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INDIRECT REQUESTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXPLICIT-DEDUCTIVE
AND EXPLICIT-INDUCTIVE INSTRUCTION METHODS

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In August of 2015 I moved to China to re-enter the English as a foreign language field after a two-year hiatus. I had previous experience teaching at a private kindergarten in Korea, but no experience teaching students at a university. I was not sure what to expect of their needs, or what to expect of the university environment in China. On the first day of class, the thing that stood out most was how direct the students were complimenting me: “You are handsome!” Although it was flattering, and provided me an unnecessary ego boost, I discovered the other foreign teachers were receiving the same direct compliments: “You are beautiful!” “You are handsome!” If I had been complimented like this in the United States, I probably would never have moved to China! Despite the flattery, I knew that this phenomenon was uncommon in the United States (at least amongst new acquaintances), and there was a disconnect between the students’ intent and the context.

After acclimating to the constant praise, I settled into my teaching routine. The more time I spent with the students, the more I learned about their language habits, and another aspect of their language eventually became evident to me. During the late September months, while it is still very hot and humid in southern China, I would sweat far more than any student. Constantly, I would need to ask someone to turn the fan on for me while I was teaching. “Can you turn the fan on for me?” “Could you turn the fan on please?” “My god, it’s so hot!” All requests were left unfilled until I pointed to the student near the fan switch, then pointed to the fan, and said, “Turn on the fan.” I hypothesized the students and I were having a breakdown at the pragmatic level. Some

instances, the students could have been confused by the syntactic structures or the semantics involved. Regardless, I started thinking about English pragmatics. I wondered if the students could not comprehend my indirectness: “Can and do they produce indirect utterances themselves?” With these instances in mind, I decided that I wanted to further my studies regarding indirect speech acts, specifically requests.

Beginning my search into indirect speech acts, I soon found out that I was not alone in noticing these pragmatic breakdowns with Chinese English learners. Yuan, Tangen, Mills, and Lidstone (2015) share that multiple studies (conducted in Chinese) show that Chinese college English learners do not have adequate pragmatic knowledge, or competence (Ji, 2008; Wang, 2010; Zhang, 2002). Luckily, many studies show that pragmatic performance can be improved via interventions containing meta-pragmatic explanations, which will be covered in the literature review. Learning indirect speech acts is not only important for politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), but also aesthetic effects, expressiveness, managing relationships, and perlocutionary objectives (Hickey, 1992). With this knowledge in hand, I decided to investigate the best method to instruct Chinese students on English indirect requests in order to help them achieve a higher level of fluency.

As a graduate student in Hamline University’s Master of English as a Second Language program, I was taught and encouraged to use inductive methods for teaching various linguistic features, whether it be a syntactic feature, a morphological feature, a phonetic feature, and so on. Inductive methods provide students with the opportunity to discover, or notice, language “rules” on their own, before receiving an explicit explanation from their teacher. A more precise definition of inductive methods will be

provided in the next chapter. After learning via inductive methods as a student, and using them on my own as a teacher, I developed the belief that inductive instruction methods are the best way to teach linguistic features. With this belief, I decided that I wanted to compare inductive instruction methods with deductive instruction methods, which led me to pursue this study.

Role of the Researcher

My role was to deliver the two interventions to the participants, and facilitate the pre- and post-testing. I hoped to discover a more effective method for teaching indirect speech requests to Chinese university students by comparing two different instruction methods: explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive. I also wished to determine if these indirect requests could be taught and retained using a class period that reflects a typical English lesson for the students.

Background of the Researcher

I taught English as a foreign language to kindergartners and elementary school students in South Korea for two and a half years. After, I returned home to the United States and found myself working for a healthcare software company. Finding this work unfulfilling, I began attending night classes for my master's degree in English as a second language. Once I had met nearly all credit requirements, I decided that I needed to return to teaching to complete the final portions of my degree.

As mentioned earlier, in August of 2015 I moved to China to teach at a university in the Fujian province. My friends who were living there at the time recommended coming to China to teach. As a child, I loved kung fu movies, and was fascinated by the Chinese writing system, so the move to China required little more than a couple of

friends' recommendation. The experience in Fujian was fruitful, but I found the lifestyle to be a bit slow, so I moved to a "tier-one city" in China, where I began teaching at my current university.

By the time of this study, I had taught at my current university for one school year, and had re-signed an additional contract to continue teaching through the spring of 2018. Before moving to China, I had never truly thought about China's position in the world, but since living here, nothing has been more illuminating to me. Now, not only do I see myself as an educator, I also see myself as a cultural liaison between the United States and China. By focusing on teaching pragmatics, I hope to reduce confusion, and improve understanding between Chinese students and whomever they may speak English with in the future.

Guiding Questions

With this study, I intended to investigate what request types are currently used by Chinese university students, and whether more pragmatically appropriate request types can be taught and retained by them following a lesson featuring an explicit meta-pragmatic explanation of indirect requests. I also sought to determine an effective way to provide meta-pragmatic explanations so that educators in China can improve their students' pragmatic competence. Specifically, I explored the following questions:

- 1) How are Chinese university students' English request types affected by a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or a ninety-minute explicit-inductive intervention?
 - a) Which request types are most frequently used before the treatment?
 - b) Which requests types are most frequently used after the treatment?

- c) How do the request type frequencies differ between the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive groups following the respective treatments?

Summary

I have shared a few anecdotes showing my motivations for this topic. Some research was mentioned regarding the state of Chinese students' pragmatic competence, interventions that show that speech act use can be taught, and why learning indirect speech acts is important. The researcher was introduced by discussing my role, and giving a brief background of myself.

Chapter Overviews

Chapter One discussed the focus of the research, the purpose of the study and its importance, the researcher, and the guiding questions. Chapter Two will review literature covering English language learning in China, direct and indirect speech acts, levels of indirectness for requests, Chinese indirect speech acts, and pragmatic interventions for speech acts. A gap in the research will be identified, and the research questions given. Chapter Three will illustrate the methodology for investigating the research questions. Chapter Four will present the data collected from the study. Chapter Five will draw conclusions from the data and make suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether an explicit-inductive treatment is more effective than an explicit-deductive treatment in teaching indirect requests mirroring a college English class context in China. My prior experience working with Chinese university students has shown me how the students are comfortable with reading and writing in English, but often feel less confident communicating with others in English. With this study, I hoped to see if Chinese university students could improve their pragmatic competence with a treatment that could be easily implemented into a Chinese college English curriculum.

The following chapter synthesizes literature related to: the English learning environment in China, speech acts, levels of indirectness, Chinese indirect speech, and previous interventions for speech act instruction. A gap in the existing research will then be highlighted, and the study's research questions will be covered. The following subsections will paint a picture as to why this research is necessary.

Learning English in China

As the world's second largest economy, China's interaction with today's globalized society continues to grow. Former Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education in China Wu (as cited in Yuan, Tangen, Mills, & Lidstone, 2015) saw the mastery of English as a way for Chinese people to "successfully participate in international politics, trade and business and in information communication" (p. 2). To

engage with the world, learners of English in China need to improve their ability to communicate with others in English.

