a lot that people start as waiter and stay there for a while before [\ climbing up the ladder] (EM).
84. a: [\ Mm].
85. B: Er obviously from your experience and from the way you trust yourself, I can see that obviously you have been educated, but as you well said that yourself, the reality of books to the reality of life is very different, that's one of the reasons why you go through training to see [\ and accommodate yourself] (EM).
86. a: [\ Mm].



87. B: Nevertheless, we do emphasise a lot and what we do find a lot of trainees are not experienced enough even if they have the theoretical knowledge of running an operation, they are confronted with quite a lot of difficulties once on the floor, and the main reason being is that knowing how to set up a table is not the same as setting up a table, and the main reason why we ask and we require this experience and going through the process is because you cannot expect to be considered the leader or a manager if you cannot show your captains who have been there for fifteen years, or your waiters who have been there for twenty years. You cannot just go and say do that without showing them or without showing them that you know what you're talking about, and that's one of the big emphasis on training in Hyatt is that we want to see future managers develop their skills from the very bottom. The reason why I'm saying all this is that I have to ask you, and I ask you to, to answer [\ very frankly] (EM).
88. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B: Are you afraid of being a waiter for so much time that is available, a month [\ or five weeks or six weeks] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>
89. a: I don't mind [= because] ...
90. B: Because but not only minding but er, are you, you have to be convinced that this is important (starting from the bottom) [\ for your development] because it's the only way that you can future manage these people because you have been through it, you know not because you've read it somewhere, but because you have been through it. That's the first point, that's very important you have to be convinced that starting at the bottom is the best thing for you [\ to advance quickly] (EM).
91. a: Mm mm [\ mm].
92. B: [/ Ha].
93. a: Um I quite agree with you, even I'm a degree student, I know a lot of theories or have only knowledge from the textbooks. If I want to join the hotel industry, um even er not only in the er in the Food and Beverage Department, even in the Rooms Division or other department, we need to start from very beginning, start from the bottom to do the operational level, and then um er it's because, um I do think that um we need to start it from the bottom and know um er and know the operational techniques, and er we may come across of come across of a lot of operational problems, we need to know how to handle this problems, and if we want to progress er or promoted to higher level manager, [\ and we know how to handle these problems].
94. B: Mhm, that's right. Okay, I do, [\ I think we will look on that].



95. B: Do you have any specific area you would like to concentrate on within your training in Food and Beverage? Is there a specific area like coffee shop, banquets, room service, [/ is there a specific area you're more interested in?]
96. <C+><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H2) a: Rooms, um I think um maybe in the ban, [\ banquet] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>
97. B: [/ In banquet?]
98. a: [/ Yeah].
99. B: Okay, any [/ specific reason for that?]
100. a: (Laugh) I think er any department [\ is the same] (EM).
101. B: [/Yeah].
102. a: Er any any department in the F, and any section or any department in the Food and Beverage is quite similar (laugh) [\ I think] (EM).
103. B: Okay, no, that's okay, I'm just, I'm just wanting to find out a little more.

<Turns 104 to 116 are exchanges about the confirmation on the month to report duty and also some chit-chats in relation to the handover.>

<Turns 117 to 124 are exchanges on the interviewee's academic study. At Turn 125 (next turn), B ends such discussion with the Discontinuity Marker "That's it. Okay, well that's fine".>

125. B: That's it. Okay, well that's fine, er, would you have any questions? [/ Please don't hesitate].
126. a: I want to know, I would be very pleased to know do you have any suggestion or er any recommendations for us as trainee to adapt to the hotel er [\ environment].
127. B: That's a good question, er I do have two on two different levels on [= on] ...
128. a: Mm [/ mm mm].
129. B: On a career-path level, I would say, um, be [\ open minded].
130. a: Mm mm [= mm].
131. B: Er Hong Kong is a great place where the diversity of cultures is so big that you can actually taste a little bit of every corner of the world. Basically, er nevertheless, I do find that Hong Kongers are in general very family-value-oriented, [/ which I think is good].
132. a: [\Mm].
133. B: Nevertheless, I do find sometimes, it can narrow a little bit your vision and I would say in your career, and if you do join Hyatt, when you finish or when you finish, I would



suggest that you take a year or two of experience abroad, going to Taiwan, going to Mainland China, going to Singapore, [=going to Malaysia].

134. a: Mm mm mm [\ mm mm mm].

135. B: But I do find that Hong Kong girls are very hardworking, but Hong Kong girls [\stay in Hong Kong].

136. a: [\ Mm].

137. B: Er I think it is worth trying to travel abroad and learn from um er [\ foreign experiences].

138. a: Mm mm [\mm mm mm mm].

139. B: Er on the second point, I can only speak for Hyatt, but you have to [\ at some point].

140. a: [/ Mm mm].

141. B: Unfortunately make it clear whether or you want to take [/ a career path].

142. a: [\ Mm].

143. B: [\ And how seriously committed you are for that].

144. a: [\ Mm].

145. B: Especially at the beginning, er and I believe that's true, in a lot of industries, er you'll be exposed to a lot of long hours and long hours, in our industry, is very easy for one simple reason [\ is that the hotel never closes].

146. a: [\ Mm].

147. B: So you can basically be here [\ twenty-four hours a day].

148. a: [\Mm].

149. B: It's not like another shop or bank it closes so you can't, but [\basically, we are open all the time].

150. a: [\Mm].

151. B: So I think in our industry, you, when you're committed, you will find that [\ hours can be quite long].

152. a: [\ Mm mm].

153. B: And that you have to be very committed, and if you have a family of your own, if you're married, it makes it a little more difficult, so I always tell people which are starting in the career, it's a beautiful career, you have the opportunity to meet every day different people, one day [\ is different from the other].

154. a: [\ Mm].

155. B: It's [\ never the same].

156. a: [\ Mm].

157. B: You always know when you start, but you never know when you finish [\ a day].
158. a: Mm [\ mm].
159. B: And that's something that I think, a lot of people that leave their profession in the very early stages is because they didn't think that it would be [\ so time consuming].
160. a: [\ Mm].
161. B: It would be, it would take so much of their life, and it's something I always encourage people to think about so that you don't lose your time and and [? your effort].
162. a: [\ Mm].
163. B: But anyway, I can see from our interview that [\ you're well committed].
164. a: [/ Mhm].

<At Turns 165 to the end, B again shows that he values the relationship with the interviewee “a” and gives advice for her long-term personal growth. Probably since B observes that the interviewee is sometimes not giving precise or good reasons when requesting the training areas especially at Turns 100 and 102, B advises him/her to be more relevant and go straight to the point when answering questions in interviews.>

Analysis

This dialogue is selected as an exemplar for placement interviews because the interviewer is passionate and raises many requests with the intention of bringing up important long-term career issues for the interviewee to ponder on. Like other selections, the excerpt itself is rich in request patterns in terms of both variety and quantity.

Turns 1-3 set up the context of a placement interview of a hotel. The interviewer “B” prefaces that he will introduce himself, his roles and his division of the hotel while at the same time will also spend time to understand the interest of the interviewee “a” in the placement and in the hotel industry. At Turn 5, the interviewer initiates the meeting by asking the first question about the interviewee's interest in the hotel industry. This part obviously shows that the interviewer has power over the interviewee because he makes the first turn for the whole conversation at Turn 1 and allocates the turn to the interviewee at Turn 5 with the question.

The interviewee responds to B's question and shares her interest in the hotel industry at

Turns 6 to 8. She is attracted to such an industry because of the strong development of the new airport, and she would like to get involved in service industry to polish her interpersonal skills.

At Turn 9, B provides the Topic Initial Utterance “to obviously have well a nice and interesting career, one thing I would at least like to, to bring upon is that if you work in this industry” to initiate his following request which is about working on shifts. “to obviously have well a nice and interesting career” also serves as the External Modification, the “Promise of Reward”, for the request that follows.

Probably since requesting a young person to commit herself to working on shifts is substantial and also important, B provides a series of External Modifications from Turns 9 to 17 to pave way for the request made at Turn 19, for example:

11. B: Er as you will know we work when others are relaxing in general, meaning that our life turns around the clients, meaning that we do often work [/ on shifts] (EM).

13. B: And on a schedule which is not very common [? like a nine-to-five] (EM).

15. B: Normal office hours, as we call it or [\ bank hours] (EM).

17. B: We work very much into shifts and working on Sundays, [= working on Christmas] (EM).

These External Modifications are “Preparators” and also “Grounders”. The pronoun “we” stresses that everyone serving in the hotel industry needs to work on shifts and there cannot be any exception for interns. Although B makes the request with no Internal Modification at Turn 19, the request is moderated by the previously mentioned External Modifications, the Directness Level 2 “Query Preparatory” and the rising tone:

19. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B: Working on all these, [/ are you comfortable with that] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>

To eagerly show one’s commitment in the hotel industry and comply with the industry norm,

the interviewee accepts the request promptly and resolutely with “Always, I think so” at Turn 20 without any resistance to such a may-be substantial request for youngsters. Interestingly, B challenges the interviewee for her without-second-thought acceptance of the substantial request and next provides one more External Modification “Grounder” at Turn 25 for the interviewee to ponder on:

25. B: In our industry, it it’s quite important to to be focused on. We work on public holidays, we work during hours that are not as common [\ as other industries] (EM).

At Turn 27, B moves on to the next part of the dialogue with the Transitional Marker “Now I’d like to ask you er my second part of the question which was what you’re interested in Hyatt” which is also functionally a question for information. The interviewee responds to such a question at Turns 28 to 32 first with jokes, for example, “I’m being assigned to work in the Hyatt” and “It’s just near the MTR station”, and next with the real reason “this hotel always emphasise on the staff training”. Such sharing is ended by the interviewer at Turn 33 with the Discontinuity Marker “Okay very good, well, that’s a good answer”.

At Turn 33, B gives the interviewee a chance to share her areas of interest for receiving training in the internship. At Turn 34, the interviewee requests to work and receive training in the Housekeeping Department and the Food and Beverage Department strongly with Directness Level 3 “Want Statement” in a falling tone:

34. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H2) a: Actually, I want to train in the rooms division department and the flat, the [\ F and B Department] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

Contrasting with most of the requests identified in the present study which are either moderated with Internal Modifications or neutrally not moderated with any Internal Modifications, this request interestingly goes the other way to strengthen the imposition with the upgrader “actually” which is of very low frequency in HKCSE (Business). Probably since the areas to receive training are the cruxes of the internship which greatly affect the future career and development of an intern, the interviewee thus wants to express her determination to receive training in the aforesaid areas through a more resolute and forceful way. Since the request at Turn 34 is upgraded in this instance, the External Modification “Grounder” at Turn 35 can be interpreted as an enhancement of the impact of the request, and it provides the

reason for the request that is having studied related subjects in school. The request at Turn 34 is reinforced by another related request at Turn 36 that is made at Directness Level 3 “Want Statement” again with another Upgrader “really” in falling tone:

36. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M1-H2) a: We think that um er I really want to [\ have a chance to work in these department] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

Turn 36 again shows that want statements are frequently used by interviewees in general. Such a request is supported by the External Modification “Grounder” at Turn 37, and it provides the reason that is about the application of knowledge learned:

37. a: To consolidate my knowledge which I’ve learnt from textbooks or from my text lecturers to apply what I’ve learnt from textbooks to apply to [\ into the real hotel situations] (EM).

With the interviewee providing good grounds for the requests made at Turns 34 and 36, B preliminarily accepts such requests at Turn 38 with “Very good, very well” and at the same time with some reservation “I see that you have no prior experience within food and beverage division in our hotel” at Turn 40.

At Turns 41-75, the interviewee extensively shares her practical experience in Food and Beverage. The practicum experience in the Bauhinia Restaurant of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University especially impresses B. Therefore, B confirms that the interviewee has basic knowledge of Food and Beverage at Turn 76. Turns 41-75 may also be perceived as the remote External Modification that supports the requests made at Turns 34 & 36 for the areas to receive training.

At Turn 78, B provides the Transitional Marker to move on to his second request that is about working from the bottom. Turn 80 is the External Modification “Grounder” for the request that follows. At Turn 82, B forcefully requests the interviewee to start working in the hotel industry from the bottom with “Obligation Statement” of Directness Level 3 without any Internal Modification and in a falling tone:

82. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M1-H3) B: That for all trainings any division you have to start at, what we say at the beginning or start from [\ the bottom] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

Since the interviewer “B” considers such request substantial and important, he provides a series of extensive External Modifications “Grounders” with strong expressions such as “we do emphasise a lot/very much” being used three times at Turns 83-87 to enhance the impacts of the Grounders:

83. We do emphasise (practicality) very much especially for the front of the house, and then food and beverage, for example, we do emphasise a lot that people start as waiter and stay there for a while before [\ climbing up the ladder] (EM).

85. B: Er obviously from your experience and from the way you trust yourself, I can see that obviously you have been educated, but as you well said that yourself, the reality of books to the reality of life is very different, that’s one of the reasons why you go through training to see [\ and accommodate yourself] (EM).

87. B: Nevertheless, we do emphasise a lot and what we do find a lot of trainees are not experienced enough even if they have the theoretical knowledge of running an operation, they are confronted with quite a lot of difficulties once on the floor, and the main reason being is that knowing how to set up a table is not the same as setting up a table, and the main reason why we ask and we require this experience and going through the process is because you cannot expect to be considered the leader or a manager if you cannot show your captains who have been there for fifteen years, or your waiters who have been there for twenty years. You cannot just go and say do that without showing them or without showing them that you know what you’re talking about... (EM).

Turn 88 is another related request to reinforce the request made at Turn 82. At Turn 88, B questions the willingness of the interviewee to be a waiter (to work from the bottom) for long working hours with “Query Preparatory” of Directness Level 2 but without any Internal Modifications:

88. <C-><P+><R+>(D2-M1-H4) B: Are you afraid of being a waiter for so much time that is available, a month [\ or five weeks or six weeks] (w EM)? </C-></P+></R+>

At Turn 90, B gives the last External Modification of that series to consolidate the justification for the related requests made at Turns 82 and 88:

90. B: Because but not only minding but er, are you, you have to be convinced that this is important (starting from the bottom) [\ for your development] because it's the only way that you can future manage these people because you have been through it... (EM).

Again, strong expressions are used at Turn 90 such as “you have to be convinced that” being used twice to strengthen the impact of the Grounder. It is interesting to note that the External Modifications given at Turns 83 to 90 are all put forward in falling tone that may be intended to raise the resoluteness of the grounds. At Turn 93, the interviewee accepts the requests made at Turns 82 and 88 and concurs with B's view totally with the positive alignments such as “I do think that um we need to start it from the bottom”.

With the Transitional Marker at Turn 94, B gives the interviewee a chance to request specific areas of training in Food and Beverage at Turn 95. At Turn 96, the interviewee requests to be trained in banquets with “Suggestory Formula” (“I think”, “maybe”) of Directness Level 2:

96. <C+><P-><R+>(D2-M1-H2) a: Rooms, um I think um maybe in the ban, [\ banquet] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

External Modifications are provided at Turns 100 and 102 in a joking way probably because the interviewee thinks that he/she has established rapport with the interviewer or he/she really thinks that the specific areas do not matter as long as the training is in Food and Beverage:

100. a: (Laugh) I think er any department [\ is the same] (EM).

102. a: Er any any department in the F, and any section or any department in the Food and Beverage is quite similar (laugh) [\ I think] (EM).

However, such responses are disappointing especially in the context of a placement interview as the interviewee loses the good chance to justify her requested area “banquet” and it shows

immaturity. B seems to be frustrated with the responses given by the interviewee and uses the Discontinuity Marker “Okay... I’m just wanting to find out a little more” at Turn 103 to end such discussion.

At Turn 125, B proceeds to the last part of the dialogue with a concise Transitional Marker “Er” and then allows the interviewee to raise questions if any in a friendly rising tone. At Turn 126, to show his sincerity in the forthcoming internship, the interviewee asks B to give advice on adaptation to the hotel working environment. At Turns 127 to 164, B demonstrates his forward-looking mentality and gives detailed advice in both short-term “Hyatt level” and long-term “career level”.

