Requests in Academic Settings in English, Russian and Chinese

Dissertation

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By

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Abstract

It has been generally recognized in pragmatics that the speech act request, i.e., asking someone to do something, can be a face-threatening act (FTA); thus studies of requests have been traditionally associated with research on linguistic politeness, the mitigation of FTAs. Every culture has each own way of appropriately presenting the requests in different contexts; people from other cultures tend to perceive the social variables somewhat differently and interpret the behavior or utterances based on their own native language systems or culture conventions. As a result, misunderstandings are likely take place in cross-culture communication involving requests.

This study endeavors to explore the similarities and differences in requests in academic settings in three different languages—English, Russian and Chinese. A written questionnaire was designed to elicit request locutions made by 25 students who were native speakers of each language; in order to ensure that the requests were sensitive to contexts, the questionnaire included 14 everyday situations in an academic setting. The questionnaire also included a rating scale for the native speakers of each language to
assess the weight of each situation; this elicited evidence for the native perception of each requestive situation and allowed comparison of cultural differences in assessment.

The dissertation compares and reveals the ways of making requests in the three languages in each requestive situation in terms not only of the strategies used in the core requests, but also of internal and external modifications within the request locutions.

While the primary goal of the dissertation is a linguistic comparison and analysis, it is the author's belief that such research has the potential to enhance, to some extent, mutual understanding in people of different cultures. In particular, being aware of how a second language phrases requests differently from one's native language can greatly reduce the potential for misunderstanding, increase the likelihood of obtaining one's requestive goal without causing offense, and in general enhance cross-cultural communication.
Dedication

Dedicated to my parents and my family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the study

Every culture has developed and possesses its own appropriate means of verbal behavior and, in particular, politeness devices. When cross-cultural communication takes place, people from different cultures tend to interpret the behavior or utterances of the cultural "others" based on their own native language systems or cultural conventions. This may lead to ‘pragmatic failure’, which is the inability to understand what is meant by what is said (Thomas 1983); communication breakdown may occur, and offensive national stereotypes may even be generated, such as the "abrasive" Russian, the "inscrutable" Chinese, and the "insincere" American.

Becoming aware of and understanding the differences in the conventions and knowing the appropriate ways of making speech acts in other cultures may help to
minimize the unintentional rudeness or offensiveness, thereby preventing communication breakdowns and improving cross-cultural communication.

The speech act of request, whose illocutionary force is to ask someone to do something, has wide applications in daily communication. Since making a request is asking someone to do something, it can be a face-threatening act (FTA) because it imposes the speaker's desire on the addressee and so potentially impinges on the addressee's freedom of action. Therefore, in order to maintain smooth social relations, speakers typically make a careful calculation of social variables such as social power, social distance between the speaker and the addressee and ranking of request imposition is needed to ensure its perlocutionary success (Brown and Levinson 1987; for further discussion, see Chapter 2). When speakers from other cultures make requests in a second language, even when they try to overcome the interference generated by the transfer of request strategies from their native language to the target language, they may perceive the social variables differently from the speakers of the target language and, as a result, produce inappropriate requests.

This study endeavors to explore the similarities and differences displayed in the requests produced by native speakers from three cultures, American English, Chinese and Russian, to examine possible cultural influences on the assessment of the weight of requestive situations, and to discuss how the different assessments may affect the way a
request is made.

A Discourse Completion Task (DCT) in the form of a written questionnaire was used in order to collect a large sample of data and to control select social variables in order to be able to compare the requestive features in the three different languages. A rating scale was incorporated in the written questionnaire for each situation so that the native speakers of each language could rate the weight of the request event; the goal was to elicit the native interpretation of each requestive situation. This allows for a comparison of cultural differences in how the weight is assessed (for further discussion, see Chapter 3).

Fourteen requestive situations were specially designed for this study and translated into the respective languages. As the participants of the study were all students, the questionnaire situations were limited to familiar academic settings; more specifically, they were presented as taking place on campus between students or between a student and a staff or faculty member. Thus the request situations were closely related to students’ life on campus. Having the students play themselves in familiar situations provides the most reliable and comparable data possible, as opposed to compelling them to pretend to be people of other social backgrounds. Admittedly, academic settings are only a tiny part of society. It is assumed that people with different social backgrounds may interact differently and therefore possess their own requestive features. However, it
is expected that any part of society reflects the culture of the whole and can be taken as a representative part.

To my knowledge, no comparable research has been conducted in which a particular speech act has been compared for these three languages—American English, Russian and Chinese—or in which requests have been examined cross-linguistically in such detail. In addition to shedding light on the pragmatics of each of the languages, it is the author's belief that such research has the potential to enhance, to some extent, mutual understanding in people of different cultures.

### 1.2. Research questions

In this study, a descriptive analysis of requests made in different contexts in the three different languages will be conducted in great detail. The researcher will endeavor to shed lights on the following issues:

1. What are the requests strategies and internal and external modifications American students prefer to use when making requests?
2. What are the request strategies and internal and external modifications Russian students prefer to use when making requests?
3. What are the request strategies and internal and external modifications
Chinese students prefer to use when making requests?

4. What similarities and differences are displayed in the usages of strategies, internal modifications, and external modifications in the requests made by American, Russian and Chinese students?

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation investigates the requestive features in American English, Russian and Chinese. Requests in these three languages are compared in term of all the possible components of the requests identified by the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (hereafter CCSARP; see Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989): alerters, core requests strategies, internal and external modifications. The structure of the dissertation is as follows.

Chapter 2 begins by briefly reviewing the most relevant literature related to the cross-cultural analysis of speech acts (section 2.1). It then proceeds to examine previous studies on the speech act of requests in general (sections 2.2–2.3) and studies that discuss requests in connection with linguistic politeness (section 2.4). Section 2.5 gives a concise description of the three languages under investigation. The following three sections survey the literature on requests in each of the three languages—English (2.6), Russian (2.7), and Chinese (2.8). Finally, in section 2.9 I note the questions that emerge from the
Chapter 3 is devoted to the methodology of the study. It begins by reviewing the data collection methods used in previous cross-cultural or language-specific pragmatic studies and discusses the advantages and disadvantages that these methods entail (section 3.1). As noted above, my study utilized a written questionnaire, which allows me to collect a large sample of comparable data and to be able to control variables to conduct comparison of the requestive features in the three languages.

In section 3.2, I discuss the coding scheme for request strategies used in the dissertation. In section 3.3, I discuss in some detail the participants of the study, with special attention to sociolinguistic variables. In section 3.4, I describe the questionnaire, including both the requestive situations covered and the scale that participants used to rate the weight of each request, so that I could better understand the choices of the linguistic forms of the requests the participants from the three languages made in different contexts. Here, for the most part, I utilized the coding schema that the CCSARP used in their cross-cultural pragmatic study; however, I modified the schema when necessary—specifically, in situations where I could not find a coding standard in the CCSARP for the requestive features which occurred in my data. Wherever I made such modifications, it is explained in the text. Finally, in section 3.5 I discuss the tests conducted by volunteer coders who were native speakers of each of the investigated languages.
languages to ensure that my own data coding was reliable.

Chapter 4 discusses the results of my research on the requestive features used by the American English speakers in my study. Section 4.2 discusses the use of external modifications; section 4.3 the use of alerters (terms of address and attention-getters); and section 4.4 the strategies used in the core requests. Section 4.5 examines the requestive features in each of the 14 situations in great detail. For each situation, the mean weight of the request, as assessed by the participants, is reported; then the core request strategies are analyzed, along with the external modifications.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the results of my research on the requestive features used by the Russian and Chinese participants, respectively. These chapters follow the same structure as Chapter 4.

Chapter 7 provides a cross-linguistic analysis of the requests in each of the 14 situations for all three languages. Each section in this chapter is devoted to a single situation. I discuss in considerable detail the similarities and differences in the mean weights of the requests and the requestive features (alerters, core request strategies, internal and external modifications) in the three languages under investigation.

Chapter 8 summarizes the research results and offers some general conclusions. Section 8.2 shows how the results of the dissertation answer the questions raised in the literature review (section 2.9). Section 8.3 discusses the implications of the study for
language teaching. Finally, in section 8.4, I mention some perspectives for future research expanding on the work done in this dissertation.
2.1. Pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics of speech acts

Pragmatics has been defined as the study of how utterances have meanings in speech situations with speakers and hearers involved (Leech 1983: x). Utterance meaning is the main research object in pragmatics, whereas semantics focuses on sentence meaning. For instance, from a pragmatic point of view, a statement like *It is hot today* can be an assertion about the weather, a request to turn on the air conditioner, or some other speech act, depending on the intention of the speaker in specific situations. By contrast, from a semantic point of view, it has only a single meaning.

A number of researchers have criticized early works on pragmatics for being too ethnocentric, especially in studies of speech acts (Watts 2003; Wierzbicka 1991). Cross-
cultural research contributes new perspectives to the study of speech acts and thereby enriches speech act theory.

To date, there have been numerous contrastive studies of speech acts across different languages and cultures. Their general goal has been to appreciate the similarities and differences in the realizations of specific speech acts. For example, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) have examined requests and apologies in 7 different languages; Tseng (1999) has compared invitation patterns in Chinese and English; Sifianou (1992) has compared requests in England and Greece to investigate politeness phenomena in both cultures. Many other studies could be cited. These works not only have made tremendous efforts to identify the pragmatic norms for realizing a specific speech act in a given culture, but also try to seek the cultural values which underlie the different pragmatic norms in different cultures.

2.2. Request as a speech act

In their seminal studies of the philosophy of language, Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1979) introduced and advanced the study of speech acts. Austin (1962) proposed the term *performatives* to emphasize that uttering is not just conveying a proposition, but is also performing an action. Austin (1962) also divided utterances into five types based on their illocutionary force: *verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives* and
Requests may belong to the category of exercitives, though this is not clearly stated in Austin’s study: “An exercitive is the giving of a decision in favor of or against a certain course of action, which includes order, command, direct, etc.” (Austin 1962:154)

Searle (1979) improved on Austin’s classification of illocutionary acts and developed an alternative taxonomy of the basic categories of utterances: assertives, directives, expressives, commissives and declaratives. He defined directives as illocutionary acts which are intended to produce some effect through action by the hearer. Some directives are included in the competitive category, where the illocutionary goal competes with the social goal, such as asking, demanding, while others are intrinsically polite, such as inviting (Leech 1983:106). Requests belong to the competitive category of directives, which Leech termed impositives (Leech 1983:106) to avoid confusion with direct and indirect illocutions.

Searle (1969) hypothesized that, in speaking, one is performing speech acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises, and so on. In the process of speaking, four kinds of acts are performed: 1) utterance acts: uttering words; 2) propositional acts: referring and predicking; (3) illocutionary acts: stating, questioning, commanding, promising, etc. (4) perlocutionary acts: the consequences or effects on the actions, thoughts, or beliefs, etc. of addressees (ibid.:24).

In addition, Searle (1969) hypothesized that speaking a language is engaging in a
rule-governed form of behavior and that there are constitutive rules underlying speech acts. Specific to requests, there are 4 types of rule (ibid.: 66):

1. **Rule of propositional content**: future act of the hearer;
2. **Preparatory rule**: (a) The hearer is able to do the act. The speaker believes the hearer is able to do the act. (b) It is not obvious to both the speaker and the hearer that the hearer will do the act in the normal course of events of his own accord.
3. **Rule of sincerity**: The speaker wants the hearer to do the act.
4. **Essential rule**: The request counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do the act.

As noted by Searle (1969), orders and commands have the additional preparatory rule that is the speaker must be in a position of authority over the hearer. Accordingly, the essential condition for orders and commands would be that the utterance counts as an attempt to get the addressee to do the act by virtue of the authority that the speaker has over the addressee—for instance, *Show me your license*, when said by a police officer to a driver. In contrast to an order, a request is performed when the utterer of the request is acting as if he or she has no authority or power to compel compliance. The speaker is not insistent and will not be enraged by a refusal (Green 1988: 121).

The differences among requests, orders and commands are also illustrated by Wierzbicka (1987) through paraphrases of the associated speech act verbs. Wierzbicka (1987), who emphasizes the importance of speech act verbs in better understanding the categories of speech acts, endeavors to distinguish the components of semantically
similar speech act verbs; she identifies 37 groups of verbs in a semantic dictionary of English speech act verbs that she compiled. Her definition of requests, orders and commands is follows:

Request (Wierzbicka 1987: 51):
I say: I want Y to happen.
I know that Y cannot happen if someone (X) doesn’t do something to cause it to happen
I say this because I want to cause X to cause Y to happen
I don’t want to say that X has to do it
I assume that X will understand that I have a reason to say that I want Y to happen
I assume that X will cause Y to happen

As Wierzbicka shows, in a request, the speaker does not have authority to ask the addressee to do the desired action, and the addressee does not have the obligation to do it. This distinguishes requests from other directive speech acts like order and command, which assume the speaker has authority over the addressee (ibid.: 37–39). Therefore, I assume that requests will tend to be presented differently from orders and commands.

2.3. Indirect speech acts and requests

Requests can be direct (Pass me that newspaper) or indirect (Are you finished with that newspaper?) There is a widespread understanding in the literature that speakers of English tend to prefer conventionally indirect requests (Leech 1983: 80; Wierzbicka
Searle (1979) considers speech acts indirect when one illocutionary act is performed by way of performing another. For instance, in the utterance *It is hot today*, the secondary illocutionary act of the utterance is a statement of weather conditions; however, depending on the specific context, the primary illocutionary act might be making a request to the addressee to turn on the air conditioner. An indirect speech act is thus made when the primary illocutionary act is performed by means of articulating a secondary illocutionary act.

However, indirect requests seem to contradict what Grice (1983) deems effective ways of communicating. Grice (1983: 168) proposes a Cooperative Principle (CP), which is constituted by 4 maxims:

A: Quantity:
   1: Make your contribution as informative as required
   2: Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
B: Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
C: Relation: Be relevant.
D: Manner: Be perspicuous.

In indirect requests, especially in hints, the maxims of quantity and manner (in particular, the submaxims "Avoid obscurity of expression" and "Avoid ambiguity") are flouted. The explanation of how the speakers can mean more than they actually say lies,
according to Grice, in *conversational implicatures*. In other words, the hearer has to “search for the specific point that was intended by the speaker but not explicitly stated” (Sifianou 1992: 16).

### 2.4. Politeness and requests

As noted in Chapter 1, because requests ask people to do something, they inherently constitute face-threatening acts (FTA). According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 65), “Orders and requests are those acts that primarily threaten the addressee’s negative-face want,” because, by performing this speech act, the speaker indicates that he wants the addressee to do or refrain from doing something and so interferes with the addressee's freedom of action. These potential face-threatening acts performed by the speaker to the addressee might evoke disobedience from the addressee; thus they are also threats to the *speaker’s* face wants.

It is for this reason that, instead of always phrasing their speech acts in the most direct manner, speakers resort to strategies of *politeness* and add various forms of redress to reduce the imposition on the addressee's face needs (Searle 1979; Brown and Levinson 1987). Therefore, studies of requests have traditionally been connected with research on politeness (Brown and Levinson 1978; Blum-Kulka 1989).

Brown and Levinson (1987:69) identify five graded hierarchical strategies of
politeness; I will mention these briefly here because I will refer to them throughout the dissertation. The most direct strategy is *bald on record*, where means of redress are not used; this is typically the imperative (mood derivable form). "Conventionally indirect" strategies, which state the speech act explicitly but include means of redress, can focus on *positive politeness* (aiming at enhancing the addressee’s positive face) or *negative politeness* (caring for the addressee’s negative face). Speakers can also make use of *off-record* strategies such as hints, which are a form of non-conventional indirectness, or, in cases of extreme imposition, they can *not perform the FTA altogether*.

So, in order to protect the mutually vulnerable face needs and minimize the negative effect, the speaker will select the most appropriate strategy of the five mentioned above by measuring the actual situations and taking three general social variables into consideration (Brown and Levinson 1987: 74-76): the *social distance* (D) between the speaker and addressee; the *relative power* (P) of the speaker and addressee; and the *ranking of the imposition* (R). The weight of the imposition (W) is measured by the formula \( W = D + P + R \) (ibid.). So eventually the single index W becomes the motive for the selection of one of the five strategies.

As the assessment of cultural context and social variables varies cross-culturally, different societies may utilize different strategies even for the same activities. For example, there is cross-cultural variation in the preferences for orientation towards
positive or negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987). It is generally stated that English reflects a negative-politeness orientation. English speakers consider keeping one’s distance as the way of being polite and prefer using indirect strategies when making requests.

When it comes to Russian, Renate Ratmajer (2003) has shown with many examples of behavior that Russian culture reflects a positive-politeness orientation, such as constantly being interested in other people, showing concern, and tending to be involved in other people’s life. In a society with a positive-politeness orientation, people consider showing involvement as a way of being polite; this contrasts with the negative-politeness orientation.

Chinese culture is sometimes assumed to have a negative-politeness orientation (Young 1982). However, Lee-Wong (1994) demonstrates in her empirical study that imperatives, i.e., direct strategies, are the dominant ways of making requests in Chinese culture. This may contradict the stereotype that Chinese people are “inscrutable” (Young 1982). In Chinese, as Young notes (ibid.: 79), it is typical to always state one’s request or one’s main point last, after first articulating the reasons for it. The lack of precision and the failure to address the point directly lead to suspicion that the Chinese speakers were beating around the bush.
The contradiction may result from the different points on which the two researchers focus: Lee-Wong (1994) only analyzes the construction of head act (the minimal unit, or the core request) of the requests, while Young (1982) focuses more on the way requests are introduced. The fact that Chinese speakers make supportive moves extensively before the core requests may lead to impression that they are inscrutable, i.e.; prefer to be indirect.

Gu (1990) points out the inappropriateness of accounting for Chinese politeness (and that of other non-English cultures) by phenomena based on studies of English speech acts. For example, in cultures like Chinese, negative face is not threatened when inviters persist even after the invitees have declined a couple of times. Gu (1990) emphasizes the normative function of politeness in Chinese society; failure to observe politeness leads to social sanctions. “Society is more than a total sum of its individual constituents when collectivism is more valued than individualism” (ibid.: 242).

Accordingly, Gu (1990) suggests that Leech’s Politeness Principles (PP) are better able to account for the interaction between Chinese face and politeness than Brown and Levinson’s approach. Leech (1983: 132), adopting the concept maxim from Grice’s CP, proposes 6 maxims of politeness, each with 2 submaxims ("minimize cost to other" and "maximize benefit to other" or similar):
1. *Tact maxim* (in impositives and commissives)
2. *Generosity maxim* (in impositives and commissives)
3. *Approbation maxim* (in expressives and assertives)
4. *Modesty maxim* (in expressives and assertives)
5. *Agreement maxim* (in assertives)

Wierzbicka (1985) points out the astonishing ethnocentrism often seen in studies of speech acts. According to Wierzbicka, the linguistic realization of English requests is characterized by the major Anglo-Saxon cultural principle of “polite pessimism”; this leads to the restriction on the use of imperatives and the preference for indirect requests in interrogative or interrogative-conditional forms. Those English characteristics in requests have been taken for granted in some studies of other languages: “what seems to hold for the speakers of English must hold for people generally” (ibid.: 25). Actually, it is often not the same for other cultures. For example, the principle of “polite pessimism” characteristic of Anglo-Saxon culture is absent from Polish culture, where imperative forms are often used and sound polite when performing requests (Blum-Kulka 1989). The situation may be similar for the Russian and Chinese requests, as my study will show. An imperative request may sometimes sound impolite in English, but it is an appropriate form for making requests in Russian (Mills 1993) and Chinese (Lee-Wong 1994).
2.5. Sketch of English, Russian, and Chinese

This research is based on an analysis of requests in three languages, English, Russian and Chinese, so a brief introduction of the three languages is presented in the following.

English belongs to the Indo-European family of languages. English is a West Germanic language, which originated in Anglo-Saxon England. Approximately 375 million people speak English as their first language. English today is probably the third most spoken language after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, based on the number of native speakers.

Russian also belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. Russian, along with Belorussian and Ukrainian, constitute East Slavic language group. Russian is the most widely spoken language of the Slavic languages and the official language of Russia. Russian is also the most widespread language of Eurasia.

Chinese belongs to one of the two branches in Sino-Tibetan family of languages, which is one of the largest language families in the world. One-fifth of the world's population speaks Chinese as their native language. Spoken Chinese has numerous varieties, which are all tonal and analytic. The standardized form of spoken Chinese is Mandarin, based on the Beijing dialect; Mandarin Chinese is the official language of the People’s Republic of China.
All three languages, English, Russian and Chinese, are among the six official languages in the United Nations, and they all fall in the top ten most spoken languages in the world.

2.6. Studies of the speech act “request” in English

Numerous studies of English requests and comparison of English requests with requests in other languages have revealed that English requests are characterized by extreme restrictions on the use of the imperative and a preference for the conventionalized indirect request form can you do that? (Wierzbicka 1985, Clark and Schunk 1980). As Clark and Schunk (1980: 111) note, "When people [native speakers of English—XD] make requests, they tend to make them indirectly. They generally avoid imperatives in preference for indirect requests." Searle (1975: 64) similarly states that "ordinary conversational requirements of politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperative sentences or explicit performatives, and we therefore seek to find indirect means to our illocutionary ends." This statement again refers specifically to English requests.

This restriction on the use of the imperative and preference for indirect requests may result from the cultural norm that America belongs to a "negative-politeness oriented" society, in which people tend not to impose on other’s territory and try to
minimize the imposition their speech acts make. Thus direct strategies can be perceived as impolite because they demonstrate less concern about people’s negative face, while the conventional indirect forms are considered to be the most polite way of making a request, since they provide an "out" for the addressee and attend to the addressee’s negative face.

2.7. Studies of the speech act “request” in Russian

A review of the literature indicates that little work has been done on requests in Russian. To my knowledge, the only scholars who have done research on Russian request strategies are Bernard Comrie (1981) and Margaret Mills (1991, 1992, 1993).

In his chapter on “Interrogativity”, Bernard Comrie (1981) briefly examines the pragmatics of Russian interrogatives. He points out that, in making indirect requests in the form of questions, Russians and Americans have a different semantic focus and use different linguistic forms. Russians tend in form to question the addressee’s intention, while Americans tend in form to question the addressee’s ability or desire. As illustrated it (1–2), Russian questions usually utilize negative forms, while English questions often are in positive forms.

(1) Вы не откроете окно?
Will you not open the window?

(2) Can you hold the door open for me?
Mills (1991, 1992, 1993) devotes three articles to Russian requests. In her 1991 article, based on over 250 interrogatives collected in natural speech environments, Mills examined pragmatic strategies with interrogatives in colloquial Russian. She claims that in colloquial Russian the combination of the negative particle plus the future perfective, as in (3), has become the “most polite conventionalized request in Russian” (ibid.: 68) and the most neutral polite requests for Russian speakers in any situation, formal or informal (ibid.: 73).

(3) Вы не одолжите мне 10 долларов?

Will you not lend me 10 dollars?

In her 1992 article, Mills confirms that all the sentence types found in standard English indirect request formulas, as identified by Searle (1979), have counterparts in Russian data except for sentences conveying the speaker’s wish that the addressee would do the act—for instance, Я бы хотела, чтобы вы открыли окно (‘I would like you to open the window, please’), which Mills considers a less representative example for indirect requests in Russian. She emphasizes the difference in the syntactic structures of requests in Russian and English and points out, in particular, that syntactic strategies vary significantly in making indirect requests in Russian and English. For example, the use of
the negative particle in colloquial Russian (5) is equivalent to a positive construction in English (4).

(4) Can you lend me $10 for lunch?

(5) Вы не можете одолжить мне десять долларов?

Can you lend me $10?

In Mill’s 1992 study, 15 Muscovites were asked to evaluate the appropriateness and politeness of 16 sentences that formed a continuum between imperatives and interrogatives. In this way, Mills confirms the conclusion of her 1991 article that the schema operator + negation + future finite verb is the most neutral polite request in colloquial Russian, i.e., a sentence concerning the hearer doing or intending to perform the act, as in (6).

(6) Вы не подвезете меня домой?

Will you drive me home?

In her 1993 article, based on 34 Russian and 46 English speech samples of a request for a ride collected in natural speech situations, Mills recognizes that Russian and
English belong to two separate speech cultures and calls on scholars to take underlying cultural factors as well as syntactic and semantic variables into consideration when “charting the route of the request schema from the speaker’s intended illocution to the hearer’s perception in the speech exchange” (ibid.: 100). Mills indicates that the speech act continuum contains a variety of syntactic structures for this particular request. Her data confirm that, when making requests, Russians favor imperatives, as in (7), and indirect requests of a particular form—sentences negatively questioning the hearer’s intention to perform the act, as in (8).

(7) Подвези меня, пожалуйста, домой.
Drive me home, please.

(8) Ты домой? Меня не подвезешь?
Are you going home? Will you drive me home?

Mills (1993: 104) briefly mentions the preferred request strategy in Russian—the direct imperative. Though this may fail to minimize cost or provide an "out" to the addressee (Brown and Levinson 1989), it nevertheless is a polite request strategy in Russian. It has been noted in general that positive politeness is more fundamental than negative for Russian native speakers (Benacchio 1996: 14). Likewise, positive face and personal warmth are more important in Russian culture than in American culture. Paying
attention to other people’s lives and providing help are the norm in Russian culture (Panate 2003: 26–27). A similar idea is also reflected in Comrie’s (1981) observations that Russians tend to stand much closer to one another when speaking than North Americans do and that it is not unusual for a Russian to touch a stranger as a means of getting attention. In Russian culture, politeness in most cases means solidarity, whereas in American culture in most cases it means preserving one’s distance, not imposing on others, and respecting privacy.

Surprisingly, Mills (1993) includes hints among the favored request strategies in Russian, along with imperatives and indirect requests—. for example, (9–10):

(9) Вы сейчас домой?
Are you on your way home?

(10) Ты в какую сторону?
You are heading in which direction?

By contrast, according to Mills (ibid.), English prefers indirect request strategies regarding the addressee's ability to perform an action. For instance,

(11) Can you give me a ride home today?
According to Mills (1993), requests referring to the hearer’s ability and using negation, conditional particles, as in (12) are regarded by Russian informants as too polite and artificial for interaction with a colleague or a friend (ibid.: 112).

(12) Ты не мог бы меня подвезти?

Could you drive me home?

By contrast, according to Mills, such conditional sentences are the preferred forms of requests in English among friends or non-acquaintances. (13).

(13) Could I borrow your camera the weekend?

Transference from one language to another leads to *pragmalinguistic errors* in request production by non-native American learners of Russian. American learners of Russian tend not to use the direct imperative forms in requests and have recourse to questioning the hearer’s ability to perform the act, which corresponds to the form of indirect requests widely used in their culture. For instance, the following sentence (14) produced by an American learner of Russian (a positive construction questioning ability) is a typical example of a pragmalinguistic error:
In the above request, besides the inappropriate usage of a particular request strategy, the influence of first language transference is also manifested in the (over)use of “please”. In Russian, it has been claimed (Mills 1993: 111), пожалуйста ‘please’ is restricted to the imperative (15).

(15) Дайте мне книгу, пожалуйста.
Pass me the book, please.

The few previous studies of Russian request speech acts leave an important aspect of request usage unclear. As Mills (1993) notes, Russians prefer imperatives, indirect requests concerning the hearer’s intention, and hints. But how do these strategies compete? It has not been examined in detail in what situations the various requests strategies are preferred—In other words, what social variables and/or cultural variables determine the preference for one strategy over another in a given context. Mills (1993) only mentions that indirect Russian requests concerning the hearer’s ability are used inappropriately when asking a friend for a ride and that the indirect requests are preferable when speakers are unacquainted and in more formal situations. However, Mills
(1993) does not discuss in details the situations in which imperatives and hints tend to be preferred.

Therefore, more empirical studies of Russian requests are needed. This provides an incentive for my research. My hypothesis is that, within some social variables, one strategy is preferable to another. Indirect requests questioning the hearer’s ability are mainly used in formal situations, rather than informal settings such as between friends. Hints are used when the weight of the request tends to be bigger. Imperatives and indirect requests questioning the hearer’s intention are both preferred strategies not only in informal but in formal situations. However, as the imposition increases, indirect requests strategies become preferred.

2.8. Studies of the speech act “request” in Chinese

Compared with studies of Russian requests, there has been more extensive research on Chinese requests based on empirical data. Some of the studies have compared the pragmatics of Chinese with another language, mostly English.

Based on an empirical study of Chinese requests in 44-46 situations (30 situations in a discourse completion test and 14-16 in interviews), Lee-Wong (1994) concludes that the use of directness in the form of the imperative is socially acceptable, appropriate, and not perceived as impolite in Chinese culture. It has been widely accepted that indirectness
does not necessarily imply politeness. For example, the research conducted on English and Hebrew reveals that the most indirect type, hints, are not perceived as the most polite (Blum-Kulka 1987:131). But the directness of the imperative can be perceived as impolite in languages like English and Hebrew (Blum-Kulka 1987: 131), because it seems to indicate a lack of concern with face.

The data in Lee-Wong’s (1994) study show that terms of address and politeness markers used as internal modifiers embedded in the imperatives seem to compensate for the direct illocutionary force of imperative utterances and carry the cultural implication of politeness (ibid.: 504). For instance, 请 ‘please’, 帮 ‘to help’, 麻烦你 ‘bother you’ are used as politeness markers to minimize the imposition in Chinese requests with the imperative.

(16) 同志，请你帮我打开这窗户一下？

Comrade, please help me to open this window?

As Blum-Kulka (1989) notes, face wants compete with other elements in the process of choosing an appropriate request strategy. What is considered imposing and rude in one society may not necessarily be so in another, where a certain degree of imposition can be interpreted as an expression of solidarity. In Chinese culture, it seems that solidarity tolerates imposition. The use of imperatives conveys a preference for
concreteness and sincerity (Lee-Wong 1994: 509). The predominance of imperatives in Chinese requests seems to imply that indicating sincerity supersedes concern with face. By contrast, in American culture, “there is a concern for clarity of expression, but this concern does not extend to pragmatic clarity, thus allowing the face-maintaining consideration to play a more central role” (Blum-Kulka 1989: 145).

Lee-Wong (1994: 500) argues that judgments and perceptions of politeness should be based on native cultural expectations. When a request is made, both the macro-level (the sociocultural context) and the micro-level (the situational) contexts should be taken into consideration.

Lee-Wong’s (1994) study clearly shows the close association between the use of imperatives and contextual factors. She notes the following contexts where imperatives are expected: 1) when the request is deemed to be easily carried out; 2) when both interactants are familiar and socially close; 3) when the speaker is in a position of power or authority (ibid.: 509).

In “Comparing Directives: American English, Mandarin in Taiwan and Taiwanese English”, Liao (1997) includes requests, commands, questions, and pleas in her category of directives. She classifies these directives into three subcategories: obligatory requests, right-type requests, and altruistic requests. The obligatory request type indicates that the requestee has an obligation to do the job requested by the requester. For instance, an
instructor exerts legitimate authority over the students’ academic behavior, so he or she may issue an obligatory request: *Turn in the homework next Monday.* Right-type requests, the type dealt with in this study, are the kind of request in which the speaker is asking the hearer to do something to mainly benefit the speaker. The speaker does not have an institutionally prescribed right to ask, and the hearer does not have an obligation to accomplish the request. For instance, *Pass me that newspaper, please.* Altruistic requests are not explicitly defined in Liao’s research, but she implies that they are the kind of request in which the speaker asks the hearer to do something to benefit other people instead of the speaker.

Here I will only discuss Liao's observations (1997) about right-type requests. The two right-type requests in her survey, asking for directions and asking to borrow a pencil, are also included in the questionnaire designed for the present research.

In the situation of “borrowing a pencil”, the preferred strategies for both American English and Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan are, in descending order, pre-request, which is to check the availability of a pencil before the request for borrowing; conventional indirect request; and mood derivable (imperative). Although significantly more Chinese in Taiwan than Americans would use the mood derivable strategy, the conventional indirect request strategy is preferable to the mood derivable in both ethnic groups in the given situation. This finding contradicts Lee-Wong’s (1994) conclusion that
mood derivable is the most used strategy in this situation for Chinese. But a possible reason for this contradiction would be that Liao’s (1997) Mandarin examples are from the Taiwan dialect. I would presume that Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan would display some different linguistic usages from Mandarin Chinese in Mainland China. Mandarin in each place inevitably reflects the culture of that language community.

In the “asking for direction” situation, according to Liao (1997), conventional indirect requests are the most popular strategy for American English speakers; ‘Please [let me] ask’ + simple question is the dominant one for Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan. This is consistent with the Lee-Wong’s finding that simple question is the preferred strategy in Chinese requests.

Generally, Liao finds that Chinese tend more than Americans to offer reasons along with requests. In addition, there is a significant gender variable: Chinese women tend more to offer reasons for their requests than Chinese men and tend to be more indirect (ibid.: 8). Cross-linguistically, it has been claimed that women tend to demonstrate greater politeness than men in speech (Brown and Levinson 1987). However, Hong’s (1998) study of the differences between Chinese men’s and women’s requests reveals a more complicated situation. In higher-ranking to lower-ranking and equal–familiar relations, females tend to be more polite than males; however, in lower-ranking to higher-ranking relations, men tend to be more polite than women (Hong 1997).
These gender differences are closely associated with sociopragmatic factors, such as the nature of social relations and the character of the context, and with cultural factors, such as traditional Chinese expectations of women’s and men’s speech.

In “A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Exploration of Polite Request Strategies: Chinese and American English”, Sue-Hua Aurora Chung (1995) contrasts request strategies among three groups of people: Chinese speaking Mandarin in Taiwan, Americans speaking native English, and Mandarin Chinese learners speaking English. She concludes that all three groups use more polite and indirect strategies in distant relationships and that direct strategies seem to be infrequently used by the participants of all three groups (ibid.:127). This contradicts Lee-Wong’s (1994) finding that Chinese speakers predominantly use imperatives to request. The contradiction may again come from the possible different linguistic behaviors between Chinese in Mainland China and Chinese in Taiwan. On the other hand, the inconsistency may reflect different criteria for defining direct and indirect strategies. Lee-Wong (1994) includes imperatives, questions, want/need statements and presumptive statements into the category of impositives, a direct bald-on-record strategy. However, Chung (1995) does not explicitly define direct request strategies. She implies that obligation strategies, need statements and command strategies may be perceived as direct.