Since the mid-1990s, Chinese students have been learning English as a foreign language (EFL) starting in their third year of primary school. EFL is a compulsory course for them throughout their schooling until they complete their sophomore year at university. However, due to a long history of standardized testing dating back two thousand years, communicative competence has been neglected in favor of morphology, syntax, and semantics (Yuan et al., 2015; Cheng, 2008). In 2007, the Ministry of Education updated its College English Curriculum Requirements to include an objective: “to develop students’ ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively” (Yuan et al., 2015). Despite this new objective, students still feel that the importance of standardized testing results in the inability to improve communicative competence in the classroom (Yuan et al., 2015).

Speech Acts: Direct and Indirect

Austin’s (1962) “How to do things with Words,” establishes the premise that all utterances perform speech acts. Speech acts usually consist of three acts working concurrently: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. At a basic level, a locutionary act is the words that are said; an illocutionary act is the function of the words said; and the perlocutionary act is the result of the words said. Illocutionary speech acts (speech acts for short) are used by speakers to perform functions such as greetings, apologies, requests, compliments, and so forth.

Speech acts are usually split into two categories: direct and indirect; however, some academics do not acknowledge this dichotomy and view all speech acts as indirect (Silverstein, 2010; Terkourafi, 2014). The dichotomy of direct and indirect speech acts will be adopted for this paper since the participants focused on are EFL learners. The reasoning for adopting this view is that the learners are more likely to focus on the syntax and semantics of an utterance, opposed to the pragmatics. Definitions of direct and indirect speech acts will be provided in the following paragraphs.

Direct speech acts are when the locutionary and illocutionary acts match, or as Searle (1969) describes, when what is said is what is meant. The following example can be used to illustrate a direct speech act:

“Clean your room.”

Here the speaker’s locutionary act is directly tied to the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act here being a command for the listener to clean his or her room, while the locutionary act is an imperative, which is clear from the syntax of the sentence with the infinitive form of the verb being in sentence-initial position. It is hard to imagine any other illocutionary act that could be performed by this particular imperative. A semantic reading of the previous example leaves language learners with no confusion by what the speaker intends, assuming they know the meaning of each word, and the correct syntax associated with commands in English.

Discordantly, indirect speech acts are when locutionary and illocutionary acts do not match. The following example can be used to illustrate an indirect speech act:

“Can you clean your room?”

Here is where a disconnect between the locutionary and illocutionary acts may occur. A strictly semantic reading of the example would leave the listener with a question regarding his or her ability to clean his or her room. It is highly unlikely that this would ever be the intent of the speaker, though a certain context may afford this. The illocutionary act of the example is a request, where the speaker is not actually asking about the listener's ability to clean the room, but is requesting that the listener perform the act of cleaning the room. Thus, there is a potential ambiguity associated with the illocutionary interpretation of the sentence.

Levels of Indirectness: Requests

To gain a better understanding of the nuance of indirect requests, it will be beneficial to examine a scale of indirectness from the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realizations Patterns (CCSARP) project (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). The project sought to compare request and apology realization patterns across all languages by initially focusing on eight languages. Based on theoretical and empirical work by Searle (1975,1979), Ervin-Tripp (1976), House and Kasper (1981), and Blum-Kulka (1984) three overarching levels of directness exist: direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect. CCSARP further divided these levels into nine sub-levels that were deemed "strategy types" (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). For this study, they will be referred to as request types. This scale will be referenced throughout the study, and used as the coding scheme for the results chapter. A detailed explanation of the three levels and subsequent sub-levels is as follows, moving from most direct to least direct.

Direct requests contain the bulk of the request types: mood derivable, explicit performative, hedged performative, locution derivable, and scope stating. A mood derivable request is when, “the grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request,” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as “clean your room!” An explicit performative request is when, “the illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers,” Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as “I ask that you clean your room.” A hedged performative request is when, “utterances embed the naming of the illocutionary force,” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as “I’d like to ask that you clean your room.” A locution derivable request is when, “the illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution,” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as “you should clean your room.” A scope stating request is when, “the utterance expresses the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling vis-a-vis the fact that the hearer do X,” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as “I want you to clean your room.”

Conventionally indirect requests contain two request types: language specific suggestory formula, and reference to preparatory conditions. A language specific suggestory formula request is when, “the sentence contains a suggestion to X,” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as, “how about cleaning your room?” A reference to preparatory conditions request is when, “the utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language,” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as, “could you clean your room, please?”

Non-conventionally indirect requests also contain two request types: strong hints, and mild hints. A strong hint request is when, “the utterance contains partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act),” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as, “your room is really messy.” A mild hint request is when, “the utterance makes no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act),” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202) such as, “have you looked at your room today?”

Chinese Indirect Speech

Using the direct and indirect examples from the previous sections, “clean your room,” and, “can you clean your room?” it can be deduced that indirectness can be achieved at the utterance level. Wondering how Chinese EFL learners perceived indirectness at the utterance level, Zhang (1991) investigated the difference between native Chinese speakers’ and native American English speakers’ perceptions of indirectness using the CCSARP’s scale of indirectness. Both groups rated sentences for levels of indirectness. The native American English speakers’ perceptions correlated with the CCSARP scale, but the native Chinese speakers’ perceptions did not. The native Chinese speakers perceived all nine request types as direct, though varying in degrees of politeness. Subsequent interviews were conducted to inquire about this phenomenon, and it was found that indirectness in Chinese occurs at the discourse level, opposed to the utterance level (Zhang, 1995).

Indirect speech in Chinese is “associated with information sequencing,” and is achieved by using small talk or some “supportive moves” in addition to the desired speech act (Zhang, 1995, p. 82). An example of this is illustrated below:

“Is this Zhao Jun? This is Hu Yun. I’d like to talk with you about something. The school has recently required us to give the students one week for studies on society. So my teaching schedule has to be changed, which in turn, will affect your oral report on Whitman in class. Could you hurry up a bit and do the report one week earlier? This way, it will fit the changed schedule. If time is too short, you may turn in your reading report two weeks late. How about that? Do you think it’s OK with you?” (p. 83)

Although the request is made using a conventionally indirect request, “could you...?” it is padded with supportive moves such as explanations preceding the request, and further negotiating following it. Without these supportive moves, the above request would be perceived as direct, and even impolite (Zhang, 1995).

Similarly with English, indirect speech in Chinese is not solely related to presenting oneself as polite. Chinese indirect speech is used to navigate the complex system of “face,” which differs from Anglo-American concepts of “face” (Hu, 1944; Gu, 1990; Kasper, 1990; Mao, 1994; Zhang, 1995). Chinese “face” contains two facets: “the need of an individual to conform to social conventions and express one’s desire to be part of this community” and “a need to show one’s moral sense of place and role” which “revolve around ‘a recognition by others of one’s desire for social prestige, reputation or sanction’” (Hu, 1994; Mao, 1994; Zhang 1995). Indirect speech in Chinese provides space to maneuver between interlocutors’ “faces.”

Pragmatic Interventions for Speech Acts

Since the focus of this study is indirect requests and how they are taught, some past interventions must be examined. Multiple studies have shown the effectiveness of pragmatic interventions on requests (Alcón Soler, 2005; Halenko & Jones, 2011; among others). However, none of the interventions reflect the realities of a college English curriculum and semester structure in China. The next paragraph will introduce two important dichotomies to consider when examining language interventions, and the subsequent paragraphs will summarize two studies that include request pragmatics interventions.