Overall observations

Situation (S) and the correlated Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) play a more important role than Power Distance (P) on the nature of requests in this dialogue. Since the interviewer “B” expects “a” to be his intern or even a long-term colleague in the field, “B” tends to make his requests more forward-looking or “long-term”. As demonstrated in the dialogue, B is really sincere and he cares about the long-term career development of the interviewee. B may like the interviewee to anchor her career in the hotel industry in the long run. Also, the objective of the dialogue particular to the situation (S) of placement interview affects the nature of requests to be made because placement interview does not only outline the job responsibilities but also involves sharing of practical experience to nurture the future workforce for the industry. Therefore, B makes two substantial but also very important requests that are working on shifts and working from the bottom. External modifications provided for such requests are thorough and in-depth. They do not only serve as justifications for the requests but also as advice to help bring up the core professional attitudes in the interviewee right from her first encounter with the industrial reality. Therefore, the requests made by B become very different from the requests identified in the other sample dialogues. The requests are put forward with lengthy and in-depth external modifications. For most of the requests identified in the present study, external modifications such as grounders generally help justify and thus reduce the imposition. However, the lengthy and in-depth external modifications given by B may well go the other way round to enhance the impacts of the requests. In addition, there are many forceful and resolute expressions such as “... to obviously have well a nice and interesting career, one thing I would at least like to, to bring upon is that if you work in this industry...” (Turn 9), “...meaning that we do often work on



shifts” (Turn 11), “We work very much into shifts...” (Turn 17), “The practicality of a training is because we do believe very strongly in Hyatt” (Turn 80), “We do emphasise very much especially... we do emphasise a lot that people start as waiter...” (Turn 83), “...we do emphasise a lot and what we do find a lot of trainees are not experienced enough... that’s one of the big emphasis on training in Hyatt is that we want to see future managers develop their skills from the very bottom...” (Turn 87) and “...you have to be convinced that this is important... That’s the first point, that’s very important you have to be convinced that starting at the bottom is the best thing for you to advance quickly” (Turn 90). The forceful way of presentation in the external modifications is not intended to put a great imposition on the interviewee but to teach and share the most important tips to success in the hotel industry so as to benefit the interviewee right from her start of career. Stronger tone is reasonable here because the request is made not just for the benefit of the requester or the hotel but also for the interviewee’s growth and development. This may be similar in nature to the requests made by parents on their children.

Probably being moved by the sincerity and the generosity of the interviewer, the interviewee makes requests quite differently compared to the speakers of the other sampled dialogues. The interviewee requests the areas of training with upgraders “actually” and “really” at Turns 34 and 36. Contrary to common understanding, the upgraders here do not produce a very imposing atmosphere but instead demonstrate the sincerity and determination of the interviewee in her career.

To conclude, the directness and the resoluteness of request making and acceptance in this dialogue do not lead to a defensive communication atmosphere but instead create a very sincere and frank dialogue. Although the current relations between the interlocutors may not be totally close in the case, the specificities of the situation (S) “placement interview” and the high expectation for future relationship help communicate good intentions from both speakers.

6.5. Analysis of Sample 5: Conversation B114 (Job Interview)

Situation: Job Interview

- **Speakers:**
 - “B” (Staff member of the academic department being the interviewer, with the name M_, NCS)
 - “a1” (Another staff member of the academic department being the interviewer, with the name W_, CS)
 - “a2” (Job candidate being the interviewee, with the name P_, CS)
- **Context:** As shown in the dialogue, the speakers are probably attending the final round of job interviews because they are discussing and making requests in relation to the job duties, the letter of employment and other job specifications such as salary in detail. The interviewee “a2” has high Expectation of Relationship Continuity with the interviewers “B” and “a1”, not only because this is the final interview and “a2” thus has high Expectation of Relationship Continuity to work with the interviewers in the near future, but also because “a2” is a former student of the interviewers as demonstrated in the dialogue.

Conversation

B114

1. a1: P_, [\ thank you very much for coming to the interview].
2. a2: [\ My pleasure] (laugh).
3. a1: (Laugh), um, the um, the interview will be very informal right, we, we just mainly explain to you the project, the nature of work that is expected of you, and er, and some other information, [/ right].
4. a2: [\ Okay].
5. a1: Um, I ex, as I explained to you in my email, right, you would be employed not by, not really by us, not really by M_ and W_, but by er bigger project, umbre, an umbrella project, what, what was the funding? Do you recall, was it almost five million four [= point] ...

6. B: Nine, [\ yeah].
7. a1: [\ Four point nine million].
8. B: [= So it's a big project].
9. a1: Right, yeah, it is, are, [\ really big one].
10. B: [\ Yeah].
11. B: This is just to explain as I guess you're, your, er, er, it, contract details, letters of er employment and so on will look slightly odd [\ if this isn't explained].
12. a2: [\ Okay].
13. a1: Mm, [\ yeah].
14. B: It's not, it's not unusual within, within universities that, that somebody gets a big project and [\ it's then broken up into pieces].
15. a1: Mm, so it er, the source of funding is er Teaching Grant Development, Teaching Development Grant, Teaching Development Grant, and er, the main project title is "Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Assessment". As you can see on this page right, we had a meeting, um a big project team meeting the other day and we were looking at, um different, er sub-project, er progress and their reports and so on. So um, the project, this, the sub-project you will be working, working for is called "Online Collaborative Assessment to Enhance Teaching and Learning", [/ right] (EM).
16. **<C+><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) a1: As you can see, there is a list of sub-projects, you'll be working for this particular one, right, and you would be, they, they said, housed in the Department of English, so you would be sitting together with other Research Assistants, um Associates, in and er also Postgrad Students in [\ one of our offices] (w EM). </C+></P+></R+>**
17. a1: Okay, um this project, "Online Collaborative Assessment" to enhance teaching and learning, er, we're, we're planning to, we're planning to conduct this research in two subjects, in the first semester, "Intercultural Communication" [= which you studied last year] (EM).
- (Telephone rings)
18. a2: Yeah, [\ mm].
19. (Pause)
20. a1: Okay, we can continue in, um, so I mentioned two subjects, in the first semester's intercultural communication, for year three, and in the second semester, "Pragmatics" [= for year one] (EM).
21. a2: [\ Okay].

22. a1: Okay, um, so you have experienced, er, online, [\ online learning before]?
23. a2: Yeah, [\ right].
24. a1: Yeah, so our project is to look, at to examine, how the teacher and how the students perceive this mode of learning, and er, most importantly, we will be getting the students to assess themselves and also get them to assess each other, alright, in one of the, um, in one of the assessment tasks which they will have to do online. Okay, so we would, we, we will, we will have er questionnaires, we will have focus group discussions and we will analyse the postings the students put on the web, and also, um, especially to look at how they think assessment, this this form of assessment, collaborative assessment, er how they perceive this form of assessment, whether they like it or not and whether this er, they perceive this form of assessment fair and objective and the problems that they might have when they, when they had to assess others [= and themselves online] (EM).
25. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B: I think, I think you might have to say something about what you mean by collaborative assessment because it wasn't on [= P_'s] ... (asking colleague). </C-></P-></R+>
26. a2: Yes, [= Pragmatics].
27. a1: It wasn't, no, [\ it wasn't].
28. B: "Pragmatics" or "Intercultural Communications", [= so maybe you should just say].
29. <C+><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) a1: Yeah, maybe you could, you can explain a, [= a bit] (asking colleague). </C+></P-></R+>
30. B: An example, well it's a form of assignment, I don't know if anybody else has done it. It's a form of assessment that, that W_'s designed, really, it was her i, her idea, we tried it on "Pragmatics", "Pragmatics" when you did it, [\ it wasn't online] (EM)?
31. a2: [\ No].
32. B: But it's now online, erm, er, we've broken "Pragmatics" up into something like six units and and the students don't have lectures anymore, and er, they go through the units on Web CT. And there're some, some examples, so if we take something like, I don't know politeness, if you can remember politeness, so there's a unit explaining what, what it is, there're some examples, then there're some worked examples, in other words, students can look at more examples and think about them and then find a kind of model answer, we call those worked examples. And then there're unworked examples, where there's some data, and there's, there's no model answer. Okay, now, what this collaborative assessment is based on the students um doing those unworked ones, posting it up on the Web CT forum and then in groups, we cou_, we might be a group,

imagine, we're a group of students and you post up what you think the answer is, for a bit of data, and then W_ and I react to what you post up, we might agree with you disagree or add, you know, that we think and analyse it fully. Okay, then based on that feedback from us, you have to either accept our feedback or reject it, but you got to be explicit in terms of why you might accept W_'s idea and reject mine. The you, so you got to kind of, you know, have a critical approach to the feedback and then you might revise what you've done with the data. So as a result of the feedback, your final interpretation of the data is this, whereas earlier it was something else, but this process, us critiquing it and you then critiquing our stuff, now students had to do that throughout the units and then present this in a kind of, do you know what a portfolio is? [/ Have you done any of that] (EM)?

33. a2: Yes, something like a file and then you have a lot of documents inside it, yeah, we had have something in er, business for com, yeah, something like that in, yea, "Business", [\' "English for Business Communication"].
34. B: [\' Yeah].
35. a1: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, [\' that subject].
36. B: Yeah, so what we said to students is they didn't have to show us everything that they've done in the forum, but we wanted to see one example from each unit handled in this way. Okay, now we did that, this, last semester with Pragmatics and it was quite successful, but it was only W_ and I giving grades, so we were looking at this portfolio, and we're thinking, well, yeah P_'s handled this well, and we'll give her an A, okay, but, um, we don't want, that was a kind of a first run, what we want to do is to make it more elaborate in terms of assessment. So it won't just be us giving P_ a grade, P_ will give herself a grade based on how she thought she did in this assignment, and the other group members will give you a grade based on how active you were, the level of contribution you made in terms of your feedback and so on. Okay, because you should know what it's like when you're in a group, you know, maybe W_, gave you lots of feedback, and I didn't, I didn't do anything much, you know er, so then you two would give me low grade, okay, and you would give W_ a high grade because she was very active and contributed a lot in terms of her critique of each other's work. So the, the next time that we do it, your grade will be based partly on the grade of the teacher, partly on the grade of your fellow group members, and partly on a grade that you give yourself. So it'll come from three sources, but at the moment, as I said, we've, we've just done, we've just done, it we were mainly trying this kind of collaborative critiquing type of assignment



which we hadn't tried before, er and so, to simplify it, we just graded it, but, but, but, but er, so it will develop over, and over the next academic year. Er, so probably, when we do it with Intercultural Communication, it will be a pilot again in a sense, but we will be piloting the assignment type that we've already tried, plus we'll be looking at this more complicated way of assessing it. And then when we do Pragmatics in the next semester, we will want that to be fairly polished, that we've ironed out the kind of problems from this semester that we've just finished, and from the first semester with "Intercultural Communication". So we're hoping that when we do it January through to, er, May or whenever it is, that, that will be F (February)_, that will be the most important one because that would kind of, end, end the project, that you know, that, we'll feel that, we'll have accomplished whatever, we can accomplish through, through er playing around with that kind of [\ assignment] (EM).

37. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B: Er, so, that would be your involvement in helping us conduct all these different ways [= of looking at it] (students' learning) (w EM).
</C-></P+></R+>

38. a2: [\ Okay].

39. a1: Mm, [\ yeah].

40. (Pause)

41. a1: Maybe you can say something about what made you feel that you would be suitable for this particular [/ position].

42. a2: Er, I think that, er, because I have been studying here for three years, and um, I'm interested in what I have learned [= I think that, erm] (EM)...

43. <C+><P-><R+>(D1-M1-H2) a2: It's a great opportunity if I can apply what I have learned into [\ practice] (Hint) (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

44. a1: Right, [\ yeah].

45. a2: Yeah, so it's, and the project that you have just mentioned to me, erm, sounds very interesting and innovative [= yeah and so] (EM)...

46. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a2: I would like to be a part of it (students' learning project), yeah, that would be my honour [= if I can be a part of it] (w EM).
</C+></P-></R+>

47. a1: That's very nice. Yeah, um, in the last few weeks, you've been working part time, right, [= but mainly transcribing data].

<Turns 48 to 60 are exchanges on the tips, the boredom but also the use of transcribing data which is allowing a researcher to look closely into the raw data.>

61. B: So, so, after you've listened to it, has your views spoken language changed? Have you seen things that you were not aware of? [= Were there...?]

<Turns 62 to 99 are exchanges of views on the fluency of spoken English. For example, they agree that even native speakers do not have perfect fluency, and being a competent speaker involves the command of communicative strategies which keep the speaking going and avoid complete halts.>

100. a1: Mm, yeah, mm, so we mentioned this particular project, alright, but, um, um, what would erm, what er, research personnel do er, when they're employed on a particular project, right, if usually, especially in our case because we have different projects going on at the same time and er at different stages of development, [= so] (EM).

101. <C+><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) a1: You would very likely be also asked to work for us [\ on other projects] (w EM). </C+></P+></R+>

102. a1: But you won't be, of course, spending a lot of the, of your time, or put it that way, um, there, there will be at different points in, in time, right, that you will be heavily involved in this particular project, definitely, right, when we're teaching, when we're collecting data from the students. But there're also er other times when you will be working on other projects like doing transcription or even typing up. Currently, we're working on prosodic transcription, so er, you would be typing up, alright, prosodic transcription or helping us to supervise student assistants. We're hoping to get um, um, a student assistant, right, to replace you (laugh) [? very soon] (EM).

103. a2: [/ Mhm].

104. B: So, right, so that kind, those kinds of duties, alright, jobs [\ responsibilities] (EM linked to previous one).

105. a2: [= Okay].

106. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B: We would ask you to, to supervise the student or students once the term starts, it might be that we would have er one or two students working a few hours [\ or whatever] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

107. a1: Yeah, [/ mhm].

108. B: Yeah, but I think when we had that lunch a while ago, talking about the possibility of you working as a research staff, er we, we mentioned that it's in the un, it's in the nature of any of the way we approach all of our projects, that whoever works for us works across our projects, because as W_ says that, there probably isn't forty-four hours a week (to use up all the 44 hours for research, because need to supervise students as well) for the next, is it what, is it [= eleven months] (EM)
109. a1: Mm [\ eleven months].
110. B: On, just on this, you know er, but we've certainly got forty-four hours of research work that you can do. From your point of view, I mean, it will also add, add variety, I mean the, [= the more] ... (EM)
111. a2: Yeah, [\ I think so].
112. B: ... the more different research tasks you're involved in er, the better and it's quite nice because one research project is related to teaching at university, and the other one is much more of a kind of classic research project where we're looking and researching our subject areas discourse and Pragmatics. So in in a way you'll be getting a feel of the two main things that are researched in our department which are the way we teach, and then what the things that we actually teach, [? if you see what I mean] (EM).
113. a2: Yeah, [\ yeah].
114. B: So, I er, so I think it'll be quite a nice er, [\ introduction for you].
115. a2: Mm, [\ yes].
116. B: What about your long term ambitions? I'm, maybe it's not fair to ask somebody who's just graduated the, this, but I mean, do you have ambitions in terms of becoming an academic or you want to end up as somebody in the, yeah, I don't know, maybe administrative in the government or working for a manager in a company, or I mean, do you have some [/ occupation in mind]?
117. a2: Erm, to tell you the truth, I um (laugh), I don't really have much of an ambition, I'm not quite an ambitious pe person, but I um, but I've just talked to W_ and she er introduced to me er a lot of possibilities um in doing research and things like that. And actually I, I like um doing research, er I like er reading research papers and things like that, and I, I think it will be nice if I can, um if I can er develop my career in this way, but er, it's only that I don't know if I have that kind of er er competence in doing that because er I, I don't know (laugh), it seems like I, I may not have that kind of ability, yes, so [\ I'm not sure].

118. B: Mhm (laugh) but yeah well, I think you're modest, I think from, from, from my experience of you as a student, I think you've definitely got the competence, you've definitely got the ability. It's whether you've got the interest in a particular area that you would like to become, you know, specialised in and pursue to a, to the level of a PhD because if you want to be an academic these days at a university, you've, you've simply got to have a PhD. So I mean, it's really down to that er, you've got the competence and ability, it's whether or not you want to set that as a longer term goal because I think it's an option for you that you could become an academic working at a university if you, but you need the interest in a particular area. And because you're, because you're starting working for us erm, you might, you might think well I think, I would, I would like to work at a university, and I would like to do research, but not in what we do because there's load, [\ you know].

<Turns 119 to 184 are more casual sharing on career direction and development. They first discuss if being an academic at a university involves teaching and then share the view that the possibility of being a pure researcher in the local context is slim because big and famous research centres with stable funding are not available in Hong Kong. At Turn 144, "a1" provides the Topic-initial Utterance and discusses the job offer in a bank including the job duties, the qualities required, the salary, the probation period, the salary and the low-interest housing loan.>

185. a1: Okay er, do do you have questions [= for us]?

186. a2: Er, n, not really, because er you have explained very clearly, and er on top of that, I have er experienced some part of the job duties [= so] ...

<From Turn 187, the interviewers "B" and "a1" share the last piece of information, the salary of the job, with "a2" and close the interview routinely and politely with "...I think, that's it, thank you very much" at Turn 200.>

Analysis

This dialogue is selected as exemplary for job interviews. Compared to other job interview dialogues in HKCSE (Business), the context of this final interview and the close relation between the interviewee and the interviewers with the former once being the student of the latter provide greater variety and also higher quantity of requests for analysis.