Several questions are raised in the process of reviewing the literature of the
research on Chinese requests. First, it appears that it is not appropriate to assign the request utterances to clear-cut categories of using direct or indirect strategies, because the supportive moves should be taken into account in analyzing the request utterance as a whole. Secondly, terminological inconsistencies may lead to different properties being lumped together under the same name in the different studies. Third, it is necessary to conduct research on the requests produced by Mandarin Chinese informants from Mainland China, as it cannot be taken for granted that requestive behavior there is the same as in Taiwan.

2.9. Research questions from the previous literature

In the process of reviewing the literature on studies of requests in American English, Russian, and Chinese, I found a number of questions relevant to my own research that have not been answered definitively. I hope to shed some light on the following questions through my own research.

1. Is it true that Chinese speakers tend to offer reasons (grounders) in their request utterances more than speakers of American English do as claimed by Liao (1997)?
2. Do Chinese speakers prefer to provide reasons prior to their core requests or subsequent to the core requests? How about speakers of American English and Russian?

3. Is it true that English speakers put restrictions on the use of imperatives and prefer using conventionally indirect strategies in making requests as claimed by Wierzbicka (1985) and Clark and Schunk (1980)?

4. Is it true that Russians prefer using imperatives in requests, as suggested by Mills (1993)?

5. Have Russian request locutions questioning the addressee’s intentions been conventionalized as the most polite forms in any situation, formal or informal as claimed by Mills (1993)?

6. Do Russian request locutions questioning the addressee’s ability tend to be used in formal situations as suggested by Mills (1993)?

7. Do hints tend to be used when the weight of the request is bigger as suggested by Mills (1993)?

8. Is it true that пожалуйста ‘please’ is restricted to imperatives in Russian, as suggested by Mills (1993)?
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will begin with a brief review of the literature on data collection methods relevant for my dissertation (section 3.1). I will then discuss the methodology of coding I adopted for this research (section 3.2). This will be followed by a description of how the data were collected, including detailed information about the participants (section 3.3). Next, I will discuss the 14 requestive situations chosen for the questionnaire (section 3.4). Finally, I will discuss the tests that were done by external coders to ensure the reliability of the data coding in this study (section 3.5).

3.1. Review of data collection methods

The production of speech acts is not only constrained by the social properties of the speech event, but also by the different methods of data collection (Kasper and Dahl 1991). In previous studies, several methods have been used in data collection:
observation, elicitation, texts and intuition (Kasper and Dahl 1991; Labov 1972). The two main techniques of data collection of speech act realizations are observation of natural speech and elicitation (Kasper and Dahl 1991; Wolfson 1986). Elicitation comprises two subcategories: (1) Elicitation through rating tasks (paired comparison, card sorting, rating scales), multiple-choice questionnaires and interviews, which provide information about the participants’ perception or comprehension of the speech act production; (2) Elicitation of production data through Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), including written or oral questionnaires and ‘closed’ or ‘open’ role plays. As previous studies have noted, each method of data collection has its advantages and disadvantages. Natural speech can be either collected through field-notes of ethnographic data or by means of audio-recording or video-recording. Such natural speech is reliable data about the way speech acts function in interaction. For instance, Wolfson (1983) provides a descriptive analysis of compliments based on one thousand samples collected through an ethnographic approach. In this methodology, the researcher must keep records of the speech situations, the relationships between the speaker and addressee, and the social background. Wolfson detects three major syntactic patterns of compliments and investigates the functions of compliments in general.

Wolfson (1983: 95) advocates ethnographic fieldwork as “the only reliable method of collecting data about the way speech acts function in interaction”. However,
the method has several disadvantages: it is time-consuming and energy-consuming to
gather large samples; the occurrence of the given speech act is unpredictable; it is
uncertain that the findings can be generalized; and it is impossible to control variables.

Human behavior is not neat, and the factors that condition the patterns of
everyday interaction are complex and dynamic. When one observes without
intervening, then there is no real way of controlling for one variable or another
(ibid.: 691).

As a result, lots of examples of natural speech are not comparable in terms of
situations and social variables. There are also specific technical problems associated with
taking field-notes. For example, it may exceed the motor skill and short-term memory of
the researcher. The phenomenon of “the observer’s paradox” (Labov 1972) may also
appear: the presence of the researcher taking notes may affect the behavior of the people
being observed. Although hidden audio-recorders or video-recorders can solve such
problems, the results still need transcribing: “Transcribing one hour of a reasonable
audible tape in ordinary orthography and including temporal variables takes about ten
hours” (Kasper and Dahl 1991: 20). The method of elicitations can compensate for some
of the disadvantages of observation of natural speech, since it allows one to get a large
sample of participants easily and to control variables which constrain the contexts.
Elicitations are especially effective for comparing strategies of speech acts from different
languages (Blum-Kulka 1989). There are studies which use elicitation techniques followed by metapragmatic assessment methods such as informal interviews or rating tasks. For example, in a study of requests and suggestions, Rintell (1981) uses a ‘closed’ role play in which Spanish speakers were asked to produce four questions and four suggestions in English and in Spanish, followed by metapragmatic assessment rating the utterances for deference on a 5-point scale. Rintell finds that, in requests and suggestions in both English and Spanish, the deference increased when requests and suggestions were directed toward older addressees. In both languages, requests carried significantly greater deference than suggestions. Rintell includes the native English speakers’ utterances and ratings in the study in order to better interpret the learners’ linguistic behavior. Such metapragmatic assessments are important in understanding the choices that interlocutors make in linguistic forms of utterances in different contexts; this information is especially valuable in cross-cultural studies. As Kasper and Dahl (1991: 32) states, “Metapragmatic assessment of contextual factors can provide an important corrective, or confirmation, of the values and weights of contextual factors built into the instrument by the researcher.” They note that controls of this sort are particularly important when the researcher is not a member of one or more of the cultures being investigated (ibid.).

My study endeavors to investigate the pragmatic aspects of requests in three different languages: English, Russian and Chinese. In order to obtain a large sample of
data and to be able to control variables to compare the requestive features in three different languages, I apply the elicitation of production method Discourse Completion Test (DCT) as the primary method. The DCT, described more in section 3.4, is also combined with a self-assessment method—a rating scale in which the questionnaire participants are asked to rate the weight of the requests on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest. In the questionnaire, the prompt for ratings follows each requestive situation, in order to get information about how the contextual factors are assessed in the three cultures under investigation. I did not control for the order in which the participants wrote their request data and self-assessments, though the placement of the latter to the right of the request prompts was intended to ensure that they would do the ratings second. I am aware that this self-rating method may, to some extent, have interfered with the participants' unconscious formation of their requests. Nevertheless, the rating information is relevant for the research and, even with its limitations, still provides some basis for a comparison of how the speakers of the different languages may have assessed the requestive contexts.

3.2. Coding scheme-request strategies

In order to make the English, Russian and Chinese data comparable, a coding scheme—a shared analytical framework of primary features—needed to be set up. I
first examined the frameworks that some other researchers have used; I chose one framework that is used in some of the most important studies of speech acts and requests in particular.

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989) has been the most extensive cross-cultural study of speech acts to date. It investigates two speech acts, requests and apologies, across seven different languages and cultures—four varieties of English (American, Australian, British, and Canadian), Danish, German, and Israeli—in the same 16 social situations: 8 for requests, and 8 for apologies.

In the CCSARP, requests are identified as consisting of the core request, alerters and supportive moves. The core request is the minimal unit which can realize a request; it is the core of the request utterance. Core requests can be analyzed from several different angles, such as the well-known direct vs. indirect classification, and from different perspectives. Alerters are the opening elements preceding the actual requests, such as terms of address or attention-getters as hi, hello. Supportive moves include internal and external modifications. Supportive moves that stand on their own can be regarded as core requests. In request utterances, supportive moves are used to soften or intensify the illocutionary force of the requests. Supportive moves include internal and external modifications. Internal modifications are achieved by means of linguistic elements or
syntactical structures within the request proper, such as the use of *can* versus *could* in English requests, while *external modifications* are devices which stand outside of the speech act itself, either prior or subsequent to the core request.

In introducing the CCSARP, Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989: 18) propose nine types of strategies for core requests, from the most direct to the most indirect:

1. *Mood derivable*: utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary forces. The major form of mood derivable is imperative. However, infinite forms and elliptical constructions which express the same directness level can be treated as direct strategies (*Leave me alone*).
2. *Performatives*: utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named (*I am asking you to clean up the mess*).
3. *Hedged performatives*: utterances in which the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions (*I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled*).
4. *Obligation statements*: utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act. This type is also called *locution derivable*, because the illocutionary force is derivable from the semantic content of the locution (*You will have to move that car*).
5. *Want statements*: utterances which state the speaker’s desire that the hearer carry out the act (*I really wish you’d stop bothering me*).
6. *Suggestory formulae*: utterances which contain a suggestion to do X (*How about cleaning up?*).
7. *Query preparatory*: utterances containing references to preparatory conditions, as conventionalized in any specific language (*Could you clear up the kitchen, please?*).
8. *Strong hints*: utterances containing partial reference to objects or elements needed for the implementation of the act (*You have left the kitchen in a right mess*).
9. *Mild hints*: utterances that make no references to the request proper, but are interpretable as requests in contexts (*I left my wallet at home today*).
Among these strategies, three levels of directness can be identified. Strategies 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are considered direct; 6, 7 are regarded as conventionally indirect; and 8, 9 are viewed as nonconventionally indirect strategies.

In addition to classifying requests by directness or indirectness, the CCSARP also distinguishes four perspectives among requests: hearer-oriented; speaker-oriented; inclusive, in which hearer and speaker are both included; and impersonal, when neither speaker nor hearer is mentioned.

(2) Examples from each of the four perspectives
(1) Hear-oriented: Could you tell me where the library is?
(2) Speaker-oriented: Could I ask you for a favor?
(3) Inclusive: Let’s get started.
(4) Impersonal: Is there any way to extend the deadline?

However, there are some problems in this approach, as applied in other researchers’ studies. First of all, core requests and modifications are mixed together in the analysis. Some of the strategies defined are not based solely on the core request, but also on the semantic formulae of external modifications such as pre- and post-request strategies, interpretation strategy, and persuasion strategy as in (3):

(3) If you have time after class, could you possibly return these books to the main library for me?
Liao (1997) considers (3) as a pre-request plus a conventionally indirect request. If this is the case, two request strategies are utilized in this request instead of a core request with an external modification preceding it. Second, sometimes the same terms have different meanings as used by different researchers in different studies. For example, in Liao (1997) pre-request means something totally different from in Chung (1994). For Liao, pre-request means checking on the hearer’s availability for carrying out the request, as in the example (4):

(4) Would you by chance be going past the library after class? If so, would it be a big inconvenience to drop off these books for me?

However, in Chung’s (1995) study pre-request comprises greetings, compliments, and apologies such as Hello, Excuse me, I am sorry.

Third, conversely, sometimes different terms are utilized for the same concept. For instance, the persuasion strategy in Chung’s (1995) research is an external modification that is called promise of reward by Blum-Kulka (1989).

In this study, request locutions will be identified as request utterances consisting of core requests, alerters and supportive moves (internal and external modifications). It is not appropriate to define request utterances as a whole as direct or indirect based solely
on the directness levels of the core requests strategies, without taking the use of the internal and external modifications of the request utterances into consideration. In this research, separate functional or semantic formulae will be established respectively for the core requests, internal and external modifications to decode the data collected from three languages and compare the similarities and differences in the usages. The CCSARP’s categorizations will be used for this research with necessary adaptations in those situations where I can not find coding standards in the CCSARP for the requestive features which occur in my data. For instance, I add intention strategy, inquiry strategy into the coding categories (for further reference, see Chapters 4-6).

3.3. Participants

As noted in Chapter 1, the dissertation provides a cross-cultural comparative study of requests in three different languages, Russian, Chinese and English. A questionnaire comprising 14 request situations was first created in English and then translated into the two other languages under investigation, Russian and Chinese. The 14 situations included in the questionnaire were designed to be parallel in all three languages and similarly defined (insofar as cultural differences allowed) in the daily life and culture of English, Russian and Mandarin Chinese. For the texts of the questionnaires in each of the languages, see the Appendix.

After the project received IRB approval (#2008E0119), I recruited 75 students at
The Ohio State University—25 native speakers for each of the languages, American English, Russian and Mandarin Chinese—to complete the questionnaire by providing 14 requests based on the 14 request situations. They were also asked to rate the weight of each of the 14 requests on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest.

The method by which the questionnaire was administered was as follows. I gave each participant the questionnaire individually. Then I would leave and each participant would take as much time as he or she wanted to fill out the questionnaire. After that, the participant would return the questionnaire to me, either in person or to my mailbox in 400 Hagerty Hall. As the questionnaire was lengthy, I did not impose any time restraints on the participants.

3.3.1. Sociolinguistic variables of the participants

The questionnaire began with questions eliciting sociolinguistic information about the participants—their age, gender, length of stay in the United States, and place of birth, and level of study (undergraduate/graduate).

Some of the 25 American English speakers were my colleagues in the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures at The Ohio State University, and others were my students studying at Ohio State University. Some of the Russian participants were likewise colleagues of mine in the Slavic department, while others were
students I met at Russian events. I met the 25 Chinese native speakers at events organized by Chinese student associations at the university.

As I was not able, due to time constraints, to conduct fieldwork abroad, I had to draw on volunteer participants studying at The Ohio State University who were accessible through personal and professional networks. Consequently, it was one of the limitations of the research that I was not able to establish completely homogeneous sociolinguistic groups. Thus there were more females than males among the American English-speaking and Russian informants. However, for the Chinese, the number of female and male is almost even (Table 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>American English speakers</th>
<th>Russian speakers</th>
<th>Chinese speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Distribution of gender of the participants

As Table 3.2 shows, there was also a somewhat wide age range (18-40s) among the participants. Nevertheless, the data gathered can still be broadly representative for speech behavior of native speakers of the three languages; any imprecision can be
clarified in future research. The focus of the present research was not on sociolinguistic factors like age and gender but on the pragmatic factors widely discussed in the literature on linguistic politeness (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987 and the many works inspired by their study) — relative power, social distance, and rank of the imposition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>American English speakers</th>
<th>Russian speakers</th>
<th>Chinese speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20s</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Distribution of age of the participants

Detailed information about each participant’s gender and age is listed in Table 3.3. The participants are identified by native language (AE = American English, R = Russian, C = Chinese) and by the order in which they filled out the questionnaire (1–25). These reference numbers will be used in the citation of examples in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AE</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>C 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>R 2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>C 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>R 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>C 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>R 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>C 4</td>
</tr>
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<td>R 5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>C 5</td>
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<td>30s</td>
<td>C 6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>R 7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>C 7</td>
</tr>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>C 8</td>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>C 9</td>
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<td>C 10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>C 11</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>C 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>R 13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>C 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>R 14</td>
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<td>40s</td>
<td>C 14</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>C 15</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>C 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>R 17</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>C 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>R 18</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>C 18</td>
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<td>20s</td>
<td>R 19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>C 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>R 20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>C 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>R 21</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>C 21</td>
</tr>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>C 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
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<td>40s</td>
<td>R 25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>C 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 Gender and age of the questionnaire participants by language

3.4. Requestive situations in the questionnaire

As noted in section 3.3, three major variables were taken into consideration when the 14 requestive situations were created in the questionnaire. They are social power, the
social distance between the speaker and the addressee, and the absolute rank of the imposition.

In the questionnaire, the participants were asked to come up with requests, imagining themselves as the speakers in their actual role as students. They were also asked to provide an overall weight of the request for each situation based on a 5-point scale with 5 being the highest.

The 14 requestive situations were designed in consultation with my advisor, Daniel E. Collins; they are as follows:

1. borrowing an expensive camera from your best friend
2. borrowing money for lunch from your best friend
3. asking a stranger for direction
4. borrowing a pen or a pencil from a stranger
5. asking a friend to help with moving
6. asking an acquaintance for time
7. borrowing a dictionary from an acquaintance
8. asking the instructor to extend the deadline for a paper
9. asking the instructor to give a make-up exam
10. borrowing a book from the advisor
11. asking the instructor to make an appointment for consultation
12. asking a professor to write a recommendation letter
13. asking a librarian to help look for a book
14. asking the receptionist if the chair is in the office

The variable of social distance is defined in terms of the level of familiarity; three degrees are assumed in my study: high familiarity (a student to his or her best friend);
medium familiarity (a student to his or her classmate, instructor, advisor, or department receptionist); and non-familiarity (a student to a stranger).

Social power is defined based on whether one of the interlocutors has institutionalized authority over the other. In my study, two levels are assumed: a power difference (a student to his or her instructor, advisor, receptionist, librarian); and no power difference (a student to a classmate, or to a peer non-acquaintance). My study did not include any situations in which the requestor had greater power than the requestee; the reason for this limitation was that the speech acts in such situations can border on the category of orders or commands.

The questionnaire was designed to ensure that there would be a variety of degrees for the third variable, absolute rank of imposition, which is determined by the time and effort required for the requestee to perform the desired action. For instance, asking for help with moving has a bigger rank of imposition than borrowing a pen, based on the effort the addressee would have to and the time s/he has to take to realize the request. Where an object is being requested, its value may also be relevant for this variable; thus the rank of the imposition is greater when an expensive camera is requested than when a pencil is requested. My study assumes three ranks of imposition: high imposition (asking to borrow an expensive camera, for help with moving, for a make-up exam, for an extension on the deadline for a paper, for an appointment for consultation, for a
recommendation letter); middle imposition (asking to borrow money for lunch, to borrow a book for a few days, for help looking for a book); low imposition (asking to borrow a dictionary quickly, for directions, for the time, to borrow a pen, whether the chair is in his/her office). Each level in these categories does not have sharp boundaries; different speakers can perceive their impositions differently. Likewise, the rank of the requests is not identical within each level of imposition.

Since the rank of the imposition may tend to interact with and be influenced by other variables, the assessment of rank of imposition may not be entirely objective. I am aware that how I classify the rank of the imposition might not be identical with the way other scholars might do so. However, the participants' independent weighting of the requests throughout the questionnaire did not provide any evidence that my assessment of the rank of imposition was skewing the results.

Informants who come from different cultures may assess the social variables differently; individuals from within a single culture may also view them differently. This will result in a range of scores for the overall weight of each request. Thus, for each situation, I will examine how the informants rate the weight of the requests in some detail and how this correlates with the three social variables in each of the 14 contexts.

As noted above, the participants assessed the weight of the imposition on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. In my discussion, I include tables that give the
breakdown of scores for each request. I also calculate the mean weight of each request by adding the weights assessed by all the participants and then it will be divided by the number of participants. I define the degrees of imposition as follows; *low* is a score below 2.0; *medium low* is a score of 2.0–2.4; *medium* is a score 2.5; *medium high* is a score from 2.6 to 3.5; and *high* is a score of 3.6 or more.

I am aware that the administration of the questionnaires in written form imposes a certain risk of interference from written language. The linguistic form of a written request may be different from an oral one. In the discussion that follows, I try to identify instances of interference from written language whenever I find them in my data. Even though there may some interference of this kind, the data obtained still provide representation evidence of the possibilities of usage in each of the languages investigated.

Another limitation of the study, which has already been mentioned above, is that the 25 Russian and 25 Chinese native participants live in the United States. This means that there is some risk that their speech has been influenced by American English. In the discussion that follows, I try to identify instances of such influence whenever I find them in my data.
3.5 Reliability of the data coding

In order to ensure the reliability of my data coding, I invited three coders who were native speakers of each of the language were invited to test the questionnaire data originally categorized by the researcher. (These volunteer coders are mentioned in the Acknowledgments.) The coding categories that I relied on were adopted from the methodology of the CCSARP, though I had to add some categories which the CCSARP do not include. (I will make reference to the individual adaptations whenever they are relevant in Chapters 4-6.)

The coders were native speakers of English, Russian and Chinese. They were first given the definitions of the categories of alerters, internal modifications, external modifications, and main strategies in the core requests, along with examples of each category. After an unconstrained time of practicing and consultation with the researcher, each coder was given 4 representative student questionnaires, which contained 56 request utterances to analyze.

The results of this test showed a high reliability based on the comparison of the coder’s analysis and the researcher’s coding results. For the English data, the coding agreement rate was 99%; for the Russian data, the agreement reaches almost 96%; and for Chinese, it is 95%. This high degree of reliability gives me confidence that my procedures for coding the data are fundamentally sound.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS and ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH DATA

Chapter 4 discusses the results of my research on the requestive features used by the American English speakers in my study. Section 4.2 discusses the use of external modifications; section 4.3 the use of alerters (terms of address and attention-getters); and section 4.4 the strategies used in the core requests. Section 4.5 examines the requestive features in each of the 14 situations in great detail. For each situation, the mean weight of the request, as assessed by the participants, is reported; then the core request strategies are analyzed, along with the external modifications and only occasionally internal modifications.

4.1. Overall results and analysis of the English data

Twenty-five native speakers of American English participated in the research by
filling out the questionnaire. However, 349 request utterances were obtained instead of
the expected 350 (14 x 25), because one participant declined to produce a specific request
utterance due to the possible excessive imposition of the request (see Situation 1, below).

Of the 349 request utterances obtained, 175 comprise core requests only (the minimal
units which can realize a request), while 174 include external modifications (external
modifications are devices which stand outside of the speech act itself, either prior or
subsequent to the core request). Within these 174 request utterances, there are 91
requests in which the external modifications occur prior to the core requests, 65 in which
they follow the core requests, and 18 in which external modifications appear both prior
and subsequent to the core request, as in (1).

(1) Hey, what are you doing next weekend? Do you want to help me move? I’ll buy
you lunch. (AE1)

In this request utterance, What are you doing next weekend? is an external modification
prior to the core request, which is used to check if the addressee has the possibility to do
the requested act. I’ll buy you lunch is an external modification subsequent to the core
request, which serves as a promise of reward to make the requested act more likely to be
realized.
4.2. External modifications in English requests

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the nine types of external modifications that are attested in requests in the American English data. I have made necessary adaptations in the process of analyzing the data where I cannot find coding standards in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & House & Kasper 1989: 287) for the external modifications which occur in my data. Thus I have added such strategies such as apology, appreciation and compliment. These are marked with an asterisk in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of external modifications</th>
<th>231</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Grounders</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Imposition minimizers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Preparators</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Apologies*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Rewards</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.Appreciations*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.Disarmers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.Getting a precommitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.Compliments*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Use of external modifications in American English requests

As Table 4.1 shows, grounders, which provide the speaker's reasons or justifications for making the request, as in (2), are by far the most common type of
external modification (62.8%). Of the 145 grounders that appear in the American English responses, 107 are placed prior to the core requests, and 38 are placed subsequent to the request proper. Hence, when a grounder is provided in American English requests, in most cases, it tends to appear prior to the core requests. In all the American English requests involving grounders provided, 73.8% stand prior to the core requests.

(2) Can I borrow your camera this weekend? I’m going to a club activity and really want to take pictures. You can borrow something of mine if you want. (AE1)

The remaining eight types of external modifications occur far less frequently than grounders. The most frequent among them is imposition minimizers, as in (3), which occur 32 times (13.9%); the least frequent getting a precommitment and compliments, which occur only once each (0.4%). The definitions of these external modifications are as follows: preparators (4), in which the speaker checks on the addressee's availability to carry out the request; rewards (5), in which the speaker promises some compensation in return for the favor done by the addressee; disarmers, in which the speaker tries to anticipate any potential objections the addressee might raise (6–7); appreciations, in which the speaker expresses advance gratitude for the anticipated favor (8); apologies, in which the speaker makes an apology to the addressee for the inconvenience (9); compliments, which sometimes may not be explicit (10); and precommitments (11), in which the
speaker tries to commit his or her addressee before revealing what the desired favor is.

(3) Can I please borrow your camera? If I break it I’ll buy it. (AE2)

(4) Please help me move if you have time. (AE24)

(5) I would really appreciate it if you could help me move out. I’ll buy you dinner (AE3)

(6) I wanted to let you know I couldn’t finish my paper due to family-related stuff. I understand it’s passed the deadline, but I was wondering if could give me an extension? (AE16)

(7) I know it is a lot to ask, but may I borrow your camera please? I promise to take good care of it. (AE19)

(8) Professor, I am applying to a company and I wanted to ask you if you would write a letter of recommendation. I would really appreciate it. (AE16)

(9) I am sorry that I was sick. Would you allow me to make-up the exam? (AE9)

(10) I would greatly appreciate your recommendation and will likely get a better job because of it. (AE11)

(11) Can I ask you a big favor? I am going to an activity this weekend, and I could really use your camera. (AE25)

4.3. The usage of alerters identified in English requests:

Sometimes terms of address and attention-getters are combined together such as ‘excuse me, sir’. There are 7 instances of combination of attention-getters and terms of address in my data. Because of their phatic (channel-opening) function, both types only occur at the beginning of the utterance, prior to the core request and any preposed external modifications.
4.3.1 Terms of address in English requests

Only 3 kinds of terms of address are used by the American English-speaking participants in their requests: *titles* referring to the addressee’s professional status or role, sometimes in combination with surnames, as in (12); *courtesy terms* such as *sir, ma’am*, or *miss* (13–14); and *casual appellatives* used with good friends, such as *dude* in (15).

(12) Hello, Professor …., Do you have a moment? I actually wanted to ask you if I could schedule an appointment with you? (AE16)

(13) Sir, can you help me find a book? (AE23)

(14) Ma’am, could you tell me if the chair is in the office at the moment? (AE6)

(15) Dude, I forgot my wallet. Can I borrow 10 bucks? (AE3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of terms of address</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Titles/roles</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Courtesy terms</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Casual appellatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Use of terms of address in American English requests

It can be seen from Table 4.2 that the American English-speaking participants do not make wide use of any terms of address; they employ them far less than do the informants that are native speakers of the other two languages in the study. Overall, they
occur in only 23/349 or 6.6% of the possible cases in American English requests, while terms of address occur in 69/350 or 19.7% of the possible case in Russian requests, the highest number of cases is in Chinese requests, with 148/345, 42.9%. Chinese participants tend to lay more ground prior to making the actual requests.

4.3.2. Attention-getters in English requests

In the American English requests, the attention-getters occur exclusively in the form of greetings and apologies. Although both the greetings and the apologies keep their direct illocutionary forces, their primary functions in the requests would seem to be phatic, i.e., to attract the addressee’s attention. In greetings, the speaker greets the addressee first, such as hi or hey (16).

(16) Hi, is the chair available right now? (AE14)

The apologies attested are Excuse me and I am sorry (or contracted I'm sorry). Native speakers of American English prefer to use Excuse me as an attention-getter. I am sorry serving as an attention-getter occurs only four times in the American English requests, while Excuse me appears fifty-one times. The locution Excuse me (17) is a polite form commonly used prior to English requests for information. The locution I am sorry (18), when functioning as an attention-getter, is different from I am sorry used as
an external modification serving as a real apology. Although *I am sorry* keeps its illocutionary force as to make an apology (functioning as a secondary force of the locution), the primary force is to get the addressee’s attention. Furthermore, *I am sorry* as an attention-getter always stands in the beginning of the requests.

(17)  *Excuse me*, could you tell me where the medical center is? (AE1)

(18)  *I am sorry*, but I can’t seem to find this book, could you help me, please? (AE25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of attention-getters</th>
<th>86</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Greetings</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Apologies</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 Use of attention-getters in American English requests

Comparison of Tables 4.2 and 4.3 shows that the American English-speaking participants prefer to use attention-getters over terms of address before making their core requests. Nevertheless, even attention-getters occur in a minority of the responses (86/349 or 24.6% of the possible cases). Altogether, alerters of either type occur in only 109/349 or 31.2% of the American English responses. This finding is suggestive, but it must be kept in mind that the written medium of the questionnaire may have reduced the informants' use of phatic devices, since there was no actual channel to be opened.
4.4. Analysis of the English core requests

Next the usage and the distribution of the request strategies in the core requests will be discussed. Table 4.4 shows the distribution of the ten types of strategies that are attested in core requests in the American English data. As noted above, I made some adaptations in the process of analyzing the data when I could not find appropriate coding standards in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989: 278). Thus I have added strategies such as inquiry, intention, permission, mind, and appreciation strategies, which are marked with an asterisk in Table 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of core requests</th>
<th>349</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory strategies</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inquiry strategies*</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Permission strategies*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategies</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mind strategies*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intention strategies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Want inquiries</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Need statements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Appreciation strategies*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Mood derivables</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Distribution of strategies used in American English core requests

As Table 4.4 shows, preparatory is the most frequent strategy by far in the American English core requests. This strategy conventionally checks on the preparatory condition for the feasibility of the request; thus in English it typically involves the verbs of
possibility can (19) or could (20). Altogether, these account for 139/199 or 72% of the total cases of preparatory strategy. A core request preparatory strategy can also be combined with a conditional structure, as in example (21).

(19) Can I borrow your dictionary for a second? I just want to look up this word. (AE1)
(20) I am applying for a job and need a recommendation from someone. Do you think you could write me a good one? (AE5)
(21) Hi, if you are not too busy, can you please help me move over the weekend? We’re going to take you out to lunch afterwards. (AE4)

The use of internal modifications with preparatory strategy is illustrated by (22).

(22) I need a letter of recommendation. I was wondering if you could write it for me. (AE4)

Internal modifications (linguistic elements or syntactical structures within the request proper) are widely used in this type of request. In (22), the internal modification I was wondering is added to the basic core request. In fact, a few internal modifications can accompany the core requests with preparatory strategy, as illustrated in (23–27).

(23) Excuse me, I’m looking for a book, but I can’t find it here. Do you happen to know where it might be? (AE9)
(24) I was hoping you could tell me if the chair is in. If not, do you know when he/she returns. (AE11)

(25) Hello, Professor …. Do you have a moment? I actually wanted to ask you if I could schedule an appointment with you? (AE16)

(26) I had a personal problem and could not finish my paper. Is it possible that [I] could have more time? (AE5)

(27) Excuse me sir, but is there any way you can help me find this book? (AE1)

These evidently have the function of making the requests sound less imposing. However, such elaborations are not frequent in the American English data; their distribution is shown in Table 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Preparatory</th>
<th>199</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can (could) I (you)</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think I (you) can (could)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there anyway I (you) can (could)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I was wondering (hoping) I (you, we) can (could)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is that possible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Would I (you) be able to</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Would it be possible to</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Distribution of variations in requests with preparatory

As shown in Table 4.4, apart from preparatory, only the inquiry strategy accounts for a large number of examples overall—55/349, or 15.8% of the total core requests. This request is ordinarily used to ask for information, as in (28–29).
(28) Is the chair in the office right now? (AE4)

(29) Do you know where the medical center is? (AE2)

The permission, mind, and hint strategies account for 19 examples or 5.4% each. The first two types are functionally similar to the preparatory strategy in that they conventionally check on preliminary conditions for the realization of the request. In the permission strategy, the speaker asks the hearer for permission to perform the request the action (30–32). *May I* or *Might I* are used in this kind of core requests.

(30) *May I* borrow your camera? I have a club activity this weekend. (AE9)

(31) Excuse me, *might I* borrow a pen for class? (AE11)

In the mind strategy, the speaker is checking if the hearer has any objection to performing the request (32–33). The name of the given strategy is based on the typical locutions used for it in English, such as *do you mind?* (33) or *would you mind?* (34). This strategy is named by the researcher. Whereas CCSARP seems to consider this strategy part of the preparatory one, I would like to separate it from the preparatory strategy due to the use of different linguistic elements *do you mind, would you mind* versus *can or could.*
(32) I have a school project that requires some photos; Do you mind if I use your camera? It’ll only be for a day or so. (AE8)

(33) Would you mind helping me move this weekend? (AE9)

The relative frequency of hints is obviously a function of inferences in specific contexts, as in (34), where the speaker is asking to borrow lunch money.

(34) I forgot to bring my wallet today. (AE4)

All of the other types of core requests account for fewer than 5% of the American English responses. In the intention strategy, the speaker again checks on a precondition, the addressee's willingness to fulfill the request (35–36).

(35) I forgot my wallet. Will you loan me $10? (AE2)

(36) Would you please extend the deadline? I have some family emergencies. (AE7)

In the American English data, requests involving the intention strategy are usually made from the hearer’s perspective. As will be seen, this contrasts with the situation in Chinese, where requests involving the intention strategy are typically made from the speaker’s perspective, as in (37).
(37)  老师，因为家里有事，我作业会延长时间交你，好吗? (AE13)

Teacher, due to family-related issues I will turn in the homework later, is it ok?

Want inquiries like (38–39) are similar to the intention strategy; the speaker phrases the request locution as if checking to see whether the hearer would like to do the requested action. Finally, need statements (40), the appreciation strategy (41), and mood derivable (42) are also attested in a only small number of examples.

(38)  Do you want to help me move? (AE15)

(39)  Professor, would you be willing to write me a letter of recommendation? (AE3)

(40)  I need to make an appointment with you to talk about my thesis. Do you know when you are free? (AE5)

(41)  I would greatly appreciate your help if you could lend me the reference book. It is not in the library. (AE22)

(42)  You buy lunch today. I’ll get it next time. (AE6)

The rarity of mood derivable (the imperative), which is only attested in 3 out of 349 examples (1.1% of the total), is striking, as the given strategy is not uncommon in the Chinese and Russian requests. It can be noted that the only three examples in the
American English data occur in scenarios involving close friends (situations 1 and 2), i.e., in contexts with no social distance. By contrast, in Chinese and Russian mood derivables are found as well in situations involving a power difference or greater social distance.

4.5. Results and analysis of the English data in each situation

In the following sections each individual situation will be discussed. The first issue to be examined will be the participants' assessment of the weight of the request. This will be followed by a survey of the strategies selected by the American English participants in the given situation, plus their use of external modifications.

**Situation 1: Borrowing an expensive camera from a best friend**

Judging from the weights assigned by the participants, borrowing an expensive camera is considered a big favor, perhaps because of the cost of the requested act (temporarily depriving the owner of the use of the camera) and the potential risk of damage. The fact that this request is made to a best friend may reduce the imposition level to some extent. Nevertheless, one American English-speaking participant declined to make the request altogether due to the possible excessive imposition of the request.
The weight of the request is the smallest 2
The weight is level 2 2
The weight is level 3 4
The weight is level 4 13
The weight is level 5 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The weight of the request is the smallest</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 Weight assessment in American English request situation 1

As shown in Table 4.6 the majority of the American English-speaking participants (17 out of 25) assess the weight of the request at level 4 or 5. The mean weight of the request is 3.6. This suggests that, in general, the American English-speaking participants consider the weight of this request high.