To better understand the following interventions deployed by past researchers, two different dichotomies must be discussed: explicit-implicit instruction, and deductive-inductive instruction. Explicit instruction refers to whether any meta-linguistic explanations are provided for language points, while implicit instruction withholds these explanations (Glaser, 2013, p. 151). Deductive instruction refers to providing the meta-linguistic explanation as a starting point of a lesson, while inductive instruction refers to beginning with examples of the target language before giving the meta-linguistic explanation (Decoo, 1996, p. 96). Alcón Soler's study compared explicit-deductive instruction to implicit-deductive instruction, while Halenko and Jones employed explicit-inductive instruction versus implicit-inductive instruction, or no instruction. Per Glaser's (2013) meta-analysis of interlanguage pragmatic interventions, "research contrasting explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive designs is largely nonexistent in interlanguage pragmatics studies" (p. 154).

Alcón Soler conducted a study published in 2005 that followed 132 seventeen and eighteen-year-old learners of English from Spain and their ability to identify and produce requests. The participants were divided into three groups: an experimental group receiving explicit meta-pragmatic instruction, an experimental group receiving implicit pragmatic instruction, and a control group receiving no pragmatic instruction. The participants were assigned fifteen self-study lessons where they watched clips of the television series *Stargate*, then completed a set of tasks and questions. These self-study lessons were complemented by two-hour classes given over the course of twelve weeks. The participants were asked to identify requests in transcripts of the clips following the first and last lessons as pre- and post-tests respectively to measure their pragmatic awareness. They were also asked to create dialogues in which someone would make a request following the first and last lessons as pre- and post-tests to measure their ability to produce requests in pragmatically appropriate ways, such as accounting for social distance and status. The findings of the study suggest that the explicit and implicit experimental groups improved their use and awareness of pragmatically appropriate requests, with the explicit group outperforming the implicit group, while the control group showed little to no improvement. The conclusions drawn from the study are promising for those wishing to teach pragmatic features in the classroom, but the amount of time required to achieve these results may be off-putting to curriculum designers.

A study published in 2011 by Halenko and Jones examined explicit-instruction's effectiveness on Chinese English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learners' pragmatic awareness. The participants of the study were Chinese exchange students studying in the United Kingdom. They were divided into two classes of thirteen: a control group that

received no meta-pragmatic explanations of requests (implicit instruction), and an experimental group that received meta-pragmatic explanations of requests (explicit instruction). The experimental group received six hours, three two-hour classes integrated into a twelve week EAP program, of explicit instruction on request pragmatics while the control group received no explicit instruction of request pragmatics. The control group's "immersion" in the U.K. was said to be the implicit instruction. Using a pre-, post-, delayed post-test structure, the researchers measured the participants' request appropriateness by having three EAP teachers evaluate responses on a Likert scale. The conclusions of the study showed the experimental group used more pragmatically appropriate requests than the control group. Although the study provided evidence of explicit-instructions' effectiveness on spoken requests, the treatment's transferability to a Chinese university's English curriculum could prove difficult as six hours of instruction would equate to a third of a semester if the introductory class, in-class midterm, and final are removed.

Research Gap

While it has been demonstrated that interventions have been conducted on the request speech act, to my knowledge none have investigated if there is a difference between explicit-deductive interventions and explicit-inductive interventions. The interventions conducted also do not align with how Chinese university students receive instruction, where students have one or two ninety-minute classes a week. Due to the national curriculum briefly covered in the beginning of the literature review, university teachers in China are not afforded the luxury of being able to dedicate six hours to the teaching of one speech act, such as Halenko and Jones's 2011 intervention on requests

for Chinese students living and studying in the United Kingdom. These gaps inform the following research questions of the current study:

- 1) How are Chinese university students' English request types affected by a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or a ninety-minute explicit-inductive intervention?
 - a) Which request types are most frequently used before the treatment?
 - b) Which requests types are most frequently used after the treatment?
 - c) How do the request type frequencies differ between the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive groups following the respective treatments?

Summary

This chapter reviewed literature focusing on the education environment in China, direct and indirect speech acts, levels of indirectness, Chinese indirect speech, and previous interventions for teaching speech acts. The review highlighted gaps in the existing research, and posed two questions to guide this study. The following chapter will discuss the methods for investigating the research questions outlined above.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following study was designed to examine if Chinese university students use indirect requests, and if so, which types. After this was determined, the study investigated if and how these request types change following a ninety-minute intervention.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

- 1) How are Chinese university students' English request types affected by a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or a ninety-minute explicit-inductive intervention?
 - a) Which request types are most frequently used before the treatment?
 - b) Which requests types are most frequently used after the treatment?
 - c) How do the request type frequencies differ between the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive groups following the respective treatments?

Mixed Methods Research Paradigm

The mixed methods research definition adopted for this research was conceived by Johnson, Onwuegbuzle, and Turner in their 2007 meta-analysis of previous definitions of mixed methods research:

Mixed methods research is an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research; it is the third methodological or research paradigm (along with qualitative and quantitative research). It recognizes the importance of traditional quantitative and qualitative research but also offers a

powerful third paradigm choice that often will provide the most informative, complete, balanced, and useful research results. (p. 129)

A mixed methods approach was the most appropriate for the following study as both quantitative and qualitative data were elicited concurrently. Not only did learners produce requests, they also answered short-answer questions which allowed them to explain why they chose the words that they chose. Their requests were coded into whichever request type they employed, while their short answers provided insight into their thought process. Combining both sets of data provided a more holistic picture as to whether the intervention had any effect on them or not.

Data Collection

Participants

The participants of this study were nineteen Chinese undergraduate and graduate student volunteers (six males, thirteen females) aged eighteen to twenty-five. All participants described their families' socioeconomic status as lower-middle or middle class. Their English level was advanced based off their scores on the National Higher Education Entrance Examination which is the threshold required by the university's entrance requirements. They came from all over China, some with varying home languages, though all were fluent or native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Seventeen of the participants were former students of the researcher, and the other two were recruited through social media via colleagues of the researcher.

Setting

The study was conducted at an urban university in a tier-one city on the east coast of China. The initial demographic questionnaire, pre- and post-tests were conducted on-

line to minimize the participants' time commitments, while the two indirect request treatments were conducted in a classroom at the university. The classroom was equipped with a computer, projector, and white board positioned at the front of the classroom. The participants sat in two rows facing the researcher to simulate the setting of a university class in China. The treatment classes were presented to the students as volunteer based supplementary classes. They were given during the summer term, outside of normal class hours. No university credit was offered or rewarded.

Data Collection Technique I

The initial data collection technique was a predominately closed questionnaire to elicit demographic data on the participants. A questionnaire was selected because it allowed the researcher to gather important and relevant data in a short amount of time (Mackey & Gass, 2016). The data collected from the participants were: age, sex, family's economic status, years formally studying English, additional English instruction, hours spent studying English, and living or traveling abroad experiences. Data gathered from the questionnaire were used to potentially identify any correlations that were not primarily investigated by the study.