Turns 1-13 set up the context of a job interview in a university academic department. The interviewer “a1” prefaces by welcoming “a2” to the interview, and this clearly establishes the relationship of host and guest with the host being more in control of the situation. First, “a1” explains that “a2” is employed because of a funded project, and “B” establishes his role of being the co-host of the interview by helping provide the actual funding amount at Turn 6. At Turn 11, “B” establishes and confirms that the objective of the interview is to explain the contract/letter of employment and the associated job duties. This part obviously shows that the “a1” and “B” have power over the interviewee “a2” because they are occupying the conversation floor and “a2” has not been allowed to share her views at the beginning.

At Turns 14 and 15, “B” and “a1” provides the scope of the project which “a2” will be requested to work on. The umbrella project is “Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Assessment”, and “a2” is requested to work on one of the sub-projects “Online Collaborative Assessment to Enhance Teaching and Learning”. Such scope provided is actually the External Modification “Preparator” for the request on job duties that follows, and the rising tone opens up the request at Turn 16.

At Turn 16, due to the Expectation of Relationship Continuity and the power over the interviewee “a2”, “a1” requests “a2” to work on the particular project as stated at Turn 15, to be housed in the Department of English and to sit together with other Research Associates and Postgraduate Students in a straightforward way at Directness Level 3 “Obligation Statement” and Perspective Imposition Level 4 “You” in a falling tone:

16. <C+><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) a1: As you can see, there is a list of sub-projects, you’ll be working for this particular one, right, and you would be, they, they said, housed in the Department of English, so you would be sitting together with other Research Assistants, um Associates, in and er also Postgrad Students in [\ one of our offices] (w EM). </C+></P+></R+>

However, the directness is somehow moderated by the Internal Modification “Would”.

At Turns 25 and 29, the interviewers “B” and “a1” mildly request each other to provide more details of the project to the interviewee “a2” at Directness Level 2 “Suggestory Formula” with Internal Modifications “might” and “could” in a flat but not a falling tone:

25. <C-><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) B: I think, I think you might have to say something about what you mean by collaborative assessment because it wasn't on [= P_'s] ... (asking colleague). </C-></P-></R+>

29. <C+><P-><R+>(D2-M2-H4) a1: Yeah, maybe you could, you can explain a, [= a bit] (asking colleague). </C+></P-></R+>

According to the findings in statistical analyses and corpus analyses, their close relationship as colleagues should have allowed them to be direct with each other. Mild manner is used here probably because of the official context of the job interview, and they may want to behave more politely in front of the interviewee who is their past student.

There are more female requesters in this dialogue for analysis of Gender (G). Although Turn 25 and Turn 29 are both at Directness Level 2, the female speaker “a1” seems to be pragmalinguistically less direct through using “maybe” and “could”.

Going back to Turns 17 to 36, there are a series of External Modifications “Preparators” and “Grounders” backing up the request at Turn 16 and that paves the way for another related request at Turn 37, for example:

17. a1: Okay, um this project, “Online Collaborative Assessment” to enhance teaching and learning, er, we're, we're planning to, we're planning to conduct this research in two subjects, in the first semester, “Intercultural Communication” [= which you studied last year] (EM).

21. a1: Okay, we can continue in, um, so I mentioned two subjects, in the first semester's intercultural communication, for year three, and in the second semester, “Pragmatics” [= for year one] (EM).

24. a1: Yeah, so our project is to look, at to examine, how the teacher and how the students perceive this mode of learning... whether they like it or not and whether this er, they perceive

this form of assessment fair and objective and the problems that they might have when they, when they had to assess others [= and themselves online] (EM).

30. B: An example, well it's a form of assignment, I don't know if anybody else has done it. It's a form of assessment that, that W_'s designed, really, it was her i, her idea, we tried it on "Pragmatics", "Pragmatics" when you did it, [\ it wasn't online] (EM)?

32. B: But it's now online, erm, er, we've broken "Pragmatics" up into something like six units and and the students don't have lectures anymore, and er, they go through the units on Web CT. ... but this process, us critiquing it and you then critiquing our stuff, now students had to do that throughout the units and then present this in a kind of, do you know what a portfolio is? [/ Have you done any of that] (EM)?

36. B: Yeah, so what we said to students is they didn't have to show us everything that they've done in the forum, but we wanted to see one example from each unit handled in this way... that will be the most important one because that would kind of, end, end the project, that you know, that, we'll feel that, we'll have accomplished whatever, we can accomplish through, through er playing around with that kind of [\ assignment] (EM).

"a1" and "B" cooperate to provide the details of the project "Online Collaborative Assessment" to the interviewee "a2". For example, the project will be conducted in two subjects, namely "Intercultural Communication" and "Pragmatics". Students go through online materials themselves, post assignments especially for the unworked examples, grade themselves and other students in the group and respond to lecturers' feedback. Research tools such as questionnaires and focus group discussions will be used to collect the feedback from both students and lecturers on the effectiveness of the "Online Collaborative Assessment". At Turn 37, after the extensive series of External Modifications, "B" puts forward the request related to the one made by "a1" at Turn 16 also at Directness Level 3 "Obligation Statement" but with Internal Modification "would" and in a flat tone:

37. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B: Er, so, that would be your involvement in helping us conduct all these different ways [= of looking at it] (students' learning) (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

“B” and “a1” help each other, not only to provide External Modifications, but also to resolutely confirm the important request on job duty. “B” here puts forward the request directly to restate the requirement to research through different ways for the project. With detailed External Modifications provided and the resolute requests made at Turns 16 and 37, “a2” accepts the request promptly, concisely and resolutely in a falling tone with “Okay” at Turn 38.

The pause at Turn 40 is the Transitional Marker that closes the previous discussions on the job duties and moves the discussion to the next part of the dialogue. At Turn 41, “Maybe you can say something about what made you feel that you would be suitable for this particular position” is the Topic-Initial Utterance that allows the interviewee “a2” to share her capabilities and through this gives the chance for “a2” to request the job offer at the final stage. The interviewee progressively requests for the job offer, first indirectly or connotatively at Turn 43 with Directness Level 1 “Hint”, and next more obviously at Turn 46 with Directness Level 3 “Want Statement” affirmed with the expression that working for the job will be her honour:

43. <C+><P-><R+>(D1-M1-H2) a2: It’s a great opportunity if I can apply what I have learned into [practice] (Hint) (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

46. <C+><P-><R+>(D3-M2-H2) a2: I would like to be a part of it (students’ learning project), yeah, that would be my honour [= if I can be a part of it] (w EM). </C+></P-></R+>

Turns 42 and 45 are External Modifications “Grounders” which provide supporting reasons such as “...studying here for three years... I’m interested in what I have learned” and “...the project... sounds very interesting and innovative...”. The request on job offer is resolutely and directly made at Turns 43 and 46 to show one’s commitment and determination for the job. Like the previous sampled dialogue of placement interview, want statements are found to be frequently used by interviewee in general.

At Turn 47, “That’s very nice” is the Discontinuity Marker to end the sharing of “a2” on her keenness for the job, and “but mainly transcribing data” is the Topic-Initial Utterance to open up the discussion in data transcription. At Turn 61, “So, so” is the Transitional Marker

and “after you’ve listened to it, has your views spoken language changed...” is the Topic-Utterance that switches the discussion to the next topic on native speaker and fluency.

At Turn 100, “Mm, yeah, mm” is the Transitional Marker and “so we mentioned this particular project, alright” acts as the Topic-Initial Utterance that brings back the discussion to the required job duties. “...what would erm, what er, research personnel do... we have different projects going on at the same time and er at different stages of development” is the External Modification “Preparator” which provides the context for the request that follows. At Turn 101, “a1” requests “a2” to work for other projects at the same time at Directness Level 3 “Obligation Statement” in a falling tone but with Internal Modifications “would” and “very likely”:

101. <C+><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) a1: You would very likely be also asked to work for us [on other projects] (w EM). </C+></P+></R+>

Turn 101 again shows that Obligation Statements are common for interviewer to make request in job duty. The Interviewer “a1” continues to provide External Modifications at Turn 102 that are examples of other projects such as typing up prosodic transcriptions and supervising student assistants. “B” helps in again and confirms the job duties described by “a1” at Turn 104 and echoes her colleague’s description “helping us to supervise student assistants” by putting forward another related request at Turn 106. At Turn 106, B elaborates his colleague’s request made at Turn 101 and requires the interviewee “a2” to supervise one or two student assistants for a few hours per week at Directness Level 3 “Performative” in a falling tone but with Internal Modification “would”:

106. <C-><P+><R+>(D3-M2-H4) B: We would ask you to, to supervise the student or students once the term starts, it might be that we would have er one or two students working a few hours [or whatever] (w EM). </C-></P+></R+>

At Turns 108 to 112, B provides a follow-up series of External Modifications to prepare the interviewee to be engaging in other projects that include one practical project related to teaching and another more classic research project. The interviewee “a2” accepts the request promptly and resolutely in a falling tone with “Yeah, yeah” at Turn 113.

At Turn 114, B uses the Discontinuity Marker “so I think it'll be quite a nice er introduction for you” to close the discussion on job duties and opens up the next new topic “What about your long term ambitions” at Turn 116. At Turn 118, “I think from, from, from my experience of you as a student, I think you've definitely got the competence...” confirms the relationship that the interviewee “a2” is previously a student of the interviewers. Then they proceed to have some general discussions on long-term career goal.

At Turn 185, “a1” proceeds to the last part of the dialogue with a concise Transitional Marker “Okay er” and next allows the interviewee to raise questions if any in a flat and official tone. At Turn 186, as a token of appreciation, the interviewee confirms that everything has been explained clearly and no further information is needed.

Overall observations

This particular situation (S) has greatly affected the request patterns. This is quite a “collectivistic situation” because the interviewers are close colleagues and the interviewee is once the student of the Interviewers. Such already close or solid relation among them has made the requests straightforward and frank, and it could be observed from the responses that the interlocutors do not observe them as “imposing” but rather as “connecting” for solidarity. Most of the requests are made directly with obligation statements of directness level 3 and discussions are mostly in flat or falling tone throughout.

Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of Zone of Proximal Development abbreviated as ZPD that is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what a learner can further do with help. That means a learner can achieve more with gradual and sequential support. Other scholars such as Bruner (1978), Cazden (1983), Applebee and Langer (1983) adopted Vygotsky's idea and referred to it as “Instructional Scaffolding”. It emphasises that instructional tasks should be sequential and built upon students' previous knowledge. Long and Sato (1984) applied the concept to conversational interaction and referred to it as “Conversational Scaffolding”. Through building a conversation with a partner and from the collaborative discourse, a speaker forms syntactic prototypes for language acquisition.

The concept of “Conversational Scaffolding” may also apply to the business discussions of the present study. As demonstrated by this sampled dialogue, the speakers collaborate and scaffold the conversation, here not for language acquisition but for making requests,

providing external modifications for the requests and accepting the requests to achieve business purposes. The core purpose of this dialogue is to share and request fulfilment of job duties. As analysed earlier, the interviewer “a1” requests the interviewee “a2” to work on the project “Online Collaborative Assessment” at Turn 16 by first prefacing the project at Turn 15 which includes the fact that it is a sub-project branching from the umbrella project “Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Assessment”. Another interviewer “B” starts helping in from Turn 32 to provide further details on the process of “Online Collaborative Assessment”. For example, students need to go through unworked examples and post their answers in groups online, lecturers then give online feedback on their posting and students need to decide if they accept the lecturers’ response. “B” lastly echoes and backs up his colleague’s request at Turn 37 by making a similar request. Turns 15 to 37 demonstrate the process of “Conversational Scaffolding” in which the interviewers “a1” and “B” help each other to build gradually and sequentially the conversational structure of the series of requests and external modifications for the interviewee “a2” to gradually pick up the details and accept the requests without any resistance at Turn 38.

For the second major request for working on other projects at the same time, the interviewers “a1” and “B” scaffold for the interviewee “a2” in a similar pattern. “a1” first prefaces the request at Turn 100, makes the request at Turn 101 and provides another external modification at Turn 102. “B” helps in and confirms his colleague’s sharing at Turn 104. B echoes and backs up his colleague’s request by making a similar request at Turn 106 and then helps provide a series of external modifications from Turn 108 to 112. With such detailed collaborative discourse provided, the interviewee a2 again accepts the requests without any resistance at Turn 113.

To conclude, as comprehensively demonstrated in this dialogue, request could be much more than a simple clause of request head act. When there are more than one requesters who have a close relationship with each other in a collectivistic setting, they could use this as a basis to scaffold” and construct a series of requests and external modifications in the form of collaborative discourse so as to enhance the effectiveness of requests.

Chapter Seven

DISCUSSION



Chapter 7. Discussion

This chapter discusses the results of the present study. Through linking and comparing the results of the present study with those of the previous studies, the significances and the values that the present study adds to the field will be portrayed. The present study identifies sociopragmatic patterns of request making being particular to the Hong Kong Spoken Business Context apart from merely identifying general pragmalinguistic patterns of request making.

7.1. Significances of Study Results

The present study may have significantly contributed to the field of request research in four aspects. First, while many of the previous studies (e.g.: Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Hassall, 1999; Marti, 2006; Ogiermann, 2009) rely on “near” natural data, the present study has explored pragmatic patterns of request making with naturally-occurring specialised discourses. For example, the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) collected data on requests and apologies with Discourse Completion Test (DCT) using written elicitation techniques to instruct participants to fill in incomplete dialogues in social situations such as borrowing lecture notes or asking a roommate to clean up the kitchen (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Although the incomplete dialogues are preceded by descriptions of the situation that specify the setting, the social distance between the participants and the power status relative to each other, the responses elicited can only be considered as “near” natural data based on simulated scenarios. Such responses are still less natural than the authentic/naturally-occurring specialised discourses in the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE) (Cheng et. al, 2008). Economidou-Kogetsidis (2013) compared DCT requests with naturally occurring requests and found that DCT requests approximated natural data only to a certain extent. The naturally occurring requests of her study were found to be “less direct, more syntactically complex and involve more hearer perspective” than the DCT requests. She therefore commented that the data generated through DCT should be treated with caution as preliminary data. Such data should be tested against authentic/naturally-occurring data. There have been some studies on request making using authentic/naturally-occurring business discourses but they are limited to written context (Kong, 2006; Yeung, 1997; Victor, 2011; Pilegaard, 1997). Since research on request making with authentic/naturally-occurring spoken specialised discourses is highly limited, the present study has added new and practical insights to this important area.



Second, the validity and reliability of results have been enhanced with the detailed research conceptual framework as outlined in Chapter 3.3 and the employment of a variety of research methods/sub-methods. The research conceptual framework of the present study has been developed based on the thorough analysis of two influential politeness models in the field (Brown and Levinson, 1978 & 1987; Blum-Kulka et. al, 1989), resulting in appropriate adoptions and modifications for fitting the present study. With the detailed research conceptual framework in hand, the 95 dialogues in HKCSE (Business) have been read in every detail so a complete pragmatic context of each dialogue could be obtained for accurately coding the pragmalinguistic components and the sociopragmatic factors based on the research conceptual framework. The various research methods, namely Statistical Analysis, Corpus Analysis and Conversation Analysis with Prosodic Study, have complemented each other and enhanced both the breadth and the depth of analysis. For example, the Statistical Analysis provided a general and broad quantitative picture while the Conversation Analysis provided the in-depth qualitative picture of how requests actually operated in the broadest linguistic context, covering Request Head Act, External Modification, Response to Request and the paralinguistic Prosodic Feature. Also, the Multivariate Analysis of Sociopragmatic Factors, which identifies the relative significances and the interactions of the sociopragmatic factors in influencing request making, makes a contribution to the field because not many previous studies (e.g.: Blum-Kulka & House, 1989) on request making address such an integrated perspective in their quantitative analyses

Third, the concepts of Pragmalinguistics and Sociopragmatics (Leech, 1983 & 2014) have been well applied to account for the co-existence of the fixed/inherent request patterns and the varied/contextual request patterns at the same time.

Last and most importantly, the present study has confirmed once again that pragmatic context is of core importance in influencing the use and the interpretation of language patterns and such finding concurs with the traditional wisdom of emphasising context in pragmatics rooted since Morris' work in 1938. This study also challenges the notion that fixed language patterns exist which could be universally applied in whatever contexts, for example, the notion of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987). While the results to Research Question 1 may have presented some general pragmalinguistic patterns of request making (e.g.: requests are generally made in English ranging from implicit structure "Hints" to the most explicit

structure “Imperatives”), the use of most of such patterns are subject to variation of sociopragmatic contexts such as Situation (speech context) and Power Distance (P) as demonstrated in the results to Research Question 2.

7.2. Results to Research Question 1

Research Question 1 is recapped as below:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): “What are the salient pragmalinguistic patterns of request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English?” with the sub-questions as below:

- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component Internal Modification (M) used to realise request making?
- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component politeness strategies on the scale of Directness Level (D) used to realise request making?
- What are the pragmalinguistic forms in terms of the component Perspective Imposition (H) on the scale of the illocutionary force posed by perspective used to realise requests?