The only strategies that the American English speakers used in this request are the preparatory (43), permission (44), and mind strategies (45). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 4.7. The most frequent kind by far (20 out of 24 cases) is the preparatory strategy, which is also the most frequent kind overall for American English requests. The three requests that feature the permission strategy are always made from speaker’s perspective.

(43) **Can I borrow your camera this weekend?** I’m going to a club activity and I really want to take pictures. You can borrow something of mine if you want. (AE1)

(44) I know it’s a lot to ask, but **may I borrow your camera please?** I promise to take good care of it. (AE19)
I have a school project that requires some photos; Do you mind if I use your camera? It’ll only be for a day or so. (AE8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of core requests</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Permission strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mind strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 1

Of the 24 request utterances obtained for situation 1, the majority (15) are accompanied by external modifications. The most common type is imposition minimizers to reduce the imposition of the requests, e.g., “I promise to take good care of it” in (44) or “it’ll be only for a day or so” in (45). This is not surprising, since the weight of borrowing a camera is considered high.

**Situation 2: Borrowing money for lunch from a best friend**

As shown in Table 4.8, the mean weight of this request, as assessed by the American English-speaking participants, is 2.2, which is medium low. Most of the participants (19 out of 25) rated the situation at the lowest two levels, though more at level 2 (14) than at level 1 (5). While borrowing and lending money can be a sensitive issue, its seriousness is offset in this situation by the lack of social distance, and probably
also the fact that only a small quantity of money is involved.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 5 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 14 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 2 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 2 |
| The weight is level 5                   | 2 |

Table 4.8 Weight assessment in American English request situation 2

Table 4.9 shows the distribution of the requestive strategies among the American English speakers. Only five of the strategies are utilized in this situation, and only one, preparatory (also the most common strategy in requests overall), accounts for 20 out 25 of the examples, as in (46). Even though the weight of asking to borrow lunch money is much less than that of asking to borrow a camera (Situation 1), comparison of Tables 4.7 and 4.9 shows that the number of requests using preparatory strategy remains the same in situation 2.

(46) **Can you lend me $10 for lunch?** I left my wallet in my dorm. So as soon as we get back, I’ll give you your $10. (AE1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hint strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intention strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mind strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 2

It is difficult to generalize about the other strategies, since they are each found in only one or two instances. The fact that money is a sensitive topic in American culture may perhaps explain why 2 of the participants choose unconventional indirectness (hints) in their requests, as in (47), where the external modification ( grounder) serves as the request locution. As noted above, mood derivable (imperative) is quite rare in the American English data. Only one of the American English-speaking participants uses mood derivable in this request (48), but the force of the imperative seems to be offset by including an explicit subject pronoun you, probably to establish focus of contrast with the first-person pronoun in the following external modification (imposition minimizer).

(47) I forgot to bring my wallet today. (AE4)
(48) You buy lunch today. I’ll get it next time. (AE6)
The most common external modification used in this request is impositio
minimizers, as seen in (46), (48), and (50). Fifteen cases of it are used. The second most
used external modification is grounders, which provide reasons for borrowing the money;
these can be seen in (46), (47), and (49). Although the weight of the request is medium
low, the extensive use of grounders (12 cases) may be due to the sensitivity of money
issues. Those two external modifications are the only ones used for this request.

(49) I forgot my wallet. Will you loan me $10? (AE2)
(50) Would you mind if I borrowed money for lunch today? I’ll pay you back
tomorrow. (AE16)

**Situation 3: Asking a stranger for directions**

Based on the type of goal, asking for directions is a request for information rather
than action. As Table 4.10 shows, the American English-speaking participants assessed
the mean weight of the request as low (1.2), despite the social distance (lack of
familiarity) between the speaker and the addressee. The majority of the participants (20
out of 25) gave it the lowest rating, and none gave it a rating of 4 or 5. In the
questionnaire there are two other situations (situation 6 and situation 14) where the
speaker is asking for information. The American English participants also assess the
weight of these two requests as low, as 1.3 in situation 6 and as 1.6 in situation 14. The
weight of situation 14 is assigned slightly higher by the participants compared to situation
3 and situation 6. This may be due to the fact that in situation 14 the request is made to a secretary, who may have a slightly higher power than the student (the speaker) and in the situation 6, the request is made to a peer stranger as in situation 3.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 20 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 4  |
| The weight is level 3                  | 1  |
| The weight is level 4                  | 0  |
| The weight is level 5                  | 0  |

Table 4.10 Weight assessment of American English request situation 3

In the American English data, as summarized in Table 4.11, the strategies utilized in this situation are inquiry (51), preparatory (52), and hint strategy (53).

(51) Do you know where the medical center is? (AE4)
(52) Excuse me, could you tell me where the medical center is? (AE1)
(53) Excuse me, I am looking for the medical center, (AE25)

The most common strategy is inquiry (15 out of 25) rather than the most common strategy overall, preparatory (9 out of 25). This is presumably due to the fact that the purpose of this request is to ask for information. Of the requests using the inquiry
strategy, the dominant form is *Do you know...*, as in (51), which is featured in 11 cases. Evidently asking whether the informant knows the information is a common way to formulate requests for information in American English.

The hint strategy is used only once in this situation. As the request is very low in weight, hinting is presumably unnecessary, since there is little reason to go off-record by using nonconventional indirectness. On the other hand, given that the locution in (53) consists of a question precisely eliciting the desired information, it may be better to classify it as the inquiry strategy instead.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inquiry strategy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 3

In the requests for information, especially addressing a stranger, it is common to use *excuse me* as an attention-getter before making the core requests, as illustrated by (52–53). Fifteen requests began with *excuse me*, and one with the informal greeting *hi*. Eight of the 9 requests with preparatory are accompanied by *excuse me*. By contrast, a smaller proportion of the requests with inquiry strategy—7 out of 15—are; the other 8 stand alone, without any attention-getters. It seems, therefore, that *excuse me* does not
have to go with the inquiry strategy, though it is certainly common when making a request for information to a stranger.

In this situation, none of the core requests are accompanied by external modifications. This may be due to the low imposition of the request.

**Situation 4: Borrowing a pen or a pencil from a stranger**

As shown in Table 4.12, the American English-speaking addressees for the most part deemed borrowing a pen or a pencil as a trivial action. The mean weight for this request is low, 1.6. The majority of the informants (22 out of 25) gave this request one of the two lowest ratings, and none gave it the highest rating. This indicates that they perceived the effort demanded of the addressee to be low, presumably because the cost of the requested act is slight; the requested objects are commonplace, and the speaker is promising to return them quickly. Another factor in the low weight may perhaps be the fact that the variable of power is low, since both the speaker and the addressee are students.
| The weight of the request is the smallest | 15 |
| The weight is level 2 | 7 |
| The weight is level 3 | 1 |
| The weight is level 4 | 2 |
| The weight is level 5 | 0 |

Table 4.12 Weight assessment of American English request situation 4

As shown in Table 4.13, the strategies the American English speakers chose in this situation are preparatory (54–55), permission (56), and mind strategy (57). The most common strategy is preparatory (19 out of 25), which, as previously mentioned, is the most common form of requestive locution overall for the American English speakers. The distribution of strategies is quite similar to that in situation 1 (borrowing a camera from a best friend), where preparatory is used in 20 cases, permission in 3, and mind in 1.

(54) Excuse me, could I borrow a pen? (AE3)

(55) Do you have a pen I could borrow? (AE5)

(56) Excuse me, may I borrow a pen for class? (AE9)

(57) Do you mind if I borrow a pen real quick? (AE17)
Even though asking for a pen from a stranger is a low imposition request, some of the American English-speaking participants still formulate their request locutions as if checking preparatory conditions—asking for permission or checking if the addressee would mind the loan—just as when a request is made with higher imposition. This may indicate that, when a request is made to a stranger, i.e., when the social distance is highest, native speakers of American English still try to make the phrase their requests as inobtrusively as possible, even when the imposition is low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Permission strategy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mind strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 4

Nine of the request utterances feature external modifications. The most used external modifications in this situation are grounders, which provide reasons for borrowing a pen. There are also 2 cases of imposition minimizers, which are aimed at reducing the already small imposition of the request. In addition, eleven attention-getters are used—*excuse me* six times, *I am sorry* three times, and the informal greeting *hi* one time.
Situation 5: Asking a friend to help with moving

Based on the type of goal, this situation involves a request for action. This request has relatively higher weight level than the previous situations discussed, presumably because of the greater expenditure of time and effort demanded of the addressee. As shown in Table 4.14, the mean weight of the request, as assessed by the American English-speaking participants, is 3.5, i.e., medium high. The majority of the participants (14 out of 25) ranked it as level 4, and only three gave it one of the two lowest ranks; however, only one participant assessed it at the very highest level. Presumably the ranking of the imposition is offset somewhat by the lack of social distance and power, since the addressee is envisioned to be a best friend. The weight of the imposition in Situation 5 is rather similar to that in Situation 1 (borrowing a camera from a best friend), where the mean weight is 3.6.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 2 |
| The weight is level 2 | 1 |
| The weight is level 3 | 7 |
| The weight is level 4 | 14 |
| The weight is level 5 | 1 |

Table 4.14 Weight assessment of American English request situation 5

A variety of strategies are utilized for this situation in the English data, as shown
in Table 4.15. The most common type is preparatory (10 out of 25), as illustrated in (58–60). Though preparatory is, as noted previously, the most common request strategy overall in the American English data, it is striking that it occurs less in this situation than in any of the other requests for action involving social equals (situations 1, 2, 4, 7) and also less than in some of the requests for action involving a power difference (8, 9, 10). Of the requests for action, only Situation 11 (asking an advisor for an appointment) has fewer cases of preparatory strategy (9 out of 25), while Situation 12 (asking an advisor for a letter of recommendation) has an equal number.

(58)  Could you possibly lend me a hand with the move next weekend? (AE12)
(59)  Do you think you could help me move more furniture next weekend? (AE5)
(60)  Is there any way you could help me move next weekend? (AE13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Want inquiry</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mind strategy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mood derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Appreciation strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intention strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 5

The remaining strategies chosen by American English speakers in this situation
are want inquiry (61–62), mind (63), mood derivable (64), and appreciation (65).

(61) **Want to help me move out?** (AE6)

(62) What are you doing next weekend? **Do you want to help me move?** It will only take a few hours. (AE15)

(63) If you are not busy next week, **would you mind helping me move?** (AE18)

(64) **Please help me move** if you have time. (AE24)

(65) I am moving out this weekend. **I would really appreciate it** if you could help me. (AE7)

(66) Are you busy next weekend? **Would you help me move?** (AE23)

It should be noted that the requests with the want, mind and intention strategies are all framed from the hearer’s perspective, as shown in the examples above. Even though the weight is relatively high, there are still two cases of mood derivables (imperatives); however, in both instances there are external modifications to modify the illocutionary intensity of the request.

Overall, in Situation 5, there are 18 requests with external modifications. The most common ones are preparatory (checking on the addressee's availability, like *What are you doing next weekend?* in (62)) and reward (as in the request *I would really appreciate it if you could help me out. I’ll buy you dinner.*), though grounders (e.g., *I am moving out this weekend* in (65)) and imposition minimizers (e.g., *It will only take a few*
hours in (62)) are also found. Preparators are the most used type in this situation, with 9 occurrences. Promises of rewards are used only eight times; this situation is the only one where the American English-speaking participants made such promises. Since the imposition is high, presumably because of the great expenditure of time and effort demanded of the addressee, it is common in American culture to invite friends to dinner to compensate for such help. Grounders occur 7 times, with 6 placed prior to the core requests. Finally, there are also 2 cases of imposition minimizers.

Clearly, this increase in the number of external modifications, as compared with the previous situations, can be tied to the high weight of the request. A greater variety of external modifications are used in Situation 5 than in the other requests involving social equals (1 and 2). In the earlier situations, only two kinds of external modifications are used: grounders and imposition minimizers, with the latter being the most common.

**Situation 6: Asking a stranger what time it is**

This situation involves a request for information. Despite the social distance involved (since the addressee is a stranger), the mean weight for this request is relatively low, 1.3; as Table 4.16 shows, the majority of the American English speakers (20 out of 25) gave it the lowest ranking, and none gave it the highest. Since requests for information (at least, within culturally defined parameters of privacy) usually demand
less effort on the part of the addressee, they are generally low in imposition, regardless of social distance. Thus in Situation 3 (asking a stranger for directions), the mean weight is similarly low (1.2).

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 20 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 3  |
| The weight is level 3                  | 1  |
| The weight is level 4                  | 1  |
| The weight is level 5                  | 0  |

Table 4.16 Weight assessment of American English requests in Situation 6

As seen in Table 4.17, the strategies the American English speakers chose in this situation are inquiry (67–68), and, to a much smaller extent, preparatory (69). As this situation involves asking for information, it is not surprising that inquiry is the most used strategy here (21 out of 25 cases). The same is true in the other requests for information (Situation 3, 15 out of 25 cases; Situation 14, 22 out of 25 cases). It is also interesting to see that the use of preparatory does not increase in direct proportion to the weight assessment in requests for information; thus Situation 14 has the highest weight of the requests for information, but features the fewest cases of preparatory strategy (3 out of 25). This strongly suggests that there is a particular way of formulating requests for information, which is different from other types of requests, probably because the weight
of asking for information is low. Thus inquiry is the most commonly used strategy in the core requests; few or no external modifications are used; and the attention-getter *excuse me* is commonly used to start the request utterances.

(67) Hey, *do you have the time?* (AE2)
(68) Do you know what time it is? (AE4)
(69) Excuse me, *could you tell me what time it is?* (AE1)

<table>
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</tr>
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<td>1. Inquiry strategy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 6

The internal modification *Do you know...* is common in these requests. There are 13 requests with *Do you know...*, which is also common in the other requests for information.

Eleven attention-getters are used in this situation—nine cases of *excuse me*, and one each of the informal greetings *hey* and *hi*. When a request for information is made to a stranger, it is common to initiate contact with the formula *excuse me*. In Situation 3 (asking for directions from a stranger), fifteen of the requests began in that way.
There are only two request utterances in Situation 6 that feature external modifications. One of these is a preparator (*Do you have the time? Could you tell me?* (AE25), and the other an expression of appreciation (*Could you tell me what time it is? Thanks.* (AE16) The relative infrequency of external modifications in this situation may be due to the fact that the weight of the request is low. As noted above, the other requests for information are likewise seldom accompanied by external modifications.

**Situation 7: Borrowing a dictionary from an acquaintance**

As shown in Table 4.18, this request for action has a low mean weight of 1.5. The majority of the American English-speaking participants assigned it one of the two lowest ratings (20 out of 25), and none gave it the highest rating. Among the factors that influence these assessments are the low social distance and power and the fact that the situation stipulates that the dictionary will be returned quickly.
The weight of the request is the smallest 8
The weight is level 2 12
The weight is level 3 4
The weight is level 4 1
The weight is level 5 0

Table 4.18 Weight assessment of American English request situation 7

In the American English data, given in Table 4.19, almost all of the requests (22 out of 25) feature preparatory strategy (70). However, there are also isolated cases of the hint (71), mind (72), and permission strategies (73).

(70) Can I see your dictionary for a minute, please? (AE4)
(71) Do you know what this word means? (AE8)
(72) You mind if I borrow your dictionary for a second? (AE18)
(73) I can’t find this one word. May I borrow your dictionary for a quick second? (AE22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mind strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Permission strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.19 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 7
It is not entirely clear that the hint in (71) is actually a request for action, even on an unconventionally indirect level. Rather, it may perhaps serve as a request for information; if the addressee does not know the answer, it may then serve as the preface for a request to borrow the dictionary.

Only three of the request utterances feature external modifications, evidently because of the low imposition level of the request. In each case, the external modifications used are grounders, providing the reasons for borrowing a dictionary, like *I can't find this one word* in (73). However, internal modifications in the form of temporal adverbials are extensively used to modify the illocutionary intensity of this request. Since looking up a word in the dictionary usually takes very little time, 20 of the American English speakers emphasize the short time the dictionary will be borrowed to reduce the imposition of the request.

**Situation 8: Asking an instructor to extend the deadline for a paper**

As this request is addressed to an instructor, there is a power difference between the interlocutors, and there is probably also some social distance involved. Therefore, it is not surprising that the mean weight for this request is 3.6, high. This is equal to the mean weight of Situation 1 (borrowing a camera), which has the highest rating of all the
situations involving social equals. As shown in Table 4.20, the majority of participants (15/20) ranked it at either 4 or 5 (the two highest ratings), and none ranked at the lowest level. In the questionnaire there are five situations where requests are made to instructors/advisors; the weight of this request is the second highest among them.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 0 |
| The weight is level 2 | 5 |
| The weight is level 3 | 5 |
| The weight is level 4 | 10 |
| The weight is level 5 | 5 |

Table 4.20 Weight of assessment of American English request situation 8

In the English data, the strategies utilized in this situation are preparatory (74–76), need statement (77), intention (78), permission (79), and hint (80). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 4.21. Given the power differential and weight of this request, it is not surprising that mood derivable (imperative) does not occur in this situation.

(74) Something came up with my family and I couldn’t finish on time. Can I possibly have an extension? (AE18)

(75) Sir, I was unable to finish the paper due to family issues. Is there any way I can get it to you in a couple of days? (AE6)

(76) I’m having some issues in my family right now. I realize this is probably against
policy, but *is it possible* for me to turn my paper in a few days late? (AE8)

(77) Professor, I’m very sorry, but *I need a deadline for my paper* because of very important family issue. Is that possible? (AE3)

(78) *Would you please extend the deadline?* I have some [*sic—XD*] family emergency. (AE7)

(79) Professor, I’m having some family-related issues right now. *May I have a little more time to finish my paper?* (AE9)

(80) I’m very sorry. I couldn’t meet the deadline. However, *if given the opportunity to turn it in later, I will ensure it will be worth the delay.* (AE11)

As shown in Table 4.21, preparatory, seen in examples (74–75), is the most common strategy (as in the American English data overall), accounting for 19 of the 25 examples. Three requests in this situation use need strategy in the core requests. Need strategy occurs very rarely in the American English data in the study; there are only 7 cases altogether. They tend to be used only in situations where requests are made to instructors or advisors. This may due to the fact such statements are highly indirect, and instructors have power (institutional authority) in the matters about which the students are asking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Need statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Permission strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.21 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 8

All of the request utterances have external modifications accompanying the core requests. This is the only situation of the 14 where all of the requests feature external modifications. The reason for this may be that the request is made to an instructor and rated as high in imposition. The consistent use of external modifications may also relate to the specific situation; since the request is asking an instructor to extend a deadline, usually students feel obliged to justify their requests. Thus so it is not surprising to see that grounders occurs 26 times in the given situation and they is the most used type of external modification here, as seen in (74–79). The other external modifications used for this request are 5 cases of apology, as in (77), and two cases of disarmer, as in (76).

Four participants use terms of address to address their instructors first before making the requests. The low number may be due to the written form of the questionnaire. I suspect that, in the oral communication, such requests might start more often with addresses.
Situation 9: Asking an instructor to give a make-up exam

The mean weight of this request for action is 3.8, high, which is highest in any of the other situations for the American English participants. As Table 4.22 shows, none of the informants gave it the lowest ranking, and the majority (15 out of 25) gave it one of the highest two rankings. Clearly, the power difference is strong in this situation, and probably also the social difference; also, the ranking of the imposition is presumably high. Even though the requester may have a rational reason to ask for a make-up exam, granting the request will require the instructor to put in additional time and effort, beyond his/her expected responsibilities; in addition, American university students are generally aware that make-up exams are not a right and can be perceived as an unfair advantage. Students may also sense that, to some extent, the request is necessary because they are, to some extent, at fault; thus seven of the utterances in this situation include apologies, as in (81), (82) and (84), below.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 0 |
| The weight is level 2                    | 4 |
| The weight is level 3                    | 6 |
| The weight is level 4                    | 6 |
| The weight is level 5                    | 9 |

Table 4.22 Weight assessment of American English request situation 9
The strategies used for this request are preparatory (81), hint (82–83), intention (84), inquiry, and permission (85).

(81) I am sorry I missed the exam. I was ill and have a doctor’s note. Do you think I could do a make-up exam? (AE10)

(82) I’m so sorry, I was so ill. (AE24)

(83) Do you offer make-up exams? I was sick on test day. (AE8)

(84) I’m sorry that I was sick. Would you allow me to make-up the exam? (AE9)

(85) May I please make up the exam, because I was ill? (AE2)

As shown in Table 4.23, the preferred strategy is preparatory (19 out of 25 cases). Given the power differential, it is not surprising that mood derivable (imperative) does not appear in this situation. It is striking that three of the participants chose to use unconventional indirectness, i.e., the hint strategy, as in (82–83); they offer apologies, grounders (stating the reasons for needing make-up exam), or preparators (checking on the instructor's attitude towards make-up exams) rather than explicitly making their request. Since asking for a make-up exam is a very high imposition request, students tend to make their requests indirectly and to offer justifications.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hint strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Permission strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.23 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 9

All but one of the requests have external modifications (cf. Situation 8). Grounders are the most common type, with 31 cases in the 24 request utterances. There are also 7 cases of apologies.

**Situation 10: Borrowing a book from an advisor**

The mean weight for this request for action is 2.9, medium high. As shown in Table 4.26, the American English-speaking participants assigned the request scores that fall mostly in the middle three ranks, with more weight toward the heavy end of the scale, though none at level 5. The situation involves a power difference and also presumably some social distance, which accounts for the higher rankings (9 cases of rank 4). At the same time, the desired action itself can be perceived as relatively trivial, especially since it is temporary and can be seen as an extension of the advisor's educational responsibilities; this may account for the lower rankings (8 cases of rank 2 and 2 cases of rank 2). The mean weight of this request is relatively low compared with other requests.
made to instructors/advisors.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 2 |
| The weight is level 2 | 8 |
| The weight is level 3 | 6 |
| The weight is level 4 | 9 |
| The weight is level 5 | 0 |

Table 4.24 Weight assessment of American English request situation 10

The distribution of the strategies chosen by the American English-speaking participants in this situation is given in Table 4.25. The most common strategy (14 cases) is preparatory (14), as in (86–87); as has been previously noted, this is also the most common form of request locution overall.

(86) Professor, Can I borrow the reference book please? (AE3)

(87) Professor, I went and looked in the library, but I couldn’t find the book. Would it be possible for you to let me borrow a copy? (AE16)

The permission strategy, seen in (88), is also well represented (7 cases), and there are a few cases of the mind (89) and appreciation (90) strategies. No mood derivable (imperative) is attested. This is the situation with the most examples of permission strategy. This is perceived as very polite, because its form as it were gives the addressee
authority over the speaker and emphasizes the addressee's power of decision.

(88) Might I borrow your book for a short while? If there are any problems, I will be responsible. (AE11)

(89) I wasn’t able to find that book. Would you mind letting me borrow it for a while? (AE9)

(90) I would greatly appreciate your help if you could lend me the reference book. It is not in the library. (AE22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Permission strategy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mind strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Appreciation strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.25 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 10

All but four of the request utterances include external modifications, with the most frequent type being grounder (23 cases in 21 utterances). There are also three cases of imposition minimizers, and one case of appreciation to express advance gratitude to the advisor for lending it. It can be noted that external modifications are common in the requests to instructors and advisors, as discussed above, probably due to the power difference and social distance inherent in such contacts.
**Situation 11: Asking an instructor to make an appointment for consultation**

Although this situation, like the previous one, involves asking a favor from advisor, the request has a lower mean weight (2.4, as compared with 2.9 in Situation 10). As Table 4.26 shows, the majority of the American English-speaking participants (15) assigned it to one of the two lowest weight levels, and none ranked it at the highest level. While there is clearly a power difference (and perhaps also some social distance) between the speaker and the addressee, the ranking of the imposition can be perceived as relatively low because it is a common occurrence in America culture for students to consult with their advisors, and such consultations are considered a routine part of the professors' responsibilities.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 5 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 10 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 5 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 5 |
| The weight is level 5                   | 0 |

Table 4.26 Weight assessment in American English request situation 11

The strategies utilized for this request are preparatory (91), hint (92), need statement (93), want statement (94), and permission strategy (95).
(91) Excuse me, could I arrange an appointment with you to discuss my thesis? (AE17)

(92) Do you have a moment for me to ask you about my thesis? Just a few minutes is all I need. (AE11)

(93) I need to make an appointment with you to talk about my thesis. Do you know when you are free? (AE5)

(94) When you have extra time? I would like to go over my thesis with you. (AE20)

(95) May I meet with you sometime this week about my thesis? (AE9)

The distribution of the strategies is given in Table 4.27. None of the strategies form a majority, although preparatory and hints are more numerous than the other types, with 9 cases each. The relative frequency of hints, i.e., unconventional indirectness, is striking. This suggests that it may have become conventional to state requests for appointments implicitly by inquiring about the requestee's (in Situation 11, the advisor's) availability. Altogether, there are 5 situations in the questionnaire involving advisors or instructors. Among them there are other two situations (8 and 9) where the hint strategy is used. However, the way the hint strategy is used here is very different. In situation 11, as we know, the hint is made by checking inquiring the requestee’s availability, whereas in other situations it made by stating the reasons or mentioning how it would be beneficial to do the act.

Of the five requestive situations involving instructors or advisors, Situation 11 is
the only one in which any of the American English speakers utilized the want strategy. Clearly this strategy is more forceful and more direct than the hints discussed above. The reason that it is only used in this situation may due to the low imposition of the request, as compared with the other four situations involving academy authority figures.

Twelve of the request utterances feature external modifications. This is fewer than in the other requests involving advisors or instructors, probably due to the lower imposition. There are 10 cases of preparators, seen in (94) one grounder, and one imposition minimizer. This is the only situation where preparators surpass the number of grounders used. It is not surprising to see the preference for preparator used in this situation, since inquiring about the requestee's availability seems efficient in this situation and may, indeed, have become a conventionalized strategy.

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<td>3. Need statement 3</td>
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<td>4. Want strategy 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Permission strategy 1</td>
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</table>

Table 4.27 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 11
Situation 12: Asking an instructor to write a letter of recommendation

For the American English-speaking participants, the mean weight for this request is 3.5, medium high. As shown in Table 4.28, none of the participants gave it the lowest ranking; a bare majority (13) rated it at level 3, while 10 others ranked it at one of the top two levels. The relative weight of the ranking can be explained in part by the power difference (and perhaps also social distance) that exists between the requester and the requestee. Moreover, the requested act requires the requestee to expend time and effort, although the imposition may be set off, to some extent, by the fact that writing letters of recommendation is viewed as an ordinary part of an instructor's responsibilities in American university culture. Perhaps the heaviest factor is that requests for letters of recommendation are implicitly requests for positive evaluations; in other words, the requestor is asking not only for a letter but also for support. In all the situations made to instructors/advisors it is the third highest imposition request.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 0 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 2 |
| The weight is level 3                  | 13|
| The weight is level 4                  | 7 |
| The weight is level 5                  | 3 |

Table 4.28 Weight assessment of American English request situation 12

101
The strategies chosen by the American English-speaking participants are preparatory (96–97), mind (98), intention (99), and appreciation strategy (97, 100). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 4.29.

(96) Could you do me a favor to write me a recommendation? (AE24)

(97) I’m applying for a job and would appreciate your recommendation. Might you be able to write one for me? (AE12)

(98) If you have the time, would you mind writing me a letter of recommendation? (AE22)

(99) Would you please write a letter of recommendation for me? Thank you! (AE20)

(100) I would greatly appreciate your recommendation and will likely get a better job because of it. (AE11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intention strategy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mind strategy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Appreciation strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.29 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 12

While there are more cases of preparatory here, they do not constitute a majority of the examples (10 cases); it is also common to state the request by using will/would you (intention strategy) or would you mind (mind strategy).
Fifteen of the request utterances in this situation have external modifications. Grounders, as illustrated in (97), are the most frequent type (12 cases). A variety of other external modifications are also used, but with much less frequency: three cases of appreciation to express advance gratitude for the letter, two cases of preparators to check if the instructor has time to do it, one case of compliment, and one case of imposition minimizer.

**Situation 13: Asking a librarian to help find a book**

As shown in Table 4.30, the mean weight for this request for action is relatively low—1.6. Almost all of the American English-speaking participants (24 out of 25) rate the weight of the request at one of the two lowest levels. While there is likely to be some social distance in this situation, the ranking of the imposition is not high in American culture, since this kind of task is viewed as a routine part of a librarian's duties. Moreover, the social variable of power is probably not a factor here, because the librarian has no authority over the requestor; note that the mean weight of this request is lower than any of the requests made to authority figures such as instructors and advisors. Indeed, the mean weight is comparable to those of asking to borrow a pen or pencil or asking whether the department chair is in the office (Situations 4 and 14, 1.6), and not much higher than asking to borrow a dictionary briefly (Situation 7, 1.5) or asking for
directions (Situation 3, 1.2) or for the time of day (Situation 6, 1.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The weight of the request is the smallest</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.30 Weight assessment of American English request situation 13

The distribution of request strategies in the American English data is given in Table 4.31. The most common strategy is preparatory (101), with 19 examples. The only student who considered this request to have a high level of imposition (level 4) used this strategy in its more indirect form, with the conditional verb *could* (102).

(101) Can you help me find a book? (AE4)

(102) Could you give me a hand finding this book? (AE18)

Other conventionally indirect strategies are found in isolated cases—intention (103), need statement (104), and mind (105). There are also three cases of unconventional indirectness in the form of hints, as in (106). It may actually be conventionalized in this kind of service encounter to form requests by inquiring if the librarians know the location of the books, as that is perceived as one of their major
responsibilities.

(103) Sir, I can’t find this book. Would you please help me? (AE2)

(104) I need a help to find a library book. (AE7)

(105) Hi, I was looking for this book, but I can’t find it. Would you mind helping me? (AE14)

(106) Excuse me, I’m looking for a book, but I can’t find it here. Do you happen to know where it might be? (AE9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory strategy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hint strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Need strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mind strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.31 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 13

Only 9 of the request utterances feature external modifications. Grounders, seen in (103), (104), and (106), are the only external modifications used in this kind of request. Since the request is made to a librarian, a stranger, where social distance is high, usually the request starts with an attention-getter or term of address before making the actual request. There are seven cases of *excuse me*, 1 case of *I’m sorry*, and three cases of the very polite term of address *sir*.
Situation 14: Asking the receptionist if the chair is in the office

The American English-speaking participants deemed this to be a low-imposition request; its mean weight is 1.6. As shown in Table 4.32, the majority of the students (16) assigned this request the lowest rating; only one put it at level 4, and none at level 5. Apparently the ranking of the imposition is considered low because answering questions is considered to be part of the receptionist's ordinary duties; in addition, it is likely that the participants judged the social distance between the interlocutors to be low, since the role of receptionist in academic departments at The Ohio State University is often filled by student workers. In addition, the power difference can be considered low, since the job of receptionist is not considered a high position in American culture. Thus the mean weight of this request is equal to that of asking the librarian for help in Situation 13, and not much higher than the other requests for information—asking for directions in Situation 3 (1.2) and asking for the time of day in Situation 6 (1.3).

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 16 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 5  |
| The weight is level 3                  | 3  |
| The weight is level 4                  | 1  |
| The weight is level 5                  | 0  |

Table 4.32 Weight assessment of American English request situation 14
The American English-speaking participants used only two strategies in this situation (Table 4.33). Most of the request utterances (22) feature the inquiry strategy, as shown in (106); the others involve preparatory, as illustrated in (107). As noted above, in requests for information, it is common to use the inquiry and preparatory strategies in the core requests.

(106) Excuse me, is the chair available right now? (AE3)
(107) Excuse me, can you tell me if the chair is here right now? (AE15)

It should be noted that the request in Situation 14 can have two interpretations. While its direct illocutionary force is to ask for information, it can also be interpreted as an indirect request for the receptionist to arrange a meeting with the chair. It would appear from the prevalence of the inquiry strategy that most of the participants focused on the direct illocutionary meaning rather than the indirect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inquiry strategy</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.33 Distribution of strategies used in American English request situation 14
No external modifications were provided with this request by any of the American English-speaking participants. It is the only situation in the questionnaire where there is no external modifications used in the request.

Fifteen attention-getters are used: six cases of *hi* and *hello*, and nine cases of *excuse me*. There are also two cases of polite generic terms of address: *miss* and *ma’am*. It is common to use attention-getters *excuse me* to initiate contact with strangers or less familiar addressees.

### 4.6. Summary of the American English data

In this chapter, I have discussed the features of the American English-speaking participants' requests in each of the 14 situations, including the weight of the request, the core requests strategies chosen, and the internal and external modifications included in the request utterances.

My analysis of the American English data confirms the claim made by Wierzbicka (1985), Clark and Schunk (1980), and others that English indeed disprefers the use of imperatives and prefers the use of the preparatory strategy in forming core requests. In my American English data, only 3 out of the 349 total request utterances (1.1%) involve the imperative in the core requests, while a noticeable number of requests (57%) use
preparatory in their core requests. Preparatory is the most frequent strategy in all and the majority strategy in most of the requests for action, regardless of the contexts and the change of social variables. However, one can observe an increase in the use of other strategies when the requestee has greater power than the requestor (situations 11) or when the weight of the request is relatively high (situations 5). Social distance in terms of familiarity and social power do not seem to have much influence on the choice of core strategy in the American English data, as preparatory is the most used strategy regardless of the change of social variables, except in the requests for asking information.

In the 3 requests for information: asking for direction, the most frequent strategy was the inquiry strategy. The way how requests for information are made is different from other types of requests in the questionnaire. The common features of requests for information are: (1) usually the weight of asking for information is low; (2) inquiry is the most commonly used strategy for the core requests; (3) few or no external modifications are used; and (4) attention-getter excuse me is commonly used to start the actual requests.

In term of external modifications, the most used one is grounders providing the reasons for making the requests. The second used one is imposition minimizer to minimize the imposition of the request. It shows that native speakers of American English indeed when making requests try to impose less on the addressee.