Data Collection Technique II

The data collection technique used for the pre- and post- tests was a discourse completion test (DCT). DCTs are the most popular method deployed by researchers in interlanguage pragmatics despite some drawbacks (Brown, 2008). As Brown (2008) notes:

Some negative characteristics of this method have been reported, such as (1) the waffling effect or verbosity (Edmondson & House, 1991); (2) the differences of

the intended speech acts and elicited speech acts (Wolfson et al. 1989; Yamashita, 2005); (3) differences of the length of oral responses and written DCT responses (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Yamashita, 1998a, 2001); and (4) DCTs' misleading written descriptions (Yamashita, 1998b).

Despite these shortcomings, DCTs are still viewed as providing the most advantages to those researching interlanguage pragmatics (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000).

The DCT for this study was developed by the researcher to reflect situations a Chinese student may face while studying abroad. These situations were selected because they provide an authentic context in which the participants can empathize with the assigned roles. There were six situations in total reflecting three different social dynamics: two interacting with a higher status person (professor); two interacting with an equal status person (peer); and two interacting with a lower status person (cafeteria employee). Three of the situations were designed to elicit a response where the participant produces a request, and the other three situations were designed to elicit a response where the participant responds to a request. To supplement the data derived from the DCT, an additional space was provided for the participants to explain their responses.

Procedure

A detailed timeline of the procedure is shown on the next page in Table 1.

Participants

The participants were gathered by recruiting volunteers from a pool of the researcher's former students via social media. Sharing of the recruitment advertisement led to two additional students from the university to volunteer for the study. Once the

volunteer list was compiled, participants completed the questionnaire to control for variables. Due to the volume of volunteers, all volunteers were accepted to the study. To accommodate the participants' schedules, they could select which treatment they would attend. The options were simply presented to them as Monday or Wednesday. The result of this process was favorable, as ten students selected the Monday option, and nine students selected the Wednesday option. Each group had six or seven female students, and three male students. See Table 2 on the next page for more information on the participants.

Table 1		
<i>Study Timeline</i>		
<u>Week</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Volunteer Recruitment	Messages were sent via a Chinese social media application to groups of former students, and a recruitment message was shared with colleagues of the researcher.
2	Questionnaire and Pre-Test	Participants received a link to the websites containing the demographic questionnaire and pre-test.
3	Treatment and Post-Test	Participants attended their respective treatment lesson. Two days later, they received a link to the website containing the post-test.
4	Post-Test	Participants had a full week to complete the post-test.

Sex	Age	Family Income	Years Studying	Training School	Private Tutor	Hours Studying	Live/Study Abroad	Travel Abroad
Male	23	Middle	8	No	No	0	No	No
Male	20	Middle	>12	No	Yes	>6	No	Yes
Male	25	Low-Middle	11	No	No	1-2	No	No
Male	24	Middle	>12	No	No	0	No	Yes
Female	19	Middle	10	Yes	No	5-6	Yes	Yes
Male	24	Middle	>12	No	Yes	3-4	No	Yes
Female	20	Middle	>12	Yes	No	3-4	No	Yes
Female	20	Middle	>12	Yes	No	3-4	No	Yes
Female	21	Low-Middle	7	No	No	3-4	No	No
Female	20	Low-Middle	11	Yes	Yes	3-4	No	Yes
Male	25	Middle	10	No	No	>6	No	No
Female	24	Low-Middle	>12	No	No	3-4	No	No
Female	18	Middle	10	No	No	1-2	No	Yes
Female	24	Low-Middle	10	No	No	1-2	No	Yes
Female	20	Middle	10	Yes	No	3-4	Yes	Yes
Female	24	Middle	>12	No	No	1-2	No	No
Female	23	Middle	>12	No	No	1-2	No	Yes
Female	20	Middle	10	Yes	No	>6	No	Yes
Female	23	Middle	9	No	No	0	No	No

Materials

Questionnaire. A week prior to the treatment the participants were guided to a website that allowed them to complete the questionnaire. An online questionnaire was chosen to minimize time commitment of the participants. The questionnaire remained open until all participants finished. Although the original intent of the questionnaire was to restrict the pool of volunteers, the questionnaire provided additional information about the participants that would not have otherwise been obtained. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Indirect Request Pre-test. Participants were guided to a website prior to the treatment that allowed them to complete the pre-test. The pre-test was available on the

website until an hour before the treatment. All participants completed the pre-test prior to attending the treatment. The DCT in the pre-test reflected six scenarios that required the participants to make a request or craft a response to one. After the request was elicited, a short answer section asked the participant to describe their word or action choice. There were two different versions of the pre-test: a female version, where all situations dealt with women, and a male version, where all situations dealt with men. The two versions were distributed to the participants based on their gender identification. This choice was made to avoid any inter-gender dynamics that the participants may consciously or subconsciously consider. The female participant pre-test can be found in Appendix B.

Indirect Request Interventions. The participants received their indirect request interventions depending on their respective groups. Those who elected to attend the Monday option received the explicit-deductive treatment, while those who elected to attend the Wednesday option received the explicit-inductive treatment. They occurred roughly two weeks following the opening of the questionnaire website. Each treatment contained the same activities (a mini-lecture containing a meta-explanation of the directness scale in requests, guided discovery, mingle-matching, accuracy focused-practice, role-play) developed by the researcher, but the explicit-deductive lesson begins with a meta-explanation and discussion of direct and indirect requests, while the explicit-inductive lesson provides the explanation and discussion of indirect requests following guided discovery and mingle-matching activities. A description of each activity will be provided in the following paragraphs.

The mini-lecture was the only teacher-centered activity of the lessons. It began by seeking a learner-generated definition of a request. Once the learners provided their

definition of a request, the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition was provided. The participants were then asked to provide some different examples of requests, and the examples were written on the chalkboard. After the chalkboard was filled, the three different request types were introduced: direct, conventionally direct, and non-conventionally indirect. Examples were provided of each and presented as a spectrum. The participants were then asked to classify the requests that were written on the board, and compare the words used amongst the examples. Additional examples were provided for the conventionally indirect requests. Finally, support for learning about these indirect speech types were finally provided based on Brown & Levison (1987) as well as Hickey (1992).

For the guided discovery activity, the participants watched a 1:28 clip from the television series *Master of None*. The clip contained multiple direct and indirect requests. The participants were asked to identify the requests used in the clip on their own. They watched the clip two times, and then were asked to provide the requests they heard and the requests were written on the chalkboard. The clip was then watched one more time, and stopped after each request so the participants could identify the requests that they missed. After they classified the requests, they made observations about the different requests, such as who said them and to whom, which words they used, and so forth.

The mingle and match activity involved the participants receiving a small slip of paper that had either a request, or a scenario. They had to talk to the other participants to find the person who had a match to their request or scenario. This activity was used to create partners for the activity that followed in both treatments.

For accuracy-focused practice, the participants worked with their partners and wrote down the request they had in a table containing nine slots for the directness spectrum with the headings: direct, conventionally direct, and non-conventionally indirect. They were then asked to fill in the rest of the table, creating the remaining request types for their given scenario. Then they made judgments about the appropriateness of each request given the scenario.

At the end of each intervention, the participants were placed into groups of three or four. They were told to think of a situation in which they would need to make a request. They then made short dialogues revolving around these requests. Once all groups were prepared with their role plays, the role plays were presented to the class. The other groups were asked to share their opinions about the request, and whether it seemed appropriate given the context.