Hypothesis of RQ1:

Default/general pragmalinguistic forms for realising requests are also present in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

The Hypothesis of RQ1 was supported with the findings of the present study. Many previous studies on request making either argue for universal general patterns (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1978 & 1987) or community-particular patterns (e.g.: Ogiermann, 2009). Instead of supporting either extreme, the present study adds value to the field through comprehensively identifying both general patterns and patterns of request making particular to the Spoken Business English of Hong Kong.

7.2.1. Least Common Directness Levels

Descriptive Statistics identify and confirm a number of general pragmalinguistic patterns of request making in this study. First, all the main levels of directness as outlined in the theoretical conceptual framework in Section 3.3 are evident in the corpora “HKCSE (Business)” and “Request” and a certain amount of request head acts have been identified in each of the main levels, namely Most Direct Level (Level 4), Direct Level (Level 3),

Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) and Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Level 1). Second, it was found that requests made at extreme directness levels, namely Hints and Mood Derivable (Imperative Mood) were the least common. For the level “Hints”, Corpus Analysis found that “I” was used more frequently than “we” or “you” and expressions such as “that kind of” was used to narrow down the scope of Hints for the requestees’ interpretation. Requests of Directness Level 4 were the most straightforward and thus sometimes moderated by internal modifications such as “please” or “just”. The findings of the present study echo those of the study by Weizman (1989).

7.2.2. Internal Modification

Second, the present study found that internal modifications were common and used for nearly half of the requests made. Moreover, Corpus Analysis found that internal modifications such as past modals “would” and “could” and the polite modal “may” were more frequently used for requests at lower directness levels such as Query Preparatory of Conventionally Indirect Level (Level 2) for playing “double-safe”. These findings are also consistent with those of the previous studies (House and Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka, 1989).

7.2.3. Most Common Levels of Perspective Imposition

The most common perspective imposition was Level 4 “you” followed by Level 2 “I”. Corpus Analysis revealed that for the strongest perspective imposition “you”, internal modifications such as “just” and “please” were sometimes used for moderation while “I” was used more frequently than “we” for Perspective Imposition Level 2 “Speaker Dominance”. Such findings are consistent with the study of Blum-Kulka (1989).

7.2.4. Particular Pattern: Most Common Directness Level

On top of identifying the previously mentioned general request patterns, Descriptive Statistics also reveal request patterns being particular to the Hong Kong Spoken Business English. First, the most common directness level was found to be Direct Level (Level 3) which included performatives, obligation statements such as “you need to...” and want statements such as “I would like to...” but not the Conventionally Indirect Level as identified in some of the previous studies (Blum-Kulka, 1989; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). At Directness Level 3, want statements and obligation statements were more frequently used than performatives such as “I’ll ask you to...”. Conventionally Indirect Level was not the most common in the local business context of HKCSE (Business) because clarity of expressions



might have been preferred over deference so as to perform business transactions efficiently and effectively as argued in some of the previous studies on the communication strategies in business contexts (Charles, 1996; Tamarit and Skorczynska, 2014).

7.2.5. Particular Patterns: Flat/Falling Tone and Frequent External Modifications

Conversation Analysis (CA) found that flat or falling tones were much more frequent than rising tone for request making or acceptance in HKCSE (Business) because business discussions might have required efficiency and practicality and plain/straightforward tone may help create a more down-to-earth atmosphere for prompt communication. Such finding also concurs with that of Cheng et. al (2008) who found that level tone is most used and fall tone being the second in HKCSE (Business) among the four sub-corpora because speakers' "constructing longer telling and asking increments" is a common discourse pattern (p.158). On the other hand, external modifications were frequent and detailed in the sampled dialogues. For requestees to accept business requests, rational and extensive grounds might be needed for consideration. Therefore, detailed external modifications were abundantly evident in the sampled dialogues.

7.3. Results to Research Question 2

Research Question 2 is recapped as below:

Research Question 2 (RQ2): "How do various contextual factors sociopragmatically affect request making in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English?" with the below sub-questions:

- How does the factor "Gender (G)" sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor "Situation (S)" sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor "First-language Group (C)" sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to

Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?

- How does the factor “Power Distance (P)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?
- How does the factor “Rank of Imposition (RI)” sociopragmatically affect request making in terms of the linguistic components Internal Modification (M), Directness Level (D), Perspective Imposition (H), External Modification (EM), Response to Request (RtR) and Prosodic Feature?

Hypothesis of RQ2:

The various contextual factors do sociopragmatically affect the linguistic realisation of requests in the Hong Kong Spoken Business English.

The Hypothesis of RQ2 was supported with the findings of the present study. Instead of portraying a rigid view that fixed request patterns exist and they are applicable to all contexts, the present study clearly demonstrates that the use of the pragmalinguistic/inherent components of request making generally varied and it is subject to different sociopragmatic factors/context. The present study finds that request making was significantly influenced by all the sociopragmatic factors, namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P), Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) and Rank of Imposition (RI). The influences of R and C were not insignificant but might have become more implicit. As identified in Statistical Analysis, R was highly correlated with S while C is highly correlated with P and G so their influences might have been shadowed by the more influencing sociopragmatic factors S and P in the integrated context. This points to the fact that the sociopragmatic factors are actually interconnected with each other to form an integrated pragmatic context for varied application and interpretation of request making patterns.

Similar to answering Research Question 1, the findings to Research Question 2 also identify both general request patterns and patterns of the influences of sociopragmatic factors

being particular to the Spoken Business English of Hong Kong.

7.3.1. Influences of Sociopragmatic Factors on Request Making

The simpler Bivariate Analysis was applied to analyse the individual influence of each sociopragmatic factor, and it was found that each of the sociopragmatic factors Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) generally had significant individual influence on Internal Modification, Directness Level and Perspective Imposition except that C and P had no significant influences on Directness Level. Such findings concur with those of previous studies as stated in literature review, and this highlights the importance of context in Pragmatics. For example, the discourse intonation study of Cheng et. al (2008) found that speech situation/discourse type affects discourse intonation with the business discourse type demonstrating mostly the flat tone.

The influences of the five sociopragmatic factors were next analysed together in Multivariate Analysis. Situation (S) and Power Distance (P) turned out to be most significant sociopragmatic factor in influencing request patterns. On one hand, S was the most significant factor on its influence to both Directness Level and Perspective Imposition. For example, the Situation (Service Encounter) was more likely to go for requests at Conventionally Indirect Level while the Situation (Meeting) was more likely to go for requests made with the Perspective Imposition “We”. Such results again highlight the importance of speech situation/context in affecting the linguistic patterns. On the other hand, Power Distance (P) came to be the most significant in influencing the use of Internal Modification, with the requesters having power over requestees less likely to use internal modifications.

Being consistent with Statistical Analysis, Corpus Analysis identified similar patterns of request making under the sociopragmatic factors. Most importantly, Situation (S) greatly affected the use of request patterns. First, request made in Situation (Meeting) tended to use the straightforward internal modification “just” and the straightforward modals in “Can you”, “Could you” and “Should you”. This highlights the unique business context among internal colleagues that might have demanded high efficiency under such situation. Yet conversation analyses at the same time found that the high expectation of relationship continuity in Situation (Meeting) could also influence requests to be made in the least directness that was the other extreme “Hints”. Requests were not presented precisely in Hints, but such

implicitness might have been supplemented by the contexts provided by the close relationships between the internal colleagues who might have understood what actions to take for the connotation. Interlocutors in such instances might have actualised the “high-context communication” as articulated by Hall (1981). For example, as demonstrated in the sample dialogue of hotel meeting B023, the boss made the request with the Hint “Is that not Standard (the newspaper) showing there?” without addressing who was to follow that up, but the Housekeeper responded to such request promptly based on the division of labour laid in their relationship. Second, requests made in Situation (Service Encounter) tended to be soft with query preparatorys “Would you” and “May I” and the internal modification “please” which might have formed the formulaic request expressions for this typical “standard situation” where requesters clearly had the right to request and requestees clearly had the obligation to fulfil request (House, 1989).

Regarding Gender (G), females tended to make softer requests with want statements “I would like to” and suggestory formula “I think” while males tended to make stronger requests with obligatory statements “You should” and “You need to”. Regarding Power Distance (P), compared to the category of requesters having no power over the requestee, the category of requesters having power over the requestee tended to be more direct in request making. They used higher levels of perspective imposition “you” and “we” more frequently and politeness markers such as “please” or “sir” were rare in their requests. When they made requests at Directness Level 3, they tended to use the stronger obligation statements with “have to”, “need to” and “should” instead of the weaker want statements. Regarding Rank of Imposition (RI), conversation analyses found that it affected the request pattern when the other sociopragmatic factors were held constant. Requests requiring greater efforts from requestee were generally more cushioned in their pragmalinguistic components.

Although First Language (C) was found to be a significant sociopragmatic factor only in affecting the Internal Modification and Perspective Imposition of request making in Bivariate Analysis, the influence of First Language (C) on request making should not be overlooked. As analysed in statistical analyses, First Language (C) was highly correlated with Power Distance and the influence of First Language had been represented by the stronger Power Distance when the sociopragmatic factors were put together in the multivariate analyses. Nevertheless, corpus analyses and conversation analyses did identify different request patterns as demonstrated by the two First Language categories, Cantonese Speakers of English and

Non-Cantonese Speakers of English. For example, corpus analysis of Section 6.2.3 found that Cantonese Speakers of English tended to reduce the force of their requests by more using internal modifications such as “would”, “may”, “please” and the weaker “I” than Non-Cantonese Speakers of English. The first probable reason for Cantonese Speakers of English being more likely to use “may” or “please” in requests is that such textbook formulaic expressions for request making have been taught right from primary school. Second, although Hong Kong is an international business centre and Cantonese Speakers of English (Hong Kong Chinese) may have adopted some western values such as the appreciation of individual rights and competition, Cantonese Speakers of English may still have inheritance from their first language and culture. Hofstede (2010) finds that Hong Kong is a collectivistic society with Individualism Index of 25 and China is an even more collectivistic society with Individualism Index of 20. As shared in literature review, collectivistic cultures regard people as connected and interdependent. They value harmony among people and collectivistic people tend to be more sensitive to the position/status of one and other (Abe, 2004; Samovar & Porter, 2001; Zormeier & Samovar, 2000; Hofstede, 1984, 2001 & 2010; Kong, 2006). Cantonese Speakers of English, as found in the present study based on HKCSE (Business), tended to be lower in power position compared to the non-Cantonese speakers of English. When they made requests on the counterparts, they might have been sensitive to the counterparts’ higher power position and the easiest way to make the atmosphere less confrontational might have been using short, handy and formulaic words or phrases of internal modifications such as “please” or the polite modal “may”.

The discernment on both Situation (S) and Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) is important in determining if a pragmalinguistically polite request is also sociopragmatically polite because S and R affect how the members of a community construct the notion of face as explained in literature review. To recapture here, Situation (S) was highly correlated with Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R). Obviously, interlocutors in Situations (Meeting) and (Interview) have relationship expectation on one and other to a certain extent while interlocutors in Situation (Service Encounter) generally had no such expectation on one and other. In other words, the situations Meeting and Interview were more collectivistic than Service Encounter with people having stronger connection with each other. For example, conventional indirectness with “may I” or “would you” were both pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically polite/appropriate in service encounters as indicated by the generous acceptances of such requests in standard situations and the fact that such business transactions

went smooth throughout the whole dialogues in general. However, one could imagine it would have become very odd if such pragmalinguistically polite requests were frequently used in the Situation (Meeting) because the interlocutors of that situation were the closest and should be embracing the most collectivistic notion of face among the three situations. Therefore, the over-usage of conventional indirectness might have made the whole atmosphere sound too conventional or remote, not facilitating social bonding for the community.

7.3.2. External Modification

Conversation analyses in addition analysed the contexts and patterns extrinsic to request head acts that included analyses of External Modification and Response to Request. External modifications were found to be generally frequent and detailed in the sampled dialogues. Such a finding contrasts with the study of Faerch and Kasper (1989). External Modifications were frequent and detailed in the present study probably because business discussions were rational and business requests required many specifications, justifications and contextual details to fulfil. Moreover, especially in the collectivistic situations “Meeting” and “Interview” where interlocutors had relationship expectation on one and other, more specifications and justifications might have been needed to facilitate cooperation if those had not been laid in their relationship. Grounders and Preparators, which were the most common types of External Modification, could serve to provide justifications and prefaces for achieving the business requests.

7.3.3. Making Request Directly

As stated in the literature review, the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978 & 1987) supports universals of request making and assumes that all of the requests are Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) which require negative politeness strategies to reduce the imposition on the requestee. While the present study identified negative politeness where the impositions or directness levels of requests were mitigated by devices such as Internal Modification and External Modification, conversation analyses (CA) of the present study at the same time identified exceptions for which the requesters did not mitigate the imposition. Those requesters instead strengthened their requests, yet the requestees did not find them impolite as demonstrated by the smooth acceptances in the dialogues. Such finding concurs with those of Charles (1996) and Skorzczynska (2014) as detailed in the literature review. As shown in the sampled dialogue of the hotel placement interview B062, the interviewee



requested the areas of training with upgraders such as “actually” and “really” to strengthen the directness of the requests and the request was reinforced back and forth by an extensive series of external modifications and by another related request that followed, yet the interviewer did not find such requests impolite. The Situation “Placement Interview” might have allowed such directness because the core purpose for the interviewee attending the placement interview was to request desired training areas and the purpose legitimised the making of such a request. This echoes the situational factor “Speaker’s Right to Demand Compliance” proposed by Blum-Kulka and House (1989). Second, the importance of the request might also have come into play. Since requesting appropriate training areas was of utmost importance to the interviewee in both the short and the long run, the interviewee might like to make such a request explicit and resolute. The interviewee also reinforced the request with a number of justifications and a follow-up request to increase the impact of the request so as to lead or push the interviewer for compliance.

Some studies, though not as many as those considering requests as imposition or FTAs (highlighting the individualistic notion of face), found that direct request could be a positive gesture to signal closeness with the requestee and construct the solidarity between the requester and requestee in collectivistic communities as explained in Section 2.6.2 (Matsumoto, 1988; Ide, 1989 & 2006; Gu, 1990; Yang, 1987; Yeung, 1997; Kong, 1998, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2008; Spencer-Oatey & Jiang, 2003; Fukushima, 2000; Lee-Wong, 2000; Yu, 2003; Rue & Zhang, 2008; Gao, 2009; He & Zhang, 2011; Wang & Spencer-Oatey, 2015; Wierzbicka, 1985; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Lakoff, 1989, 1990 & 2005; Nwoye, 1992; Hernández-Flores, 2004, 2008; Ogiermann, 2009). Business situations (S) such as meeting and interview are collectivistic as interlocutors have relationship expectation, rapport and solidarity among them. The “principle of reciprocity” articulated by Gu (1990), Yang (1987) and Yeung (1997) and Lee-Wong (2000) may have applied to business meetings and interviews as well because for example, when internal colleagues make requests on one and other in meetings, they expect to reciprocally repay the requestee in future cooperations. Request making may, in positive sense, recognise the relationship with requestee and also requestee’s ability of fulfilling a request. In such sense, request making is healthy and it promotes reciprocity, solidarity and cooperation in the long run and the assumption of request making being imposing in business collectivistic setting may only be a shallow deduction. This study adds to the rising trend in the recent request studies and helps raise such awareness in request research. The mainstream western perspective of conceptualising requests as FTAs



that require negative politeness strategies to reduce the imposition on the requestee may not universally apply to every situation, and such caution is especially required when conducting request studies in collectivistic settings.

In addition to building relationship/solidarity or maintaining mutual face, request making in business setting can also be seen positively in the light of Grice's Cooperative Principle (1969 & 1975). People should be generally rational when doing business, and they may be talking more of facts or justifications and less of feelings or perceptions. In addition, making request in workplace may not be necessarily only an imposition for one's good but can also be a cooperative act for mutual goods. Business people may follow Grice's Maxim of Quantity that emphasises brevity, preciseness and avoidance of unnecessary information and Grice's Maxim of Manner by being frank and clear. This may explain why requesters were occasionally direct or strengthened in the force of request making as identified in the present study because clarity and sincerity might have been preferred over deference. Direct requests might not be judged impolite because they could be for mutual goods. For example, requests observed under the Situation (Meeting) were generally direct and straightforward, not only of those initiated by the boss but also of those initiated among peers probably because the employees' benefits were linked and fulfilling requests collectively enlarged the ultimate benefits for everyone in a company. This is also in line with some of the past studies in Business Communication finding that direct strategies may enhance communication in some business contexts (Charles, 1996; Tamarit & Skorczynska, 2014).