Alerters are not often used in English requests. Only 23 instances of terms of
address are found in the American English data, usually in situations where a request is made from a student to a professor or advisor. Terms of address are seldom used in situations when a request is made to a best friend, a less familiar addressee (e.g., a classmate), or a stranger. In my data, there is only one term of address used to address a best friend (the informal *dude*, a marker of male solidarity in American youth culture), and none at all to address a stranger or acquaintance.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE RUSSIAN DATA

Chapter 5 discusses the results of my research on the requestive features used by Russian speakers in my study. Section 5.2 discusses the use of external modifications; section 5.3 the use of alerters (terms of address and attention-getters); and section 5.4 the strategies used in the core requests. Section 5.5 examines the requestive features in each of the 14 situations in great detail. For each situation, the mean weight of the request, as assessed by the participants, is reported; then the core request strategies are analyzed, along with the external modifications.

5.1. Overall results and analysis of the Russian data

Twenty-five Russian students studying at The Ohio State University participated in the research by filling out the questionnaire containing 14 request situations. In this way, 350 request utterances were obtained, of which 214 comprise core requests only.
Among the 136 request utterances that feature external modifications, there are 75 where the external modifications occur prior to the core requests, 49 request utterances where they are subsequent to the core requests, and 12 which include external modifications both before and after the core requests. In accordance with the methodology adopted in this dissertation, cases in which two external modifications are used consecutively are counted as having two external modifications, as in example (1).

(1) Я была больна на прошлой неделе и не могла сдать экзамен. Можно мне пересдать? (R13)

I was sick last week and I could not take the exam. Can I retake it?

In this request, two external modifications are counted, even though they are adjacent and both involve the same strategy, grounders.

5.2 External modifications in Russian requests

The distribution of these external modifications is given in Table 5.1. Eight of the types of external modifications appear in the Russian requests. They are grounders (2), apologies (3), imposition minimizers (4), preparators (5), appreciations (6), compliments (7), rewards (8), and consequences (9). I made necessary adaptations in the process of analyzing the data where I cannot find coding standards in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & House & Kasper 1989: 287) for the external modifications which occur in my data. Those
strategies such as apology, appreciation, compliment, and consequences are added by me.

They are marked with an asterisk in Table 5.1.

(2) Я не успела закончить домашнее задание. Вы не разрешите мне сдать его завтра? Извините! (R2)
I did not manage to finish the homework. Will you not allow me to turn it tomorrow? Sorry!

(3) Я очень извиняюсь, но из-за болезни могу у вас попросить перенести экзамен? (R7)
I am very sorry, but due to illness can I ask you to postpone the exam?

(4) Можно у тебя одолжить фотоаппарат на время? Я буду очень аккуратно с ним обращаться. (R2)
Can I borrow your camera for a while? I will handle it very carefully.

(5) У вас есть книга <<Лингвистика>>? А можно её у вас одолжить буквально на пару дней? (R2)
Do you have the book Linguistics? And can I borrow it from you for literally a couple of days?

(6) Не могли бы вы мне одолжить эту книгу? Спасибо. (R3)
Could you not lend me this book? Thank you.

(7) О! Любовь Моисеевна, здравствуйте, как у вас дела, так здорово выглядите сегодня. Я так рада, что вас встретила. Я столько всего узнала по нашей теме. А, правда, что...? (R17)
Liubov' Moiseevna, hello, how are you? You look greatly today. I am so glad that I met you. I have learned so much about our topic. Is it true that…?

(8) Дай мне, пожалуйста, напрокат твою замечательную чудо-технику. Обещаю вернуть в целости и сохранности. А кроме того ещё и прекрасные фото. (R14)
Please lend me your remarkable wonder of technology. I promise to return it in its entirety and in good preservation. And in addition I will bring back lovely photos.

(9) Если ты не дашь мне милостыню, я умру голодной смертью. Да и прошу тебя, идём вместе! (R14)

If you do not give me alms, I will die of starvation. So I am asking you, let's go together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requests with external modifications in total requests</th>
<th>136/350</th>
<th>38.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total external modifications used in request utterances</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Grounders</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparators</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Imposition minimizers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Apologies*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Appreciations*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Compliments*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Rewards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Consequences*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Use of external modifications in Russian requests

As shown in the table, only 38.6% of the 350 Russian utterances include external modifications of some kind. Grounders (giving reasons for the request) are the most frequent type (111 out of 194 external modifications, or 57.2% of the total). Of these, 76 appear before the core requests, and 35 after them. All of the other types of external modifications occur much less frequently. The second most frequent type, preparators (checking whether preconditions for the request are in effect), occur in only 38 utterances, or 19.6% of the total external modifications; of these, five are in the fixed
linguistic formulae к вам с просьбой ог У меня к вам просьба 'I have a request to ask you', which appear prior to the core requests, as in (10).

(10) У меня к вам очень серьезная просьба. Я болел и пропустил экзамен, но я старался хорошо подготовиться и очень прошу вас принять экзамен! (R14)

I have a very serious request to ask you. I was sick and missed the exam, but I was trying to prepare well and ask you kindly to allow me to take the exam!

Compliments, rewards, and consequences, in particular, appear only in isolated examples and cannot be considered characteristic of the requests made by the Russian participants.

5.3. The usage of alerters in the Russian requests

Alerters consist of terms of address and attention-getters. These will be analyzed separately in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, respectively. Both types only occur at the beginning of the utterance, prior to the core request and any preposed external modifications; this is to be expected, given their phatic (channel-opening) function.

5.3.1. Terms of address in the Russian requests

Six kinds of terms of address are used in the Russian requests: terms referring to the addressee’s professional title or role (11), sometimes with terms of respect (12); first
names (13); first names plus patronymics, the most characteristic form of polite address in Russian (14); hypocoristics and terms of endearment (15); and the formulae молодой человек ‘young man’ and девушка ‘girl’, used to address male and female strangers, respectively (16).

(11) Профессор, я бы хотел попросить вашего разрешения сдать работу позже. (R4)

Professor, I would like to ask for your permission to turn in the work later.

(12) Уважаемый профессор..., если вам не трудно, напишите, пожалуйста, рекомендательное письмо для меня. (R13)

Respected professor X, if it is not difficult, please write me a recommendation letter.

(13) Слушай, Маша, одолжи мне свой фотоаппарат на неделю, а? Я иду в поход. (R25)

Listen, Masha, lend me your camera for a week, ok? I'm going camping.

(14) Елена Анатольевна! Я пропустил экзамен по полезни. Когда у меня есть возможность его сдать? (R16)

Elena Anatol’evna! I missed the exam due to illness. When will I have a chance to take it?

(15) Дорогой, одолжи мне, пожалуйста, до завтра 10 долларов, к сожалению, я забыла свой кошелек дома. (R15)

Dear, please lend me $10 till tomorrow. Unfortunately, I forgot my wallet at home.
Young man, tell me how to get to the university’s medical center?

The distribution of terms of address in the Russian data is given in Table 5.2. Altogether, terms of addressee occur in only 19.7% of the total number of Russian request utterances. The most common type is first name plus patronymic, illustrated in (14), which is attested in the situations involving requestees that are socially distant and/or have greater power than the requestors (all 5 situations involving with instructors/advisors and situation 13 where a request is made to a secretary). First names and terms of endearment, seen in (13) and (15), respectively, occur only in the requests involving close friends (situation 1, 2, and 5). The terms молодой человек, seen in (16), and девушка appear, as may be expected, only in those situations involving requests from strangers (3, asking for directions, 4, asking for a pen, and 6, asking for the time of day,). Of the other types, Ludmila Isurin (personal communication) has suggested that the use of terms for occupations and roles like Профессор 'professor' in (12) is due to interference from English, since it is not characteristic of Russophone discourse in Russia; some degree of interference is to be expected, given that the informants are all studying in the United States. On the other hand, the use of terms of respect like Уважаемый профессор X in (13) probably have a different explanation; this is a typical way of beginning a letter, so
we can suspect interference not so much from English as from the conventions of Russian
writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of total requests</th>
<th>69/350</th>
<th>19.7%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of terms of address</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. First names plus patronymics</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. First names</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Titles/roles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Terms of endearment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Address to strangers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Terms of respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 Use of terms of address in Russian requests

5.3.2. Attention-getters used in Russian requests

There are 4 kinds of attention-getters used in Russian requests: greetings (17); the
phatic imperative (послушай ‘listen’ (18); the apologies извините, простите ‘excuse
(me)’, whose main function in this context is for the most part to open the channel of
communication; and inquiries like подскажите ‘tell’, скажите, пожалуйста ‘please tell’,
which are used to accompany core requests using the preparatory strategy (20).

(17) Здравствуйте! Как хорошо, что я вас встретила! Мне очень нужно с вами
поговорить. У вас не найдётся свободной минутки встретиться со мной на
этой неделе? (R5)

Hello! How nice that I met you! I very much need to talk with you. Will you not
have a free minute to meet with me this week?
(18) Слушай, Маша, одолжи мне свой фотоаппарат на неделю, а? Я иду в поход. (R25)

Listen, Masha, lend me your camera for a week, ok? I'm going camping.

(19) Извините, можно у вас одолжить ручку? (R1)

Excuse me, can I borrow a pen from you?

(20) Скажите, пожалуйста, можно мне сдать работу позже? (R3)

Please tell [me], can I turn the work later?

The distribution of attention-getters in the Russian data is given in Table 5.3. Altogether, attention-getters occur in 25.1% of the total request utterances. The only frequent type is apologies, which occur in situations where a request is made to a stranger or a less familiar person, when social distance is high (situations 3, 4, 6, 7, 13, 14). The phatic device слушай or its perfective послушай 'listen', which is marked as familiar (second-person singular) rather than distal/deferential (second-person plural), appears only in situations involving close friends and classmates, i.e., social equals (situations 1, 2, and 5). Greetings occur in situations involving friends, where social distance is small (situations 1, 2, and 5). Inquiries appear only in requests for information (situations 3, 6, 14)
### Percentage of total requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of total requests</th>
<th>88/350</th>
<th>25.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of attention-getters</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Apologies</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (по)слушай ‘listen’</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Greetings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inquiries</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. Use of attention-getters in Russian requests

### 5.4. Strategies used in Russian core requests

Eight strategies in the core requests are used by the Russian participants of my study: mood derivable (imperative) (21), preparatory (22), inquiry (23), hint (24), intention (25), want (26), need (27), and explicit performative (28). I made necessary adaptations in the process of analyzing the data where I cannot find coding standards in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989: 278) for the core request strategies which occur in my data. Thus I have added strategies such as inquiry and intention strategies; these are marked with an asterisk in Table 5.4.

(21) Одолжи мне фотоаппарат на пару дней. (R4)

Lend me your camera for a couple of days.

(22) Ты не могла бы одолжить мне фотоаппарат, пожалуйста? (R1)

Could you not lend me your camera, please?
Извините, где здесь поликлиника? (R2)

Excuse [me], where is the medical center here?

Извините, пожалуйста, у вас не будет свободной минуты переговорить о моей работе? (R2)

Excuse [me], please, do you not have a free minute to talk about my work?

Слушай, не одолжишь словарь на несколько минут? (R4)

Listen, will you lend the dictionary for a few minutes?

Профессор, я бы хотел попросить вашего разрешения сдать работу позже. (R4)

Professor, I would like to ask for your permission to turn in the work later.

Здравствуйте! Как хорошо что я вас встретила! Мне очень нужно с вами поговорить. У вас не найдется свободной минутки встретиться со мной на этой неделе? (R5)

Hello! How nice that I met you! I very much need to talk with you. Will you not have a free minute to meet with me this week?

Я прошу вас продлить срок, потому что моя мама заболела и я должен быть поехать домой. (R20)

I ask you to extend the deadline, because my mom has got sick and I should go home.

There is also one example in which the informant asks how unlikely the desired action is to be fulfilled (29); I have classified this as preparatory strategy.
As shown in Table 5.4, there is no majority strategy used in the Russian requests. The most common strategy is preparatory, at just below 50% (47.7% to be precise); the second is mood derivable (imperative); and the third is intention. All of the other conventionally indirect strategies appear in fewer than 4% of the request utterances and cannot be considered typical overall. Unconventional indirectness in the form of hints can be seen in 6.6% of the examples. The frequency of mood derivable in the Russian data, as compared with the American English, is striking; this may contribute to the fact that Russian speech acts tend to sound very direct to people from other cultures (in particular, Americans).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of core requests</th>
<th>350</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatories</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivables</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategies*</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategies</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inquiry strategies*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Want statements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Need statements</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Explicit performatives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 Distribution of the strategies used in the Russian core requests

5.5. Results and analysis of the Russian data in each situation

In the following sections each individual situation will be discussed. The first issue to be examined will be the participants' assessment of the weight of the request. This will be followed by a survey of the strategies selected by the Russian participants in the given situation, plus their use of internal and external modifications.
**Situation 1: Borrowing an expensive camera from a best friend**

The mean weight of this request for the Russian participants is 3.8, high. As shown in Table 5.5, the majority of the participants (14 out of 25) ranked it at one of the two highest levels; none ranked it at the lowest level. While there is no social distance (D) or power difference (P) in this situation, the ranking of the imposition (R) is high because, as discussed in section 4.5, the requested item is costly and fragile, and the owner (the requestee), if s/he grants the request, will be temporarily deprived of its use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight Assessment</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weight of the request is the smallest</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5. Weight assessment of Russian request situation 1

The only strategies the Russian participants used in this situation are preparatory (30), mood derivable (31), and intention (32). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 5.6.

(30)  Ты можешь одолжить мне свой фотоаппарат на несколько дней? Я обещаю не испортить его. (R23)

Can you lend me your camera for a few days? I promise not to spoil it.
(31) Одолжи мне, пожалуйста, фотоаппарат. (R9)

Please lend me your camera.

(32) Дашь мне свой фотоаппарат на пару дней? (R22)

Will you give me your camera for a couple of days?

As Table 5.6 shows, the majority strategy (15 out 25) is preparatory, which is also the most frequent type of request overall in the Russian data. Even though borrowing a camera from a friend is, as noted above, a big imposition, there are still eight participants who utilize mood derivable in their requests. This suggests that there may be a tendency to prefer preparatory over mood derivable when the weight of the request is higher—a hypothesis that will be explored in the discussion of the other situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 1

A bare majority (13 out of 25) of the Russian request utterances feature external modifications. The most common external modification in this situation is imposition minimizer (9 cases), illustrated in (33); this is not surprising, given the participants'
perception that this request involves a heavy imposition. There are also 6 cases of
grounders and 1 compliment and 1 reward used for this request.

(33) Послушай, ты не могла бы мне одолжить свой фотоаппарат? Я буду очень аккуратно с ним. (R3)
Listen, could you lend me your camera? I will be very careful with it.

**Situation 2: Borrowing money for lunch from a best friend**

In the Russian examples, the mean weight for this request is 2.2, medium low,
which is much lower than the 3.8 mean weight seen in the first situation (asking to
borrow a camera). A majority of the Russian participants (14 out 25) assigned it to one of
the two lowest levels, and only two assigned it to one of the two highest levels.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 8 |
| The weight is level 2                     | 6 |
| The weight is level 3                     | 9 |
| The weight is level 4                     | 0 |
| The weight is level 5                     | 2 |

Table 5.7 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 2

In the Russian data, the strategies utilized in this situation are, in descending order
of frequency, mood derivable (34), preparatory (35), hint (36), intention (37), and explicit
performative (38). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 5.8.
onga, lend me $10, I forgot my purse. I will certainly pay you back.

Could you not lend me $10? I will return [it] tomorrow!

I was in a hurry this morning and left my purse at home. Do you have $10 for me until tomorrow? I will certainly pay [you] back tomorrow.

Can you imagine, I forgot my purse at home. Will you not lend me $10? I will certainly return [it] tomorrow.

If you do not give me alms, I will die of hunger. So I am asking you, let's go together!

As shown in Table 5.8, none of the core request strategies is in the majority, but mood derivable (imperative) is more than twice as frequent as the next most common strategy. Compared with Situation 1 (borrowing a camera from a best friend), fewer cases of preparatory are used in this situation, and there are more instances of mood derivable. This may be due to the decrease of the weight of the request. Three hints are also used for this request. As this request is made to a best friend, that is, a person
familiar with the context, the requestee may still be able to catch the implied meaning of the request without the speaker's explicitly stating it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mood derivable</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explicit performative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 2

Most of the requests (20 out of 25) include external modifications. The most frequent type is grounders (14 cases), which is used to specify the reasons for the requestor's need to borrow the money. Imposition minimizers (9 cases) are used relatively often as well. Although the imposition of the request is relatively lower than the one in the Situation 1 (borrowing a camera), borrowing money can still be a sensitive issue in American culture, and moreover this request is necessary because of the speaker's shortcoming (forgetfulness). Thus it is not surprising that more external modifications—in particular, grounders (reasons and justifications)—are used than in Situation 1.
**Situation 3: Asking a stranger for directions**

The Russian participants considered this request for information low in imposition; its mean weight is 1.3—much lower than the requests for action in Situations 1 and 2 (3.8 and 2.2, respectively). As Table 5.9 shows, most of the participants (18 out of 25) ranked it at level 1, and none ranked it at one of the two highest levels.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 18 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 6  |
| The weight is level 3                   | 1  |
| The weight is level 4                   | 0  |
| The weight is level 5                   | 0  |

Table 5.9 The weight assessment of Russian request situation 3

In the Russian data, the strategies utilized in this situation are intention (39), mood derivable (40), and preparatory (41). The distribution of these types is given in Table 5.10. None of the strategies is in the majority, and there is little difference in the frequency of the two most common types, inquiry (12 cases) and mood derivable (10 cases).

(39) Извините, вы не подскажете, где поликлиника? (R8)

Excuse [me], will you not tell me where the hospital is?
(40) Помоги мне, пожалуйста, найти дорогу в поликлинику. (R21)
Help me, please, to find the way to the hospital.

(41) Извините, вы не могли бы мне показать дорогу в поликлинику? (R4)
Excuse [me], could you not show me the way to the hospital?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intention strategy</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Preparatory strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 3

With this request, as with other requests for information, it is common to find the attention-getter (a conventionalized apology) Извините ‘excuse [me]' prior to the core request, as in (39) and (41). There are 10 cases of this alerter in the Russian data for Situation 3.

Only one request utterance features any external modification—the grounder seen in the example (42).

(42) Извините, вы не можете показать мне где находится поликлиника. Я новичок и не знаю где она находится. (R20)
Excuse [me], can you not show me where the medical center is located. I am new and I do not know where it is.
In this example, the core request features the preparatory strategy. Despite this, and despite the use of the external modification, the participant evaluated the request at the lowest level of weight (level 1). In general, the absence of external modifications is typical with requests for information involving strangers, where the encounter is expected to be quick and there is no time or need for involved explanations.

**Situation 4: Borrowing a pen or a pencil from a stranger**

The Russian participants in the study generally considered this request to be low in imposition. Its mean weight is 1.5, much closer to the request for information in Situation 3 than the requests for action in Situations 1 and 2 (3.8 and 2.2, respectively). As Table 5.11 shows, the majority of the Russian informants ranked its weight in the lowest category, and none assigned it to either of the highest categories. The reasons for its low ranking, despite the social distance (lack of familiarity) between the requestor and the requestee, are probably that the object to be borrowed is inexpensive and the borrowing is short-term.
The weight of the request is the smallest | 16
---|---
The weight is level 2 | 6
The weight is level 3 | 3
The weight is level 4 | 0
The weight is level 5 | 0

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 16
---|---
The weight is level 2 | 6
The weight is level 3 | 3
The weight is level 4 | 0
The weight is level 5 | 0

Table 5.11 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 4

In the Russian data, the strategies used in this situation are preparatory (43), intention (44), mood derivable (45), and hint strategy (46). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 5.12. The majority strategy (18 out of 25) is preparatory, which is the most common type of request strategy overall in the Russian data.

(43) Извините, можно у вас одолжить ручку? (R1)
Excuse [me], can [I] borrow a pen from you?

(44) Вы не одолжите мне запасную ручку? (R5)
Will you not lend me a spare pen?

(45) Дайте, пожалуйста, ручку на секундочку. (R17)
Please give a pen for a second.

(46) У вас случайно не найдется лишней ручки? Я свою никак найти не могу. (R22)
Do you by any chance have a spare pen? I can not find mine.
Table 5.12 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 4

- Total number of request utterances: 25
  - 1. Preparatory: 18
  - 2. Intention strategy: 3
  - 3. Mood derivable: 3
  - 4. Hint strategy: 1

Even though the request is of low weight, preparatory is the most used strategy. Since no power difference is envisioned in this situation (the requestee has no authority over the requestor), the probable reason for the preference for conventional indirectness is that the request is made to a stranger. It may be noted that all three of the participants who ranked the weight of the request at level 3 (the highest for this situation) utilized preparatory for their core requests.

In this situation only two of the requests feature external modifications—appreciation and grounder, illustrated in (46). As with other requests made of strangers, the absence of external modifications can probably be explained by the fact that the encounter is expected to be brief, so there is no time or need for involved explanations.

There are 10 cases of attention-getters used in this request. Since the request is directed towards a stranger, it is common in Russian to use Извините ‘excuse [me]’ to start the actual utterance (i.e., to initiate contact). By contrast, only one term of address is
used in this requestive situation—девушка ‘girl’ (a formulaic way of addressing an unknown woman). It seems that it is not common to use terms of address to strangers in the situations involving low-imposition requests.

**Situation 5: Asking a friend to help with moving**

As noted in section 4.5, this request for action makes considerable demands on the requestee's time and effort, though this is offset somewhat by the lack of social distance or power difference. For the Russian participants, the mean weight for this request is 3.6, medium high. As shown in Table 5.13, the majority of the informants (14 out of 25) ranked it at level 4 or 5, and only five assigned it to the two lightest weights. The mean weight is much higher than the request for information (Situation 3, 1.3) or the requests for borrowing a small amount of money or a common object (Situations 2 and 4, 2.2 and 1.5, respectively), but slightly less than the request to borrow a valuable item (Situation 1, 3.8).

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 2 |
| The weight is level 2 | 3 |
| The weight is level 3 | 6 |
| The weight is level 4 | 6 |
| The weight is level 5 | 8 |

Table 5.13 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 5

134
In the Russian data, the strategies used in this situation are preparatory (47), intention (48), mood derivable (49), and hint (50). The distribution of the strategies is given in Table 5.14. The majority strategy is preparatory (15 cases out of 25), which is the most used strategy overall in the Russian data. The occurrence of hints, an unconventionally indirect strategy, is not surprising, given that the request is high in weight but made to a social equal who is familiar with the demands of close friendship; thus the requestor can deem it sufficient to check on the availability of the addressee rather than requesting help explicitly without giving the requestee any "out." The use of mood derivable (imperative), though not frequent (one-fifth of the examples), is also found in the other Russian requests made to close friends (Situations 1 and 2), i.e., whether there is no social distance. There are two Russian informants (R 9 and R11) who use mood derivable in their requests in these three requests involving best friends, regardless of the change of weight of the request. It should also be noted that, even though the imperative is used, there is still a degree of indirectness, in that the lexeme used exclusively in this situation is помочь 'help', which conventionally elevates the addressee to a superior position and accordingly makes the request sound more polite.
Table 5.14 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hint strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intention strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly less than a majority of the request utterances (12 out of 25) feature external modifications. The external modifications used are appreciation, grounder, and preparatory. The grounder (11 cases) is the most used one. There are also 5 cases of preparatory and 2 uses of appreciation. In terms of alerters, there are 3 cases in which the
request utterance starts with the attention-getter Слушай ‘listen’ (note the familiar/informal second person) instead of the formal Извините ‘excuse [me]’, which is commonly used when a request is made to a stranger. In situations involving friends, if an attention-getter other than a name is used at all, it is typically Слушай ‘listen’; informal Извини sounds like a true apology. In Situations 1 and 2, there are 3 cases each of Слушай.

**Situation 6: Asking a stranger what time it is**

The Russian participants deemed this request for information, like the one in Situation 3, to be low in imposition. Its mean weight is 1.4, just slightly higher than asking for directions (1.3). As shown in Table 5.15, most of the participants (19 out of 25) assigned it to the lowest weight level; none ranked it at either of the highest levels.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 19 |
| The weight is level 2 | 3 |
| The weight is level 3 | 3 |
| The weight is level 4 | 0 |
| The weight is level 5 | 0 |

Table 5.15 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 6
The distribution of the core request strategies in the Russian data is given in Table 5.16. The strategies used in this situation are, in descending order of frequency intention (51), mood derivable (52), inquiry (53), and, in an isolated case, preparatory (54).

(51) Вы не подскажете, который час? (R6)
Will you not tell [me] what time it is?

(52) Скажите, пожалуйста, который час? (R13)
Please tell [me] what time it is?

(53) Извините, который час? (R2)
Excuse [me], what time is it?

(54) Могу я узнать который сейчас час? (R21)
Can I find out what time it is now?

The only informant to use the preparatory strategy, seen in (54), assessed the weight of the request at the lowest level. The participants' choice of indirect strategies like preparatory and intention, illustrated in (51), may be influenced by the fact that the requestee in this situation is supposed to be a stranger, i.e., socially distant. (Note the consistent use of second-person plural verb forms, i.e., ones marked as distal/deferential.)

It may be noted that the use of the imperative Скажите ‘tell’ (5 cases) or подскажите ‘tell’ (4 cases), as in (52), is conventionalized (formulaic) in this context, which may
lessen its directness and further. Moreover, it is accompanied by the politeness marker пожалуйста ‘please’ in most cases (7 out of 9). One of the examples without пожалуйста starts the request with a term of address. The other is a plain request without any alerters or external modifications. When a request is made to a stranger without any modifications, simply a request with imperative, speakers from other cultures may perceive that as too direct and thus insufficiently polite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Intention strategy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inquiry strategy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Preparatory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.16 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 6

In this situation, the attention-getter извините ‘excuse [me]’ (54) occurs 6 times. This expression is more likely to accompany the intention strategy, the less direct strategy, to further modify the force of the request (5 cases). There are also two instances where извините ‘excuse [me]’ is accompanied by nothing more than the question. However, it seems that извините ‘excuse [me]’ would never go with requests with imperatives for this request. No external modifications are used with this request; this agrees with the pattern seen in other requests to strangers (situations 3 and 4).
**Situation 7: Borrowing a dictionary from an acquaintance**

This request is made by a student to another classmate, so there is no power difference between the requester and the requestee. There is some social distance (lack of familiarity), since the requestee is supposed to be an acquaintance (знакомый) rather than a friend (друг)—an important difference in Russian culture; nevertheless, the Russian participants evidently did not find this factor as important as the similarity in age and rank, since they consistently utilize the familiar forms of the verb (second-person singular) rather than the distal/deferential (second-person plural). The mean weight for this request is 2.2, medium low, which is equal to Situation 2 (borrowing money for lunch from a best friend), higher than the requests for information, and lower than the other requests for action other than borrowing a pencil or pen (Situation 4, 1.5). As Table 5.17 shows, a bare majority of the participants (13 out of 25) ranked the weight of the request at the lowest level; only one ranked it at level 4, and none at level 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The weight of the request is the smallest</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.17 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 7
In the Russian data, the strategies utilized in this situation are preparatory (53), intention (54), and mood derivable (55). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 5.18. The dominant strategy is preparatory, which occurs 21 times; the others occur twice each.

(53) Я не знаю что значит эти слова. Я могу воспользоваться твоим словарем? (R20)

I do not know what these words mean. Can I use your dictionary?

(54) Слушай, ты не одолжишь мне словарь на минутку? (R25)

Listen, will you lend me the dictionary for a minute?

(55) Одолжи мне словарь на минутку, пожалуйста. (R9)

Please lend me the dictionary for a minute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intention strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.18 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 7

The only participant who assessed the weight of the request at a high level (4) chose to use preparatory strategy in making the request. By contrast, the two participants
who utilized mood derivable considered the weight of the request to be levels 1 and 3, respectively. The politeness marker пожалуйста 'please' is used in both the requests with the mood derivable strategy; other than that, there no more case of пожалуйста in this request.

Only three of the requests have external modifications. The external modifications used are grounder, seen in (53), and preparatory. As for internal modifications, it can be noted that 17 of the requests include references to the brief period of the borrowing, like на минутку 'for a minute' in (54) and (55). These can be considered a way of reducing the level of imposition of the request by emphasizing the brief duration of the desired action.

**Situation 8: Asking an instructor to extend the deadline for a paper**

As this request is made by a student to his or her instructor, there is a clear power difference between the requester and requestee, and probably also some social distance. Thus the Russian participants considered the request to be relatively high in imposition. Its mean weight is 3.8, equal to that of Situation 1 (borrowing an expensive camera) and higher than all of the other requests considered so far. None of the Russian participants ranked its weight smallest; a majority (15 out of 25) put it in one of the two highest levels.
The weight of the request is the smallest | 0
The weight is level 2 | 2
The weight is level 3 | 8
The weight is level 4 | 7
The weight is level 5 | 8

| Table 5.19 Weight assessment of Russian situation 8 |

In the Russian data, a greater variety of strategies are used in this situation than in the previous situations considered. Their distribution is given in Table 5.20. The majority strategy (14 out of 25 cases) is preparatory (56). Direct speech acts using mood derivable (imperative), as illustrated by (57), are found in six cases. Unconventional indirectness in the form of hints is found in two examples, as in (58). The remaining conventionally indirect strategies—intention (59), want statement (60), and explicit performative (61)—are found only in isolated cases.

(56) Иван Дмитриевич, Вы не могли бы продлить мне срок для домашнего задания? (R24)

Ivan Dmitrievich, could you not give me an extension for the homework?

(57) Пожалуйста, перенесите срок моего домашнего задания. (R21)

Please extend the deadline for my homework.


(58) Скажите, пожалуйста, существует ли возможность продлить термин отдачи курсовика? (R1)

Please tell me, is there some possibility of extending the time for handing in the coursework?

(59) Я не успела заполнить домашнее задание. Вы не разрешите мне сдать его завтра? Извините! (R2)

I did not manage to finish the homework. Will you not allow me to turn it in tomorrow? I am sorry!

(60) Профессор, я бы хотел попросить вашего разрешения сдать работу позже. (R4)

Professor, I would like to ask for your permission to turn in the work later.

(61) Я прошу вас продлить срок, потому что моя мама заболела и я должен быть поехать домой. (R20)

I am asking you to extend the deadline, because my mom got sick and I have to go home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hint strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intention strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Want statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Explicit performative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.20 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 8

It should be noted that, in the six requests with mood derivable, the participants assessed the weight of the request as relatively high; three considered it as level 5, two as level 4, and one as level 3. The only participant to use an explicit performative, which is
considered a direct strategy by the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989:18), assessed the weight of the request as level 5, i.e., as the highest level. These facts indicate that there is not an absolute correlation between the low weight of a request and the use mood derivable.

The majority of the request utterances—15 out of 25—feature external modifications, as seen in (59) and (61); some of these have multiple external modifications. The external modifications used are grounders, apologies, and preparators. The most frequent type is grounder, which occurs 16 times. There are also 6 cases of apology and 1 of preparator used. Typically, students have to provide some explanation for requests of this kind; this motivates the use of grounders. At the same time, students, as noted above, consider such requests an inconvenience to the instructor and, in addition, may feel that they can be blamed for not being prepared; this motivates the use of apologies.

**Situation 9: Asking the instructor to give a make-up exam**

As this request is made by a student to an instructor, there is a marked power difference between the requester and requestee, and there is probably also some social difference; moreover, as discussed in section 4.5, fulfillment of the desired request would require the requestee to expend both time and effort. All these factors make this a high-
imposition request for the Russian participants. The mean weight for the request is 4.0, the highest of all of the situations examined so far. As shown in Table 5.21, a majority of the participants (20 out of 25) ranked it at one of the two highest weight levels, and none assigned it to the lowest level.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 0 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 3 |
| The weight is level 3                  | 2 |
| The weight is level 4                  | 9 |
| The weight is level 5                  | 11 |

Table 5.21 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 9

Four strategies are found for the core requests in the Russian data—preparatory (62), hint (63), mood derivable (64), and explicit performative (65). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 5.21. The majority strategy is preparatory (14 out of 25 cases). However, the participants who utilized the other three strategies, including mood derivable (imperative), all assessed the weight of the request to be high. This shows again that, as observed in the discussion of Situation 8, there is no clear association between lower weight and the use of mood derivable.
(62) Алла Васильевна, вы не могли бы дать мне возможность сдать экзамен, который я пропустила из-за болезни? Я буду очень вам благодарна. (R24)

Alla Vasilievna, could you give me a chance to take the exam which I missed because of the illness? I will really appreciate you.

(63) Есть у меня шанс сдать экзамен? (R5)

Do I have chance to take the exam?

(64) Разрешите, пожалуйста, сдать экзамен. (R1)

Please allow me to take the exam.

(65) Я вас очень прошу разрешить мне передать экзамен, потому что я был очень болен. (R20)

I ask asking you to allow me retake the exam because I was very ill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hint strategy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Explicit performative</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.22 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 9

A majority of the request utterances (19 out of 25) include external modifications. Four kinds are used—grounders, apologies, imposition minimizers, and appreciation. The grounders are the most used one in this situation, occurring in 18 instances. There are also 5 cases of preparator, and one each of apology and appreciation (thanks in advance).
Situation 10: Borrowing a book from an advisor

As this request is made by a student to his or her advisor, there is power difference, and probably also some social distance between the requester and the requestee. The greater the difference in education level, the greater in general would be that social distance, such that the difference is potentially greater if the requestor is an undergrad, for example. The mean weight for this request is 3.4, medium high, but considerably lower than in the previous situation, in which the student was asking for a make-up examination (4.1). The distribution of weight assessments is given in Table 5.23.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 1 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 5 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 10|
| The weight is level 4                   | 7 |
| The weight is level 5                   | 3 |

Table 5.23 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 10

In the Russian data, the strategies used in this situation are preparatory (66), mood derivable (67), intention (68), want statement (69), and explicit performative (70). The distribution of the strategies is given in Table 5.23. Preparatory is the majority strategy,
with 19 out of 25 examples; mood derivable (imperative) occurs in three cases, and the others only once each. The participants who used mood derivables and the explicit performative (a direct strategy) assessed the weight of the request to be medium or medium to high; this again demonstrates that there is no clear correlation between low weight and the use of the imperative.

(66) Вы знаете, я не смог найти книгу, может у вас есть эта книга и я смогу у вас одолжить? (R20)

You know, I could not find the book. Maybe you have it and could I borrow it from you?

(67) Одалжите мне, пожалуйста книгу. (R1)

Please lend me a book.