Indirect Request Post-test. The post-tests were opened to the participants two days after the treatment, and remained open for one week. The post-test DCTs were the same as the pre-tests, though the sequence of questions was reordered randomly. The questions remained the same as the pre-tests to eliminate the introduction of any new variables the participants may consider while answering the questions. The male participant post-test can be found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire

As previously mentioned, the primary function of the data derived from the questionnaire was to set controls for the participant pool. Due to a lack of volunteers, controlling the participant pool was no longer an option. Data derived from the

questionnaire was used to create a more vivid understanding of the participants, and provided potential to discover any correlations between demographics and request type choice and ability to comprehend requests.

DCTs (pre- and post-)

The data elicited were analyzed to determine if direct or indirect requests were employed, and to determine the frequency of the different request types. The request types were determined using CCSARP's scale of indirectness. The request types were compared throughout the testing phases to gauge how they changed. The data elicited from the short answer sections were analyzed across tests to see if any changes in logic resulted from the treatment.

Verification of Data

The linguistic data elicited from the DCT were triangulated with the qualitative data from the short answer section follow up of the DCT. These two data sets combined to create a more holistic picture into how the participants chose their request types, and the impact of the intervention on their choices.

Ethics

Prior to contact with the participants, approval from Hamline University's Institutional Review Board was granted, as well as approval from the university where the study was conducted. The participants were given information through a messaging application about the requirements of the study (questionnaire, pre- and post-test, lesson), and the researcher answered all questions that arose. Upon completion of this study, this paper was made available to all participants. To protect the participants of the study, the following measures were taken:

- 1) Human participant consent forms were provided in English that was comprehensible to all participants.
- 2) No names are used in any of the materials included in this paper. Participants were assigned numbers. All communications between the researcher and participants have been scrubbed for identifying information, and the original copies have been destroyed.
- 3) The website used for the questionnaire and subsequent tests did not track the IP addresses of the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the methods used to investigate the research questions listed in the introduction. The mixed methods paradigm was shown to be an appropriate methodology to conduct this study. A description of the data collection, procedure, materials, data analysis, and data verification were also provided. The following chapter will present the data from this methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Data for this study were collected using the online service Survey Monkey, which allowed the researcher to provide private hyperlinks to the participants. Five private hyperlinks were created for the following tools: a questionnaire, a pre-test for female participants, a pre-test for male participants, a post-test for female participants, and a post-test for male participants. The data from these tools were collected over a period of three weeks. Through the collection of these data, answers were sought for the following questions:

- 1) How are Chinese university students' English request types affected by a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or a ninety-minute explicit-inductive intervention?
 - a) Which request types are most frequently used before the treatment?
 - b) Which requests types are most frequently used after the treatment?
 - c) How do the request type frequencies differ between the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive groups following the respective treatments?

To effectively answer the overarching research question, the three sub-questions should be answered first.

Which request types are most frequently used before the treatment?

Upon completion of the demographic questionnaire, the participants completed the pre-test that was designed to have them produce a request in three different situations. The situations asked the students to imagine interacting with a professor, a cafeteria

employee, and an American friend. A photograph of the imaginary individual was included to create a richer context for the participant. Specifically, the participants were asked, “What would you say and/or do?” Table 3 shows the participants’ most frequently used request types below, and two observations stand out.

Table 3				
<i>All Participants’ Pre-Test Request Types</i>				
Request Type	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect	N/A
Total	6	34	7	10
Percentage	10.53%	59.65%	12.28%	17.54%

First, some difficulty existed for the participants, as ten responses registered as N/A. These responses were coded as N/A, for a few different reasons. One reason, and the most common, was the participant did not explicitly state what they would say. For example, “I would talk with her my real thought.” This response lacked which words would be used in the interaction, so the request type could not be determined. Another reason for an N/A coding was an incomplete answer, such as “why not?” This response appeared to be the beginning of a suggestory formula request, but given the lack of any other words, it could not be determined. The final reason for an N/A coding was declining to answer the “what would you say,” portion of the question and responding to the “what would you do,” portion of the question. For example, “help her or give way.” These N/A responses were spread amongst seven participants, with one participant registering two and another registering three.

The other observation that stood out from Table 3 above was the preference for conventionally indirect requests. Nearly sixty percent of the requests made by

participants were either a suggestory formula request or a reference to preparatory conditions (RPC) requests. A closer look at the participants' conventionally indirect request shows a propensity for RPC requests as shown below in Table 4. To answer the initial sub-question above, the most frequently used request type was conventionally indirect, specifically RPC requests. For example, Participant 1 responded to the cafeteria worker scenario with the RPC request: "Could you help me?"

Table 4		
<i>All Participants' Pre-Test Conventionally Indirect Request Types</i>		
Conventional Indirect Request Type	Suggestory Formula	Reference to Preparatory Conditions
Total	2	32
Percentage	5.88%	94.12%

Which request types are most frequently used after the treatment?

Following the respective explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive treatments, the students completed the post-test that contained the same questions and situations as the pre-test, though the order of the questions was changed. Before differentiating between the two separate treatments, it is useful to look at the participants' request type frequencies as a singular group to examine the effects of a lesson containing an explicit meta-pragmatic explanation of indirectness in requests regardless of when that explanation is given. The results of the post-test are shown below in Table 5.

Table 5				
<i>All Participants' Post-Test Request Types</i>				
Request Type	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect	N/A
Total	4	42	8	3
Percentage	7.02%	73.68%	14.04%	5.26%

Again, the most frequently used request type was conventionally indirect requests. Conventionally indirect requests were used more frequently than in the pre-test, accounting for roughly seventy-four percent of all responses. Not shown above, RPC requests were also the preferred conventionally indirect request accounting for ninety percent of the conventionally indirect requests. The N/A responses reduced to three total, which were given by two students. The N/A responses on the post-tests corresponded with N/A responses on the pre-tests, where the participant provided an answer that could not be coded to a question where they had previously provided an answer that could not be coded. To answer the sub-question above, the most frequently used request type following the treatment was conventionally indirect, specifically RPC requests.

How do the request type frequencies differ between the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive groups following the respective treatments?

The primary focus of this study was to compare the impact of explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive treatments on the types of requests that participants use. The data from the previous two sections have shown that the participants primarily use RPC requests, before and after the treatment, and RPC requests were used more frequently following the treatment. Tables 6 and 7 offer a comparison between the two treatments.

Following the treatments, the two groups experienced similar changes in frequency to the request types they used. Each group experienced growth in conventionally indirect requests and declines in the number of N/A responses. The explicit-deductive group used conventionally indirect requests fifteen percent more, and reduced the number of N/A responses by one hundred percent. The explicit-inductive group used conventionally indirect requests about thirty-six percent more, and reduced

the number of N/A responses by fifty-seven percent. The changes that occurred in the direct requests and non-conventionally indirect requests were not noteworthy as the changes were the result of one request changing respectively for each group. To answer the sub-question above, each group used conventionally indirect requests more frequently following the treatment, but the explicit-inductive group experienced a greater change in frequency.