7.3.4. Cooperative Scaffolding of Request Making

Stokes and Hewitt (1976) state that speakers of a conversation need to carry out “aligning actions” and pursue their goals co-operatively to make a conversation coherent. Cheepen and Monaghan (1990, pp.14-15) share that the participants of a dialogue need to “clarify and construct the orientation of both speaker and hearer”. Such cooperation was abundantly present in the sampled dialogues of this study. When several requesters of a team were present in the dialogue such as in the hotel meeting and the job interview, they sometimes constructed requests together by building on each other’s requests and providing external modifications alternatively one after another. For example, as demonstrated in the sampled dialogue of job interview B114, the two interviewers scaffolded and constructed the requests on job duties for the interviewee by alternatively making requests and providing external modifications one after another. As demonstrated, requests could be much more than just a simple utterance with a head act verb. They could be a series of related requests with external modifications inserted in-between, and they could be made collectively in the form of collaborative discourse by having more than one requester who had a close relationship with each other. Scaffolding and cooperation of speakers in a dialogue were particularly rich in the context of HKCSE (Business) because of several possible reasons. As previously explained, external modifications were proved abundant and also important for making business requests. In order for a request to be successfully carried out by the requestee, detailed contexts and grounds might have been needed and requesters belonging to the same team could supplement each other so as to provide more complete external modifications for the requestee. Second, for an important request, requesters of the same team might help highlight and repeat that request to signal solidarity and sincerity in the team.

7.4. Integrated View: Pragmalinguistics, Sociopragmatics and Collectivistic Notion of Face

Based on Pragmalinguistics, Sociopragmatics and conception of face constituting “politeness”, an example of request has been extracted from the dialogue B023 in the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE) (Business) to illustrate how a request being direct in pragmalinguistic sense was not interpreted by the requestee as an impolite request in an hotel internal office meeting:

B1: We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide.

a2: Yeah.

In B023, the boss made a request on his subordinate with “We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide”. Pragmalinguistically speaking, the directness level of such request was high at Level 3 “Obligation Statement”. The perspective imposition was also strong with “We” imposing on both the requester and the requestee and there was no internal modification to soften the tone. However, the request did not seem to be interpreted as impolite by the subordinate because she accepted the request right away with “Yeah”. Such request being direct in the pragmalinguistic dimension might sound reasonable and not impolite to the subordinate sociolinguistically because of a few social determinants. First, the situation (S) in which the dialogue was made was an internal office meeting between the boss and his subordinates in a hotel. The efficiency of getting things done, the tendency of males being more direct in speech, the higher power position of the boss, the high expectation of relationship continuity among participants and the fact that request being face-enhancing for solidarity in the collectivistic notion of face might have made such request, being direct in the pragmalinguistic sense, acceptable and sounding not impolite in the sociopragmatic sense.

The author of the present thesis would like to illustrate further with an example of his own. He has changed job recently and am currently working in a tertiary institute that stresses traditional Chinese culture and collectivism. When he first worked there, he requested his colleague with a lot of pragmalinguistic softening means such as the use of conventionally indirect questions and politeness markers so as to play safe as new comer, at least not to appear to be a harsh and imposing man at the beginning. He thought that others’ first impressions of him did affect the development of long-term cooperation and relationship. After about two months, a long-serving colleague came to him and question him, “Why are you so (pragmalinguistically) polite even when having internal routine meetings? You do not need to repeat “please (唔該)” and “I am really grateful (感激)” so many times and this makes us feel uncomfortable”. In other words, his requests being pragmalinguistically polite were not interpreted sociopragmatically as polite, but rather as unnecessary remoteness posed to colleagues. He has changed his requesting style to a more pragmalinguistically direct style for solidarity since then because he has become a more in-group member in his institute after serving a few months. At the same time, he has also changed his mind-set and interpreted



colleagues' pragmalinguistically direct requests, not as an imposition impeding his individual freedom to act, but rather as further consolidation of solidarity between him and his colleagues because "principle of reciprocity" has been established and promoted.

To close this chapter, let us revisit the notion of politeness embraced by Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987, p.1):

"The problem for any social group is controlling its internal aggression... politeness... presupposes that potential for aggression...and makes possible communication between potentially aggressive parties."

While respecting such aspect of politeness notion, based on the findings of the present study, may we also pay more attention to another aspect which highlights the positive nature of politeness of human beings?

The virtue for any human social group is connecting with each other. Politeness, presupposes that potential for cooperation, and it promotes the solidarity between potentially cooperative parties. As a result, the whole community becomes more robust.



Chapter Eight

DISCUSSION



8. Conclusion: Limitations of Present Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study heightens the awareness of the complexity of the act of requesting and puts it in the sociopragmatic contexts for analysis and interpretation. Via the analysis of a corpus of business-oriented specialised discourse and the in-depth scrutiny of several iconic dialogues, this study should have gone some distance towards revealing the many levels of meaning conveyed in a request and that this study makes a contribution to our knowledge of the request act. Nevertheless, the present study has five major limitations as follows:

- (1) Limited scope on the sociopragmatic factors;
- (2) Shortage of authentic/naturally-occurring business dialogues;
- (3) Limited scope on request for action and object;
- (4) Preliminary analysis only on request scaffolding; and
- (5) Quantitative method for qualitative data and limited samples for Conversation Analysis.

Based on such limitations, five areas are identified for future research on request making. Research frameworks and methods that can be of future use are also suggested for researchers' reference.

8.1. Studying the Influences of Other Factors on Request Making

With the goal of exploring the influences of sociopragmatic factors in depth, the present study limited the scope and focused on the sociopragmatic factors, namely Gender (G), Situation (S), First Language (C), Power Distance (P), Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R) and Rank of Imposition (RI).

Conversational Analysis showed that factors such as the purpose of the dialogue, the legitimisation of request and the importance of requests may also significantly influence request making. As Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) points out, “context external” factors such as rights and obligations and “context internal” factors such as request goal may also substantially influence request patterns. The influences of such factors to request making are yet to be explored more in depth in future research.

8.2. More Authentic Business Discourses for Studies on Request Making

Although the local education system now recommends that students should be biliterate in English and Chinese and trilingual in English, Cantonese and Putonghua, English still enjoys a better status as the workplace language because Hong Kong is an international business centre. English business communication should therefore be a research area of great importance to a number of stakeholders such as the business people, the teachers of Business English and the government. However, as shared in Chapter 2 “Introduction”, studies in such an area with authentic business discourses are limited in Hong Kong, with studies in politeness or request making being even less.

The present study cannot be accomplished without the generous permission of using HKCSE (Business). As a part-time doctoral candidate conducting research, it has been truly difficult, if not impossible, for the author of the present study to have support of business enterprises in accessing their business discourses at meetings, interviews or office talks. However, if business enterprises could cooperate more with academic researchers in conducting studies in business communication and provide more authentic/naturally-occurring discourses in terms of variety and quantity, research in business communication would certainly extend to cover new situations, but not limited to only public service encounters, business communication in academic institutions or web-based business discourses (Cheng, 2009b). Therefore, I echo such advocacy for having more collaboration between business communication practices and business communication research, similar to the collaborations already present in the studies for health-care, law and management. Communication practice and communication research should not be viewed as two “separate and distinct worlds”. Such collaboration would bring benefits to various stakeholders including not only academia but also other stakeholders such as business people and organisations (Cheng, 2009a).

8.3. Studying Requests for Information

Although many of the previous studies on request making focus on the requests made for action and object as explained in literature review, it does not mean that such a kind of request is not important. As seen in the dialogues of the present study, the requests made for business transactions were intertwined with the requests for information for fulfilment. For example, in the hotel placement interview B114, apart from making requests on job duties, the interviewer also requested a lot of information on the qualifications and the experiences from the

interviewee so as to understand the interviewee's strengths for allocation of training areas. Hence, making requests for information may also be an important pragmatic function in addition to making requests for action or object, and this may be a valuable area of study for future research.

Studies on request for information are at the beginning stage, and interested researchers may refer to the directness scales of request for information derived by Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010, 2013), Hassall (1999) and Macaulay (2001). To provide one more reference for future research, the directness scale of the present study is modified below for studying requests for information:

Request for information

**Directness Levels (D) are arranged from the most Direct Level (4) to the least Direct Level (1)

- 4. Most Direct Level
 - Mood Derivable
 - Interrogative or declarative mood of the verb or helping verb signals the illocutionary force of soliciting business information in simplest structure, e.g.: “What is the departure time?”, “Did you purchase anything from the mini bar?”, “What do you think of the success criteria?”, “How do you feel about the future of the industry”, “Any late comers (ellipsis included)?”, “Tell me your career plan”, “Is it that you check out now?”
- 3. Direct Level
 - Want Statements
 - Declarative mood with structure of want/wish for business information, e.g. “I'd like to ask about the departure time (requesting information)”, “I'm just wondering how you think about the process”, “The question would be if you prefer being trained in one department”
- 2. Conventionally Indirect Level
 - Query Preparatory
 - Interrogative mood with preparatory condition such as ability, willingness or possibility or other relevant opener which prepare for the question soliciting information afterwards, e.g.: “May I know the departure time?”, “Can I have the departure time”, “Can you tell me the departure time?” “Would you mind telling me the departure time?”, “Just a follow-up/short



question, what is the departure time?”, “By the way, what is the departure time?”

- 1. Non-conventionally Indirect Level (Hints)
 - Hints
 - e.g. “The information I have may not be sufficient enough for me to make the decision (want others to supply more information)”

8.4. Studying Collaborative Discourse in Request Making

Conversation analyses (CAs) of the present study went beyond the utterance level and found that requesters of a team scaffolded requests through collaboratively providing external modifications and related requests in a series. As mentioned earlier, Lee (2009) also views request not in terms of single utterance but in terms of adjacency pair sequences. In his study, extended requests have been constructed collaboratively by both the passenger service agent and the passenger. It is worthwhile to explore further the salient patterns of scaffolding of requests and also how sociopragmatic factors influence such scaffolding.

8.5. Using Conversation Analysis More for Studies on Request Making

In the present study, quantitative statistical method was applied to analyse HKCSE (Business) which contained qualitative data of business dialogues. No matter how detailed and comprehensive the request manual was or how carefully the requests were coded for the present study, there might have been subjective judgment involved. Although numbers helped lend a veneer of objectivity to the coding process that was to some degree subjective, two additional measures have been applied to reduce the subjectivity. First, second coding was conducted for enhancing the objectivity. Second, CA was conducted to supplement additional insightful patterns in addition to the piecemeal investigations of request head acts in statistical analyses and corpus analyses. CA has been able to analyse request making in the broadest scope that includes series of external modifications and related requests running through the whole dialogue. However, due to the limitation of time and resource of being a part-time researcher, the author of the present study has not been able to analyse more beyond the five iconic dialogues from HKCSE (Business). Future studies on request making may consider adopting a more qualitative focus and more thoroughly applying CA as the research tool.

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APPENDIX



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Appendix

A.1 Dialogues for Second Coding

Dialogue B001

Service Encounter (hotel)

NCS: B / CS: b

(R1) B: I want to check out 8221, (it's) Mr. G_.

b: Let me see, it's 8122.

B: Er, 8122, right.

b: Yeah.

B: Right, sorry.

b: You are too tired.

B: Yeah, 8122, that's stupid, but I was in the right room.

b: Did you purchase anything from the mini bar?

B: No, nothing.

b: Your bill is on the way, it's coming.

B: Okay.

b: Is everything okay?

B: Everything okay, yeah, thanks, I needed some sleep.

b: And you're going home now?

B: Yes, home to China.

b: For work or?

B: For work, yeah, the problem is when you arrive in the morning in Hong Kong, in Europe it's midnight.

b: Yeah, so you feel very tired.

B: And with the kids in midnight, they want to sleep.

b: Yeah.

B: So, it's very hard.

b: Alright.

B: Okay, signature.

b: Yes, please.



b: And by the way, are you going to handle the account by your visa card?

B: Yeah, credit.

b: Yeah, I do need your credit card once again.

B: Once again, it's a visa.

b: Yeah.

B: Alright.

b: Now, you feel better?

B: Yeah, much better.

b: May I have your signature once again please?

B: Okay, yeah.

b: So how long will it take to go to China?

B: Er, one hour.

b: One hour?

B: Just one hour, it's very quick.

b: Alright, here you go.

B: Okay, thank you very much.

b: No problem.

B: And you'll make the other one (another document for signature)?

b: Well, actually this morning, it's not signed yet, no, this morning we're holding an approval here.

B: Okay, alright.

b: Okay, have a nice trip.

B: Okay, good bye.

b: Bye.



Dialogue B023

Meeting (Hotel)

NCS: B1-B5 / CS: a1-a4, b1-b4

B1: Good morning all. Let me introduce again Doctor K_ from the University of Hong Kong and her associate P_ G_. They want to record our meeting again. And er they want to, I'm not quite sure why, but anyway,

B1: If we just go round the table and you introduce yourselves again, starting with C_.

a1: Yeah C_ L_, Public Relations Manager.

B2: T_ B_ from Food and Beverage.

b1: E_ N_, Assistant Manager.

a2: C_ L_, the Executive Housekeeper.

B3: G_ P_, Front Office Manager.

B4: A_ F_, the Marketing Services Manager.

a3: M_ L_, Executive Services Manager.

b2: D_ W_, Chief Engineer.

b3: H_ W_, Concierge.

a4: E_, Director of Corporate Sales.

B1: Okay, good, thank you, let's go ahead, okay.

B3: In the logbook yesterday, we had an incident. In the lobby yesterday morning, where Mister C_ from Room 904 accidentally walked through a pane of glass next to the side entrance. He received medical attention, and the cut was looked after. And as a gesture of goodwill, I believe all the charges for the clinic and the repair charges were waived. The guest was most grateful for all the attention received. Also, we had a lost report from Mister L_ who is an outsider, who had been having a meeting in the Executive Lounge. Yesterday, he left his luggage in front of a taxi when he left the hotel after he arrived from his other destination, and he just asked us that should it be returned to contact him, so left his contact details.

B1: No news yet.

B3: No. And there was the arrival for Mister M_ from the Mandarin Oriental Jakarta. He was met on arrival at quarter past three yesterday, and was escorted to his room, and was most grateful for the warm welcome and the nice room.

B1: Okay, he's doing a tour of the hotel today with V_, and he's here with V_ D_ of Head

Office. He may become the personnel director if H_ L_ becomes a inaudible.

B3: Last night's occupancy, it was 96.7%, and the rate was 1025. We just had 6 rooms vacant and a couple of the rooms were in group doubled-up.

B1: Are those 6 rooms guaranteed?

B4: Oh, we had 4 out of 13 actually guaranteed.

B3: So on the arrivals today, it's quite a quiet day with VIP arrivals, though it's very busy with groups downstairs today. And on page 2, we we can, it's the sixth arrival from Mister H_ from Waterfall Microwave who came for his 25th visit, staying up on the executive floor in superior room. We also have a suite booking for a Mister G_ from Unilever Hong Kong. He's actually VP6 and not VP8. Page 3, we have another VP6 guest Mister U_ K_ from Mitsubishi Double Fortune Travel, staying up the executive floor. In a superior room and in VP8 Mister R_ M_ from Whirlpool, returning for his 47th visit to VP8, also staying on the executive floor. And that's it for the for the VIP visitor highlight. We also have a booking from the Oriental Bangkok, Mister F_, statistician from Bangkok.

B1: Yeah.

B3: So yeah, as I said, it's a busy day downstairs, we have 9 groups arriving today and 5 departing. Some of them are earlier arrivals, but they're spaced throughout the day really, so it's going to be very busy today. There's a lot of traffic in the lobby.

b1: Can find it worse than this.

B1: M_.

a3: Yeah, yesterday we take in 180,059 room nights, 380 room nights increase in corporate sector, have a drop by 285 room nights in wholesale sector.

B1: How many?

a3: 285.

b4: Very poor.

a3: Drop off in wholesale sector, so now we're holding 86.4% with the rate 979, revenue 22.74 million. So we're still 1.73 million behind budget, I mean left.

B1: Okay, F and B.

B2: Today, Harbour Room 2 is occupied for O_ P_ for lunch. For 20, Harbour 3 is occupied by a Chinese lunch for M_ Financial Services. 3 tables harbour rooms for tonight. We have a graduation dinner for a 180, that's the first one that we have, one O_ W_ I_ college remaining rooms. Obviously, there's still the coffee shop Gloucester Room. One is S_ C_ Bank, and we do lunch for 21 Gloucester Room, 2 meeting and we do Chinese lunch for 15, and the second preparation in 99 from 95 in the Gloucester Rooms, and P_ and G_ have a meeting with lunch

and tea for 21 meeting in Californian and lunch.

B1: You have a birthday party for...

B2: K_?

B1: K_.