(68) Вы не одолжите мне книгу на несколько дней? (R5)

Will you not lend me a book for a few days?

(69) Я хотел бы попросить у вас почитать книгу. Она мне очень нужна для учёбы, но к сожалению, я не могу найти ее в библиотеке. (R15)

I would like to ask you for a book to read. I need it very much for studying, but, unfortunately, I cannot find it in the library.

(70) Я не смогла найти в библиотеке книгу и прошу вас дать мне на время. (R21)

I could not find a book in the library and I am asking you to give [it] to me for a while.
A majority of the request utterances (18 out of 25) have external modifications. The types used in this situation are grounder (19 cases), seen in (66), (69), and (70), preparatory (7 cases), and appreciation (1 case). The preferred ones are grounder and preparator. Compared with situations involving instructors/advisors so far, the external modifications are usually grounders, preparators and appreciation and occasionally for some situation (situation 9 of asking to give a make-up exam) apology. So it may be indicate that it is conventional to provide reasons or to check the instructor/advisor’s availability when making requests to addressees with power difference, in this case, to instructors/advisors.

Table 5.24 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of request utterances</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explicit performative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Situation 11: Asking an instructor to make an appointment for consultation

Like the previous situation, this request is made by a student to his or her advisor; this means that there is power difference (and probably also a social difference) between the requester and requestee. The mean weight for this request is 3.4—that is, medium high—the same as in Situation 10, whether a student was asking his or her advisor to borrow a book. The distribution of weight rankings is given in Table 5.25.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 1  |
| The weight is level 2                   | 5  |
| The weight is level 3                   | 7  |
| The weight is level 4                   | 7  |
| The weight is level 5                   | 5  |

Table 5.25 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 11

In the Russian data, the strategies utilized in this situation are preparatory (71), hint (72), need statement (73), want statement (74), and mood derivable (75).

(71) Марья Васильевна, вы не могли бы проконсультировать меня по поводу моей диссертации? (R25)

Maria Vasilievna, could you not give me a consultation concerning my dissertation?
The distribution of core request strategies is given in Table 5.26. While none of the strategies forms a majority, preparatory is the most frequent (11 examples). Hinting is also more frequent in this situation than in any of the others (7 examples). In chapter 3 methodology I mention that when an external modification stands alone, it can be considered a core request. In this situation the requests (7 cases) using hints are made by checking the availability of the advisor. Originally this strategy is an external modification (preparator). Because the external modification stands alone, it functions as a request by inference, i.e., a hint strategy. Such hints (inquiring whether the requestee
has time) may have become a conventionalized way of making requests for appointments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory strategy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hint strategy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Want statement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Need statement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mood derivable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.26 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 11

A bare majority of the request utterances (13 out of 25) have external modifications. Preparators are the most common type (11 examples), but grounders, appreciation, and compliment are also found. Grounders are much less used in this request, with only 3 occurrences. This is the only situation where the use of preparator surpasses the number of grounders. This outcome is not surprising, since granting the request requires the advisor to be available. Availability becomes a crucial factor for this request, so checking with the advisor when making the request can easily become conventionalized.
Situation 12: Asking an instructor to write a letter of recommendation

Like Situation 9, this request is made by a student to his or her instructor. There is clearly power difference between the requester and requestee, and probably also a social distance; moreover, the requested act requires the requestee to expend time and effort, and it presupposes that s/he will have enough good will toward the requestor to write a positive letter. Therefore, for the Russian participants the mean weight for this request is high—4.1, highest in all of the situations in the questionnaire. As Table 5.27 shows, most of the Russian informants (20 out of 25) ranked this request at one of the two highest levels (4 or 5).

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 1 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 0 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 4 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 10|
| The weight is level 5                   | 10|

Table 5.27 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 12

The strategies used by the Russian participants for this request are preparatory (76), hint (77), want statement (78), and mood derivable (79). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 5.28.
(76) Дмитрий Сергеевич, могли бы вы написать рекомендательное письмо для меня? (R24)

Dmitrii Sergeevich, could you write a letter of recommendation for me?

(77) Было бы у вас немного времени чтобы написать мне письмо? Если вы не заняты, конечно. (R7)

Would you have a little time to write me a letter? If you are not busy, of course.

(78) Я хочу попросить вас написать для меня рекомендательное письмо. (R11)

I want to ask you to write a letter of recommendation for me.

(79) Уважаемый профессор! Если вам не трудно, напишите, пожалуйста рекомендательное письмо для меня. (R13)

Respected professor! If it is not difficult for you, please write a letter of recommendation for me.

The preferred strategy for core requests is clearly preparatory, which accounts for 19 of the 25 examples. The four participants who chose to use mood derivable (imperative) consider the weight of the request to be high; two of them assessed the weight of the request at level 4, and two at level 5. This shows once again that the imperative is not necessarily correlated with low weight. It can be noted that the intensity of the mood derivable in the four examples is reduced by various redressive devices, as seen in (79). All four requests with imperatives are accompanied by external modifications; moreover, all the imperatives are used with пожалуйста ‘please’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.28 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 12

A majority of the request utterances (15 out of 25) have external modifications. The types found in this situation are grounders, preparator (6 cases), appreciation (1 case), and compliment (1). Of these, grounders are the most frequent external modification with 16 cases. Among the ten requests without external modifications, nine of them feature preparatory as the core request strategy, and one the want strategy. All four of the requests with imperatives have external modifications to modify the force of the request made to the instructor.

Among all 5 situations involving instructors/advisors, the most common way to address the instructors/advisors is to use first names plus patronymics.

**Situation 13: Asking a librarian to help find a book**

For the Russian participants of the study, the mean weight for this request is 2, medium low. While the situation assumes some social distance, the variable of power is not in play. As Table 5.29 shows, the majority of the participants (17 out of 25) assigned
the request to one of the two lowest weight levels, and none assigned it to the highest.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 7 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 10 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 5 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 3 |
| The weight is level 5                   | 0 |

Table 5.29 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 13

The Russian participants used four strategies in this situation—preparatory (80), intention (81), mood derivable (82) and hint (83).

(80) Просите, пожалуйста, вы не могли бы помочь мне найти стихотворение Козьмы Пруткова? (R24)

Pardon, please could you not help me find the poems of Koz'ma Prutkov?

(81) Вы не поможете мне найти книгу? (R3)

Will you not help me find a book?

(82) Помогите, пожалуйста, найти мне вот эту книжку. (R5)

Please help me find this book.

(83) Вы не подскажете, где находится эта книга? (R8)

Will you not tell me where this book is?
The distribution of the strategies is given in Table 5.30. Though there is no majority strategy, preparatory is the most used (12 examples). Mood derivable is also well represented (9 cases). It would seem that the low weight of the request, as assessed by the participants, is not a decisive factor in determining whether mood derivable or preparatory is chosen. It indicates the social variable—power difference between the speaker and addressee—may play an important role in the choice of the core request strategy in this situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Intention strategy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.30 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 13

It seems that the smaller the weight of the request, the fewer number of external modifications is used. In this situation, only four of the request utterances feature external modifications. The external modifications used for this request are grounders (3 cases) and preparators (1 case).

Since this is a request to a librarian, social distance (non-familiarity) is high. Thus attention-getters are widely used. Eight requests start with excuse me, one Простите.
**Situation 14: Asking the receptionist if the chair is in the office**

As Table 5.31 shows, for the Russian participants, the mean weight for this request is 4; in other words, it is deemed high in imposition. While social distance may be involved, it should be noted that the position of receptionist is not a lofty one in Russian culture. It would appear that the Russian participants are reacting not to the *direct* illocutionary force of the speech act—asking for information—but to its most likely *indirect* illocutionary force—asking the receptionist to arrange a meeting with the chair. Thus, the mean weight of this request is much higher than the requests for information in Situations 3 and 6 (low-imposition) and comparable instead to the requests for a make-up exam or for a letter of recommendation (Situations 9 and 11, both 4.1). The mean weight is higher than the other request for an appointment, Situation 11, presumably because of the social factor that the relation between a doctoral student and his/her advisor, is generally less distant than that between a student and a department chair (a relatively exalted position in Russian culture).

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 16 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 7  |
| The weight is level 3                  | 2  |
| The weight is level 4                  | 0  |
| The weight is level 5                  | 0  |

Table 5.31 Weight assessment of Russian request situation 14
The distribution of core request strategies is given in Table 5.32. The intention strategy (84) forms a bare majority (13 out of 25 cases). The other strategies utilized are, in descending order, inquiry (85), mood derivable (86), and preparatory (87).

(84) Вы не скажете, декан в офисе? (R12)
Will you tell whether the chair is in the office?

(85) Декан у себя в офисе сейчас? (R6)
Is the chair in his/her office right now?

(86) Скажите, пожалуйста, декан у себя в офисе? (R23)
Please tell [me] whether the chair is in his/her office.

(87) Могу я узнать в офисе ли декан сейчас? (R21)
Can I know if the chair of the department is in the office?

The distribution of strategies here is comparable to other requests for information. In the three requests for information in the questionnaire, the four core request strategies used for the requests for information are intention, inquiry, mood derivable, and preparatory. In different situations, the use of each strategy may vary. However, in all three situations in the Russian data, the intention strategy is the most frequent one.
The total number of the requests | 25  
1. Intention strategy | 13  
2. Inquiry strategy | 6  
3. Mood derivable | 5  
4. Preparatory | 1  

|  
Table 5.32 Distribution of the strategies used in Russian request situation 14  

External modifications are not found in this situation; this is comparable to the other requests for information. In Situation 6 (asking the time), there are likewise no external modifications, while in Situation 3 (asking for directions) there is only one request accompanied by external modifications. Requests for information usually entail much less effort for the addressee and so are usually low in imposition. Thus, there is less motivation for them to be accompanied by external modifications, especially given the need to minimize the duration of the encounter.

5.6. Summary of the analysis of the Russian data

In this chapter, I have discussed the features of the Russian participants' requests in each of the 14 situations, with attention to the weight of the requests, the core request strategies chosen, and the internal and external modifications included in the request utterances.
The fact that the most frequent strategy overall in the Russian core requests is preparatory calls into question the stereotype sometimes encountered in literature on speech acts that Russians prefer to be very direct. This perception may be influenced by the fact that, at least judging from the results of my study, Russian requests tend to be made without external modifications. Only 38.9% of the Russian requests in the study involve external modifications. Of the requests that do feature external modifications, the most common type is grounders, which provide reasons for making the request.

The second most used core request strategy in the Russian requests is the imperative (mood derivable). The results of our study confirm Mills' (1993) research on politeness in Russian requests: even when the imperative is produced without redress, it can be a polite request strategy in Russian. In our data, the imperative is widespread and occurs in every situation, regardless of the social variables. Indeed, in Situation 2 (asking a best friend for lunch money), the imperative is the most frequently used strategy. However, in our data one can see a relative (not absolute) correlation with social variables: imperatives are used more often in requests to friends, regardless of weight of the request, and are found less often in requests to more distant addressees, even when the weight of the imposition is not high. For instance, in Situations 4 (borrowing a pen from a stranger) and 7 (borrowing a dictionary from a classmate acquaintance), the majority of the requests feature preparatory (18/25 and 21/25 respectively), while the
imperative is less frequent (3/25 and 2/25, respectively). In the situations involving instructors/advisors, imperatives are also used, but with much less frequency.

The third most used strategy in Russian core requests is intention. This is considered an indirect speech act that conventionally questions the addressee’s intention to perform the desired action (see Mills 1991). In our Russian data, we found that it is mostly used in the situations of asking for information, which are low-imposition even though they may involve social distance. Thus intention is the most frequent strategy in Situations 3 (asking for directions), 6 (asking for the time), and 14 (asking if the chair is in the office), where the mean weights range from 13-1.4. However, the intention strategy seems less favored in situations where the requests involve power differences, e.g., those made by students to professors or advisors, where the mean weights are relative high, ranging from 3.4–4.1.

The hint strategy, which Mill (1993) considers a favorite strategy in Russian requests, does not, in fact, have a very wide application in our data. We found that hint is likely to appear in the situations where the weight of the request is relatively high and where the context sharply limits the possible interpretations, such as in the situations 9 and 11.

Alerters have a fair amount of use in Russian requests; 69 terms of address and 88 attention-getters are found in our data. Terms of address tend to be used more in the
situations where requests are made from students to instructors or advisors; this suggests that their primary function for the Russian participants is not so much phatic as deferential.

Only 38.6% of the Russian requests are accompanied by external modifications. Grounders are the most frequent type; however, in specific situations other kind of external modifications can surpass the number of grounders. For example, in Situation 1 (borrowing an expensive camera), where the Russian participants give a high weight to the imposition, imposition minimizers are the most frequent type of external modification. In Situation 11 (making an appointment with an advisor), the number of preparatory exceeds that of the grounders. In this situation, the weight is deemed medium high; it seems conventional in Russian culture to check on the availability of the advisor when making an appointment.
CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE CHINESE DATA

Chapter 6 discusses the results of my research on the requestive features used by Chinese speakers in my study. Section 6.2 discusses the use of external modifications; section 6.3 the use of alerters (terms of address and attention-getters); and section 6.4 the strategies used in the core requests. Section 6.5 examines the requestive features in each of the 14 situations in great detail. For each situation, the mean weight of the request, as assessed by the participants, is reported; then the core request strategies are analyzed, along with the external modifications.

6.1. Overall results and analysis of the Chinese data

Twenty five native speakers of Chinese participated in the research by filling out a questionnaire containing 14 request situations in Chinese. This yielded 345 request utterances instead of the expected 350 (14 x 25). One participant declined to produce a
specific request utterance due to the possible excessive imposition of the request. In two other cases, individual participants left blanks instead of answering a question. In two additional cases, I discarded responses that reflected a misunderstanding of the situation.

Of the 345 request utterances, only 141 comprise core requests only (with core request defined, as elsewhere, as the minimal unit which can realize a request), while 204 (59.1%) include external modifications (devices which stand outside of the speech act itself, either prior or subsequent to the core request). Of these 204 elaborated request utterances, there are 112 where the external modifications are prior to the core requests and 54 where the external modifications are subsequent to the core requests. In addition, there are 38 request utterances which include external modifications both prior and subsequent to the core request. These figures show that the Chinese participants in this study tend to prefer using external modifications prior to core requests.

As noted in 3.2 above, in this study core requests are identified as those without any external modifications provided. They may stand alone or with alerters, as in the following examples. Example (1) consists of a core request with a term of address preceding it; example (2) is a plain request, without any external modifications or alerters.
External modifications, as noted above, are devices which stand outside of the speech act itself, either prior to the core request, as in example (3), or subsequent to it, as in example (4). Alternatively, external modifications may stand both prior and subsequent to the core request, as in example (5).

(3) 周六有什么事吗? 我要搬家。来帮我一下吧! (C 2)

Do [you] have something to do this Saturday? I will move. Come and help me!

(4) 来帮我搬家。完了请你吃大餐. (C 25)

Come and help me move. After that [I] will treat you with a feast.

(5) 老师，有一本书我急用。但是在图书馆没借到。听说你有。方便借我看看吗? 用完就还给你。 (C 18)

Instructor, I need a book urgently. But the library does not have it. [I] heard that you have it. Is it convenient for me to take a look at it? Once [I] finish, [I] will return [it] to you promptly.
6.2. External Modifications in Chinese requests

Nine external modifications appear in the American English request data (see Table 6.1). I made necessary adaptations in the process of analyzing the data where I cannot find coding standards in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & House & Kasper 1989: 287) for the external modifications which occur in my data. Thus I added strategies such as apologies, appreciations, compliments, mentioning consequence, and embarrassments; these are marked with an asterisk in Table 6.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of external modifications</th>
<th>316</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grounders</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparators</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appreciations*</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Imposition minimizers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Compliments*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Apologies*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Promises of reward</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mentioning consequence*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Embarrassments*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 The use of the external modifications in Chinese requests

As Table 6.1 shows, grounders, which provide the speaker's reasons or justifications for making the request, as in (6), are by far the most common type of external modification (62.3%). In addition, grounders occur most often prior to the core
requests—148 out of the 197 (75.1%). This distribution confirms Young’s (1982) findings that Chinese speakers tend to articulate reasons first before making the requests. It may contribute to the impression that people from other cultures have that Chinese people are inscrutable. Before introducing the main point and making the core requests, extensive external modifications are provided, which may to some extent confuse the addresseees who are from other cultures.

Of the other attested types of external modifications, the next most frequent are preparators, as in (7). These are far less frequent than grounders (16.1% of the total). All of the other attested types occur in fewer than 10% of the cases. These are appreciations, in which the speaker expresses advance gratitude for the anticipated favor (8); imposition minimizers, in which the speaker tries to reduce the imposition of the request (9); compliments, which the speaker compliments the addressee, sometimes may not be explicit (10); apologies, in which the speaker makes an apology to the addressee for the inconvenience (11); rewards in which the speaker promises some compensation in return for the favor done by the addressee (12); mentioning consequences: mentioning the possible consequences if the request is not being done (13); embarrassments, in which the speaker expresses his or her embarrassment to bother the addressee (14).
(6) Classmate, I do not know a couple of words. Can [you] lend me your dictionary for a moment?

(7) Do you have any money with you? Lend me 10 Yuan.

(8) Professor, how are you? Can [I] bother you to help me write a recommendation letter for a job application? I would really appreciate your help!

(9) Dear, this weekend I am going to a club. Can [I] borrow your camera? I will take good care of it.

(10) I want to find a book, but [I] can’t find it. You are pretty familiar with the surroundings. Can [you] help me a bit?

(11) Teacher, how are you? Due to some family reasons, I did not turn in the homework on time. Sorry, I will turn it in a little later, is that ok?
I am going to move this Saturday. Do come help me. I will treat you to a feast.

Teacher, I am looking for a job now. There is a letter of recommendation lacking. Look, you also wouldn’t want your student to be unemployed, would you?

Teacher, I have some family issues. Can [I] turn [it] in later? [I am] embarrassed.

6.3. Alerters in Chinese requests

As noted in 3.2 above, alerters, by CCSARP’s definition, are the opening elements preceding the actual requests, which include terms of address and attention-getters. Because of their phatic (channel-opening) function, both types only occur at the beginning of the utterance, prior to the core request and any preposed external modifications. Their function is to alert the hearer to the ensuing requests.

However, the definition is too simplistic for Chinese. Alerters in Chinese culture have complex usages. In particular, terms of address do more than just drawing attention from the addressee; they can be seen as an essential expression of linguistic politeness (Gu 1990) and also as part of normative politeness in daily interaction (Lee-Wong 1994).
They are one of the principal means of expressing social status and social relations. The appropriate use of terms of address shows the speaker’s respectfulness (and warmth, depending on the choice of the term of address) toward the addressee; failure to use them properly reveals the speaker to be rude and even may bring social sanctions.

I have used the CCSARP’s two main categories of alerters, terms of address and attention getters, in analyzing the Chinese data collected. In each category there are several subcategories.

### 6.3.1. Terms of address in Chinese requests

The Chinese requests in this study displayed a variety of terms of address. Six kinds were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of total requests</th>
<th>148/345</th>
<th>42.9%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of terms of address used</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Title/Role</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Casual terms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Given names</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Terms of endearment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kinship terms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Courtesy terms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 The use of terms of address in Chinese requests.
As the table 6.2 shows, the Chinese-speaking participants make quite extensive use of terms of address. Overall, the terms of address occur in 148/345 or 42.9% of the possible cases in Chinese requests. Native speakers of Chinese employ them far more often than do the informants that are native speakers of the other two languages in this study. The terms of address occur in only 23/349 or 6.6% of the possible cases in American English requests, and only in 69/350 or 19.7% of the possible case in Russian requests. The Chinese participants tend to lay the ground prior to making the actual requests more than do the participants from the other language groups.

*Title/role* terms are the most preferred type in Chinese requests (42.9%). The Chinese participants tend to address people by referring to the addressee’s professional title or role, for instance, ‘teacher’, ‘student’, as in (15). Sometimes *casual terms*, in which the speaker addresses in a casual way, are used, as in (16). Alternatively, *given names*, in which the speech addresses by the addressee’s first name, occurs, as in (17); or *terms of endearment*, such as亲爱的‘dear’ in (18); or *kinship terms* as in (19); or *courtesy terms* such as 先生‘sir’, 小姐‘Miss’ in (20).

(15) 同学, 请问你校医院怎么走? (C 12)

Student, please [may I] ask you how to get to the university medical center?
(16)  哥们儿，能不能借我用用相机啊? (C 7)

    Brother, can [you] lend me the camera?

(17)  x x, 可以周末帮我搬家吗? (C 13)\(^1\)

    x x, can [you] help me move this weekend?

(18)  亲爱的，周末去俱乐部玩，可以借你的照相机用一下不?

    我给你好好保管哈。(C 11)

    Dear one, I will be going to a club this weekend. Can [I] borrow your camera? I will take good care [of it].

(19)  您好大叔，您可以帮我找一下吗? 我找了好一会了。 (C 18)

    Hello, uncle, can you help me find [it]? I looked for [it] for a while.

(20)  先生，您能帮我找一本书吗? 我找了很久都没找到，谢谢您！(C 16)

    Sir, can you help me to find a book? I was looking [for it] for a long time, [but] I did not find [it]. Can [I] ask you to help me to find [it]?

Title/role terms are the most often used terms of address in Chinese data. They are often used in the situations (8—12) when there is social power between the speaker and the addressee, such as a request is made from a student to a professor and in the situations (3, 

\(^1\) In the questionnaire, no name was given to the friend of the participant. Thus, when a participant wrote "x x", I classified it as a given name, because in Chinese culture a speaker usually calls his or her friend by given names.
4, 6, 7) when a request is made from a student to another student who is a stranger or a casual acquaintance.

6.3.2. Attention getters in Chinese requests

Attention getters naturally precede the core requests. Their primary function in the requests would seem to be phatic, i.e., to attract the addressee’s attention. Four kinds of attention getters occur in the Chinese data. The first is greetings, such as 你好 in (21). The second is 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’, a fixed linguistic phrase used commonly before the core requests for information, especially when addressing a stranger, as in (22). The third is expressions of embarrassment/bother, which conventionally indicate the embarrassment of the speaker for the bother that the speaker is causing the hearer. These differ from the external modification ‘embarrassment’ in two ways: first, as attention-getters, they usually occur prior to the core request; second, they have the additional function of attracting the attention of the addressee, whereas expressions of embarrassment as an external modification has sole function of expressing embarrassment or bother, as in (23). The fourth type of attention-getters is (quasi-) apologies, which are formed as apology locutions, but their main illocutionary force is as attention-getters. Thus, 对不起 'excuse me' as an attention-getter is different from a genuine apology used as an external modification, as in (24).
Hello, can [you] lend me [your] pen?

Hello, please [may I] ask where the university clinic is?

[I am] embarrassed to bother [you], can I use your pen for a moment?

Excuse me, I forgot to bring [my] watch. Can [I] bother you to tell me what time it is now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of total requests</th>
<th>171/345</th>
<th>49.6%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of terms of address used</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Greetings</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 请问[please [may I] ask]</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expressions of embarrassment/bother</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Apologies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 The use of attention-getters in Chinese requests

The distribution of attention-getters in the Chinese data is given in Table 6.3. Altogether, attention-getters occur in 49.6% of the total Chinese request utterances. Almost half of the Chinese requests use attention-getters. Native speakers of Chinese employ them far
more often than do the informants that are native speakers of the other two languages. In fact, they occur half as frequently in those two languages, appearing in only a quarter of the possible cases in the American English and Russian requests (86/349 or 24.6% and 88/350 or 25.1% respectively.

6.4. Analysis of the Chinese core requests

As noted above, the core request is the minimal unit which can realize a request; it is the core of the request utterance. Core requests can be analyzed from several different angles, such as the well-known direct vs. indirect classification, and from different perspectives—the speaker’s, the addressee’s, impersonal, and inclusive—depending on the subject of the main verb (first-person, second-person, impersonal, or first-person plural with inclusive meaning, respectively).

In the Chinese data, inclusive and impersonal perspectives do not occur in requests with preparatory strategy. The requests attested are either from the speaker’s or from the hearer’s perspective; requests from the hearer’s perspective occupy a dominant position in the requests using preparatory strategy. It is characteristic of Chinese culture that most requests use a covert subject—an implicit “you” or “I”, which is a null subject, as in (25–26):
(25) 你好，能告诉我现在几点了吗? (C 19)

Hello, can [you] tell me what time it is now?

(26) 导师，这本书我在图书馆找不到，可否借您的用一下? (C 13)

Advisor, I could not find this book in the library. Can [I] borrow yours for a little while?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of the requests with preparatory strategy</th>
<th>163 (100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hearer’s perspective</td>
<td>103 (63.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Speaker’s perspective</td>
<td>60 (36.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Covert hearer’s perspective</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overt hearer’s perspective</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Cover speaker’s perspective</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overt speaker’s perspective</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 The distribution of perspectives of the requests using preparatory strategy

As Table 6.4 shows, preparatory strategies usually appear with covert subjects, regardless of whether they are from the speaker’s or the hearer’s perspective. It is characteristic of Chinese language.

6.4.1. The main strategies in Chinese core requests

Nine strategies in the core requests are used by the Chinese participants in my study: preparatory, which refers to the condition for the feasibility of the request, such as ability or possibility. Its syntactic structure usually is interrogative, as in (27), mood
derivable (imperative) (28), inquiry (29), want (30), intention, in which the speaker states what he or she would like to do. This is necessarily followed by an appealer, asking for permission, as in (31), hint (32), need (33), explicit performative (34), and choice selection strategy (35). As noted above, in the process of analyzing the data, I made adaptations where I could not find coding standards in the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989: 278) for the core request strategies which occur in my data. Thus I added strategies such as inquiry, intention, and choice selection strategies, which are marked with an asterisk in Table 6.5.

(27) 你好，能告诉我怎么才能到校医院吗? (C 2)
     Hello, can you tell me how to get to university clinic?

(28) 你带钱了吗? 借我十元左右。(C 2)
     Do you have money with you? Lend me around ten Yuan.

(29) 你好，系主任在不在? (C 4)
     Hello, is the department chair in?

(30) 对不起，老师，因为家里发生了一些事情，所以我的作业没有按时完成。
     我希望你能够再给我些时间，这次我会按时完成。(C22)
Sorry, teacher, because of some family matters, (so) I did not finish my homework on time. I hope you could give me more time, this time I will finish it on time.

(31) 老师，我的作业不能按时交给你了。晚一些给你，行吗? (C 19)

Teacher, I can not turn in the homework on time. [I] will give it to you later, is it okay?

(32) 老师，我正在找工作，现在缺少一份推荐信。

您看，您也不希望你的学生失业吧. (C 18)

Teacher, I am looking for a job now. There is a letter of recommendation lacking. Look, you also wouldn’t want your student to be unemployed, would you?

(33) 老师，请问你最近有时间吗?我的论文里面有一些问题需要请教您. (C 17)

Teacher, please [may I] ask if you have time soon? I need to ask your advice on my thesis.

(34) 因为生病，请求补考机会。(C 6)

Because [I] was sick, [I am] asking for an opportunity to do a make-up exam.

(35) 你现在有两个选择，一是请我吃饭，二是借我点儿钱。

否则我就得饿死了。 (C 18)

Right now you have two choices, one is to invite me for lunch, the other is to lend me some money. Otherwise, I am going to starve to death.
As shown in Table 6.5, there is no majority strategy used in Chinese requests. The most common strategy is preparatory, as just below 50% (47.2% to be precise); the second is mood derivable (imperative); and the third is inquiry. The predominance of preparatory contradicts Lee-Wong’s (1994) claim that the imperative (mood derivable) is the favorite strategy in Chinese requests. All of the other conventionally indirect strategies appear in fewer than 10% of the request utterances and cannot be considered typical overall. Unconventional indirectness in the form of hints can be seen in 1.7% of the Chinese data in this study. Neither the explicit performatives nor the choice selection strategies are typical strategies in Chinese requests, as each only occurs once in the data.

### Table 6.5 Distribution of strategies used in the Chinese core requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of request utterances</th>
<th>345</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory strategies</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivables</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inquiry strategies*</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want statements</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intention strategies *</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hint strategies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Need statements</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Explicit performatives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Choice selection strategies*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5 The results of analysis of the Chinese data in each situation

In the following I will analyze the strategy preferences of the Chinese informants in each individual situation. The type of request and social variables, such as social distance and power, all influence the strategy that the participant chose for the request. In the following sections each individual situation will be discussed. The first issue to be examined will be the participants' assessment of the weight of the request. This will be followed by a survey of the core request strategies selected by the Chinese participants in the given situation, plus their use external modifications.

Situation 1: Borrowing an expensive camera from a best friend

The mean weight in this request is 3.0, medium high. As shown in Table 6.6, the majority of the participants (18 out of 25) ranked it at level 2 or level 3; only one ranked it at the lowest level. While there is no social distance (D) or power difference (P) in this situation, the ranking of the imposition (R) is high, because of the potential risk of damage and because, if the addressee grants the request, s/he will be temporarily deprived of the use of the desired object.
The weight of the request is the smallest  1
The weight is level 2  8
The weight is level 3  10
The weight is level 4  1
The weight is level 5  5

Table 6.6 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 1

The only strategies the Chinese participants used in this situation are preparatory (36) and mood derivable (37). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 6.7.

(36) 能把你的相机借我用一下吗? (C 17)
Can [you] lend your camera to me for a bit?

(37) 我周六有个活动，把你的相机借我用用。 (C 2)
I will have an event on Saturday. Lend me your camera to use a bit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of the core requests</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable (imperative)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.7 Distribution of strategies in Chinese request situation 1
Although the preparatory strategy is the preferred strategy in this situation, mood derivable is a frequently used strategy as well. There are 10 Chinese participants who use it. The high frequency of the mood derivable strategy (imperative) may be due to the fact that this request is made to a best friend; it is also found in Situation 2, in which the addressee is likewise a close friend. It would appear that, when Chinese speakers make requests to their best friends, regardless of the weight of the request, they do not hesitate to use highly direct strategies like mood derivable without feeling the need to redress much. I will continue to explore this hypothesis in subsequent sections. In the meantime, observe that in (37), for example, even though the mood derivative is used, the verb, 用 ‘to use,’ is in the reduplicated form and has been analyzed (e.g., Chao (1968)) as in the tentative aspect, translated by adding the phrase, 'a bit'. In other words, the reduplicated form softens the request.

Of the 25 request utterances, 10 involve core requests only, and 15 include external modifications. Within the 10 requests without external modifications, 8 utilize the preparatory strategy and 2 mood derivable (imperative). Requests using mood derivable have their intention explicitly stated; this explains the tendency to include external modifications in order to minimize the imposition. Grounders are the favorite external modification used in this request (11 cases). There are also 4 cases of preparators, two uses of imposition minimizers, one appreciation and one reward.
Compared with American English informants and Russian participants, Chinese participants use a greater variety of external modifications in this request. For example, some of the Chinese students check on the availability when requesting the camera, a strategy that the participants of the other two languages did not employ.

**Situation 2: Borrowing money for lunch from a best friend**

As shown in Table 6.8, the mean weight of this request, as assessed by the Chinese participants, is 2.3, which is medium low. Most of the participants (15/25) rated the situation at the lowest two levels; only one rated at the highest level. While borrowing and lending money can be a sensitive issue, the weight of the request is offset in this situation by the lack of social distance, and probably also the fact that only a small quantity of money is involved.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 6 |
| The weight is level 2                    | 9 |
| The weight is level 3                    | 8 |
| The weight is level 4                    | 1 |
| The weight is level 5                    | 1 |

**Table 6.8 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 2**

In the Chinese data, the strategies utilized in this situation are: mood derivable (38), preparatory (39), hint (40) and choice selection intention (41). The distribution of
these strategies is given in Table 6.9.

(38) 你带钱了吗? 借我十元左右。(C 2)

Do you have money with you? Lend me around ten Yuan.

(39) 我忘记带饭卡和钱包了，你能借我点儿钱吗? (C 14)

I forgot to bring my meal card and wallet. Can you lend me a bit of money?

(40) 有没有带钱啊? 我去超市，回寝室就给你，我钱包没带。(C 5)

Do [you] have money with you? I’m going to the supermarket. [I] will give [it] back to you once I’m back to the dorm. I didn’t bring my wallet with me.

(41) 你现在有两个选择，一是请我吃饭，二是借我点儿钱。

否则我就得饿死了。(C18)

Right now you have two choices, one is to invite me for lunch, the other is to lend me some money. Otherwise, I am going to starve to death.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The total number of core requests</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mood derivable</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Choice selection strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.9 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 2
Table 6.9 shows the distribution of the requestive strategies among the Chinese speakers. The mood derivable (imperative) is the most used strategy in this request; it is almost twice as frequent as the preparatory. The use of imperative increases in Situation 2, as compared with Situation 1, presumably because the mean weight is smaller.

Within these 25 request utterances, 20 requests feature external modifications and 5 are without modifications. The most used external modification in this request is grounders (16 cases). There are also seven cases of imposition minimizers, 3 preparators, 1 threat, and 1 appreciation. The threat is purely humorous, as seen in (42); the participant added the hyperbole that he would starve to death if his best friend did not either treat him to lunch or lend him a bit of money so that he could buy lunch.

(42) 你现在有两个选择，一是请我吃饭，一是借我点钱，否则我就得饿死了。(C 18)

Right now you have two choices, one is to invite me for lunch, the other is to lend me some money. Otherwise, I am going to starve to death.

Spoken in an appropriate tone, this strategy implies a close, informal relationship between the speaker and the addressee.
Situation 3: Asking a stranger for directions

The Chinese participants considered this request for information low in imposition; its mean weight is 1.8—much lower than the requests for action in Situations 1 and 2 (3.0 and 2.3, respectively). As Table 6.10 shows, most of the participants (21 out of 25) assigned it to one of the two lowest levels, and only two assigned it to the highest level.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 13 |
| The weight is level 2                    | 8  |
| The weight is level 3                    | 1  |
| The weight is level 4                    | 1  |
| The weight is level 5                    | 2  |

Table 6.10 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 3

In the Chinese data, the strategies utilized in this situation are, in descending order of frequency, inquiry (43), preparatory (44) and mood derivable (45). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 6.11.

(43) 您好!请问校医院在哪儿? (C 20)

Hello, please [may I] ask where the university clinic is?

(44) 你好，能告诉我怎么才能到校医院吗? (C 2)
Hello, can [you] tell me how to get to university clinic?