Table 6				
<i>Explicit-Deductive Participants' Request Types</i>				
	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect	N/A
Pre-test				
Total	3	20	4	3
Percentage	10.00%	66.67%	13.33%	10.00%
Post-Test				
Total	2	23	5	0
Percentage	6.67%	76.67%	16.67%	0.00%
Change	-33.33%	+15.00%	+25.00%	-100.00%

Table 7				
<i>Explicit-Inductive Participants' Request Types</i>				
	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect	N/A
Pre-test				
Total	3	14	3	7
Percentage	11.11%	51.85%	11.11%	25.93%
Post-Test				
Total	2	19	3	3
Percentage	7.41%	70.37%	11.11%	11.11%
Change	-33.33%	+35.71%	0.00%	-57.14%

How are Chinese university students' English request types affected by a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or a ninety-minute explicit-inductive intervention?

The previous sub-questions have provided quantitative data to show how a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or explicit-deductive intervention can impact the participants' request types, but the frequency of use does not provide the whole picture. The participants were also asked to explain their word choices after they responded to the initial questions in the pre- and post-tests. Gaining some insight into their thought process provided a more holistic view of how the participants' request types were impacted by the interventions. Although some participants did not provide any answers that reflected any concepts from the interventions, many of the participants had at least one.

As mentioned, some participants' word choice explanations did not reflect concepts from the interventions. For example, Participant 6 explained his word choice to the professor situation on the post-test by stating, "Feedback is important for teacher and at least it will have some changes." The request he answered the initial question with was an RCP request: "Hi professor, would you mind speak a bit slower when you in class cause I have some difficult to understand your class in this speed." However, his word choice explanation does not address that fact. Instead it reflects his word choice regarding the situation. Participant 10 explained her word choice to the friend situation on the post-test by stating, "Invite her." She had used a suggestory formula request for the initial question: "How about going for dinner today? I heard a wonderful restaurant nearby," and her explanation describes the function of the words she chose. Around half of the

participants provided at least one explanation like the examples above, including four participants that provided all three explanations in those fashions.

Roughly half of the participants provided at least one explanation that reflected a concept provided in the interventions. The most common explanation mentioned politeness when choosing the words to use. Participant 1 stated, “The polite student may not be refused,” explaining his RPC request to the professor scenario. Participant 9 similarly explained, “I should be polite when I ask the employee for something,” to the cafeteria employee scenario. Participant 15 simply answered, “Be polite.” Politeness was a part of the meta-pragmatic explanation of indirect requests, which could have influenced the participants’ responses to the explanation question, though some participants mentioned politeness on the pre-test too. Examples of the participants’ use of concepts provided in the interventions can be found in Table 8 of Appendix D.

Seven of the participants provided a sort of meta-pragmatic explanation for their word choice on the post-test, with five of them providing a meta-pragmatic explanation on all three situations. The answers considered “meta-pragmatic,” contained some mention of directness or contextual information explaining their word choice. For example, Participant 16 describes her request as, “indirect and won’t give her too much pressure.” Her explanation from the pre-test made no mention of directness, but considered it following the treatment. She also thought about social pressure, a part of managing relationships, which was also discussed during the meta-pragmatic explanation of directness in each treatment. Participant 4 used a more specific classification of request in one of his answers where he said, “I think it is ok to provide my request to my friend in a conventional indirect way.” He also considers his relationship with the person he is

making the request, and though the details are lacking, he does use one of the terms learned in the treatment. One participant provided the same explanation for all three of the questions, “a conventional indirect request is comfortable.” Without further explanation, it is not entirely clear what the participant meant, but it does show the treatment’s influence with the mention of the conventional indirect request. Examples of the participants’ use of meta-pragmatic explanations can be found in Table 9 of Appendix E.

Amongst the groups, the explicit-deductive treatment group had more participants using meta-pragmatic explanations or at least mentioning politeness with all ten participants responding with at least one. Four of the participants in the explicit-inductive treatment group did not use a meta-pragmatic explanation and did not mention politeness, but two of the participants did for all three questions.

In concurrence with Alcón Soler (2005), and Halenko and Jones (2011) demonstrating the positive effects of explicitly teaching pragmatically appropriate requests, the participants were affected in recordable ways by both the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive treatments. The explicit nature of the treatments either affected the participants’ request type, or their word choice explanation. Unlike Alcón Soler’s and Halenko and Jones’ results, the participants’ request types were not evaluated for pragmatic appropriateness.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results from the data collection methods. The results showed that conventionally indirect requests were most frequently used request types before the treatments, and they were the most frequently used request types

following the treatments. The explicit-inductive group experienced a slightly greater change in frequency in their use of conventionally indirect requests compared to the explicit-deductive group. The qualitative data gathered showed that participants began mentioning politeness and used meta-pragmatic terms to explain their word choices following the respective treatments. In Chapter Five the major findings, limitations, implications, and suggestions for further research will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

With the data collected from the tools in Chapter Three, and presented in Chapter Four, this study has attempted to answer the questions:

1) How are Chinese university students' English request types affected by a ninety-minute explicit-deductive intervention or a ninety-minute explicit-inductive intervention?

- a) Which request types are most frequently used before the treatment?
- b) Which requests types are most frequently used after the treatment?
- c) How do the request type frequencies differ between the explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive groups following the respective treatments?

The first section of this chapter will present the major findings. The second section will explain the limitations. The third section will consider the implications. The fourth section will make suggestions for further research. The final section will provide some final conclusions from the study.

Major Findings

The biggest finding from this study was the frequent use of conventionally indirect requests, specifically Reference to Preparatory Conditions requests, by all participants. I had expected more of a reliance on direct request types due to the locutionary acts matching the illocutionary acts. I had thought the participants would rely on the semantic use of words to craft their requests, but the data showed their preferences for conventionally indirect requests. This seems to suggest that the participants had

learned request types as chunks of speech opposed to relying on word for word translations. The participants' English levels may have been underestimated as well.

Another major finding was some of the participants adopted the meta-pragmatic terms in describing their word choices. During the meta-pragmatic explanation of indirectness in requests in the treatments, the meta-pragmatic terms were used to present the request types, but they were not emphasized or taught as important terms to remember and use. The goal of the meta-pragmatic explanation was to have the participants focus on the relationship between the interlocutors and the context of the situation, but some of the participants adopted the terms anyway.

Limitations

Despite the limitations about to be covered, the study was a very fruitful and beneficial experience. The limitations provided valuable lessons about designing a study, conducting research, and analyzing data. The lessons learned from this study will serve as precautions for any future research I conduct. The study's limitations can be divided into four categories: volunteer pool, timeframe, design, and researcher.

Initially, the goal of recruiting volunteers was to have a large enough pool so that specific variables could be controlled. However, the study was conducted during the summer holiday, so many potential participants had gone home. The recruitment process netted nineteen volunteers, which was one fewer volunteer than desired for the study. The nineteen volunteers were also not all the desired demographic. The plan was to have only graduate students, but due to lack of volunteers, the pool needed supplementation from undergraduate students. The most visible impact of including undergraduates was widening the participants' age range from 23-25 years old to 18-25 years old. Any

additional impacts of including undergraduate students are hard to identify based on the small data set. These issues could have been avoided if the study was conducted during the fall or spring semesters, but a lack of understanding between the university and myself resulted in too much time passing before the requisite approval could be obtained.