B2: Revenue-wise yesterday, we had a pretty good day, the coffee shop is still doing extremely well, it was all digit doubles yesterday. Take on some steps actually, getting rid of the casuals because we sent half the stuff on vacation, cos we have to be careful that we don't spend too much. We did 440 breakfasts yesterday, a 180 lunch and 300 dinners last night, so actually more than we do in the coffee shop downstairs. Besides that, each unit did well yesterday. They came pretty close to their budget. Todd's did extremely well, they did a 130,000 last night. Only a Thursday happy hour with the bar at 5, the wine bar at 9 and J_ at 9.

B1: Yeah.

B2: So all in all, it was a good day.

B1: Yeah.

B2: Considering that the amounts we did was 2.5 million which is lagging behind about 550,000. So far restaurant partners are doing pretty well.

B1: Okay. Just a few things, we'll start with the comment cards.

B1: 1105 guest stayed here for a few days, 31st of May to the 2nd of June, they liked the smooth run service and the high room standards with splendid views.

B1: They would have liked to have had a Sunday morning newspaper. Is there anything promoting Hong Kong on activities, daily activities on TV which we don't have? Shoe polishing cloth, they would have like one of them. Room number Eleven O Five.

B1: Is that not Standard showing there?

a2: Well, actually you know every room has one.

B1: So, you know, they missed that.

B1: Complaining about the portion size in the coffee shop, saying they're too large, which is unusual, and a small accounting error handled well by cashiers.

B1: So now 607, enjoyed all the services of the hotel, I won't read them all out, but they're very complimentary.

B1: 607, the AC (air conditioning) had not been working on one, on one occasion check.

B1: D_, 607, just have a look at that.

B1: And Mister and Mrs K_, 1129, liked everything, nothing at all bad, perfect.

(R2) B1: The executive lunch set up, you need to just let me know what we are going to



be doing there before break.

B1: For the interior designers S_, D_, did Mister A_ contact you from Mitsubishi about the televisions?

B1: Can you follow up with them (TVs in hotel) today?

B1: Because if they don't come, if they don't get organised, then they'll lose their contract, right.

B1: Just a couple of other things.

B1: T_, if you could contact that lady who's apparently very good supervisor.

B1: I've had a letter from one of our regular guests in the UK who is making another booking for September to October, letting us know that they looking forward to coming back, they're just also highlighting that they've had a letter from British Airway Holidays, er, outlining all the renovation work that's going on in the hotel. It's quite interesting because the the room renovations are now on hold.

B1: We need to contact all the travel agents worldwide.

a2: Yeah.

B2: 607 (agents)?

a1: Mhm.

B2: Through the various sectors and let them (agents) know that it's not on.

B2: Because if that's the kind of letter going out, we're not going to get any business because they're trying to dissuade people from coming here.

B2: Article appeared in the Hong Kong Standard, this morning's magazine passes magazine to F_ B_, it doesn't feature Todd's or any of our other outlets about our vegetarian food.

B2: So we need to get on to them (vegetarian food).

B2: Because we've got certainly a good vegetarian spread.

B2: And can I see you after the meeting?

B2: Cos I want to talk to you about the 1997. I've thought of some letters that we need to draft up finally today.

B2: Okay that's all I have, C_.

a1: I haven't any, thank you.

B2: In the area of the buffet, in the dining room, is there the possibility to isolate the air conditioning above there?

B3: No, that's very much variable.

B2: Chillier than downstairs. This week, I've had a few complaints about food temperature today so.

B1: D_, do you have anything?

b2: We will have this stand set into O P S room by today with our member's room message.

B1: Okay, good, okay that sounds good, thank you. Let's hope he gets that as well.

B3: I'm just getting an increasing number of letters from the telephone providers regarding mobile telephone use within our hotel and installing modulers to enable that.

B3: So I was just wondering if people (colleagues) can ask their staff if we are getting complaints from the guests.

B3: Because I'm not aware of whether we're getting complaints, because they always cite the Dickens Bar as a poor transmission area, but I think it's with the standards that should be maintained are so.

B1: Well, I.

B2: That's true.

B5: That's true, yeah.

B1: Yeah, but some of the guests don't want to be contacted at the Dickens Bar either. I think...

B2: Yeah.

B3: And M_ says it's going for the Dickens Bar because they're getting a large number of engagements.

B3: I think, could install further ones.

B2: I know we've placed an order, first of all, for one location.

B3: How do we do this in relation to this as well?

b2: Because we have a few areas in hand and an appointment at 10, one is definitely OK, and it may be good if we could just get one company to come and do this study, and that is to make a decision which areas are improved in.

b2: Yes, in Dickens Bar, you need a very strong signal receiver, due to there is a, er there's er under.

B4: The remaining courses are here. I've talked to Henry this morning, we'll put 3 more out for this morning.

B1: Okay, I just noticed in the advertisement of the TV entertainment times yesterday, we've got an error in there.

B4: Yeah, the error was not on the proof though.

B1: Alright.

B4: They're investigating why that happened, but on the next subscription it won't happen.

B1: Okay.

b2: Today, I'm a bit concerned about the lights, which light have transmit to the karaoke, we're going to have a meeting over there.

B1: What's happening today?

b2: Today, there's a general, they found the fell down piece which was identified by the contractors, and we called the structural engineer to have a look at that piece, and he suggests us to take it out, but it's not his preferred piece; therefore, now they've already started using the jackhammer, so you will expect complaint.

B1: Okay, yeah.

B2: Next and last week, the excavator.

b2: The actual demolition, heavy demolition.

B1: Started on Monday.

b2: Was probably that, so you might expect a lot more complaint.

B1: Anyway, we've just have to make sure we've got people in place that can handle the gas pipe.

B1: Have we had the drawings for the access to the kitchen?

B2: Couldn't find them last night, so I haven't got it yet, got an e-mail last night.

b2: You got, you got.

B2: One thing, I got the e-mail last night.

b2: Because I need this information to pass it to D_.

B2: Okay.

B1: And I've confirmed the amazing grace that they close from that one week.

b2: 17 to 23rd, the other thing is that I will be out at a meeting in the Hong Kong Hotel Association regarding the switch.

B1: Okay.

b3: Mister H_, meeting at one thirty.

B1: Okay, thanks, anything?

a4: Just now want to let everybody know that you know the corporate and booking sales team, we are conducting a sales _ starting from next Monday for three days from the tenth to twelfth, so you may not be finding us in the in the office.

a4: So anything, must pass it to messengers.

B1: Good, alright, that's all for now, thanks very much, have a good day.

Dialogue B029

Service Encounter

NCS:B / CS:a

B: Okay, yeah, Hong Kong Taipei, Taipei Hong Kong.

a: And I guess you have booking already.

B: Yeah, I have a booking in yeah 10:30 yeah.

(R3) a: Okay, may I have your passport please?

B: yeah.

a: Thank you.

(pause)

B: Is it?

a: Mister D_.

B: Yeah.

a: Would you like to have one-way ticket or round trip?

B: Erm round trip, I think, please.

a: Okay, may I know how long you will stay in Taiwan?

a: Will it (stay) be more than three days?

B: It's cheaper yeah.

B: Yeah, I'll be, erm I will be coming back by the Sunday night or Monday morning.

a: Would you like to have any booking now or just leave it open?

B: Can you book me for last flight on Sunday night?

a: Okay.

B: I'm not sure, but I've got a.

a: Oh, you can change it in Taiwan?

B: Yeah, I can change it (in Taiwan).

B: Can you give me the telephone number?

a: So would you like to just make a booking on Sunday first or you just do it in Taiwan?

B: No, make the booking, make the booking, then I can change it.

a: Okay, last flight er should be departed at 7:30 in the evening, okay, which get into Hong Kong at 9:15 at night.

B: Yeah, okay.

(Pause)



a: Okay, this is your passport.

B: This is a smoking flight tonight?

a: Er no.

B: It's not a smoking flight.

a: It is a non-smoking flight actually.

B: (Inaudible) non-smoking.

a: So Mister D_, if you just come back on Sunday, we have to charge you a one-year ticket because it's less than three nights (share on the condition).

a: Will you come back on Monday then?

B: Is it cheaper (flight)?

a: Yes.

B: How much cheaper (flight)?

a: It's two hun, I mean 2360, that means 660 Hong Kong dollars, the price difference, cheaper, cheaper.

B: Cheaper okay, I'll come back on Monday then.

B: First flight back on Monday, please.

a: Okay (laugh), okay.

(Pause)

B: First flight's 7:20, isn't it, isn't that right?

a: First flight departure 7:20, arrival Hong Kong 9am, okay?

B: Ni, nine.

a: 9am.

B: 9am.

a: Nine o' clock.

a: Would you like to pay by credit card then?

B: Yes please.

B: And do the frequent flyer miles as well, please.

a: Thank you, yeah, sure.

(Pause)

B: Oh what what what what er what card did I give you?

a: Oh, I guess I have.

B: I give you a wrong card, no, no, no, no.

a: Yeah (laugh) no, that one, that one, not, no.

a: I need the credit card, yes (laugh) same colour (laugh).



B: Yeah.

B: Same colour.

(Pause)

a: Mister D_.

B: Yeah.

a: May I have your signature by the cross please?

B: Of course.

(Pause)

a: Thank you.

(Pause)

a: Thank you.

a: So would you please collect your boarding card at B counter now?

B: Up where?

a: Just at counter B on the other side.

B: Counter B, okay, no worries.

a: Thank you, have a nice flight.

(Pause)

a: Don't forget your passport, bye bye.

B: Bye bye.



Placement Interview

NCS: B / CS: a

B: I would like to first start by introducing myself and the bit of history of the division I sort of take care of within the hotel. And then I'll ask you if you permit me to go into a little more details.

(Pause)

B: First of all, I always like ask people why that they're interested in the industry and second in Hyatt.

a: mm.

B: So what's your interest in the industry, why you're attracted to a hotel, hotel life or hotel career?

a: Um, mm, mm, um, I've choose this er this course hotel and catering management to study. It's mainly because I think that er this course is quite practical and useful, and um, and I also know that er the hotel industry in Hong Kong, um the service industry, especially for the hotel industry, will be a blooming industry after 1997. As you know um um, after the construction of the new airport, and there is numerous hotels built around the Chek Lap Kok Airport, and I think that um um er to choose the a career which is working in the hotel industry, um will be a career which is um a good career prospect.

B: That is correct.

a: And I also er want to choose some kind of career which is service oriented, er which has, er direct contact with the guest, I can learn the interpersonal skills, the communication skills and to learn how to cooperate with others. I think it's quite important.

B: It is, I do agree with all of what you said, but I would also like to emphasise that it's not only restricted to our industry to have the relations with others, and to obviously have well a nice and interesting career, one thing I would at least like to to bring upon is that if you work in this industry.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm.

B: Er as you will know we work when others are relaxing in general, meaning that our life turns around the clients, meaning that we do often work on shifts.

a: Mm mm mm.

B: And on a schedule which is not very common like a nine-to-five.



a: Mm mm mm.

B: Normal office hours, as we call it or bank hours.

a: Yes.

a: Mm.

B: We work very much into shifts and working on Sundays working on Christmas.

a: Yes.

B: Working on all these (on shift and during public holiday), are you comfortable with that?

a: Always, I think so.

B: You think so?

a: I will try my best.

B: That, that's important.

a: Mm mm.

B: In our industry, it it's quite important to to be focused on we work on public holidays, we work during hours that are not as common as other industries.

a: Mm mm.

B: Now I'd like to ask you er my second part of the question which was what you're interested in Hyatt.

B: Or is there any special reason or you just dropped off in the MTR, and you saw Hyatt oh let me walk in here (laugh).

a: (laugh) Actually, um I'm being assigned to work in the Hyatt, Hyatt regency.

B: Oh you're been assigned, it's not your choice.

a: Yes (laugh), but er when I'm, I know that I was being assigned to er to apply for the internship trainee to work in the Hyatt Regency, I'm quite happy cos um (laugh) its location is very convenient. It's just near the MTR station, and um I just come here, go here to um by MTR.

B: Uhuh.

a: And um also, um I know that, er from the brochure of the Hyatt Regency, I know the, I know that er this hotel always emphasise on the staff training, and they treat their staff not like their employee just like their guest, and they have a good and er well organised training programmes for the staff; therefore, I'm quite happy to be assigned to to work here.

B: Okay very good, well, that's a good answer.

B: I would just like to know which area of interest do you have, where would you like to train, which area.

B: Do you have a specific area you would like to train in?

a: Actually, I want to train in the rooms division department and the flat, the food and beverage department.

a: Because I have these subjects in my er when I'm studying in the Hong Kong polytechnic er er I've taken these subjects such as the accommodations and the food and beverage management during year one and year two.

(R4) a: We think that um er, I really want to have a chance to work in these department.

a: To consolidate my knowledge which I've learnt from textbooks or from my text lecturers to apply what I've learnt from textbooks to apply to into the real hotel situations.

B: Very good, very well.

B: Because I'm from Food and Beverage, I'll ask more specifically.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm.

B: Within Food and Beverage, I see that you have no prior experience within food and beverage division in our hotel, you have or not, no?

a: Er actually um, we have taken the food and beverage management er in year one and year two er, we have two restaurants in the Hong Kong polytechnic name as er namely.

B: Okay.

a: The Bauhinia Restaurants and the Polytop Restaurant, um um these two restaurants is for the students to have their practicum there to to practise there, and.

B: Uhuh, okay.

a: Um, er our our class have 50 students, and we're divided into 2 groups.

B: mhm.

a: Er er one group will be er doing the kitchen operation in the er back of house, and the other group is in the front of house to.

B: Uhuh.

a: Er to to do the service.

B: Uhuh.

a: To have er the direct contact with the guest. I think the food and beverage management subjects um is quite practical and useful and quite interesting as as er.

B: Uhuh.

a: We need to work together, all 50 of us need to work together, and we cooperate with each other, we learn to, er the interpersonal skills, the communication skills.

B: Mhm.

a: And um er, all of us er want to er try our best to to make the menu a success, and um I think it's quite interesting and useful subjects.

B: Okay, so when you were doing your practicum in the restaurants of your university, how, what did you do exactly?

a: Mm mm mm mm mm mm what.

B: What what.

a: What did I learn?

B: Yeah, no, what did you, what were the tasks you had to do (practicum in the restaurant), what what did you do?

a: Um um yes it is, actually um, we need to set the price of the menu, um it's because, um they have decide the menu for us, we need to cook this food this er all of them are set menu, er in year two, we need to to to do the two to do three practicum.

B: Mm mm.

a: Two of them are are western food.

B: Mm mm.

a: And the one of them are Chinese food, and all er three of them are are set menu, we need to set the price to consider the food cost, to calculate the food cost, um and then er, I mean er, it's because um in this semesters, our group are doing the um front of house to have er to do the service um.

B: Mhm.

a: We've we have divided into 3 groups, the management team, the supervisory team and the operational team.

B: Okay.

a: The operational team consists of the runner and the waiter waitress, and the supervisory team consist of the captain, and the management team have the er financial controller, receptionist er sales and marketing manager, and manager, they do all the planning, and um.

B: Okay.

a: They, we need to um, firstly we need to set our object objective, may maybe the er the the number of occupancy rate and the er er the the the percentage of the customer satisfaction, and and we also need to design for the service procedure such as um to unfold napkin and then to to pour the water, yes and then um erm.

B: Yeah, that's very important part, yes.

a: Er lastly the guest will fill in a questionnaires to evaluate our ser our service.

B: Okay, yeah.

a: And then we can get some feedback and then evaluate our service stand standard.

B: Okay fine, okay, well, I've seen obviously that well you have some basic knowledge.

a: Mm.

B: Er the reason for I'm asking you these questions and the reason why I would like to insist on.

a: Mm.

B: The practicality of a training is because we do believe very strongly in Hyatt.

a: Mm.

B: That for all trainings any division you have to start at, what we say at the beginning or start from the bottom, we do emphasise (practicality) very much especially for the front of the house.

a: Mm.

B: And then Food and Beverage, for example, we do emphasise a lot that people start as waiter and stay there for a while before climbing up the ladder.

a: Mm.

B: Er obviously from your experience and from the way you trust yourself, I can see that obviously you have been educated, but as you well said that yourself, the reality of books to the reality of life is very different, that's one of the reasons why you go through training to see and accommodate yourself.

a: Mm.

B: Nevertheless, we do emphasise a lot and what we do find a lot of trainees are not experienced enough even if they have the theoretical knowledge of running an operation, they are confronted with quite a lot of difficulties once on the floor, and the main reason being is that knowing how to set up a table is not the same as setting up a table, and the main reason why we ask and we require this experience and going through the process is because you cannot expect to be considered the leader or a manager if you cannot show your captains who have been there for fifteen years.

a: Mm.

B: Or your waiters who have been there for twenty years.

a: Mm.

B: You cannot just go and say do that without showing them or without showing them that you know what you're talking about, and that's one of the big emphasis on training in Hyatt.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm.