(45) 麻烦您告诉我下去校医院怎么走可以吗? (C 8)

Sorry to bother you, tell me how to get to university clinic, can [you]?

Table 6.11 shows the distribution of the requestive strategies among the Chinese speakers. Since this request is a request for information, so its most used core request strategy is inquiry. Mood derivable is only used once in the request (45). Since (45) is a request addressed to a stranger, the mood derivable strategy includes an attention getter (in part, a politeness marker) 麻烦 ‘to bother’ plus an appealer (asking for permission); these make the request sound polite and phrased in a proper manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inquiry strategy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable (imperative)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.11 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 3

The attention getter 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ is widely used in this situation. It is a common way to ask a stranger for directions by using 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ plus inquiry strategy. It occurs 18 times.
Only three requests in this situation are accompanied by external modifications—three cases of grounders and one case each of appreciation and preparatory. The relatively infrequent use of external modifications in this request may be due to the fact the request is low in imposition. Moreover, like the speakers of the other languages, the Chinese participants tend not to resort to external modifications in questions addressed to strangers, where the encounters are typically intended to be as brief and inobtrusive as possible.

**Situation 4: Borrowing a pen or a pencil from a stranger**

As shown in Table 6.12, the mean weight of this request, as assessed by the Chinese participants, is 1.8, which is low. Most of the participants (20/25) rated the situation at the lowest two levels, and only one rated it at the highest level.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 10 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 10 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 1  |
| The weight is level 4                   | 2  |
| The weight is level 5                   | 1  |

Table 6.12 The weight assessment of Chinese request situation 4

In the Chinese data, the strategies utilized in this situation are, in descending order...
of frequency, preparatory (46) and mood derivable (47). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 6.13.

(46) 同学，我的笔没带，你可以借我用一下吗？谢谢！ (C 19)

Classmate, I didn’t bring my pen. Can [you] lend me your pen to use a bit? Thank you!

(47) 你的笔借我使下。忘带了我。 (C 25)

Lend me your pen to use a bit. [I] forgot to bring mine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The total number of request utterances</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.13 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 4

As Table 6.13 shows, the majority strategy (16 out 24) is preparatory, which is also the most frequent type of request overall in the Russian data. Although there are 8 requests using mood derivable for this request, most of them are using an appealer (5 cases) after the core requests or other politeness markers such as 请 ‘please’ and an external modification—grounders to mitigate the imposition.

Of the 24 request utterances collected for this situation, 18 involve only core
requests without external modifications. The only two external modifications used in this request is grounders (6 cases) and appreciations (3 cases).

**Situation 5: Asking a friend to help with moving**

As shown in Table 6.14, the majority of the informants (16 out of 25) ranked it at level 3 or 4, and only eight assigned it to the two lightest weights. This request for action makes considerable demands on the requestee's time and effort, though this is offset somewhat by the lack of social distance or power difference. The mean weight of this request, as assessed by the Chinese participants, is 3.0, which is medium high.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 1 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 7 |
| The weight is level 3                  | 10|
| The weight is level 4                  | 6 |
| The weight is level 5                  | 1 |

Table 6.14 The weight assessment of Chinese request situation 5

In the Chinese data, the strategies utilized in this situation are mood derivables (48), preparatory (49), need statement (50), and want statement (51). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 6.15.
(48)  来帮我搬家，完了请你吃大餐。（C 25）

Come and help me with moving. [I] will treat you to a feast after that.

(63)  我要搬家。能不能过来帮一下忙？(C 4)

I am going to move. Can [you] come and help me a bit?

(64)  搬家需要你的帮助。（C 6）

[I] need your help with moving.

(65)  你下周有时间吗？我下周搬家。我想请你帮我。（C 16）

Do you have time next week? I am going to move next week. I would like ask you to help me out a bit with that.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of request utterances</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mood derivable (imperative)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Need statement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want statement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.15 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 5

Table 6.15 shows the distribution of the requestive strategies among the Chinese speakers. Although the weight of the request is medium high, mood derivable is used relatively frequently and more than preparatory. This is one of the two requestive situations where the number of imperatives surpasses the preparatory, although only slightly in this request.

The majority of the requests make use of external modifications. Only 4 requests
occur without external modifications. In the remaining 21, the most frequent external modification is grounders (15 cases). There are also 11 uses of preparators, namely, to check if the addressee is available, since his/her availability is a crucial factor for this request to be realized. Other kinds of external modifications are also used, but with much less frequency: there are two cases of appreciation (thanks in advance), one of an imposition minimizer, and one promise of a reward.

**Situation 6: Asking a stranger what time it is**

As shown in Table 6.14, the majority of the informants (20 out of 25) ranked it at the two lightest weights, and only one assigned it to the highest weight. It is a request made to for information. The mean weight for this request is 1.9, low. Since requests for information usually demand little effort from the addressee, this is a low imposition request, even though a request is made to a stranger. Similarly, in Situation 3 (asking a stranger for the time), the mean weight is only 1.8.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 11 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 9  |
| The weight is level 3                  | 2  |
| The weight is level 4                  | 2  |
| The weight is level 5                  | 1  |

Table 6.16 The weight assessment of Chinese request situation 6
As seen in Table 6.17, the strategies the Chinese speakers chose in this situation are inquiry (66), and, to a much smaller extent, preparatory (67), and mood derivable (68). Since the request is used to ask for information, the most preferred strategy is naturally inquiry strategy with the attention getter ‘please [may I] ask’ preceding the core requests. Fifteen of the requests are made this way.

(66) 请问现在几点了? (C 2)

Please [may I] ask what time it is now?

(67) 能告诉我现在几点了吗? (C 4)

Can [you] tell me what time it is now?

(68) 帮我看一下几点了，谢谢。 (C 11)

Help me take look at what time it is, thank you.

| The total number of request utterances | 25 |
| 1. Inquiry strategy | 20 |
| 2. Preparatory | 4 |
| 3. Mood derivable | 1 |

Table 6.17 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 6
The only request which is assessed in the highest level weight (level 5) is made by simply asking a question, but with an external modification appreciation utilized.

Only 6 requests have external modifications in this situation, as in (68). It may be due to the low weight of the request. Typical for this request is an expression of appreciation following the core request. There are 4 cases of appreciation used subsequent to the core requests. Other kinds of external modifications used are compliment and grounder. Since this request is made to a stranger, alerters are widely used in order to either attract the addressee’s attention to the request or greeting and addressing the requestee appropriately to establish good rapport with the stranger to make the request as in (69). There are also 3 cases of terms of address used. In Chinese requests the term of address which is used to make a request to a stranger, who is also a student, is 同学 ‘student’.

(69) 你好，请问现在几点了？ (C 6)

Hello, please [may] I ask what time it is now?

**Situation 7: Borrowing a dictionary from an acquaintance**

As shown in Table 6.18, the majority of the informants (19 out of 25) ranked it at the two lightest weights, and only one assigned it to the highest weight. This is a request
made to an acquaintance. Among the factors that influence the assessments are the low social distance and power and the fact that the situation stipulates that the dictionary will be returned quickly. The mean weight for this request is 2, medium low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The weight of the request is the smallest</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The weight is level 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.18 The weight assessment of Chinese request situation 7

Table 6.19 shows the distribution of the requestive strategies among the Chinese speakers. Although the weight of the request is medium low, preparatory is used relatively frequently as in (70) and more than mood derivables (71).

(70) 同学，有几个单词我不认识，你的字典能借我用一会儿吗? (C 2)

Classmate, there are a few words I don’t know. Can [you] lend me your dictionary for a minute?

(71) 辞典借我用一下，我查个单词。谢谢。(C 5)

Lend me your dictionary to use for a minute. I need to look up one word. Thank you.
The total number of request utterances | 25
---|---
1. Preparatory | 15
2. Mood derivable | 10

| Table 6.19 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 7 |

Since this is a low imposition request, fewer external modifications are used compared with high-imposition requests like Situations 1 and 5. Only four requests are equipped with external modifications. This may be due to the low weight assessed for this request generally, and perhaps also to the fact that the encounter is evidently taking place during a classroom exercise, so that it needs to be as brief as possible. The external modifications used for this request are grounder (3 cases) and appreciation (2 cases).

Internal modifications are extensively used to modify the illocutionary force of this request. Since borrowing a dictionary to look up a word usually takes very little time, twenty-one of the Chinese speakers emphasize the brief duration of the desired action in order to reduce the imposition of the request, by downplaying the amount of time that the dictionary will be borrowed, as in (70) and (71).

**Situation 8: Asking an instructor to extend the deadline for a paper**

As this request is addressed to an instructor, there is a power difference between the interlocutors, and there is probably also some social distance. Therefore, it is not
surprising that the mean weight for this request is 3.9, high. As shown in Table 6.20, the majority of participants (18/20) ranked it at either 4 or 5 (the two highest ratings), and none ranked at the lowest level.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 0 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 3 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 4 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 11|
| The weight is level 5                   | 7 |

Table 6.20 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 8

In the English data, the strategies utilized in this situation are preparatory (72), intention (73), mood derivable (74), and want statement (75). The distribution of these strategies is given in Table 6.21. Given the power differential and weight of this request, it is not surprising that mood derivable (imperative) does not occur in this situation. There is also no room in this context to speak jokingly or teasingly, as in the case of situation 2, in borrowing money from one’s best friend to buy lunch.

The 4 strategies utilized for this request are preparatory (72), intention (73), mood derivable (74) and want statement (75).
(72) 老师对不起，我因为最近家里发生一些事情，

所以作业没有按时完成。能不能宽限几天? (C 1)

Teacher, sorry. Because some family matters came up recently, I could not finish the homework on time. Can you extend the deadline for a few days?

(73) 老师，我的作业忘带了。下午给你放到你学院的邮箱里行不? (C 11)

Teacher, I forgot to bring my homework. I will put it in your mailbox this afternoon, is that ok?

(74) 不好意思，我家里发生了一些事情，没有来得及做完作业。

再给我点儿时间我尽快交。 (C 21)

[I'm] embarrassed to say [but] some family matters came up, (so) [I] did not finish the homework in time. Give me a little more time. I will turn it in very soon.

(75) 对不起，老师，因为家里发生了一些事情，

所以我的作业没有按时完成。我希望你能够再给我些时间。

这次我会按时完成。 (C 22)

Sorry, teacher. Because some family matters came up, [I] did not finish my homework in time. I hope you can give me more time. This time I will finish [it] on time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The total number of requests</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Intention strategy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Want statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.21 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 8

Since the weight of the request is high, as shown in Table 6.21, in this situation much less mood derivable strategy is used; instead, the most frequent strategy is preparatory, and the second is intention. The requests using intention strategy in this situation are usually made from speaker’s perspective, i.e., have first-person subjects, as in (73). This makes the request sound like asking for permission, which makes it more indirect and hence polite.

In order to reduce the illocutionary force, extensive external modifications are also utilized. This is the only situation in the Chinese data that all of the request utterances utilize external modifications. Grounders are the most common type of external modification used in this request. On the one hand, this may due to the fact that the weight of the request in this situation is assessed to be high. On the other hand, since this request is made to an instructor, the norms of Chinese culture make it necessary to give a reason to the instructor to justify making the request culture. There are also
isolated cases of other external modifications: imposition minimizers (2 cases), apologies (2 cases), and appreciation (3 cases).

**Situation 9: Ask for giving a make-up exam**

This request is also addressed to an instructor, therefore there is a power difference between the interlocutors, and is probably also a social distance. Thus, it is not surprising that the mean weight for this request is 3.8, high. As shown in Table 6.22, the majority of participants (20/23) ranked it at either 4 or 5 (the two highest ratings), and only one ranked it at the lowest level.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 1 |
| The weight is level 2 | 1 |
| The weight is level 3 | 1 |
| The weight is level 4 | 11 |
| The weight is level 5 | 9 |

Table 6.22 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 9

As shown in Table 6.23, four strategies are utilized for this request: preparatory (76), mood derivable (77), explicit preformative (78), and want statement (79). The most frequent strategy is preparatory. Among the requests using preparatory strategy, more than half (8) feature negation as an internal modification.
(76) Teacher, because of illness I could not attend the mid-term exam. *Can [not you] give me a chance to take a make-up exam?*

(77) 十分抱歉我病了。所以没参加期中考试。

请您给我一次补考的机会。谢谢您。(C 8)

Very sorry that I was sick, so [*I*] could not attend the mid-term exam. *Please give me a chance to take a make-up exam. Thank you.*

(78) 老师，我非常想参加这次的期中考试来检验我的学习状况。

我希望你能够给我一次补考机会。(C 22)

Teacher, I want very much to attend this mid-term exam to check on the state of my study. *I hope you can to give me an opportunity to do a make-up exam.*

(79) 因为生病，请求补考机会。(C 6)

Because [*I*] was sick, [*I am*] asking for an opportunity to do a make-up exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The total number of requests</th>
<th>23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Want statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Explicit performatives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.23 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 9
Since the weight of this request is considered fairly high, internal modifications are used extensively. Except for the use of negation in the requests utilizing preparatory strategy, all six requests using mood derivable strategy either have the politeness marker ‘please’ and/or use an appealer to modify the illocutionary force of the requests.

Due to the high-imposition request, all but one of the requests in this situation feature external modifications. It is not surprising that the weight of the only one request without external modification is assessed as the lowest (level 1) by the Chinese subject.

The most used external modification is grounder. It seems common for the students to offer reasons when making this request. Other kinds of external modifications only have isolated cases of use: two cases of appreciation, one consequence, and one preparator.

**Situation 10: Borrowing a book from an advisor**

As shown in Table 6.24, the majority of the Chinese participants assigned it one of the two highest ratings (15/25), and two gave it the lowest rating. This request for action has a high mean weight of 3.6. The situation involves a power difference and also presumably some social distance, which accounts for the higher rankings (10 cases of rank 4).
The weight of the request is the smallest 2
The weight is level 2 1
The weight is level 3 7
The weight is level 4 10
The weight is level 5 5

Table 6.24 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 10

The distribution of the strategies for this request is shown in Table 6.25. The strategies used for this request are preparatory (80), mood derivable (81), and want statement (82). The most frequent strategy is preparatory. Only two imperatives are used in this request. In all situations, there is a tendency for fewer imperatives to be used the higher the weight of the request. The two requests with mood derivable (imperative) both include politeness markers serving as internal modifications to reduce the imposition.

(80) 老师，请问您我可不可以问您借一本书啊? (C 1)

Teacher, please [may I] ask if I can borrow a book from you?
Teacher, there is a book that I need urgently, but I wasn’t able to borrow [it] from the library. I was told that you have [it]. [Is it] convenient to lend it to me to take a look? When [I am] done, [I] will return [it] to you immediately.

Teacher, I want to borrow a book from you. I could not borrow it from the library. [I] don’t know. may [I]?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of requests</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mood derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Want statement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.25 The distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 10

This request is addressed to an advisor, so the weight of request is relatively high; therefore, all but two of the requests are mitigated by external modifications. The most frequent external modification used is grounders (36 cases). Others include imposition minimizers (4 cases) (to ensure the book will be returned soon, preparatory (8 cases) to see if the book is available with the advisor, compliment (2 cases), and appreciation (3 cases).
**Situation 11: Asking an instructor to make an appointment for consultation**

This request involves asking a favor from the advisor, therefore it has a high mean weight, 3.8. As shown in Table 6.26, the majority of the Chinese participants assigned it one of the two highest ratings (15/25); however, seven gave it the lowest two ratings. This discrepancy reflects two competing cultural norms—deference to teachers, on the one hand, and the understanding that advisors have responsibilities to their students, on the other.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 2          |
| The weight is level 2                    | 5          |
| The weight is level 3                    | 3          |
| The weight is level 4                    | 7          |
| The weight is level 5                    | 8          |

*Table 6.26 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 11*

As shown in Table 4.21, want, seen in examples (83), is the most common strategy in this request. Other strategies are preparatory (84), need statement (85), hint (86), and mood derivable (87).
(83) Teacher, [I] have a question and want to ask your advice. Now that I bumped into you, do [you] have time?

(84) Can [I] ask your advice on a few questions about the thesis?

(85) Teacher, please [may I] ask if you have time soon? I need to ask your advice on my thesis.

(86) Teacher, do you have time right now?

(87) Teacher, I encounter some thorny questions in [my] thesis. When will you have free time? Help me a bit to answer those questions. Thanks!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of requests</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Want statement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparatory</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Need statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mood derivable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.27 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 11
In this request the most frequently used type is the want strategy, which states the desires of the requestors. All of the 12 requests that use this strategy are accompanied by an external modification, preparatory, to check on the instructors’ availability. It may be a conventionalized way of making requests to make an appointment in Chinese culture to state the desire to meet the instructor while checking on his/her availability.

The one request using mood derivable includes the politeness marker ‘help’, which makes the request more acceptable to address an advisor.

Since it is a high-imposition request, all but four of the requests are accompanied by external modifications. The four requests which do not use external modifications utilize preparatory or hint strategy in their core requests. It means that a request using a more apparent means of indicating illocutionary force in the core requests tend to contain external modifications to minimize the imposition of the request. The most common strategy used in this request is preparator (19 cases). Other kinds of external modifications used involve three cases of grounders and one of appreciation.

**Situation 12: Asking an instructor to write a letter of recommendation**

For the Chinese participants, the mean weight for this request is 3.9, high. As shown in Table 6.28, only one of the participants gave it the lowest ranking; the majority
assigned it one of the two highest ratings (17/25). The relative weight of the ranking can be explained in part by the power difference (and perhaps also social distance) that exists between the requester and the requestee. Moreover, the requested act requires the requestee to expend substantial time and effort to realize the request.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 1 |
| The weight is level 2                  | 2 |
| The weight is level 3                  | 5 |
| The weight is level 4                  | 7 |
| The weight is level 5                  | 10 |

Table 6.28 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 12

In the Chinese data, given in Table 6.29, the strategies utilized for this request are preparatory (88), mood derivable (89), want statement (90), and hint strategy (91). It is not surprising to see that the most frequent strategy is preparatory.

(88) 老师，能不能帮忙写一个推荐信? (C 4)
Teacher, can [you] help [me by agreeing] to write a letter of recommendation?

(89) 老师，我正在找工作，帮我写封推荐信，行吗? (C 13)
Teacher, I am looking for a job right now. Help me [by agreeing] to write a letter of recommendation, is it ok?
Teacher, I am looking for a job right now. I would like to ask you to write a letter of recommendation for me.

Teacher, do you have time? I want to ask you for a favor. I am looking for a job right now and lacking one letter of recommendation. I thought about that a lot and you are the most suitable to write it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The total number of requests</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Want statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.29 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 12

The two requests using mood derivable strategy include appealer and external modifications in the requests.

Most of the requests feature external modifications; only 6 are without them. All six requests without external modifications used the preparatory strategy in the core requests. The most preferred external modification for this request is grounders to provide reasons for making the request. There are also other isolated kinds of external
modifications: three cases of compliments, three cases of appreciations, and one of imposition minimizer.

**Situation 13: Asking a librarian to help find a book**

The mean weight for this request is 2.5, the medium. As shown in Table 6.30, only five of the Chinese participants assign the weight to the level 4 and level 5. However, compared with the weight assessed by participants from the other two languages, the weight in Chinese requests for this situation is the highest, at 2.5. The American English and Russian informants assigned it 2.0 and 1.6 respectively. Although helping students finding books may be viewed as a routine part of a librarian's duties, in Chinese culture librarians are treated with almost the same respect as instructors. This may explain why the weight assessed by Chinese informants is the highest.

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 4 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 5 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 8 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 1 |
| The weight is level 5                   | 4 |

Table 6.30 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 13
The distribution of request strategies in the Chinese data is given in Table 6.31.

The most common strategy is preparatory (92), with 16 examples. Other strategies used are: inquiry (95), mood derivable (94), and hint strategy (96).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The total number of requests</th>
<th>23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preparatory</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inquiry strategy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mood derivable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hint strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.31 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 13
Although the weight of this request is medium, preparatory is the most frequent strategy used. The only two requests using mood derivable strategy include either politeness marker ‘please’ or internal modification and appealer.

In this situation there are four requests using inquiry strategy. It might be the case that the requesters only ask for information and will find the book themselves based on the information obtained, or the primary illocutionary intention is to ask the librarian to help find the book for him or her.

Only 6 out of the 23 requests involve external modifications. Grounders are the most frequent external modification, with 22 cases. Other external modifications used in this situation include compliment (2 cases), appreciation (3 cases), and embarrassment.

**Situation 14: Asking the receptionist if the chair is in the office**

The Chinese participants deemed this to be a medium low-imposition request; its mean weight is 2.1. As shown in Table 6.32, the majority of the students (16) rated this request at the two lowest levels; only one put it at level 4, and only one at level 5.
The weight of the request is the smallest
The weight is level 2
The weight is level 3
The weight is level 4
The weight is level 5

| The weight of the request is the smallest | 9 |
| The weight is level 2                   | 7 |
| The weight is level 3                   | 7 |
| The weight is level 4                   | 1 |
| The weight is level 5                   | 1 |

Table 6.32 The weight assessment in Chinese request situation 14

As shown in Table 6.33, the strategies utilized in this situation are inquiry (96), want statement (97), and mood derivable (98).

(96) 你好! 请问系主任在吗? (C 7)
Hello, please [may I] ask if the department chair is in?

(97)  老师, 我想问一下, 系主任在办公室吗? (C 2)
Teacher, I want to ask if the department chair is in his office?

(98)  我想找系主任。如果看到他, 麻烦你告诉我。谢谢。(C 22)
I need to find the department chair. If [you] see him, [may I] bother you to tell me. Thank you.
The total number of requests | 25  
---|----  
1. Inquiry strategy | 23  
2. Mood derivable | 1  
3. Want statement | 1  

Table 6.33 Distribution of strategies used in Chinese request situation 14

The only request using mood derivable strategy includes internal modification and external modifications to reduce the illocutionary force as in (98). Since it is a request for information, the inquiry is the most preferred strategy used. In this request, the inquiry strategy plus the alerter 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ is the most common way to make this request.

As might be expected, 22 of the 25 requests do not have any external modifications. The external modifications used in this situation are grounders and appreciations. One of the reasons for the paucity of external modifications may be due to the low weight of the request. Another possible reason might be that it is not common to specify the reasons or to use other external modifications in this situation in Chinese culture.
6.6. Summary of the Chinese data

In chapter 6, I have discussed the requestive features used by the Chinese participants in each of the 14 situations on the questionnaire. I have focused on discussed the weight of the request, the core requests strategies, and external modifications.

While the imperative (mood derivable) is frequent in my data, it is not predominant; this contradicts Lee-Wong's (1994) claim that the imperative is the predominant requestive strategy in Chinese. In her study, 72 Chinese informants used imperative in their core requests, constituting 20.9% of a total of 345 Chinese requests in that study. By contrast, in my data, the most used core request strategy is preparatory. In general, I have found that, the greater the weight of the request, the fewer the number of imperatives used. However, this generalization does not apply to situations when requests are made to best friends (Situations 1, 2, and 5). Even though the weight of requests made to a best friend is relatively high in Situations 2 and 5 (mean weights of 2.3 and 3.0, respectively), the most commonly used core request strategy is, in fact, the imperative. Likewise, in Situation 1 (borrowing an expensive camera from a best friend), although the weight is relatively high (mean 3.0), a large number of imperative are used (10.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Total number of imperatives</th>
<th>72</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Imperative without external modifications</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Plain imperative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.34 Use of imperatives in Chinese requests

As shown in Table 6.34, very often when imperatives are used in Chinese requests, they are not used alone; they are often accompanied by external modifications. Among the 72 Chinese requests that use the imperative in the core requests, only 22 appear without external modifications; of these, only 10 involve plain imperatives, without the politeness marker ‘please’ or other internal modifications.

The most used core request in Chinese requests is preparatory. In my data, in general, the greater the weight of the request, the more preparatory is used, except, as noted above, in requests made best friends.

In requests for information, my data confirm Lee-Wong’s (1994) finding that the most preferred way of making requests is to use 请问 ‘Please [let me] ask’ + simple question. In my study, this is categorized as 请问 ‘Please [let me] ask’ + inquiry strategy.

My Chinese data show a rich use of terms of address and attention-getters serving to compensate for the force of requests. Terms of address are used in many of the
requestive situations: to a best friend, to a stranger, to a classmate, and especially to a
professor or advisor. It is common to start a request to a professor or advisor by
addressing them by their title or role.

External modifications are frequently used in Chinese requests as well, with
59.1% of Chinese requests accompanied by external modifications. The most used
external modification is grounders, which provide reasons for making the requests. There
are 148 out of 197 grounders (75.1%) that are preposed to the core requests. The rich use
of alerters and the high percentage of use of preposed grounders partly indicate that
Chinese participants make special efforts to establish clear lines of communication for
making their requests.
CHAPTER 7

COMPARISON OF THE DATA FROM THE THREE LANGUAGES

Various factors have influence on the linguistic means the speaker employs when making a request. These include both situational factors and social ones. In their classic study of linguistic politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose that the three variables of relative power, social distance between the speaker and the addressee, and the absolute ranking of imposition are the most important factors in determining which strategy the speaker will select to make a request. In subsequent literature, there has been an increasing focus on how cultural factors can influence the ways in which speakers form requests. Such cultural factors, in my view, interact with the situational and social factors, lead to different culturally-colored assessments of situational and social factors, and thus result in culturally specific assessments of the total weight of the request. Eventually the speaker, the carrier of the culturally specific ways of thinking, makes the
final ‘appropriate’ choice for the given context. The ‘appropriateness’, in a sense, lies in the fact that the request complies with the culture of the society the addressee lives in; this makes the addressee feel comfortable and, as a result, makes it more likely that the addressee will cooperate and fulfill the request made by the speaker. Thus, the cultural factors, along with the situational and social factors, determine the choice of the request strategy and are involved in every step of the request-making process, including the ‘post-request portion’. The ‘post-request portion’ is similar, in a sense, to the ‘perlocutionary act’ introduced by Searle (1969), which is the effect produced on the addressee by the request.

The influence of cultural factors on how requests are made is most evident in cross-cultural communication, when the interlocutors have different social rules and manners of performance and, as a result, misunderstanding is likely to occur. In order to prevent possible breakdowns in cross-cultural communication, the interlocutors have to be constantly sensitive to the differences in social rules or manners of performance and therefore reach the necessary level of understanding to ensure smooth communication.

The present research has focused on one of the most frequently used communicative acts, requests, in order to reveal the similarities and differences in the performance of speech acts by people from three different languages. In this chapter, each of the 14 situations in the questionnaire is analyzed separately. Comparison of the
data obtained from the three different languages will reveal major differences in how requests are formed, which reflect the cultural differences in the three speech communities.

Although our intention is to compare a wide range of requests in the three different languages, occasionally it will also be necessary to make comparisons within a single language among the different situations (see also Chapters 4–6).

7.1. Situation 1: Borrowing an expensive camera from a best friend

7.1.1. Weight of the request

The overall weight of the request assessed by the participants is at medium high in Chinese (3.0), but high in Russian (3.8) and English (3.6). Power differences are not relevant in this situation, and the absolute rank of the imposition is the same for all three languages. This suggests that the remaining social variable—the degree of familiarity—plays the major role in this situation in reducing the overall weight for this situation in Chinese, as compared with Russian and English. I will continue to explore this hypothesis in subsequent sections.
7.1.2. Core request strategies

The strategy preferred by participants from all three cultures is preparatory, as in examples (1–2). However, more of the American English-speaking participants (20) choose this strategy than Russian or Chinese speakers (15 each).

(1) Can I please borrow your camera? If I break it, I’ll buy it. (AE 2)
(2) Ты не могла бы одолжить мне фотоаппарат, пожалуйста? (R 1)

Could you not lend me your camera, please?

More of the Chinese participants (10 cases) utilize the ‘direct’ strategy—mood derivable—than Russian (8 cases) ones, while none of the American English-speaking informants use it. The discrepancy between the Chinese and Russian responses is not surprising if we assume (as generally in the literature) that directness is in inverse proportion to weight, given that, as discussed above, the Chinese informants tended to assess the weight of the request lower than did the Russian participants. In addition, comparison with other situations in my data suggests that the Chinese speakers have less hesitation about making demands on close friends than the participants from other cultures. One of the Chinese examples with the imperative provides additional evidence for this hypothesis (3):
Apart from the use of the mood derivable, the speaker minimizes the distance from the addressee by using 咱们的‘our’ (inclusive 1st person plural) to make the request as if it were from an inclusive perspective, including the addressee and himself/herself as the owners of the camera to indicate a close relationship (Brown and Levinson 1987: 127). The request also contains a sentence-final particle, bei 呗, which softens the request, weakening the utterance from a command to a more of a suggestion, and the imposition minimizer yixia 一下 'a little', to minimize the potential duration that the camera would be borrowed.

These findings contradict the prevalent cultural stereotypes that native Chinese speakers tend to be ‘indirect’, while native Russian speakers tend to be very ‘direct’. Such overly general characterizations pose a danger of inaccuracy, especially when context is not taken into account.

In this light, it is interesting to examine another Chinese request in which the speaker begins by checking the availability of the camera and proceeds to state his or her needs and possible future action without seeking agreement or permission from the addressee first (4):
Will you be using your camera? I'll use it a bit on Sunday.

This request, when not accompanied by any tag questions such as 行吗? ‘is it ok?’ or 好吗? ‘is it all right?’, is perceived as quite direct and not particularly polite, especially with a relatively big favor such as borrowing an expensive camera. However, judging from my data, it may be an appropriate way to address one's best friend in China. It could be inferred from the request that the relationship between the speaker and addressee is very strong and very close. Using more politeness or formality in such a context would be considered excessive and may make both the speaker and the addressee feel uncomfortable.

Two of the Russian participants employ the intention strategy, which is a typical way of making requests in Russian (Mills 1993). It usually involves a second person subject (5). This strategy may sound too direct to American English speakers (Daniel Collins, personal communication).

Will [you] give me your camera for a couple of days?

The mind strategy, which does not have counterparts in Russian or Chinese, is
used by one American English-speaking participant for this request (5):

(6) I have a school project that requires some photos; Do you mind if I use your camera? It’ll only be for a day or so. (AE 8)

To native speakers of Chinese, the literary translation of this strategy sounds more like an informational question inquiring whether the addressee would find something a nuisance. This shows that the given strategy is not conventionalized for requests in Chinese.

The permission strategy only appears in English requests, since in Chinese and Russian there is no specific lexical means for distinguishing permission from preparatory strategy, as in English may (7) vs. can (8). By means of using permission strategy, the speaker conventionally offers the addressee the authority to give his or her permission to do the act; this puts the speaker in a subordinate position to the addressee and accordingly makes the request sound more polite.

(7) May I borrow your camera? I have a club activity this weekend. (AE 9)

(8) Can I please borrow your camera? If I break it, I’ll buy it. (AE 2)
7.1.3. Internal modifications

One of the most frequent internal modifications is the negation of the verb in the preparatory and intention strategies. This means of reducing the illocutionary intensity of the request appears in the Chinese and Russian data (4 and 6 cases, respectively), but not in the American English data. A Russian example can be seen in (9).

(9) Ты не могла бы одолжить мне фотоаппарат, пожалуйста? (R 1)

Could you not lend me [your] camera, please?

In the Chinese data, negation of the verb occurs only in requests with the preparatory strategy. Among the 10 cases of preparatory strategy in Situation 1, only 4 feature the negation of the verb. In the Russian data, by contrast, negation of the verb takes place in requests with both preparatory and intention strategies. In Situation 1, there are 2 Russian requests that use the intention strategy, and 15 that use preparatory. One of the requests with intention involves negation, as do four of requests with preparatory. All of the cases of negated preparatory are in the conditional and feature the second person of the verb.

Another way to modify the illocutionary intensity, and hence to lower the imposition of the request, is to shift the mood of the verb from the indicative to the conditional/subjunctive (irrealis) (Brown and Levinson 1987:173). This internal modification is found in both the Russian data and in the American English data, as in
(10). In Russian this use of the conditional is typically combined with negation of the verb, as in (9), above.

(10) Could I please use your camera this weekend? (AE 23)

There is no comparable construction in Chinese, since there is no difference between indicative and subjunctive mood.

Another culturally variable internal modification is the use of different second-person forms. Unlike English, Chinese has two categories of second-person pronouns: informal 你, used to address someone who is close in relationship or younger, and formal 您, used to show respect to someone who is higher in power, senior, or older. Depending on the person with whom the speaker is talking, s/he will select one of the pronouns accordingly. Improper use of either of these pronouns can cause offense by suggesting a perception that the interlocutors are more intimate (你) or more distant (您) than the addressee expects. The same situation is found in Russian, where ты ‘you (informal)’ and вы ‘you (formal)’ correspond to 你 and 您, respectively. In the data for this request, I expected all the Chinese participants to choose use 你 ‘you (informal)’ and all Russian participants to select ты ‘you (informal)’ to address the addressees because of the close relationship stipulated between them. This prediction turned out to be correct for both the Chinese and the Russian data.
A further internal modification is the choice of the verb in the core request. Not surprisingly, given the nature of the situation, the main verbs that appear in this situation are ‘borrow’, ‘lend’, and ‘use’. In Chinese, there is only one word 借, which encompasses the meaning of both ‘borrow’ and ‘lend’ in English, depending on the syntactic valency. Likewise, in Russian the verb 借 can be translated as either borrow or lend in English, again depending on the syntactic valency.

With regard to the verb used in making this request, the majority of the American English-speaking participants (19 out of 25) use borrow, as in example (11), while another five select the verb use, as in example (10), above. (The remaining informant declined to offer any request locution because the weight was too high.)

(11) Can I please borrow your camera? If I break it, I’ll buy it. (AE 2)

Lend is not used even once in the American English data for this request. If the verb borrow is used, then it would mean that the request is made from the speaker’s perspective as in examples (10) and (11). I would argue that this is a redressive strategy. A request made from a speaker’s perspective sounds more like asking for permission; the direct locutionary meaning of the request demands little from the addressee, offers the addressee a form of authority, and thus sounds more polite.

Quite the opposite situation takes place in the Chinese requests. Here a majority
of the participants (18 out of 25) use 借—15 in the meaning ‘lend’, as in (12), but only 3
借 in the meaning ‘borrow’, as in (13). The remaining seven participants choose 用 in the
meaning ‘use’, as in (14). In some of the requests, a combination of 借 ‘borrow/lend’ and
用 ‘use’ is utilized, as in (12).