Besides the study taking place over the summer, other issues arose related to the timeframe of the study. The treatments had to be conducted at night because of participant availability, which did not reflect the participants' experiences in college English classes. A pilot study should have been conducted before the main study, but the previously mentioned lack of understanding between the university and myself resulted in not having time to conduct one. Additionally, a delayed post-test had to be omitted which would have potentially provided data on the participants' retention of the concepts from the respective treatments.

In addition to the previously mentioned timeframe limitations, other design flaws were revealed. One of my original aims was to measure the participants' ability to comprehend indirect requests. I designed the DCTs, and mainly focused on how I would deliver them to the participants, as opposed to refining them. After I had sent out the hyperlinks to the students, I realized that all comprehension scenarios involved conventionally indirect requests, specifically RPC requests. Since I did not include any other indirect request types, I decided to omit the data gathered from that portion of the study.

Another design flaw was the online DCT. Although it was more convenient for the participants, the pre- and post-tests were not all submitted and collected at the same time. I had to send messages to participants to encourage them to complete the DCTs on

time, which would not have had to be done if the study had been conducted during the fall or spring semesters in regularly scheduled classes. The explicit-inductive treatment could have been designed better as well. I was too worried about keeping the information between the treatments equal that I did not spend enough time on the participants' self-discovery of the pragmatic features of indirectness. If I had completed a pilot study first, I would have seen the flaws of that design and would have been able to avoid them.

Finally, the study was limited by the researcher. This was my first time designing and conducting my own research. Although I had a great support group of advisors around me, I am not always effective at communicating my ideas as they occur in my head. Looking back on some of my drafts, I can see where I had not written ideas that I was thinking, which contributed to some design flaws. I also have never taken a statistics course, so my ability to analyze data sets is sorely lacking. It was very difficult for me to organize the data into manageable sets, and even more difficult to analyze the data once it was organized.

Implications

Due to the small data set, the implications are uncertain. The data showed a demonstrable effect of both explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction methods, but not enough data was available to support one method over the other. Language teachers could choose to implement either based on their teaching style and or preferences, or experiment with both to see if their learners respond better to one or the other. If there is an explicit explanation of meta-pragmatic features of indirect requests, the learners should benefit.

Administrators of Chinese universities could benefit from this study by working with their foreign language teachers to implement a model like the one suggested in the following further research section. Recruitment and retention of highly qualified foreign teachers can be difficult, but by encouraging their foreign teachers to engage in this sort of research, they will be providing them with a professional development opportunity that could encourage them to stay and work at the university for longer than they may normally. Any publications that could result from such studies would further serve to boost the reputation of the university.

Further Research

By viewing this study as a pilot for a larger study, the previously mentioned limitations can inform a future, more thorough, study investigating the effects of explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction methods on indirect speech acts, specifically requests. The following paragraphs will outline some suggestions on how the study can be designed to derive more data, and hopefully more intriguing results.

First, the study would be better suited to be conducted during regularly scheduled class times. Universities in China grant considerable autonomy to their foreign English teachers in the designing of curricula. With that in mind, this study could be built into a semester-long curriculum, which would allow tighter controls on the timeline of the study. The questionnaire could be conducted during the first week, which would gather the participants' demographic data, and provide valuable information to the researcher as a teacher. The pre-test could be delivered the following week, the treatment during the third week, the post-test the fourth week, and a delayed post-test during one of the last

weeks of the terms. This schedule would be more reliable for future researchers as it would be more replicable than the schedule used in this study.

Conducting this study in concurrence with a semester-long curriculum at a university in China would also provide a larger data set. Class sizes generally range from twenty to forty students, and teachers will usually have between two hundred and three hundred students total each semester. A more robust data set would allow for more sophisticated data analysis, which would hopefully unveil insights worthy of further exploration.

Like the studies mentioned in the Literature Review conducted by Alcón Soler (2005) and Halenko and Jones (2011), this study has shown how an explicit treatment, whether deductive or inductive, can affect a participant's request types and thought process when choosing request types. To judge whether those changes are pragmatically appropriate, native or fluent speakers of English could be used to evaluate the appropriateness of the request types used before and after the treatments. Using evaluators would also be beneficial in determining whether Chinese university students have an issue making pragmatically appropriate requests or not. Though Yuan, Tangen, Mills, and Lidstone (2015) had reported Chinese university students felt their communicative competence had not been improving in the classroom due to a focus on standard testing, maybe their self-evaluations were too harsh. An evaluation of their ability to make pragmatically appropriate requests could provide a glimpse of their overall communicative competence.

Although the study provided a small data set showing the positive impacts of explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive interventions on participants' request types, the

dichotomy between these two instruction methods is still lacking explorative studies. As Glaser's (2013) previously mentioned meta-analysis stated, research contrasting these methods is "largely nonexistent in interlanguage pragmatics studies" (p.154). Hopefully the suggestions provided in the previous paragraphs can build a study that could function as a stepping-stone for future researchers to explore explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction methods. With more research into this dichotomy, perhaps a better way for teaching pragmatic features will manifest, and learners will benefit from improved instruction methods.

Final Conclusions

In late October of 2017, I presented my initial findings at a Business English conference held at the university where my study was conducted. The conference was attended by researchers and Business English professors from my university, and other related universities from across China. Now that my Chinese colleagues have been introduced to my research, I may be able to partner with one or more of them in the upcoming semester, or next school year, to pursue my revised study on a larger scale. By partnering with a Chinese researcher, the study would benefit from access to research published in Chinese, and hopefully become better suited to the needs of Chinese university students.

This study has been invaluable to me as a language teacher, and as a potential future researcher. During my lessons, I now think more about how my activities and assessments align with the objectives set out at the beginning of the semester. I also now think more about whether those objectives align with the needs of learners, and I have been making notes to share with the administrators from my department. By outlining my

observations about the learners' needs and the objectives we are setting for them, I hope to enhance my position at my school beyond an "English Lecturer," to something more research focused.

After two years of living and teaching in China, and working on this study for the past year, I have grown substantially as a teacher and a researcher. I remember beginning the initial research methodology course with a vague idea about wanting to research pragmatics. As time passed, it narrowed to indirect speech acts. Then it turned to indirect requests. After seeing multiple studies focused on interventions for requests, I knew I needed to separate my own research in a way that would provide some related but different and new data. Luckily, I had found Glaser's (2013) call for more research investigating explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction methods for pragmatic features, which happened to align with my values as an educator trained at Hamline University. I thought I designed a well-constructed study that would effectively compare those two methods, but not until after conducting the study did I realize the flaws. Despite those flaws, I feel value can still be derived from the study, and I plan to build on what I have done. With much needed improvements, I hope to expand the scale of this study to provide a more valuable set of data and ideally bring more attention to the dichotomy of explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction methods.