B: Is that we want to see future managers develop their skills from the very bottom.

a: Mm.

B: The reason why I'm saying all this is that.

B: I have to ask you and I ask you to to answer very frankly, are you afraid of being a waiter for so much time that is available, a month or five weeks or six weeks?

a: I don't mind because.

B: Because but not only minding but er are you.

B: You have to be convinced that this is important (starting from the bottom) for your development.

B: Because it's the only way that you can future manage these people because you have been through it.

a: Mm mm mm.

B: You know not because you've read it somewhere, but because you have been through it.

a: Mm mm.

B: That's the first point, that's very important you have to be convinced that starting at the bottom is the best thing for you to advance quickly.

a: Mm mm mm.

B: Ha.

a: Um I quite agree with you, even I'm a degree student, I know a lot of theories or have only knowledge from the textbooks. If I want to join the hotel industry, um even er not only in the er in the Food and Beverage department, even in the Rooms Division or other department, we need to start from very beginning, start from the bottom to do the operational level, and then um er it's because, um I do think that um we need to start it from the bottom and know um er and know the operational techniques, and er we may come across of come across of a lot of operational problems, we need to know how to handle this problems, and if we want to progress er or promoted to higher level manager, and we know how to handle these problems.

B: Mhm, that's right. Okay, I do, I think we will look on that.

B: Do you have any specific area you would like to concentrate on within your training in Food and Beverage?

B: Is there a specific area like coffee shop, banquets room service, is there a specific area you're more interested in, rooms, um I think um maybe in the ban banquet, in banquet, any specific reason for that?

a: (laugh) I think er any department is the same.

B: Yeah.

a: Er any any department in the F, and any section or any department in the Food and Beverage is quite similar (laugh) I think (not a very good answer).

B: Okay, no, that's okay, I'm just, I'm just wanting to find out a little more, um obviously I

understand from miss L_ that you would be with us from June until.

a: Mm mm mm mm September.

B: September right okay.

a: The middle of September.

B: The middle of September, okay, so that's going to be quite an interesting time.

a: Yes, mm.

B: To be working, well, I suppose working anywhere in Hong Kong, but working in our industry because we're going to go through that week.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm mm mm mm.

B: Which is going to be very special, er the last days of June.

a: Mm mm mm mm.

B: To the beginning of July, so that's interesting anyway, well, very well, um I can see (inaudible) your English is very good.

a: Ha, thanks.

B: Obviously, so I can't say anything about that um.

B: You still have how much to do to finish your university, how long is it?

a: One year.

B: Er one year more.

a: Yes, one year more.

B: So after this.

a: After this in.

B: After September, you have one year.

a: Yes, one year, one year more.

B: That's it.

B: Okay, well that's fine er, would you have any questions? Please don't hesitate.

a: I want to know, I would be very pleased to know do you have any suggestion or er any recommendations for us as trainee to adapt to the hotel environment.

B: That's a good question, er I do have two on two different levels on on.

a: Mm mm mm.

B: On a career-path level, I would say, um, be open minded.

a: Mm mm mm.

B: Er Hong Kong is a great place where the diversity of cultures is so big that you can actually taste a little bit of every corner of the world. Basically, er nevertheless, I do find that Hong Kongers are in general very family-value-oriented, which I think is good.

a: Mm.

B: Nevertheless, I do find sometimes, it can narrow a little bit your vision and I would say in your career, and if you do join Hyatt, when you finish or when you finish, I would suggest that you take a year or two of experience abroad, going to Taiwan, going to Mainland China, going to Singapore, going to Malaysia.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm mm.

B: But I do find that Hong Kong girls are very hardworking, but Hong Kong girls stay in Hong Kong.

a: Mm.

B: Er I think it is worth trying to travel abroad and learn from um er foreign experiences.

a: Mm.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm.

B: Er on the second point, I can only speak for Hyatt, but you have to at some point.

a: Mm mm.

B: Unfortunately make it clear whether or you want to take a career path.

a: Mm.

B: And how seriously committed you are for that.

a: Mm.

B: Especially at the beginning, er and I believe that's true, in a lot of industries, er you'll be exposed to a lot of long hours and long hours, in our industry, is very easy for one simple reason is that, the hotel never closes.

a: Mm.

B: So you can basically be here twenty-four hours a day.

a: Mm.

B: It's not like another shop or bank it closes so you can't, but basically, we are open all the time.

a: Mm.

B: So I think in our industry, you, when you're committed, you will find that hours can be quite long.

a: Mm mm.

B: And that you have to be very committed, and if you have a family of your own, if you're married, it makes it a little more difficult, so I always tell people which are starting in the career, it's a beautiful career, you have the opportunity to meet every day different people, one day is different from the other.

a: Mm.

B: It's never the same.

a: Mm.

B: You always know when you start, but you never know when you finish a day.

a: Mm mm.

B: And that's something that I think, a lot of people that leave their profession in the very early stages is because they didn't think that it would be so time consuming.

a: Mm.

B: It would be, it would take so much of their life, and it's something I always encourage people to think about so that you don't lose your time and and your effort.

a: Mm.

B: But anyway, I can see from our interview that you're well committed.

a: Mhm.

B: Er, I will not ask you the question, but er I don't think it's fair with the camera on, but er always think about being a little more prepared in the way of saying, being precise. When you ask for an interview, be precise, say I want to come here because of this reason that reason this reason, meaning I know you're prime hotel, and er and your location, I know that you have a huge banquet operation, and I'm interested in banquet sales, so then you go straight to the point, you know, exactly what you're talking about.

a: You mean, I need to be more precise, not?

B: (cough) Being more objective.

a: Oh oh oh.

B: Being more objective, it's not a fair question because you've just said that, but but think about it when you go to an interview, you have an objective, you know why you're going there, and why the reason you're seeing that person.

a: Mm mm mm mm mm mm I need to be well prepared to, when er, before I go to the interview (inaudible).

B: You are well prepared, but I'm just saying having a clear objective, just say I want to come to your hotel for this reason, that reason, this reason (advice only).

a: Mm mm mm, yeah thanks.

B: Thank you.

a: (laugh) Thank you.

B: Thank you very much, very good.

a: Thank you.

B: Always keeps a smile (advice only).

B: And very good English that's that's a very good point.

a: (laugh).

a: Thanks.



Dialogue B114

Job interview (Explaining project/contract details, on student learning and transcription again)

NCS: B / CS: a1, a2

a1: P_, Thank you very much for coming to the interview.

a2: My pleasure (laugh).

a1: (laugh) Um, the, um the interview will be very informal, right, we, we.

a2: Right.

a1: Just mainly explain to you the project, the nature of work that is expected of you, and er and some other information, right.

a2: Okay.

a1: Um, I ex, as I explained to you in my email, right, you would be employed not by, not really by us, not really by M_ and W_, but by er bigger project, an umbrella project, what what was the funding, do you recall? Was it almost five million four point.

B: Nine yeah.

a1: Four point nine million.

B: So it's a big project.

a1: Right, yeah, it is a really big one.

B: Yeah, this is just to explain as I guess you're your, er, er, it, contract details, letters of er employment and so on will look slightly odd if this isn't explained.

a2: Okay.

a1: Mm yeah.

B: It's not, it's not unusual within universities that that somebody gets a big project, and it's then broken up into pieces.

a1: Mm, so, it, er the source of funding is er teaching grant development, teaching development grant and er the main project title is enhancing teaching and learning through assessment. As you can see on this page right, we had a meeting, um a big project team meeting the other day, and we were looking at um different er sub-project, er progress and their reports and so on so. Um the project, this the sub-project you will be working working for is called online collaborative assessment to enhance teaching and learning, right, as you can see there is a list of sub projects, you'll be working for this particular one, right, and you would be.

a2: Yeah, okay.

a1: They, they said, housed in the department of English, so you would be sitting together with other research assistants, um associates in and er also postgrad students in one of our offices, okay, um this project online collaborative assessment to enhance teaching and learning, er we're, we're planning to, we're planning to conduct this research in two subjects in the first semester, intercultural communication which you studied last year (telephone rings).

a2: Yeah, mm.

(Pause)

a1: Okay, we can continue in, um so I mentioned two subjects in the first semester's intercultural communication for year three.

a2: Yeah.

a1: And in the second semester Pragmatics for year one.

a2: Okay.

a1: Okay, um so you have experienced er online online learning before.

a2: Yeah, right.

a1: Yeah, so our project is to look at to examine how the teacher and how the students perceive this mode of learning and er most importantly, we will be getting the students to assess themselves and also get them to assess each other, alright, in one of the um in one of the assessment tasks which they will have to do online okay, so we would, we, we will, we will have er questionnaires, we will have focus group discussions and we will analyse the postings the students put on the web and also um especially to look at how they think assessment, this, this form of assessment collaborative assessment, er how they perceive this form of assessment, whether they like it or not and whether this er they perceive this form of assessment fair and objective and the problems that they might have when they, when they had to assess others and themselves online.

B: I think you might have to say something about what you mean by collaborative assessment because it wasn't on P_'s (asking colleague).

a2: Yes, Pragmatics.

a1: It wasn't, no, it wasn't.

B: Pragmatics or intercultural communications, so maybe you should just say.

a1: Maybe you could explain a bit (asking colleague).

B: An example, well, it's a form of assignment, I don't know if anybody else has done it, it's a form of assessment that W_'s designed really, it was her idea, we tried it on Pragmatics when you did it, it wasn't online.

a2: No.

B: But it's now online, erm, er we've broken Pragmatics up into something like six units, and and the students don't have lectures anymore, and er they go through the units on Web CT, and there're some some examples, so if we take something like "I don't know politeness" if you can remember politeness, so there's a unit explaining what, what it is, there're some examples.

a2: (laugh) Mm.

B: Then there're some worked examples, in other words, students can look at more examples and think about them and then find a kind of model answer, we call those worked examples.

a2: Mm.

B: And then there're unworked examples, where there's some data, and there's, there's no model answer, okay, now, what this collaborative assessment.

a2: Okay.

B: Is based on the students um doing those unworked ones, posting it up on the WebCT forum and then in groups we cou, we might be a group, imagine we're a group of students, and you post up what you think the answer is.

a2: Mhm.

B: For for a bit of data, and then W_ and I react to what you post up, we might agree with you, disagree or add, you know, that we think and analyse it fully, okay, then based on that feedback from us, you have to either accept our feedback or reject it, but you got to be explicit in terms of why you might accept.

a2: Mm.

B: W_'s idea and reject mine, the, you, so you got to, kind of, you know, have a critical approach to the feedback and then you might revise.

a2: Yeah.

B: What you've done with the data, so as a result of the feedback, your final interpretation of the data is this, whereas earlier it was something else, but this process, us critiquing it, and you then critiquing our stuff, now students had to do that throughout the units and then present this in a kind of, do you know what a portfolio is, have you done any of that?

a2: Yes, something like a file, and then you have a lot of documents inside it, yeah we had have something.

B: Right, yeah, right.

a2: In er business, for com, yeah something like that, in yea Business English for Business Communication.

B: Yeah.

a1: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, that subject.

B: Yeah, so what we said to students is, they didn't have to show us everything that they've done in the forum, but we wanted to see one example from each unit handled in this way, okay, now we did that this last semester with Pragmatics, and it was quite successful, but it was only W_ and I giving grades, so we were looking at this portfolio, and we're thinking, well, yeah P_'s handled this well and we'll give her an A, okay but.

a2: Mm.

B: Um we don't want, that was a kind of a first run, what we want to do is to make it more elaborate in terms of assessment, so it won't just be us giving P_ a grade, P_ will give herself a grade based on how she thought she did in this assignment, and the other group members will give you a grade base on how active you were the level of contribution you made in terms of your feedback and so on, okay, because you should know what it's like when you're in a group, you know maybe W_ gave you lots of feedback.

a2: Yeah.

B: And I didn't, I didn't do anything much, you know, er, so then.

a2: Mm mm.

B: You two would give me low grade okay, and you would give W_ a high grade because she was very active and contributed a lot in terms of her critique of each other's work.

a2: Mm.

B: So the the next time that we do it, your grade a will be based partly on the grade of the teacher, partly on the grade of your fellow group members and partly on a grade that you give yourself, so it'll come from three sources, but at the moment, as I said, we've, we've just done.

a2: Mm.

B: We've just done it, we were mainly trying this kind of collaborative critiquing type of assignment which we hadn't tried before er, and so to simplify it, we just graded it, but but but but er so it will develop over and over the next academic year, er so probably when we do it with intercultural communication, it will be a pilot again in a sense, but we will be piloting the assignment type that we've already tried plus we'll be looking at this more complicated way of assessing it, and then when we do Pragmatics in the next semester.

a2: Mm.

B: We will want that to be fairly polished that we've ironed out the kind of problems from this semester that we've just finished and from the first semester with intercultural communication, so we're hoping that when we do it January through to er May or whenever, it is that, that will be F_, that will be the most important one because that would kind of end end the project that,

you know, that we'll feel that we'll have accomplished whatever we can accomplish through er playing around with that kind of.

a1: Mm mm.

B: Assignment, er so.

(R5) B: That would be your involvement in helping us conduct all these different ways of looking at it (students' learning).

a2: Okay.

a1: Mm, yeah.

(Pause)

a1: Maybe you can say something about what made you feel that you would be suitable for this particular position.

a2: Er I think that er because I have been studying here for three years, and um I'm interested in what I have learned I think that erm.

a2: It's a great opportunity if I can apply what I have learned into practice.

a1: Right, yeah.

a2: Yeah, so it's and the project that you have just mentioned to me erm sounds very interesting and innovative yeah and so.

a2: I would like to be a part of it (students' learning project), that would be my honour if I can be a part of it.

a1: That's very nice, yeah, um in the last few weeks, you've been working part time right, but mainly transcribing data.

a2: Yeah, yeah, right.

a1: How did you feel about, how do you feel about transcribing data?

a2: Er, I think it's quite a challenging task and then you.

a1: Right.

a2: Really have to um have that patience, um you have to sit there for er a few hours, and then you just listen to the tapes sometimes, um sometimes it's quite frustrating if you can't um hear what they're saying, but then er, but then I think if you get what they're saying, then it's really great. You have that great sense of satisfaction.

a1: Yeah, yeah, mm, that's, yeah, yeah, we've mentioned that you did a wonderful job yeah best transcriber we've ever had.

B: Yeah, yeah.

a1: And yeah, yeah, (laugh), but er don't worry too much about the fact that sometimes you cannot hear certain utterances or bits of an utterance too too too too well, alright, don't worry



too much, I mean, don't, you don't have to spend too much time going back and and try and listen again because the tape the transcription will always come back to us either M_ or myself alright, and we will.

B: Mm.

a1: And we will kind of listen again and pay particular attention to bits that you found really problematic so um um.

B: Mm.

a1: If you really can't hear it which you did right, just simply put put er inaudible and then just keep on (inaudible) carry on.

B: Yeah, and it might be that nobody can hear it, the, the quality just isn't very good.

a1: Yeah, mm, yes.

a2: Okay.

B: But er, I mean transcribing is an awful job, er that's for sure, but, and we don't, I mean, transcribing isn't an end in its, in itself.

a2: It's just the beginning.

B: It's just the beginning, then we can start analysing it. The only good thing about transcribing we find is that because we're teachers and researchers into discourse and Pragmatics er, it makes us listen very closely to our data, and in, and look very closely at the final product, and often we get our ideas and more ideas if we're involved at that level. Although we don't actually like checking and transcribing, er it does immerse us in the in the data a bit, like going to Britain, where you were immersed in English, you know, like it or not, you get English for all the time, from every angle; and it's a bit like that transcribing or checking data. It really kind of pushes you under the water of the, you know, if you think of data as the as the swimming pool, you're pushed under the water and completely covered in it, and that helps us.

a1: Mhm mm.

B: So so after you've listened to it, has your views spoken language changed, have you seen things that you were not aware of, were there ...?

a2: Er, er, maybe, er, I'll say that er even if er you're a native speaker or something like that or whether you're very fluent in English, er, still, you may have some kind of hesitation and er fillers that kind of thing, so maybe, er, um I won't think that native speakers are perfect, yeah, (laugh) that's what I think, yeah.

a1: (laugh).

a2: Okay, I mean, erm, maybe, er, before I thought that, er, um, native speakers, they spoke



perfectly.

B: Mm.

a2: But then, now, maybe I have er a little bit changed my mind, yeah.

a1: Mm.

B: No, I think that that's very insightful, what you're saying, because that is the impression, that, that native speakers (inaudible) have complete fluency.

a2: Mhm.

B: Er complete command of the vocabulary and the the structure of the language, and it just pours out endlessly perfectly er, and it doesn't.

a1: No (pause).

a2: Yeah, no, (pause) no, hesitations (laugh).