(12) 你可以把你的相机 借我 用一下吗? (C 24)
Can you lend me your camera to use for a moment?

(13) 我可以 借 一下你的照相机吗? (C 23)
Can I borrow your camera for a moment?

(14) 我周末要去参加一个活动，能 用 一下你的相机吗? (C 3)
I am going to an activity this weekend. Can [I] use your camera a bit?

In the Russian data, a greater variety of verbs is used for the core request:
одолжить 'lend/borrow'; попользоваться или пользоваться 'use', as in example (15);
дать 'give' (16); and взять 'take' (17).

(15) Я могу пользоваться твоим фотоаппаратом несколько дней? (R 15)
Can I use your camera for a few days?

(16) Я в поход собираюсь, много красивых мест будет. Дай мне свой фотоаппарат на это время, ok? (R 10)
I am going camping. There will be many pretty places. Give me you camera for
that time, ok?
In Russian, as in Chinese, there is a preference for using the equivalent of English lend in this request. There are 12 cases of одолжить ‘borrow/lend’; of these, nine involve a second-person subject (‘lend’), as in example (9), above, while only three involve a first-person subject (‘borrow’), as in example (18).

(18) Можно у тебя одолжить фотоаппарат на время? Я буду очень аккуратно с ним обращаться. (R 2)

Can [I] borrow your camera for a while? I will handle it very carefully.

Another internal modification worth noting is that most of the Chinese participants use null subjects when making their requests. Apart from requests with imperative structures (mood derivable), there are only two requests that feature explicit subjects; the remaining 13 requests utilize null subjects. Judging from the context, of these null subjects, ten are second person, and three are first person. At the same time, this implies that the meaning ‘lend’ is used more than ‘borrow’ in Chinese requests; if the subject is 你 ‘you (informal)’, the verb 借 should be in the meaning of ‘lend’. By contrast, in the American English data there is only one example with a null
subject/agent, which is possible only because of an embedding construction): "Would it be possible to borrow your camera, please?" (AE14). Here the first-person agent is left implicit, and the word *please* makes it clear that the sentence is a request. Note that "Would it be possible for me to borrow your camera, please" is an acceptable locution in English (Daniel E. Collins, personal communication). The attested request is made from an impersonal perspective, which, I would argue, makes the locution sound very tentative and indirect.

Of the Russian requests, apart from those with imperative structures, there are five with null subjects. Unlike Chinese, Russian is an inflectional language; thus the verb ending will indicate in which person the subject is. For instance, in *Дашь мне свой фотоаппарат на пару дней?* "[You] will give me your camera for a couple of days?" (R22), *Дашь* 'give' is inflected in the second-person singular future. However, when an infinitive plus non-inflecting modal is used, null subjects are possible, in which case the perspective can be ambiguous. Therefore, in our data, pronouns in an oblique case or possessive adjectives are consistently used, apparently in order to eliminate the possibility of confusion. This can be seen in (18), above, where the pronoun appears in the prepositional phrase *у тебя* 'from you'; this shows unambiguously that the verb *одолжить* is being used in the meaning 'borrow'. As I suggested above, this may be a redressive strategy that puts the requestee as it were in the position of an authority.
All three languages have a specific formula (‘please’) to make requests sound more polite, but the usage of this strategy is different across the three groups. The Chinese participants who choose mood derivable (imperative) in situation 1 do so exclusively without using this politeness marker. The absence of ’please’ in this situation in the Chinese data is understandable, because (as I know from my own perceptions and informal discussion with other native speakers) Chinese speakers do not use ‘please’ with close friends or family members. Doing so would be 见外了, which implies that the speaker would be treating the addressee as an outsider, putting him/her into the category of more distant people, because the politeness marker ‘please’ is only used with 外 ‘outsiders’ in Chinese culture. Thus, the politeness marker ‘please’ should be used with care in Chinese; as it may cause offense either to a close friend or a stranger when used in inappropriate contexts.

By contrast, ‘please’ is possible in this situation for both the Russian and the American English speakers. Contrary to Mills’ (1993) statement that пожалуйста ‘please’ is found only with the imperative (mood derivable), the Russian participants demonstrate that they can use it optionally not only with the imperative (4 cases) but also with the preparatory strategy (1 case), as in example (2), above. For the American English speakers, it is common to use please to address a best friend or close family members, as well as more socially distant addressees. Eight of the 20 American English-
speaking participants who use preparatory strategy in this situation also utilize please, as in example (1), above.

Finally, we can note the use of temporal adverbials as internal modifiers. In Chinese, 一下 ‘for a moment' as in example (19) or 下 'for a moment', are usually employed after the verb or repetition of the verb, as in example (20). These reduce the imposition to some extent by emphasizing its short duration. A majority of the Chinese requests (22 cases) in situation 1 exemplify this usage.

(19) 能把你的相机借我用一下吗? (C 17)

Can [you] lend me your camera for a moment?

(20) 哥儿们，能不能借我用用相机啊? (C 7)

Brother, can [you] lend me your camera for a moment?

This usage is quite characteristic of the Chinese data; there are also similar cases in the Russian and American English data. The are 8 requests where American English speakers mention using the camera either for the weekend (6 cases), as in (10), above, or just for the evening (2 cases), while in Russian, there are 12 requests which emphasize the duration of the loan—one case of на неделю ‘for a week’, two case of на несколько дней ‘for a few days’, three cases of на пару дней ‘for a couple of days’, three cases of на время ‘for a while’, and three cases of на выходные ‘for the weekend’. The
difference among the use in three languages is that the Chinese informants minimize the duration by saying ‘a little’, rather than mentioning specific time periods. This way of making the request may to some extent, reduce the imposition; however, it is only in wording, as in reality ‘a little’ could even imply that the camera would be borrowed for an entire weekend.

7.1.4. Alerters

A second issue that needs to be mentioned is the use of terms of address. Chinese personal names usually consist of a surname and a given name. The given name is usually used among family members and close friends; when addressing a stranger or less familiar addressees, it is typical to use full names or surnames plus titles. There are no examples of the use of a given name in Situation 1. However, there are other terms of address: one participant uses the address form 兄弟 ‘brother’, two others 哥们儿 ‘brother (colloquial)’, and one other 亲爱的 ‘dear’. In the Russian data, one female informant uses дорогой ‘dear (masculine)’, which suggests that she envisions the relationship to be a romantic one. However, in English there is no comparable use of address forms in this situation. The Chinese and Russian examples all seem to be positive politeness strategies used to build solidarity in a high-imposition situation.
7.1.5. External modifications

With regard to the external modifications used, the Chinese participants offer reasons (use grounders) more frequently than either the American English or the Russian speakers in this situation. Grounders appear in 13 of the Chinese requests as in example (14), but in only 6 of the Russian as in example (16) and 9 of the English responses in this situation as in example (7). If reasons are offered, they tend to occupy the position which precedes the core requests in all three languages. This is the case with 7 out of the 13 Chinese grounders, 5 out of the 6 Russian grounders, and 5 out of the 9 English grounders. Comparison with subsequent request situations shows that there is a positive association between the use of grounders and higher mean weights of the requests.

Compared with the Chinese participants, the American English and Russian speakers tend to prefer imposition minimizers to accompany the core requests rather than grounders. Ten of the American English-speaking as in example (8) and nine of the Russian participants as in example (18) use imposition minimizers, while only two of the Chinese informants do. It seems that due to the nature of the request, in which some potential risk may ensue to the addressee by lending the camera to the speaker, the action of reassuring the addressee by promising to take a good care of it makes the requests more likely to be realized. The fact that the Chinese speakers are less concerned about this might be due to the lower weight that they ascribe to this request and, concomitantly,
to apparent cultural norms that allow great informality and heavy impositions among close friends, to which I alluded above. Regardless of the language, all the imposition minimizers stand exclusively after the core requests, since they are premised on the latter.

Besides reasons and imposition minimizers, preparators, promises of reward, and compliments are also used to complement the core requests in situation 1. One of the Chinese participants uses a promise of reward, and one of the Russian participants employs a compliment. The external modification preparators (4 cases) are used solely by the Chinese participants (21).

(21) 你的相机有用没有？我星期天用一下。(C 4)

Will you be using your camera? I will use it on Sunday for a moment.

7.2. Situation 2: Borrowing money for lunch from a best friend

7.2.1. Weight of the request

All three language groups assessed this request at a medium-low level of imposition. The mean weight for both the American English and Russian speakers is same, 2.2, while for the Chinese participants the weight is only slightly higher, 2.3. Not surprisingly, for participants from all three cultures, the overall weight of borrowing an expensive camera is much greater than that of borrowing lunch money.
7.2.2. Core request strategies

The majority of the American English speakers (20 out of 25) use the preparatory strategy in this situation. By contrast, far fewer of the Russian and Chinese participants do so (5 out of 25 and 8 out of 25, respectively.) Instead, in both groups, the most frequent core request strategy in Situation 2 is mood derivable (imperative). The number of mood derivables used in Chinese (15 out of 25) and Russian (12 out of 25) in the request for borrowing lunch money is considerably greater than that in the higher-weight request to borrow a camera.

Like Situation 1, Situation 2 bears out the claim made often in previous literature on politeness that English speakers tend not to make extensive use of mood derivable in requests. Only one of the American English-speaking participants actually uses this strategy in the given situation (22). Here the imperative has an explicit subject, which is atypical and emphatic with the imperative structure; moreover, some native speakers find that the locution *You buy* is formulaic in contexts involving the purchase of meals or drink (Daniel E. Collins, personal communication).

(22)  You buy lunch today. I’ll get it next time. (AE 6)

In the previous situation, the request to borrow a camera, which was deemed higher in
weight, the mood derivable strategy was not used at all.

All this points to an interesting fact: for both the Chinese and the Russian participants, as the overall weight of the request decreases, the use of preparatory also decreases markedly, but the use of mood derivable (imperative) increases. By contrast, for the American English-speaking participants, the number of preparatory strategies used remains the same in both situations. A comparison of the use of preparatory and mood derivable in Situations 1 and 2 is given in Table 7.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Request of borrowing camera (relatively bigger weight)</th>
<th>Request of borrowing lunch money (relatively smaller weight)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>Mood derivable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1 Distribution of preparatory and mood derivable in situations 1 and 2

In asking to borrow lunch money, 3 of the Russian participants use the hint strategy (26), as do two of the American English and one of the Chinese speakers (27). By contrast, none of the participants used hints in asking to borrow an expensive camera.
(26) Спешила утром и забыла кошелёк свой. У тебя есть до завтра 10 долларов для меня? Обязательно завтра отдам. (R 13)

I was in hurry this morning and forgot my wallet. Do you have $10 for me until tomorrow? [I] will pay [you] back tomorrow for sure.

(27) 有没有带钱啊？我去趟超市，回寝室就还给你，我钱包没带。(C 5)

Do [you] have money with you? I’m going to the supermarket. [I] will give [it] back to you once I’m back to the dorm. I didn’t bring my wallet with me.

The 4 Russian participants and 1 Chinese participant who use the hint strategy make the request by checking on the availability of the money; they may also give reasons for the request or include imposition minimizers. Only one of the American English-speaking participants checks the availability of money when making the request (28):

(28) I forgot my lunch money. Do you have spare money I can borrow? (AE 7)

Here, the core request in example (28) is classified as using hint strategy, because "I can borrow" is only incorporated into the question as a relative clause modifying the noun money; thus the surface meaning of the locution (as opposed to the requestive illocution) is to check whether money is available. While in (28) the core request is preceded by a reason (i.e., a grounder), there are two other requests (29–30) in the American English data that use the hint strategy solely by stating the reason.

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(29) But I am so hungry. (AE 24)

(30) I forgot to bring my wallet today. (AE 4)

7.2.3. Internal modifications

Negation of the verb in the preparatory strategy is used much less as an internal modification in the Chinese data in this situation, as compared with the requests for borrowing camera; it is used only once (31). This is simply and strictly a neutral yes-no question form using the “A-not-A” structure.

(31) 能不能借我几块钱? 我忘带饭卡了。（C 23）

Can [you] lend me a few dollars? I forgot to buy my meal card.

By contrast, in the Russian requests the number of negated uses in the preparatory strategy remains the same. In the Russian preparatory and intention strategies, negation of the verb has become the norm, and unnegated cases are relatively infrequent and less conventionalized. Negation of the verb in the preparatory and intention strategies is not attested at all in the English data.

Of the 20 American English requests with preparatory strategy in Situation 2, fifteen have can and 5 could. Here the proportion of can to could is much higher than in
the requests to borrow an expensive camera (12:8). This suggests that there is a tendency for the more indirect could to be used more as the weight of the requests increases.

In Situation 1, as expected, all the Chinese and Russian participants use informal pronouns in addressing their best friends—你 ‘you (informal)’ and ты ‘you (informal)’, respectively.

With respect to the verbs used in this request, the situation is different from the requests to borrow a camera. A wide variety of verbs are found in the English requests. While borrow (32) is the most frequent lexeme (16 cases), as in the requests for borrowing a camera, there are also two cases of lend (33), two of spot (34), one of loan (35), and one of buy (36).

(32) Can I borrow $10? (AE 5)
(33) Can you lend me $10 for lunch? (AE 9)
(34) Hey, can you spot me 10 bucks for lunch? I’ll pay you back when I get cash. (AE 19)
(35) I forgot my wallet. Will you loan me $10? (AE 2)
(36) You buy lunch today. I’ll get it next time! (AE 6)

As discussed above, 借 in Chinese can be the equivalent of ‘borrow’ or ‘lend’, depending on the context. In addition to 借 (22 cases), seen in (37), there is one case of
用 'use' (38), and one of 请 'invite' (39).

(37)  借我点钱吧，我今天忘带了。 (C 3)

      How about lending me a bit of money. I forgot to bring [some] today.

(38)  饭卡用一下，我的忘带了。 (C 10)

      [Let me] use your meal card a moment. [I] forgot to bring mine.

(39)  请我吃饭，没带钱包。 (C 25)

      Invite me to eat. [I] didn’t bring my wallet.

Of the 22 cases of 借, five are ambiguous and can be understood either as ‘borrow’ or as ‘lend’ (40). The remaining 17 instances are all clearly used in the sense of ‘lend’ (41).

(40)  借点钱，下午就还。 (C 4)

      Lend [borrow] a bit of money, [I] will return [it] this afternoon.

(41)  你带钱了吗？借我10元左右。 (C 2)

      Did you bring any money with you? Lend me around 10 yuan.

In the Russian requests, apart from the four cases of hints discussed above, the
majority of the requests (16 cases) use the lexeme одолжить ‘lend or borrow’ (42). There are also two requests with дать ‘give’ (43), two with займа́ть ‘loan’ (44), and one with найти ‘find’ (45). Among the 16 cases of одолжить, 14 occur in the meaning of ‘lend’, 2 in the meaning ‘borrow’.

(42) Одалъи 10 баксов на обед. (R 4)
Lend [me] $10 for lunch.

(43) Я деньги дома оставил. Дай 10 долларов до завтра? (R 10)
I left [my] money at home. Give me $10 until tomorrow?

(44) Займи мне 10 долларов. (R 9)
Lend me $10.

(45) Найдешь мне 10 баксов на обед? (R 16)
Will [you] find 10 bucks for me for lunch?

In the Russian data, excluding the requests with mood derivable (where null subjects are stylistically neutral) and with the hint strategy, only there are two requests with null subjects among the requests using preparatory strategy, while 7 others feature explicit subjects. In the Chinese data, by contrast, excluding the requests with the mood derivable and hint strategies, six of the nine remaining requests have null subjects, as in (46).
Can [you] lend me a few dollars? I forgot to bring my meal card.

When it comes to the use of the politeness formula ‘please’, as discussed above for situation 1, Chinese people usually do not use 请 with their best friend or close family members. On the other hand, American English speakers and Russians may choose to use ‘please’ (Russian пожалуйста) or omit it. However, in the Russian requests for borrowing a camera, the ratio of using пожалуйста ‘please’ to omitting it is 5:3, while in requesting of borrowing lunch money, more Russian participants chose to use пожалуйста ‘please’ to accompany the request (47); the ratio of using пожалуйста ‘please’ to omitting it is 9:3. All three cases of пожалуйста in Situation 2 occur with the imperative structure (48).

(47) Отдолжи мне 10 долларов на обед, пожалуйста, я верну их тебе вечером. (R 20)
Lend me $10 for lunch, please, I will return it to you this night.

(48) Я забыла дома кошелек. Одолжи мне, пожалуйста, 10 долларов на обед. (R 12)
I left [my] wallet at home. Please lend me $10 for lunch.
In the American English responses, *please* is used less in the requests for lunch money (49) than in requests for borrowing an expensive camera; the ratio here is 3:8. This may due to the fact that the request in this situation is given less weight by the English-speaking subjects than the one in situation 1.

(49)  Can I *please* borrow some lunch money? I’m really hungry. (AE 17)

Another culturally specific aspect of Chinese requests is the use of adverbial hedges. As noted above, in Situation 1, there were many cases that featured 一下 ‘for a moment’. In the situation of borrowing money, 点 ‘a little, a bit’ tends to be used instead, unless a specific amount of money is mentioned. Eleven of the requests employ 点 ‘a little, a bit’, as in (50).

(50)  能借我点钱吗? 我的饭卡和钱包都忘记带了! (C 17)

Can [you] lend me a bit of money? [I] forgot to bring my meal card and wallet!

Clearly this is a negative politeness strategy, in that it gives the requestee leeway in deciding how much money to give. There are eleven Chinese informants who use ‘a little’; a similar use is found in the American English and Russian data, though to a lesser
extent (6 and 2 cases, respectively). The number of cases per language is not tied to the weight of the request.

7.2.4. Alerters

The terms of address in the Chinese data which sometimes accompany the requests for borrowing an expensive camera do not appear with these requests for borrowing lunch money. The reason may be because the weight of borrowing lunch money is less than that of borrowing an expensive camera, so the intimate or casual terms of address are less needed to make the interlocutors feel even closer and thus to increase the likelihood that the request will be granted.

By contrast, in the Russian data, the same terms of address are used as in the requests for borrowing a camera. Thus only one Russian participant uses дорогой ‘dear’ in example (51) to address her best friend; the same informant used дорогой in situation 1. Several of the other Russian informants began their utterances with their friend’s name.

(51) Дорогой, одолжи мне, пожалуйста, до завтра 10 долларов, к сожалению, я забыла свой кошелек дома. (R 15)

Dear, lend me please $10. It is pity that I left my wallet at home.
In the American English data, there is only instance of a term of address, the highly informal *dude*, which is characteristic of dialogue between young men, as seen in example (52).

(52) **Dude,** I forgot my wallet. Can I borrow 10 bucks? (AE 3)

Overall, the use of terms of address with requesters is far greater among the Chinese and Russian participants than among the American English ones.

**7.2.5. External modifications**

The most common external modifications used for this request by all three groups of informants are grounders and imposition minimizers. When borrowing money, in order to make the addressee more likely to cooperate, the speaker usually states the reason and then promises to repay the loan. The differences revealed among the requests from the three cultures are that the American English speakers tend to use more imposition minimizers than grounders when making this request, while the Russian and Chinese participants tend to use more grounders. Compared with the previous situation, participants from all three cultures use more modifications with the core request for lunch money, even though the overall weight of asking to borrow a camera is considerably more than that of asking to borrow lunch money.
One Russian (53) and one Chinese participant (54) chose to express the possible consequence incurred if the request is not executed by the addressee. With appropriate tone, this strategy may imply a casual and close relationship between the speaker and the addressee.

(53) Если ты не дашь мне милостыню, я умру голодной смертью. Да и прошу тебя, идем вместе! (R 14)
If you do not give me, I will starve to death. [I am] asking you, let go!

(54) 你现在有两个选择，一是请我吃饭，一是借我点钱，否则我就得饿死了。(C 18)
Right now you have two choices, one is to invite me for lunch, the other is to lend me some money. Otherwise, I am going to starve to death.

There is another characteristic Russian external modification, which is functionally similar to the internal modification пожалуйста 'please'—the formula Будь другом 'be a friend' (55–56). This serves the positive-politeness function of emphasizing the close relationship between the interlocutors. (The American English colloquialism be a pal, which formally and functionally similar to this Russian expression, is not attested in my data.)
(55) (Имя) Будь другом, одолжи мне пару рублей. Спасибо. (R 3)
(Name) Be a friend, lend me a couple of rubles. Thank you.

(56) Слушай, будь другом, дай мне 10 долларов на обед. Я тебе завтра их отдам. (R 22)
Listen, be a friend, lend me 10 dollars for lunch. I will give it back to you tomorrow.

7.3. Situation 3: Asking a stranger for directions

7.3.1. Weight of the request

As this is a request for information rather than action, all three language groups rated its weight as lower than the previous two requests. However, the Chinese participants assigned it a much higher weight, with a mean value of 1.8, than did the American and Russian participants. There is only slight difference in the mean weight assessment between English (1.2) and Russian (1.3). It can be noted that the Chinese requests for action directed to close friends in Situations 1 and 2 had a lower mean value than did the American English and Russian ones. It seems evident that the relevant social variable causing the differences in the Chinese weights is distance (familiarity).

7.3.2. Core request strategies

Preparatory is still utilized for this request, but with considerably less frequency in all three groups. Nine of the American informants use preparatory (57), while only two
of the Russian and three of the Chinese participants do (58-59).

(57) Excuse me, can you tell me where the medical center is? (AE 27)

(58) Извините, вы не могли бы мне показать дорогу в поликлинику? (R 4)

Sorry, could you show me the way to the medical center?

(59) 你好，能告诉我怎么去校医院吗? (C 19)

Hello, can [you] tell me how to get to the university medical center?

Another noticeable is that the Russian participants use a large number of mood derivables (10 cases), as in example (60).

(60) Помоги мне, пожалуйста, найти дорогу в поликлинику. (R 21)

Please help me find the way to the hospital.

In other cases, the imperative скажите 'tell' occurs; this is a formulaic strategy for initiating requests for information, so that the bald-on-record force of the mood derivable is probably reduced. The same may be true of the imperative 'help' in (60), since it conventionally puts the requestee in a higher position than the requestor.

By contrast, only one mood derivable is employed in the Chinese data; here it may be relevant that, as noted in 7.3.1, the Chinese participants tended to give this
request a higher weight assessment than did the Russian informants. None of the American English speakers utilize the mood derivable here; presumably such forms would sound too abrupt to American English speakers in non-urgent requests to strangers with no power difference involved.

Another typical way in which the Russian speakers formulate this request (and other requests for information) is with the negated intention strategy, typically involving verbs of saying like сказать or подсказать 'tell', as in (61). This is actually the most frequent strategy in this situation in Russian data (11 cases).

(61) Извините, вы не подскажете, где поликлиника? (R 8)

Sorry, will you tell me where the hospital is?

This strategy is not found in the American English or Chinese data for this situation.

7.3.3. Internal modifications

In the Russian requests using the preparatory or intention strategies, the main verbs are consistently negated in this situation. Such negation, which lessens the directness of the speech act, is not characteristic for the Chinese or American English requests in this situation.

Another way of reducing directness, shifting from indicative to conditional/
subjunctive, is found in the American English examples with the preparatory strategy; of the 9 cases, 4 involve could and 5 can. The Russian examples with preparatory both involve the negated conditional.

As this request is supposed to be addressed to a stranger, all of the Chinese and Russian examples show formal/deferential second-person forms rather than the informal ones associated with familiar relationships (see sections 7.1.3 and 7.2.3, above).

The use of the politeness formula 'please', another way of reducing the illocutionary intensity of the speech act, is very common in this situation; it occurs 18 times in the Chinese data. Likewise, the majority of the Russian requests using the mood derivable strategy (7 cases) are accompanied by ‘please’. However, most of the English requests with preparatory are made without the accompaniment of please; there are only two exceptions, as in (62). This may be attributed to the low weight assessed for this request.

(62) Hi, can you please point me to the medical center? (AE 21)

Other internal modifications are not characteristic in this situation.
7.3.4. Alerters

In the questionnaire, this request is said to be to a stranger who is apparently a student as well. In some cultures, including Chinese, terms of address are normally used when a speaker initiates a conversation with a stranger. Thus three of the Chinese participants start their requests by addressing the strangers as 同学 'classmate', which is suitable only in Chinese (63). In the Russian responses, there are cases with the generic distal address formulae молодой человек 'young person' for a male addressee (64) or девушка 'girl' for a female addressee (65). On the other hand, in American culture, such terms of address are not typically used among young people when addressing to strangers who are close to them in age; thus none of the requests made by the American English-speaking participants in this situation contains a term of address.

(63) 同学，请问去校医院怎么走？(C 23)
Classmate, please [may I] ask how to get to the university medical center?

(64) Молодой человек, подскажите, как пройти в поликлинику университета？(R 17)
Young person, tell [me] how to get to the clinic of the university?

However, another form of alerter is well represented in the American English data—the attention-getter Excuse me, as in (65–66). This expression can serve two
purposes. Its direct locutionary meaning is as an apology for disturbing the addressee. In addition, *Excuse me* has become a conventional strategy for American English speakers to get attention before making core requests for information; indeed, this is probably the primary function of the expression, at least in the given context, where it is not clear that the illocutionary force of apology is intended.

(65)  *Excuse me*, can you tell me where the medical center is? (AE 22)

(66)  *Excuse me*, where is the medical center? (AE 23)

Fifteen of the American English-speaking participants preface their core requests with *excuse me*.

Another typical way of making requests for information in American English is the phrase *Do you know* preceding the core request, as in (67).

(67)  *Do you know* where the medical center is? (AE 2)

There are 11 responses in which *Do you know*... is used, either by itself or following *Excuse me*. It would appear that this phrase has been conventionalized in American English as an attention-getter in requests for information.

In a similar way to *excuse me* in English, ten of the Russian participants employ
извините 'excuse [me]' or простите 'pardon [me]' preceding their requests for information, as in (68).

(68)  Извините, вы не знаете, где здесь поликлиника? (R 2)
     Excuse [me], do you not know where the medical center is?

Here we can also note the presence of the phrase вы не знаете 'do you not know', functionally equivalent to English do you know in (67). This can be viewed as a preparator checking on the preconditions for the request; the use of negation can be seen in other Russian preparatory strategies (see 7.3.2, above).

Rather than making apologies to get attention, as many of the American English- and Russian-speaking participants did, the Chinese participants prefer to use a different kind of strategy, 请问 'please [may I] ask' (18 cases), which usually precedes informational questions, as in (69).

(69)  你好！请问校医院怎么走啊？(C 3)
     Hello, please [may I] ask how to get to the school medical center?

Example (69) also illustrates another polite strategy for opening channels of communication, the greeting 你好 or 您好 ‘hello’. The majority of the Chinese participants (13 out of 25) begin their requests in Situation 4 with this kind of attention-
getter. There is no similar instance of a greeting used to initiate contact in this situation in the Russian data, and only one example in the American English data.

7.3.5. External modifications

Regardless of language, the participants of the study used far fewer grounders for this request than for the ones previously considered. There are only three grounders in the Chinese data (65), only one in the Russian (66), and none in the American English.

(70) 请问校医院怎么走？我是新生，不太熟悉这里的路. (C 14)

Please [may I] ask how to get to the university medical center? I am a new student and [I am] not familiar with the university yet.

(71) Извините, вы не можете показать мне где находится поликлиника. Я новичок и не знаю где она находится. (R 20)

Excuse [me], can you show me where the medical center is. I am new and [I] do not know where it is.

Other external modifications are not used in this situation. (I treat apology locutions as alerters rather than external modifications based on my analysis of their primary illocutionary force; see 7.3.4, above). It would appear that speakers from all three language groups avoid external modifications in initiating encounters with strangers, which are intended to be as brief and unintrusive as possible.
7.4. Situation 4: Borrowing a pen or a pencil from a stranger

7.4.1. Weight of the request

The weight of this request is low for all three cultures. The Chinese participants considered its weight the highest, with a mean of 1.8; in fact, this is the lowest mean weight in any situation for the Chinese participants. The Russians participants considered its weight the lowest, with a mean of 1.5, and American English speakers ranked it only slightly higher than Russian, with a mean of 1.6. (For Russian and American English participants, the lowest means in any situations were 1.3 and 1.2, respectively). While these weight differences are not great, it is suggestive that the Chinese speakers again have the highest assessment, as in Situation 3, another situation involving a stranger, i.e., one in which there is social distance (lack of familiarity).

7.4.2. Core request strategies

For all three language groups, the most frequent strategy used in this request is preparatory. Surprisingly, there is only one case of a hint strategy, which is in the response of a Russian participant; the Chinese and American participants do not use hints at all for this request.

The most noticeable difference among the three groups for this request made is
that none of the American participants use the mood derivable strategy (imperative) to make this request. This serves as further evidence for the observation that the use of this ‘direct strategy’ (thus defined by Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper (1989: 18) is very restricted in English requests. On the other hand, mood derivable is found in some of the Chinese and Russian responses; twice as many Chinese students as Russians use it in the given situation (3 imperatives in Russian and 8 cases of imperatives in Chinese). Both groups of participants offer redressive strategies in the form of internal and external modifications (see 7.4.3 and 7.4.5, below).

The other forms of requests only occur in a single language in the given situation. In some cases, this is because there is no counterpart in the other languages; for example, the 'mind' strategy, which does not have counterparts in Chinese and Russian, is used only by a single American participant (68) in this situation (as also in Situation 1).

(72)  Do you mind if I borrow a pen real quick? (AE 17)

Likewise, the permission strategy only appears in the American English data (5 cases) (73); it is distinguished from the preparatory strategy (74) by the use of may or might instead of can or could (19 cases).
May I please borrow a pen for a few minutes? (AE 24)

Can I borrow a pen? (AE 18)

As noted in the discussion of situation 1 (asking to borrow an expensive camera), there is no comparable wording distinction in Chinese and Russian.

There are two other types of requests in the American English data which do not exist in Chinese and Russian requests. One is seen in (75):

Do you have a pen I could borrow? (AE 5)

Six of the American participants use this kind of request, in which 'I could borrow' serves as an attributive of 'a pen'. This seems to be a common way to make a request in English; it conventionally presupposes the requestee's willingness to supply the desired article. Another specifically English type, which also involves an attributive clause, is seen in (76):

I'm sorry, but is there any way I can borrow one of your pens? I seem to have forgotten mine. (AE 1)
The phrase "is there any way" serves as an internal modification and it is added to the core request and makes the request sound more polite than *Can I borrow one of your pens?* Both these constructions should probably be viewed as variations of the preparatory strategy.

The form of the Chinese request seen in (77), which makes reference to the addressee's convenience, is very polite, especially with the use of 您 ‘respectful you’, the deferential form of the second person pronoun, instead of 你 ‘informal you’.

(77) 请问您方便借我支笔用一下吗？我忘带了。 (C 20)

Please [may I] ask if it is convenient for you to lend me a pen for a moment? I forgot to bring mine.

Solely by looking at this request without context, we can guess that it is used to address a complete stranger, an older person, or a superior. It cannot be used between close friends or even classmate acquaintances; otherwise the speaker would intend to create distance with the addressee. While there are conceivable equivalents in Russian and American English, the literal translation of the request sounds extremely indirect and probably too formal for the given situation.

In other instances, the strategy is viable in more than one of the languages but happens to be attested in only one in the given situation. Thus the only examples of the
intention strategy in this situation appear among the Russian requests (3 cases), as in (78).

(78) Вы не одолжите мне запасную ручку? (R 5)

Won’t you lend me your spare pen?

The grammatical structure in (78) (the negated future) is common and polite in Russian, where it has become conventionalized in the requestive function. However, for American English speakers, the literal translation of this request would sound too marked for the given context (as if pleading), while for Chinese speakers it would carry a nuance of criticism and would generally not be perceived as a request.

7.4.3. Internal modifications

As noted in 7.4.3, the modifying of illocutionary intensity by means of negation is normal with the preparatory and intention strategies in the Russian data. However, it is not characteristic for the American English speakers, and it is not attested in Situation 4 for the Chinese speakers.

It has already been noted that the use of conditional/subjunctive forms to lessen illocutionary intensity is normal for the Russian preparatory construction (where it generally combines with negation). Among the English requests using the preparatory strategy, where negation is not used, the conditional is more common than the indicative
in this situation; there are 12 cases of word *could*, as in (79), versus 7 with *can*, as in (80). However, among the English requests which use permission strategy, there is only one case of conditional *might*, seen in (81), but four with ‘may’, as in (82).

(79) **Could** I borrow a pen please? (AE 6)
(80) **Can** I borrow a pen? (AE 18)
(81) Excuse me, **might** I borrow a pen for class? (AE 11)
(82) Hi, **may** I please borrow a pen. I lost mine. (AE 21)

The variation in the choice of second-person pronouns is also treated here as an internal modification. In the Russian data, eight of the nine second-person requests in this situation contain the formal pronoun вы ‘you (formal)’ or its declined forms, whereas only one uses ты ‘you (informal)’. This is in sharp contrast to the Chinese requests; the Chinese participants exclusively use the informal ‘you’ to address a stranger who is a peer. This may suggest that Russians are more sensitive to one of the social variables—distance/familiarity; even when the addressee is of the same age range, if they do not know each other, they can still use вы ‘you (formal)’. I will continue to explore this hypothesis in subsequent sections.

Another internal modification relevant for this situation is the variation in the main lexemes chosen for the core request. In the American English data, 24 of the
American participants chose to use the word *borrow*, not *lend*, as in (71–78). This means that they preferred to formulate the requests are made from the requestor's perspective. As I interpret it, this sounds more polite because it is modeled on asking for permission, a different speech act than requesting, in which the requestor has less power than the requestee. The only request that does not feature *borrow* has the verb *use* instead; thus it likewise involves the requestor's perspective.

In the Chinese data, quite the opposite situation occurs; here are only 4 cases of 借 in the sense of ‘borrow’, but 15 in the meaning ‘lend’, as well as one request which is ambiguous (83).

(83) 借一下笔，好吗? (C 15)

Lend/borrow a pen for a moment, okay?

The remaining five the requests employ the verb 用 ‘use’, so they involve the requestor's perspective. This is quite similar to the research results of Chao-chih Liao (1997: 194). In Chao-chih Liao’s data, the majority of the Chinese participants in an analogous borrowing situation used ‘lend’, while only 3 used ‘borrow’.