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Appendix A
Demographic Questionnaire

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|------------|----|--------|-----------------------|-----|-------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | Name: | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. | Age: | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | |
| 3. | Sex: | Female | | | | Male | | | | | |
| 4. | How would you describe your family's economic status? | Low | Low-Middle | | Middle | Middle-Upper | | Upper | | | |
| 5. | How many years have you studied English in school and university? | Less than 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | More than 12 | |
| 6. | Have you ever attended a training school for English? If so, how many years? | Less than 6 | Yes | | | | No | | | | More than 12 |
| 7. | Have you ever had a private English tutor? If so, how many years? | Less than 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | More than 12 | |
| 8. | How many hours do you spend studying English a week? | 0 | 1-2 | | 3-4 | | 5-6 | | More than 6 | | |
| 9. | Have you ever lived or studied abroad? | Yes | | | | No | | | | | |
| | | If yes, where? | | | | If yes, for how long? | | | | | |
| 10. | Have you ever traveled abroad? | Yes | | | | No | | | | | |

Appendix B

Pre-test (female version)

Directions:

Imagine you are in the United States of America on a Summer Exchange Program. Type your responses to each situation in the space provided. After, you will be asked to give a brief explanation of your answer.



1. Please write your English name or your name in pinyin:

2. Situation:

You are attending your first lecture of the exchange program. Shortly after the professor begins speaking, you realize it is very difficult for you to understand her. You think she is speaking too fast. You approach her after class.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

3. Situation:

You were very busy this morning, and you arrive in the student canteen of the university later than usual. You get your tray and food, but notice the containers for forks and spoons are empty. A canteen employee walks by you.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

4. Situation:

There is an American student that sits next to you every day in your Tuesday class. She always says hi to you, and asks some questions to you. You think she is very nice, and you want to be friends with her. You want to have dinner with her.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

5. Situation:

You are in the classroom, and you are sitting near the light switch. The professor is about to start a video. She looks at you, and says, “would you mind turning off the light?”



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

6. Situation:

You and a fellow exchange student just sit down at an empty table in the university’s student canteen. An employee of the canteen, who you saw cleaning tables, approaches you two and says, “could you go over there?” She points to another table.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

7. Situation:

You are walking back to your classroom, and you see an American classmate. She sees you, and says “Hey! I was wondering if you can tell the teacher I’m not feeling well?”



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your reasoning for your answer:

Appendix C

Post-test (male version)

Directions:

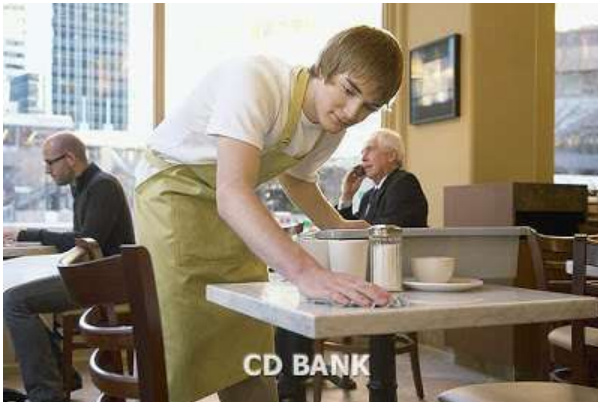
Imagine you are in the United States of America on a Summer Exchange Program. Type your responses to each situation in the space provided. After, you will be asked to give a brief explanation of your answer.



1. Please write your English name or your name in pinyin:

2. Situation:

You and a fellow exchange student just sit down at an empty table in the university's student canteen. An employee of the canteen, who you saw cleaning tables, approaches you two and says, "could you go over there?" He points to another table.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

3. Situation:

You were very busy this morning, and you arrive in the student canteen of the university

later than usual. You get your tray and food, but notice the containers for forks and spoons are empty. A canteen employee walks by you.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

4. Situation:

You are in the classroom, and you are sitting near the light switch. The professor is about to start a video. He looks at you, and says, “would you mind turning off the light?”



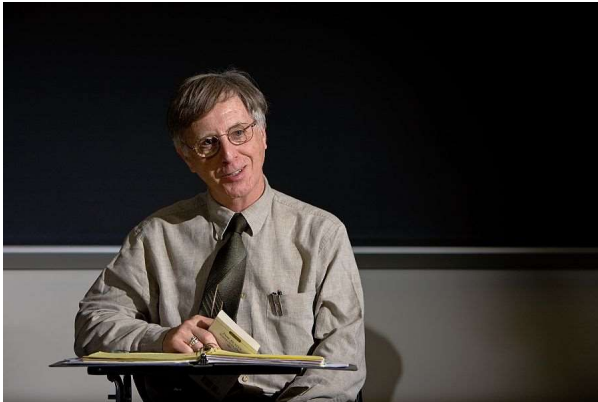
What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

5. Situation:

You are attending your first lecture of the exchange program. Shortly after the professor begins speaking, you realize it is very difficult for you to understand him. You think he is

speaking too fast. You approach him after class.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

6. Situation:

There is an American student that sits next to you every day in your Tuesday class. He always says hi to you, and asks some questions to you. You think he is very nice, and you want to be friends with him. You want to have dinner with him.



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your word choices for your answer:

7. Situation:

You are walking back to your classroom, and you see an American classmate. He sees you, and says “Hey! I was wondering if you can tell the teacher I’m not feeling well?”



What would you say and/or do?

Briefly explain your reasoning for your answer:

Appendix D

Qualitative Samples: Intervention Concepts

Table 8		
<i>Examples of Participants Using Intervention Concepts</i>		
Participant	Request	Explanation
1	I am sorry,professore. Could you mind slowing down your speed?I can't catch up with you.	The polite student may not be refused.
6	i hear there is a good canteen nearby ,why not we go there together when you are free?	its polite
7	Hi,professor! I cannot follow you because I am not a native english learner , would you mind speak slowly next time~?	It is polite and explain why I want her speak slowly.(more persuasive)
8	I'd like to ask you that you speak more slowly.	Because I think in this way I can make it clear and it's polite at the same time.
9	Excuse me, could you please take me a fork and a spoon?	I should be pilot when I ask the employee for something.
13	I would ask her " could you please give me a pair of fork and spoon?"	I think it's important to show enough politeness to the staff in the canteen.
14	Excuse me, could you please take me a fork and a spoon?	It seems like polite enough.
15	Hi, the spoons and forks are not enough. Would you mind bringing us some?	Be polite
17	Would you mind speaking more slowly?	it's more polite and i can understand the lesson.
<i>Note.</i> The requests and explanations are presented as they were given by the participants. No edits have been made.		

Appendix E

Qualitative Samples: Meta-Pragmatic Explanations

Table 9		
<i>Examples of Participants Using Meta-Pragmatic Explanations</i>		
Participant	Request	Explanation
4	I think I would understand the lesson better if you could speak a littel slowly	I need to apply my request indirectly
8	Could you please add som forks and spoons in the containers?	Because I think to strangers the direct way is not very polite and non-conventionally indirect way is not clear.
11	Hi, sir. Could you refill the containers	a conventional indirect request is a comfortable way
12	I can't understand when you speck fast.	Because she is not the teacher for my self, so I need use the indirect way.
13	I would say" Hey! Do you know there is a new restaurant just opened near our school? I heard that the food in that restaurant is quite delicious. Would yo mind go there and have dinner with me ?"	I think in this situation I should use the non-conventionally indirect request and firstly arouse her interest of going out for dinner with me.
15	Hello, I have heard there is new Mexico restaurant nearby. I think you would love that!	We are new friends and I would not choose a direct way
16	Hi, I've heard a new opened restaurant nearby, do you want to have a try tonight?	Indirect and won't give her too much pressure
<i>Note.</i> The requests and explanations are presented as they were given by the participants. No edits have been made.		