B: Yeah, it doesn't, it doesn't in fact, you know, immediately when somebody is not speaking spontaneously that they're reading something or they've rehearsed something that they're saying because it suddenly becomes (pause) free, hesitation-free, filler-free and so on, and you immediately realise that you're not listening to something natural er.

a2: Yeah.a1: Mhm.

B: Because that is in the nature of all natural language, yeah, and I think, I think that's an important point that very often learners of English have unreasonable expectations on their own English, and their teachers do as well.

a1: (laugh).

a2: (laugh).

B: That teachers, very often teachers of English forget that that nobody speaks so called perfect English, there's no such thing if you're speaking spontaneously so I think that's important yeah.

a1: Well, that er, that that that is, that make me think of a different thing, and and and and that is what is perfect English or what is, what makes perfect any language.

B: Mm yeah yeah yeah.

a1: Which would be very interesting.

B: Yeah.

a1: Erm.

B: Yeah may maybe perfect spoken English is being able to cope with those elements.

a2: Mm.

B: That occur naturally that you've got.

a2: Mm.



B: The strategies to handle things when you.

a1: Yeah.

B: Forget what you want to say or you want to change what you're saying as you're saying it.

a2: Yeah.

B: And maybe that's what perfect spoken English is, somebody who who has a very good command of those strategies.

a2: Cover up (laugh), cover up their mistakes or.

a1: Mm, yes, self-repair repairing, yeah, one's.

B: Yeah yeah yeah, may, maybe the mistake isn't that you hesitate or that you re formulate as you're speaking, maybe the mistake is that you come to a complete halt er.

a2: Mm.

a1: (laugh).

a2: (laugh) yeah.

B: When those things happen that you literally dry out, you know, I guess if you if you're able to keep going.

a1: Mm.

a2: Mm.

B: If you're able to keep the floor, er, I think that's probably what a perfect speaker is in a way.

a1: Yeah, yeah, so handling, being able to handle um the different elements components of communicative competence.

B: Yeah.

a1: Yeah, mm, yeah.

B: Yeah, that might make a nice PhD.

a1: (laugh).

a2: (laugh).

a1: There're actually a few things.

B: What is a fluent speaker, you know, what is a competent speaker.

a1: Mm, non-native speaker of.

B: Because because clearly it's not somebody who doesn't have any of that stuff.

a1: A language.

a2: Mhm.

a1: Mhm.

B: There's no such person.

a1: Yeah, right.

B: So what is it, yeah, that would, that that would be very interesting.

a1: Mm, yeah, mm, so we mentioned this particular project, alright, but um um what would erm what er research personnel do, er, when they're employed on a particular project, right, if usually, especially in our case because we have different projects going on at the same time, and er at different stages of development, so.

a1: You would very likely be also asked to work for us on other projects.

a1: But you won't be of course spending a lot of the of your time or put it that way, um, there there will be at different points in in time, right, that you will be heavily involved in this particular project definitely, right, when we're teaching, when we're collecting data from the students, but there're also er other times when you will be working on other projects like doing transcription or even typing up. Currently, we're working on prosodic transcription, so er you would be typing up alright prosodic transcription or helping us to supervise student assistants. We're hoping to get um um a student assistant right to replace you (laugh) very soon.

a2: Mhm.

B: So, right, so that kind, those kinds of duties, alright, jobs responsibilities.

a2: Okay.

B: We would ask you to to supervise the student or students once the term starts.

B: It might be that we would have er one or two students working a few hours or whatever.

a1: Yeah, mhm.

B: Yeah, but I think when we had that lunch a while ago, talking about the possibility of you working as a research staff, er, we we mentioned that it's in the unit's, in the nature of any of the way we approach all of our projects that whoever works for us, works across our projects because as W_ says that there probably isn't forty-four hours a week for the next, is it? What? Is it eleven months?

a1: Mm eleven months.

B: On just, on this, you know, er, but we've certainly got forty-four hours of research work that you can do. From your point of view, I mean, it will also add add variety, I mean, the the more.

a2: Yeah, I think so.

B: The more different research tasks you're involved in, er, the better, and it's quite nice because one research project is related to teaching at university, and the other one is much more of a kind of classic research project where we're looking and researching our subject

areas, discourse and Pragmatics, so in in a way, you'll be getting a feel of the two main things that are researched in our department which are the way we teach and then what the things that we actually teach if you see what I mean.

a2: Yeah, yeah.

B: So I, er, so I think it'll be quite a nice er introduction for you.

a2: Mm, yes.

B: What about your long term ambitions, I'm, maybe it's not fair to ask somebody who's just graduated the this but I mean, do you have ambitions in terms of becoming an academic or you want to end up as somebody in the, yeah, I don't know, maybe administrative in the government or working for a manager in a company, or I mean, do you have some occupation in mind?

a2: Erm to tell you the truth, I um (laugh), I don't really have much of an ambition, I'm not quite an ambitious pe person, but I um, but I've just talked to W_, and she er introduced to me er a lot of possibilities um in doing research and things like that, and actually I I like um doing research, er I like er reading research papers and things like that, and I I think it will be nice if I can um, if I can er develop my career in this way, but er it's only that, I don't know if I have that kind of er er competence in doing that because er I I don't know (laugh), it seems like I I may not have that kind of ability, yes, so I'm not sure.

B: Mhm (laugh) but yeah well, I think you're modest, I think from from from my experience of you, as a student, I think you've definitely got the competence, you've definitely got the ability, it's whether you've got the interest in a particular area that you would like to become, you know, specialised in and pursue to a, to the level of a PhD because if you want to be an academic these days at a university, you've, you've simply got to have a PhD.

a2: Yeah.

B: So I mean, it's really down to that er you've got the competence and ability, it's whether or not you want to set that as a longer term goal because I think it's an option for you that you could become an academic working at a university if you, but you need the interest in a particular area and because you're, because you're starting working for us erm, you might, you might think, well, I think I would, I would like to work at a university, and I would like to do research, but not in what we do because there's load you know.

a2: (laugh) Yes.

B: I mean there's it's endless in terms of what you could end up being an academic specialising it, okay, so as I said, you might find it attractive, but think, well, I know that I want to be an academic, but I also er discovered that it wouldn't be this kind of stuff that I



would do, I would rather look at these things you know.

a2: Er does um becoming an academic um mean that um I have to get involved in teaching things like that?

a1: Yeah, this is this is basically what an academic.

a2: Oh.

a1: Does teaching in the tertiary in.

B: Mm yeah.

a1: In institutions I would, I would.

B: Yeah.

a1: I would think these days, but these days that, unless you teach well, I've got, we've got some former students, right, who're now teaching in primary, secondary schools, um, they're required to develop their career or involve in er professional development as well, right, um, they they have to do to to take courses in order to upgrade their their qualifications, er we've also got students who're teaching in C_, right, um she teaches more than twenty twenty hours a week, and er she's not, she she doesn't really have to do research, right, and she is not required to publish, but it is a requirement for her to obtain higher qualifications, so when we talk about academics, depending on in which institution you work, um, the basic kind of work is teach, and then on top of that, of course, there is administrative work, there is also research publications.

B: Unfortunately, er, and I think it's true to say especially in Hong Kong, there aren't many opportunities to be a full-time academic researcher. Around the world that in some universities, there are well-established research centres or institutes which hire people er to be researchers, and you could well spend a career, you know, with opportunities for promotion and so on within a pure purely research function, er in in Hong Kong, and I think, and Hong Kong is not. Untypical research staff in Hong Kong tend to be attached solely to a project rather than a research centre or an institute um, so the terms and conditions are temporary, er and so on that and there's not such a career structure, there're different grades er, so er it's not impossible to to move up, but it's a very kind of haphazard kind of situation.

a1: Well in Hong Kong, I understand that in the two um in Chinese University and Hong Kong University, they've got a few research centres, Asian centres.

B: Right, yeah.

a1: Blah blah blah, alright.

B: Yeah.

a1: Um, they tend to do a lot of surveys, um so in in in the social sciences.

B: Right, right, yeah.

a1: Um, but I guess, er i guess, er the staff there their their their employment conditions are contracts, and so they work for contracts.

B: Mm yeah.

a1: And look for an an opportunity to re, have the contract renewed, it very much depends on the support and funding.

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I mean very very often that research centres, unless they're they're big and world famous, and you know, receive some kind of regular government funding or regular secure funding from within the university and so on, er, it means that you're constantly having to re-apply, there's always that kind of uncertainty which obviously then affects the career prospects and the terms and conditions of res research staff.

a1: Mm.

a2: Mm.

a1: Mm.

B: But it is possible, so basically if you're, if you like research, and you like that that kind of, academic kind of occupation, then probably you would end up like W_ and I that you would work in a university teaching within your area of research interest and researching as part of your job specification. Like for W_ and I, if our, if you read our job specification, it says that we're supposed to do teaching, we're supposed to do research, we're supposed to do some administrative duties, so it's kind of built into our job when we're appraised every year by er the head of department or by the university for various things. They wouldn't see that we, that we do that, it's it's part of our job, so typically you would become a university assistant professor, and er er do research as part of your job in that way rather than a full-time researcher, that's a better career path and more secure career path.

a1: Mm, well, in our in in our department, we haven't had, we we we we haven't yet had this system, but in the Chinese University, er, remember, I, right, when she did her MPhil right, she is at the same time a teaching assistant, so she's at the simultaneously, alright, um um gaining experience in teaching and also in her research study post grad study which is nice.

B: Yeah.

a2: Yeah, yeah I think so.

B: Yeah.

a1: Yeah.

B: Yeah.

a1: Right, well, I hope that we we we would get that big project and er would be able to use

use the money to have somebody doing us doing post grad study and er doing research for us at the same time.

B: Yeah, yeah.

a1: So we're not sure about that possibility you talked about, you went you went for an interview in a bank, right.

a2: Yeah, right.

a1: You didn't like, you didn't like the job nature, did you?

a2: Um at the beginning, when I er sent that application letter to the bank, actually I wasn't very sure what er the job was about, and so when I went to the interview, and then they told me more about the job duties, um I thought that, um I mean (laugh) it was nice because they offered me the job and then you know (laugh).

a1: Mm.

a2: Er during this kind of sluggish er economic conditions then, when you have somebody offered you a job, then actually you have to be grateful, right, but um, but I think er the job nature um doesn't really er suit me, so I.

a1: What specific er duties (of banking position)?

a2: Er they offered me the post of an officer er in the credit control division that means, er I have to er tackle.

a1: Mm.

a2: Some kind of er problems that they have when they lend the money to the to the people.

a1: Oh, right.

a2: And then the people, they don't er give them back the money.

a1: Mm, okay.

a2: So I have to do something like that, I have to follow up the cases and yeah something like that.

a1: Uhuh, did they did they ever say anything to you about why you were offered the job (in the bank), what qualities and er that you have that you have right that they feel suitable?

a2: Er they think that, er, my um Chinese and English um are quite good, and then um they think that they need somebody who have er a kind of language competence in order to contact their correspondence and the law firms, so that's why they.

a1: Right, right.

a2: Mhm.

a1: Just a matter of interest er, what was the salary that they that they offered you?

a2: Er they offered me erm ten thousand.

a1: Okay.

a2: Yeah and then um they say that um after the probation period.

a1: Mhm.

a2: Which lasts for six months, then er they will kind of er.

a1: Yeah review.

a2: Yeah review the salary and things like that.

a1: Right okay, yeah, mm, are there um, so apart from this, er the ten thou ten thousand salary, right, do they?

a2: Er they (the bank) have some kind of housing allowance and er some other kind of allowances as well.

a1: Yeah medical.

a2: Yeah.

a1: Okay.

a2: Er yeah.

a1: Alright.

a2: You know, you, when you work in a bank, you have lots of that kind of things, yeah.

a1: (laugh) There er low in, low interest, right, if you want to yeah (inaudible).

a2: Yeah yeah yeah.

B: Yeah yeah yeah (inaudible).

a2: The housing loans.

a1: Mm.

B: I think they give, they lend more, don't they, to to their own people if they want to buy a property?

a2: (laugh)

a1: Mhm.

a2: Yeah.

B: Yeah.

a2: Lower interest.

a1: Yes, yeah.

B: Yeah.

a1: Okay, er do do you have questions for us?

a2: Er n not really because er you have explained very clearly, and er on top of that, I have er experienced some part of the job duties so.

B: Does P_ know what the salary is (asking colleague)?



a1: Do you know what the salary is?

a2: Er not really.

B: What is the salary?

a1: It's, it is, it is um eleven thousand five hundred or something, but I'm not sure whether the salary will be changed, I'll have to check, right, whether starting from the beginning of July this year that the salary will be will be as er quoted mm to me, um, I'll check, right, and I'll let you know Mon on Monday. Have you have you heard of?

B: Right, I haven't heard, no, but I mean ever.

a1: Salary reduction?

B: Everytime that they get the chance to revise salaries, they revise them down, that's for sure.

a2: Yeah, I understand because the government is cutting the budget.

a1: Mm.

a2: So it's not surprising.

a1: Yeah, our salaries, yeah, our salaries has been redu, has been cut a couple of times quite recently.

B: Mm.

a1: Okay, so, yeah what I'll do is to er write a report and fill in a couple of forms.

a2: Yeah.

a1: Yeah, and then I think that's it, thank you very much.

B: And er, yeah, and how long does it take? Were you told a couple of weeks?

a1: Um, a couple of weeks, that's what P_, um the the the that other research assistant told me.

B: Right.

a1: Yeah.

B: Okay.

a1: Okay.

a2: Thank you.

A.2. Basic Statistics of Sub-Corpora

Figure 11.22 Basic Statistics of Sub-Corpora under the Specifically-derived Corpus “Request” by Wordsmith 5.0

Statistics \ Sub-corpus	G (F)	G (M)	S (M)	S (S)	S (I)	C+	C-	P-	P+	R-	R+	Request (all)
No. of												
Request Head	202	237	182	105	152	257	182	154	285	109	330	439
Acts												
Tokens used for word list	4420	4694	3404	1539	4171	5356	3758	3028	6086	1756	7358	9114
Total no. of sentences	201	245	186	109	151	254	192	153	293	111	335	446

(1) Gender (G): “G(F)” stands for the sub-corpus of 202 requests made by, while “G(M)” stands for the sub-corpus of 237 requests made by males.

(2) Situation (S): “S(M)” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests in meetings and office communication, S(S) stands for the sub-corpus of 105 requests made in the service encounters at hotel and airport and S(I) stands for the sub-corpus of 152 requests made in placement interviews and job interviews.

(3) First Language (C): “C+” stands for the sub-corpus of 257 requests made by Cantonese Speakers of English, while “C-” stands for the sub-corpus of 182 requests made by Non-Cantonese Speakers of English.

(4) Power Distance (P): “P-” stands for the sub-corpus of 154 requests made by requesters without power over requestees, while “P+” stands for the sub-corpus of 285 requests made by requesters with power over requestees.

(5) Expectation of Relationship Continuity (R): “R-” stands for the sub-corpus of 109 requests made by requesters without relation expectation on requestees, while “R+” stands for the sub-corpus of 330 requests made by requesters with relation expectation on requestees.



A.3. Reduction of Categories of Power Distance for Analyses

Power Distance (P) is one of the sociopragmatic factors, and it has initially been coded into three categories that were with less power than requestee (P-), of equal power with requestee (P₀) and with power over requestee (P+). Five types of speeches of the Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE), namely hotel service encounter, internal meeting, airport service encounter, placement interview, and job interview were included for the present study, but symmetrical power hierarchy (P₀) was only rarely present in the requests made between colleagues in the dialogues of internal meetings and interviews. For example:

Request made to colleagues in a hotel meeting (Dialogue B023)

<C-><P₀><R+>(D2-M2-H1) B3: So I was just wondering if people (colleagues) can ask their staff um if we are getting complaints from the guests. </C-></P₀></R+>

Request made to a colleague in a job interview (Dialogue B114)

<C+><P₀><R+>(D2-M2-H4) a1: Yeah, maybe you could, you can explain a, a bit. </C+></P₀></R+>

As observed in the above two examples and other requests of P₀ in HKCSE, such requests may demonstrate similar patterns as those of P- where requesters have less power than the requestees. For example:

Request made to a passenger in an airport service encounter (Dialogue B029)

<C+><P-><R->(D2-M2-H4) a: Would you like to pay by credit card then? </C+></P-></R->

As demonstrated by the above three examples, requests of P₀ and P- showed similar patterns of request. For example, both tended to go for lower directness level(s) and reduce imposition by using internal modifications.

Since the category of requests of P₀ (made by requesters of equal power with requestees) were few in number and not across all speech situations and this category behaved similarly as the requests made by requesters with less power than requestees, requests of P₀ were combined with requests of P- to form the new category, without power over requestee. With such a change, Power Distance (D) is recoded for the rest of the study as below.

Revised Power Distance (P)

P- Without power over requestee (1)

(i.e., with less power than or of equal power with requestee)

P+ With power over requestee (2)