The situation in the Russian data is more complicated. Like the Chinese participants, Russian participants preferred using ‘lend’ to ‘borrow’. Of the 15 requests with the verb олжить, 4 mean ‘borrow’, and 11 ‘lend’. This orientation on the
requestee's perspective can also be noted in the one case of дать ‘give’. However, there are also two cases of взять ‘take’, two of попросить in the meaning ‘request’, and one of воспользоваться in the meaning ‘use’, all of which involve the requestor's perspective.

There are three requests in which the verb is left implicit; this is only typical for Russian requests in which the adverb можно 'can/may' is used predicatively (84). In these cases, the omitted verb is understood to be 'take' or 'borrow'.

(84) Можно вашу ручку на минутку? (R 7)
    Can [I borrow] your pen for a minute?

Another culturally specific internal modification, as discussed in the previous sections, is the usage of null subjects in Chinese requests. It is the case in all three languages that, when an imperative is used, the subject pronoun is omitted except in marked utterances (see 7.2.2, above). However, of the 24 Chinese requests to borrow a pen or pencil, aside from the 6 requests with imperative forms, there are also 12 cases of other constructions in which 你 ‘you, informal’ or 我 ‘I’ is left implicit, as in (85).

(85) 能把笔借我用一下吗? (C 17)
    Can [you] lend me your pen to use a sec?
In the 12 requests with null subjects, the ratio of 借 in the meaning ‘lend’ or ‘borrow’ is 8 to 4.

In the Russian data, except for one request using the hint strategy and three with imperatives, only seven of the requests feature null subjects. They all also involve the modal word можно 'can/may', with or without an infinitive, as in (82), above.

The politeness marker 'please' is found extensively in both the American English and the Russian data in this situation. Those Russian participants who use mood derivable here consistently redress it with the ‘politeness maker’ пожалуйста 'please'. By contrast, only one of the Chinese participants uses the equivalent of ‘please’, (86).

(86) 同学，不好意思，请问能不能借你的笔用一下？(C 1)

Classmate, it is embarrassing to ask [but] please [may I] ask if [I] can borrow your pen to use for a moment?

Instead, the Chinese participants tend to use external modifications to reduce the imposition (see below).

Another internal modification of illocutionary intensity is the use of temporal adverbials to reduce the imposition of the request. Thus 一下 'for a moment' is used in some of the Chinese requests after the verb 借 'lend or borrow' or 用 'use' or after the combination of these verbs, as in (87).
Sorry to bother you for a moment, can you lend me your pen to use for a moment?

There is a similar use in some of the Russian requests, as in example (88).

Только вашу ручку на минутку? (R 7)

Can [I borrow] your pen for a minute?

The diminutive минутку (cf. the unsuffixed минуту) ‘minute’ makes the weight of the request sound smaller and consequently makes it more likely to be granted by the addressee.

The final internal modification to be discussed in this situation involves word order. In the Chinese data, the object (the pen the speaker is going to borrow or the pen the addressee is going to lend) can be preposed before the verb which governs it (89–90). One case (89) involves topicalization (and translated as such for transparency), and the other (90) involves the so-called ba (把) construction for which there is no English equivalent.

Hi, classmate. Your pen, can [you] lend [it] to me to use for a moment?
There are 6 requests that show this inverse word order between the verb and the object. When the object is placed preverbally, the object is being emphasized instead of the action of ‘borrowing or lending’. Consequently, the force of the imposition is decreased.

7.4.4. Alerters

Alerters are widely used in this request to a classmate. The Chinese participants prefer use the relatively non-specific term of address 同学 ‘classmate’ (11 cases) before the actual request or else the greeting 你好 ‘how are you’ (4 cases), or they use a combination of the term of address and the greetings (3 cases). The American English and Russian participants do not use names at all; however, they do use apologies as attention-getters, such as excuse me (6 cases), I’m sorry (2 cases), or извините or простите ‘excuse [me]’ (11 cases).

(91) 同学，可以用一下你的笔吗？(C 13)

Classmate, can [I] use your pen for a moment?

(92) Excuse me, could I borrow a pen?
(93) Извините, не мог бы я одолжить вашу ручку?

Excuse [me], could I borrow your pen?

7.4.5. External modifications

Contrary to the stereotype that Chinese people often offer reasons, in my data fewer of the Chinese participants use grounders with this request than do the American participants. There are only five Chinese participants offering reasons along with their core requests—four preceding them, as in (94), and two following them (95).

(94) 同学，我的笔没带，你的可以借我用一下吗？谢谢！ (C 19)

Classmate, I didn’t bring my pen. Can [you] lend me yours to use for a moment? Thanks!

(95) 你的笔借我使下。忘带来了。 (C 25)

Your pen, lend [it] to me to use for a minute. I forgot to bring mine

Eight of the American English speakers use grounders in this situation; in three cases the reason precedes the core request, and in five it follows. However, only one of the Russian participants offers a reason for the request, and that is when the request uses the hint strategy (96).
(96) У вас случайно не найдется лишней ручки? Я свою никак найти не могу. (R 22)

Do you have a spare pen by any chance? I can not find mine.

Apart from grounders, the Chinese data also include appealers, such as the tag questions 好吗? ‘is it fine?’ or 行吗? ‘is it possible? , is it okay?’ (97). All of the direct Chinese requests in this situation (those using mood derivable) feature such modification devices, apart from the one cited in (95), above, which utilizes a grounder instead.

(97) 借一下笔好吗? (C 15)
Lend (borrow) a pen for a moment, ok?

Other than grounders, there is also one expression of appreciation (thanks in advance) in Russian and three in Chinese. Two of the American English participants utilize imposition minimizers. In general, however, this request tends to feature much fewer external modifications than Situation 1 and Situation 2, where higher weights are involved.
7.5. Situation 5: Asking a friend to help with moving

7.5.1. Weight of the request

The weight of this request is considered much higher by the American and Russian participants than by the Chinese participants. The mean weight is at the high end of medium high (3.5) for the American English speakers, high (3.6) for the Russians, but only medium (3.0) for the Chinese. This can be compared with the ratings in Situation 1 (asking to borrow a camera), where the Russian and English participants assessed the request at high (3.8 and 3.6, respectively), while the Chinese speakers assessed it at medium (3.0). Both situations do not involve any power differences and have the same absolute rank of imposition. The collective evidence from the situations involving best friends (1, 2, 5) and strangers (3) suggests that the Chinese speakers are influenced by the variable of social distance: they tolerate a greater degree of imposition in requests to close friends, i.e., tend to score them lower, than do the speakers of the other languages.

7.5.2. Core request strategies

In the American English and Russian data, the most common means of formulating the request in Situation 5 is preparatory strategy (96–97). It is particularly striking how dominant preparatory is in the Russian data (15 cases).
(96) Can you please help me move out next weekend? I don’t think I can do it by myself. (AE 21)

(97) Ты не смогла бы мне помочь переехать в конце следующей недели? (R 22)

Could you help me to move next week?

In the Chinese requests, by contrast, the number of mood derivables (imperatives) slightly exceeds that of preparatory strategy. There are 11 cases of mood derivables versus 10 preparatory.

(98) 周六有什么事吗？我要搬家。来帮我一下吧。 (C 2)

Are you free this Saturday? I will move. Come and help me.

Are you doing things on Saturday? I will be moving. Come and help me a bit [okay?].

The prevalence of mood derivable in the Chinese data many may be due to the relatively smaller degree of imposition assigned by the Chinese participants to this request, as compared with the other cultures (see 7.5.1, above). Conversely, only Russian participants—that is, the group that gave the highest rating to the weight of the request—use the hint strategy in this situation (3 cases, with weight assessments of 3, 4, and 5).

There is a greater variety of strategies used for this request in the American
English data than in the Russian or Chinese. These include the appreciation and mind strategies (99–100), which are not available in either Russian or Chinese.

(99) I am moving out. I’d really appreciate if you help me move. (AE 7)

(100) Would you mind helping me move out next weekend? I’ll buy you lunch. (AE 19)

The want strategy is used by both the American English-speaking and the Chinese participants for this request, but in a different way. The Chinese requests of this type are made from the speaker’s perspective (101), while the American English requests are made from the hearer’s perspective (102).

(101) 你下周有时间吗？我下周搬家。我想请你帮我。(C 16)

Do you have time next week? I’ll be moving next week. I would like to ask you to help me a bit.

(102) What are you doing next weekend? Do you want to help me move? It will only take a few hours. (AE 15)

As asking about the addressee’s desires makes the speakers sound more considerate than baldly stating their own wants, the American English requests should be considered less direct than the Chinese. This gives further evidence for the hypothesis advanced in 7.1.2 that Chinese speakers tend to favor ‘direct’ strategies with their close friends to a greater
degree than American English or Russian speakers.

### 7.5.3. Internal modifications

One of the chief internal modifications seen in this situation is the shifting from indicative to subjunctive/conditional mood to lessen the force of the speech act. In Russian, slightly more than half of the requests (8 cases) using the preparatory strategy utilize the subjunctive (conditional) form of the verb, which is the l-participle plus the particle ‘бы’, as in (97), above. The use of бы makes the situation hypothetical and thus sounds more polite. The frequency of this indirect structure (rendered even more indirect by the use of negation) may due to the fact the weight assessed by Russian participants is relatively high (see 7.5.1). I should mention that all eight of the cases in this situation where the conditional is used in Russian are made from the second-person perspective, as in example (97). (There are no cases of first-person preparatory strategies in the Russian data for this situation.) Among these 8 requests, only one request is not negated. There are three cases in Russian requests with preparatory strategy where the indicative is used instead of the conditional; these are all negated as well.

Likewise, in the American English data, far more of the requests using preparatory strategy feature conditional *could*, as in example (103), than indicative *can* (7: 2). *Could* sounds more tentative than *can*, so it conventionally reduces the imposition
of the request. It is noteworthy that the two cases of *can*, e.g., example (96), above, are both accompanied by *please*, a different internal means of diminishing illocutionary intensity.

(103) I’m moving next weekend, and I could really use some help. *Do you think you could help me?* (AE 25)

This example features the use of the *Do you think*, a further internal modification to make the request sound even more tentative; there are two other examples of this modification in the given situation.

According to the instructions in the questionnaire, this request is made to a best friend, so it is not surprising that the Chinese and the Russian participants consistently choose to use the informal pronouns (你 or ты) to refer to the addressee. Judging from this and the previous sections, it is evident that the preference for using ты ‘you (informal)’ or вы ‘you (formal)’ in Russian is primarily by determined the degree of familiarity and closeness between the speaker and the addressee rather than their similarity in age. This is shown in the next three examples; (104–105), which feature the informal pronoun, are addressed to close friends, while (106), which features the formal pronoun, is addressed to a less intimate acquaintance, though as a classmate presumably someone of approximately the same age.
(104) Ты можешь мне помочь переехать на новую квартиру? (R 19)

Can you help me move to the new apartment?

(105) Вы не могли бы дать на секундочку свой словарь? (R 5)

Could you not give your dictionary to me for a second?

(106) Вы не одолжите мне ручку? (R 9)

Will you not lend me a pen?

By contrast, in Chinese, besides the familiarity factor, the age difference (or lack there of) between the speaker and addressee also plays an important role in choosing of the informal or formal use of ‘you’. Nin ‘you (formal)’ is used to address someone who is senior to oneself and is used to show respect.

As has been discussed in previous sections, in Chinese requests that feature preparatory strategy are quite frequently without explicit subjects. There are 10 Chinese requests with preparatory strategy in this situation, and all of them feature null subjects. The majority of these requests have omitted second-person subjects (107); only one request involves a null first-person subject (108).

(107) 要搬家。能不能过来帮一下忙？(C 4)

I’ll be moving. Can you come over to help out a bit?

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Can [I] bother you over the weekend to help me move [some] things a bit?

However, even though Russian allows pro-drop, it is much rarer for the Russian requests with preparatory to feature null subjects; there is only one example among the 15 Russian requests with the preparatory strategy (109).

I am moving out at the end of next week. Can [you] help me?

However, in even in this example, the absent subject is clearly marked on the verb.

The only other internal modification that needs to be discussed for this situation is the usage of the politeness marker ‘please’. In the Russian data for this situation (though not for others), пожалуйста ‘please’ is exclusively used with imperative structures rather than with the preparatory strategy (110), although even with the imperative it can be omitted (11).

Please help me move.
(111) Помоги мне с переездом. (R 9)

Help me with moving.

Likewise, in the American English data, the majority of the cases of preparatory strategy (8 cases) do not include *please* (112). Only one of the two American English requests with mood derivables features *please* (113). Indeed, in this situation there are only three requests altogether that contain this form of internal modification; the other two occur in the Russian data.

(112) Could you help me move this weekend? (AE17)

(113) Can you *please* help me move out next weekend? I don’t think I can do it myself. (AE 21)

In contrast to the English and Russian requests, the Chinese participants avoid using 'please' altogether when addressing their best friends, because, as discussed in 7.1.3, it would serve to distance the addressee from the speaker instead of showing friendliness or respect.
7.5.4. Alerters

Alerters are not widely used in this situation. No terms of address occur in the American English data, while no attention-getters occur in the Chinese data. In the Russian data, when a request is made to a best friend, the attention-getter слушай ‘listen’ (3 cases) is used instead of извини ‘excuse [me]’. In the American English data, the attention-getters are simply *hi* and *hey* (3 cases total). In the Chinese data, two personal names are used. I assume that the administration of the questionnaires in written form may have negatively influenced the use of terms of address by the participants, as in the Chinese example "xx, 可以周末帮我搬家吗?" (C13) ‘xx, can [you] help me with moving this weekend?’ Here ‘xx’ should be a personal name, as the request is made to a friend. (See Chapter 7.1.4, above.)

7.5.5 External modifications

For all three language groups, considerably more external modifications are used here than in the requests for information, where the imposition level is judged to be low. Curiously, the number of external modifications is inversely proportional to the mean weight in this situation. Thus the Chinese participants use the most external modifications (21), the American English speakers the next (18), and the Russians the least (12). This suggests that other factors than weight can be primary here.
It is a distinctive feature of the American English data that the participants are highly likely to employ the ‘reward’ strategy (114); none of the Russian participants do so, and only 2 of the Chinese participants, as in (115). Clearly this reflects different cultural rather than linguistic norms.

(114) I am moving next weekend. Do you think you could help me move? I’ll buy you lunch and provide beer. (AE 10)

(115) 我周六要搬家。你过来帮我吧。我请你吃大餐。 (C 19)

I’ll be moving on Saturday. You come on over and help me [okay?] I’ll treat you to a feast.

It seems that these American participants feel it necessary or, perhaps more precisely, customary to offer some material compensation to the requestees for making the effort to help him or her in this physically arduous and time-customary task.

Instead of the reward strategy, the Chinese participants tend to use the grounder ‘reason’ (15 cases) and the preparator ‘checking availability of the addressee’ (11 cases) to accompany the core request. It seems that a fairly common way of making this kind of request in Chinese is to combine these two external modifications; there are seven requests made this way in this situation (116).
Do you have something happening on Saturday? I will be moving. Come over and help me a bit [okay?]

Imposition minimizers are often used in situations when the imposition of the request is relatively high. However, it is interesting that, despite the relatively high ranking of this imposition, the given kind of external modification is not typical for this situation among any of the three language groups. There is only one example from an American English speaker (120). The same function is performed in another example by an internal modification (conditional clause) (118).

What are you doing next weekend? Do you want to help me move? It will only take a few hours.

Please help me move if you have time. (AE 24)

7.6. Situation 6: Asking a stranger what time it is

7.6.1. Weight of the request

The weight for this request is considered medium low. The Chinese participants perceive its weight to be much higher (mean 1.9) than American and Russian participants do weight (mean 1.3 and 1.4 respectively).
7.6.2. Core request strategies

In all three language groups, there is much less use of preparatory strategy in Situation 6 than in the previous situations except for the requests for information: only four American English participants, four Chinese participants, and one Russian participant used it (119–121).

(119) Excuse me, could you tell me what time it is? (AE 1)

(120) 对不起，我忘记带表了，能不能麻烦你告诉我现在几点了？(C 17)

Sorry, I forgot to bring my watch. Can [I] bother you to tell me what time it is now?

(121) Могу я узнать который сейчас час? (R 21)

Can I know what time it is now?

Three of the four Chinese requests and all of American English requests with preparatory are made from an addressee’s perspective (120). The only Russian request that uses preparatory strategy (121) is made from the speaker’s perspective. (For a discussion of internal modifications, see Chapter 7.6.3.)

Another striking feature of the requests for time is the high proportion of mood derivables in the Russian data; nine of the Russian participants used imperatives for their
core requests (122–23), while only one Chinese (124) and none of the American English-speaking participants did.

(122) Скажите, пожалуйста, который час? (R 13)

Please tell [me], what time it is?

(123) Подскажи, который час? (R 17)

Tell [me], what time it is?

(124) Xx, 帮我看一眼几点了. 谢谢! (C 11)

Xx, help me to take a look at what time it is. Thanks!

While the increased use of mood derivable in Russian in this situation may seem abrupt and impolite to members of other cultures, especially when the politeness marker ‘please’ is not used, as in example (123), it is actually not a sign of greater brusqueness; rather, the given utterances all feature the imperatives Скажите or Подскажи(те) 'tell', which have become formulaic polite ways of introducing requests for information (see 7.3.2, above).

In the only Chinese request with mood derivable strategy, the verb 帮 ‘help’ is employed, automatically elevating the position of the requestee and making the request sound more polite.

Apart from the mood derivable, the Russian participants also made extensive use
of the negated intention strategy (11 cases) in Situation 6, as in (125). This is not found in the Chinese and American English requests in the given situation.

(125) Вы не подскажете, который час? (R 5)

Will you not tell [me] what time it is?

In the English data for this situation, the most frequent way of making this request (14 out of 25 cases) is to ask the addressee if he or she knows the time (126)—a variation of the preparatory strategy. The same strategy is available in Russian requests as well, but it features negation, as in example (127).

(126) Do you know what time it is? (AE 4)

(127) Вы не знаете, который сейчас час? (R 20)

Do you not know what time it is now?

Three of the American English and one of Chinese requests consist merely of questions, without any redressive strategies (126–27). This type of request is not present in the Russian data in this situation.
(126) What is the time? (AE 6)

(127) 现在几点了? (C 9)

What time is it now?

Such plain requests consisting only of questions may sound abrupt when addressing a stranger, though conceivably, with appropriate tone, pitch, or body gestures (not investigated in this study), they could be made to sound polite. The response in (127) contains a sentence-final particle, le 了, which, in this context, can serve to soften the request for information. It does not serve any grammatical function such as marking change of state.

7.6.3. Internal modifications

As has been noted above, Russian requests with the intention strategy typically involve negation, unlike the equivalent utterances in American English and Chinese. This is found in all of the Russian requests of this kind in Situation 6, and also in the variant of the preparatory strategy. The negative particle не ‘no(t)’ makes the request sound less direct than ones using the imperative.

The only one Russian request with preparatory strategy that does not utilize the subjunctive (conditional) form of the verb is (121), which is made from the speaker’s perspective. Usually a request made from a speaker’s perspective sounds more polite.
However, all four American English participants who use preparatory strategy made the requests from the addressee’s perspective; three of them use *could* and only one *can*.

Six of the nine Russian requests with the imperative six of them include *пожалуйста* ‘please’, as in example (122). No other use of *пожалуйста* ‘please’ is found in Russian for this situation. There is only one American English participant who used *please* in the request. Fifteen of the Chinese speakers used 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’; however, I classify this as an attention-getter rather than an internal modification.

This request is made to a peer stranger. The Chinese students use 你 ‘you (informal)’ to address the addressee (6 cases), as in example (120). Although the addressee is a stranger, the addressee is of almost same age of the speaker; thus, 您 ‘you (formal)’ is not used. By contrast, the Russian participants make more use of вы ‘you (formal)’ than ты ‘you (informal)’. Evidently, for the Russian speakers, crucial issue in determining the choice of pronouns is not age or peer status but familiarity.

Other internal modifications are not found in request Situation 6.

7.6.4. Alerters

As in the previously discussed situations that involve initiation of contact with strangers or casual acquaintances (3 and 4), it is common in this scenario for the request utterances to begin with phatic devices—terms of address and attention-getters. Three of
the Chinese requests feature a type of address term that does not have any equivalent (or, at least, any pragmatically neutral one) in American English or Russian—‘classmate’ (3 cases), used to approach a stranger who is apparently a fellow-student (128). The generic terms would appear in some of the Russian responses—девушка (literally, 'girl'), used to address an unknown woman, or молодой человек 'young man', used to address an unknown man (129). These are the only terms of address used in the Russian requests in this situation.

(128) 同学，现在几点了？(C 13)
Classmate, what time is it now?

(129) Девушка! Подскажите, который час? (R 16)
Girl, tell [me] what time it is?

The American participants do not use any terms of address in this situation, and indeed it is unclear what such terms could be, since the available generics miss, ma'am, and sir are not typically used for age-mates among the student population, while other terms like dude and girl are too informal to be used in polite address to strangers.

Attention-getters are used more extensively in the Chinese data for this situation. These include the greetings 嘿 ‘hi’ (130), 你好 ‘how are you?’ (131); the apology 对不起 ‘sorry’ (132); the phatic formula 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ (133); and
expressions of embarrassment: 打搅一下‘bother a little’ (134), 麻烦一下 ‘cause a little inconvenience’, 不好意思 ‘embarrassed’.

(130) 嘿，现在几点了？(C 23)
    Hi, what time is it now?

(131) 你好！你的手表很漂亮，能让我看看吗？(C 18)
    Hello, your watch is very pretty, can [you] let me take a look?

(132) 对不起，我忘记带表了。能不能麻烦你告诉我现在几点了？(C 17)
    Sorry, I forgot to bring my watch. Can [I] bother you to tell me what time it is now?

(133) 请问，现在几点了？(C 2)
    Please [may I] ask, what time is it now?

(134) 打搅一下，请问现在几点了？(C 16)
    [May I] bother [you] a little, please [may I] ask what time it is now?

The phrase 请问 'please [may I] ask', seen in (133), is particularly common in Chinese requests for information; it is found in 15 of the request utterances in this situation.

In the American English and Russian requests, the only attention-getters used are conventional apologies— *excuse me* (9 cases), as in (135), and its translation извините or прости(те) (6 cases), as in (136).
(135) **Excuse me**, do you know what time it is? (AE 8)

(136) **Извините**, который час? (R 2)

Excuse [me], what time is it?

By contrast, apologies is not a common way to start this kind of request in Chinese; only one case is found in this situation.

### 7.6.5. External modifications

It seems that in this situation, as in other requests to strangers, it is typical not to provide any external modifications. None are found in the American English and Russian data in Situation 6, and only two in the Chinese data—a grounder, seen in (132), above, and a compliment, seen in (131), above.

### 7.7. Situation 7: Borrowing a dictionary from an acquaintance

#### 7.7.1. Weight of the request

The weight of this request ranges from low to medium low. The Russian participants consider it the highest, with a mean of 2.2; the Chinese participants assess it at a mean of 2.0; and the American participants view it as the lowest, with a mean of 1.5.
7.7.2. Core request strategies

The method preferred by members of all three cultures is the preparatory strategy:

22 of the American English speakers, 21 of the Russians, and 15 of the Chinese employ this strategy to make the given request, as in (137–39).

(137) Could I borrow your dictionary? (AE 10)
(138) Могу ли я воспользоваться этим словарем на несколько минут? (R 24)
            Can I use this dictionary for a few minutes?
(139) 词典能借我用一下吗? (C 15)
            Can [you] lend me the dictionary for a second?

Considerably more Chinese participants than Russian utilize mood derivable (10 vs. 2). This may be due to the higher weight ascribed to this situation by the Russian participants than by the Chinese participants. As usual, the American participants do not use imperatives to make this kind of request, even though they assess its weight as low.

7.7.3. Internal modifications

In the English data for Situation 7, the conditional can be used to tone down the illocutionary intensity of the request, as in (137), above; the ratio of can to could in the
The given situation is 14:7. The comparable usage for Russian, the conditional in combination with negation occurs in 2 cases, as in (140):

(140) Вы не могли бы дать на секундочку свой словарь? (R 5)

Could you not give [me] your dictionary for a second?

Where the verb in the preparatory appears in the first-person, it is indicative and not negated, as in example (138), above. Where the verb in the preparatory appears in the second-person, there is only one case in this request that is not negated, but this is in subjunctive form. Both the Russian requests that use the intention strategy are negated, as in example (150).

In respect to whether formal ‘you’ or informal ‘you’ is used to refer to classmates, there is a noticeable difference between the Russian and Chinese data. All but one of the Chinese participants use informal 你 ‘you’ to address classmates, while more of the Russian participants use number of formal ‘you’ than informal (11 vs. 7). This suggests that the age factor plays a more decisive role in the choice of informal or formal ‘you’ in Chinese, while degree of familiarity is more important in Russian. In Chinese, 你 ‘informal’ you is likely to be used to refer to someone of similar age, even if they are casual acquaintances or strangers, but this is not the case in Russian.

One of the possible internal modifications in this situation is the choice of main
verb. In the American English requests, it should be noted that the verb *lend* is not used for this request; rather, *borrow* is preferred (15 cases), so that the speaker is always presented as the agent of the desired action. The other verbs used are *use* (3 times), *look at* (4 times), and *see* (3 times) (141–142). By using these verbs, the speaker avoids mentioning the potential loan relationship between himself or herself and the addressee.

(141) Can I *use* your dictionary for a second? (AE 15)

(142) Could I *see* your dictionary for a quick second? (AE 11)

Only two verbs are used in the Chinese requests—借 ‘borrow or lend’ (21 times) and 用 'use' (4 times), which does not indicate any loan relationship. As discussed in 7.1.3, depending on the context, 借 can mean either 'borrow' or 'lend'. In the present situation, the majority of the cases of 借 (16) mean 'lend', i.e., present the addressee as the agent of the desired action, as in (143).

(143) 能把字典借我用一下吗? (C 17)

Can [you] *lend* me the dictionary to use for a moment?
The verbs used in the Russian requests represent a variety of choices. The most common one is  одолжить ‘lend or borrow’. As mentioned above, like Chinese 借, одолжить can mean either 'borrow' or 'lend', depending on the context. In the given situation, there are 9 cases of одолжить, 2 of them ambiguous, 4 in the meaning 'lend' (with the addressee presented as the agent of the desired action), and 3 in the meaning 'borrow' (with the speaker presented as the agent of the desired action). Other verbs used are  возпользовать 'use' (4 times),  дать 'give' (2 times),  попросить 'request' (2 times),  взять 'take' (1 time), and занять 'occupy'. There are also 5 cases of  можно 'may, is possible' with no explicit infinitive, as in (144).

(144)  Можно ваш словарь на пару минут? (R 7)

Is it possible [to use] your dictionary for a couple of minutes?

Null subjects are well represented in the Chinese data in this situation. Apart from the 10 requests with imperative structure, 13 of the 15 remaining requests feature null subjects—either 你 ‘you (informal)’ and 您 ‘you (formal)’ (7 cases) or 我 ‘I’ (6 cases), as in (145–46).
(145) 同学，能把词典借我用一下吗? (C 12)

Classmate, can [you] lend me your dictionary to use for a moment?

(146) 同学，可以借用一下你的字典吗? (C 13)

Classmate, can [I] borrow your dictionary to use for a moment?

Null subjects also appear in the Russian requests in this situation, as in example (144). There are ten Russian requests have null subjects, which are implicitly first-person in some cases and second-person in others.

One of the ways in which the Chinese speakers tone down the illocutionary intensity of their requests in this situation, especially when the core request strategy is mood derivable, is by using tag questions like 行吗? 'is it possible, is it okay?' 可以吗? 'is it possible, is it okay?', as in (147).

(147) 借我用一下词典可以嘛? (C 9)

Lend me the dictionary to use for a minute, is it okay?

One of the most common internal modifications in Situation 7 is the use of temporal adverbs. Since looking up a word in a dictionary usually does not take much time, participants from all three language groups tend to add time expressions in order to emphasize the minimal imposition of the request. Thus, in the Chinese data, the verb is
usually accompanied by 一下 'for a moment' (23 cases), as in (148).

(148) 你好!字典能用一下么? (C 10)

Hello! Can [I] use the dictionary for a moment?

Likewise, 20 of the English requests include time expressions like for a second, for a moment, for a minute, or really quick, as in (149). (The Chinese phrase in (148), yixia 一下 ‘one time, once, in a short while, for a moment’ also emphasizes the brevity of the time duration, and can be translated using the same English expressions of time.)

(149) Hey, can I see that for a second? (AE 17)

Similarly, 17 of the Russian requests feature time expressions like на секундочку 'for a second', на минутку 'for a minute', на пару минут 'for a couple of minutes', на одну минуту 'for one minute', or на несколько минут 'for a few minutes', as in (150).

(150) Слушай, не одолжишь словарь на несколько минут? (R 4)

Listen, will [you] lend your dictionary for a few minutes?
It can be seen that, in this respect English and Russian requests display similar usage: the time is specified in the request, no matter if the action will be carried out in this specified time or not. However, the Chinese participants do not make the time explicit.

7.7.4. Alerters

In the American English requests, no use of terms of address appear in this situation. Four attention-getters are used—three cases of *hi*, *hey*, and one of *excuse me*. More attention-getters occur in the Russian requests, where извините and простите ‘excuse [me]’ and ‘слуша́й’ 'listen' are used. There is only one term of address (a personal name) used in Russian requests. I assume the written form of the questionnaire may have had a negative affect on the use of the terms of address here.

A greater variety of terms of address appear in the Chinese data. There are four cases of 同学 ‘classmate’, two case of casual terms such as 帅哥 ‘handsome brother’, and one case of a personal name. (The use of the casual terms of address presupposes that the relationship between the speaker and the addressee is closer than just two classmates.) There are also five cases of greetings in the Chinese requests: four cases of 你好 or 您好 ‘how are you?’ and expression of embarrassment.
7.7.5. External modifications

In the data all three languages, most of the requests in situation 7 stand alone, without any external modifications. The only kind of external modification found in this situation is grounder, which appears in only 3 cases in each language. The relative scarcity of external modifications in this situation may due to the fact that the weight of the request is low. In addition, the interlocutors are not supposed to be well acquainted, and the action seems to be unfolding during some classroom task—factors that would promote a quick communication, with a minimum of engagement.

7.8. Situation 8: Asking an instructor to extend the deadline for a paper

7.8.1. Weight of the request

The weight of this request is considered high in all three cultures. The Chinese participants consider it the highest, with a mean of 3.9; the American participants see it the lowest, with a mean of 3.6; and the Russian participants value it in between, with a mean of 3.8.

7.8.2. Core request strategies:

The most frequent strategy used for this request in all three cultural groups was preparatory, that is, a relatively indirect approach. Given the high weight assessed, it is
not surprising that the number of mood derivable forms (imperative) used by the Chinese participants has decreased considerably in this situation, as compared with the requests to friends; there are only 2 cases, as in (151). In the American English data, no mood derivables are used at all. However, even though the weight was evaluated as relatively high by the Russian informants, there are still 6 imperatives in the Russian requests, as in (152). There is also one Russian request using an explicit performative formula, which possesses strong directive force (153); there is no comparable strategy in the Chinese or American English data.

(151) 老师，由于我家里有事情，没有交上作业。请你延长我们作业时间好吗？(C9).

Teacher, due to family matters, [I] haven’t turn in the homework yet. Please (you) extend our deadline, okay?

(152) Пожалуйста, перенесите срок моего домашнего задания. (R 21)

Please extend the deadline for my homework.

(153) Я прошу вас продлить срок, потому что моя мама заболела и я должен быть поехать домой. (R 20)

I am asking you extend the time, because my mom got sick and I have to go back home.

A typical way for the Chinese participants to make this request is to use the intention strategy to indicate what the speaker will do and then accompany it with a tag
question, as in (154). There are 6 requests formed in this way

(154) 老师，因为家里有事，我作业会延长时间交你，好吗? (C 13)
Teacher, because of family matters, I’ll turn in my homework later, is that okay?

While the core request is highly presuppositional, in that it takes the requestee's agreement for granted, and thus presumably relatively forceful, the tag question mitigates this somewhat by asking for the addressee's permission and accordingly showing respect.

The strategy seen in (154) has no counterpart in the Russian data. However, one of the American English requests is made in a similar way, but involves a full question rather than a tag question (164).

(164) I had some issues and I would like more time to finish my paper? Would that be ok? (AE 20)

This is a variation of the intention strategy, but phrased in a different way than the Chinese counterpart. In Chinese requests, the intention strategy is usually followed by an appealer. By contrast, American English requests use a subjunctive form of the verb.

In English requests, the subject is usually present. In this situation, the majority of the requests (11 cases) involve first-person subjects, while only 3 have second- subjects. When requests are made from the first-person perspective, it sounds like asking for
permission; as a result, the request sounds more polite than those made from a second-person perspective.

In Russian requests in this situation, as in English requests, the number of requests made from the speaker’s perspective (170) is more than the number of requests made from the hearer’s perspective (171), at a ratio of 8:6.

(170) Могла бы я сдать домашнее задание попозже? (R 5)
    Could I turn the homework in a little bit later?

(171) У меня на прошлой неделе было два экзамена и я не успела сделать уроки. Вы не могли бы продлить мне срок? (R 19)
    I had two exams last week and did not manage to finish the homework. Could you extend the deadline for me?

In the Chinese requests, the number of requests made from the speaker’s perspective is twice the number made from the hearer’s perspective.

7.8.3. Internal modifications

In the American English requests, could as in (171) is more frequently used than can, at a ratio of is 9:5. ‘Could’, as the conditional of ‘can’, sounds more polite (indirect).

A similar feature exists in Russian, where the particle ‘бы’ marks the conditional mood. In this situation, the majority of the requests (7 cases) which use preparatory
strategy employ ‘бы’ in Russian, which make the request sound more polite, as in example (172). There are fourteen requests with the preparatory strategy in Russian requests. Among them there are five cases with negation. When the verb is negated, the verb is also in subjunctive form. They all are made from the addressee’s perspective, i.e., have second-person subjects. In this situation, when a request with preparatory is made from the speaker’s perspective, i.e., has a first-person subject, it is never negated, though two of them are in the subjunctive form, as in example (172).

(172) Могла бы я сдать домашнее задание попозже? (R 5)

Could I turn in the homework later?

As noted above, a comparable use of the conditional mood to reduce the force of an utterance does not exist in Chinese.

This request is made to an instructor. Thus it is surprising to see more cases of 你 ‘you (informal)’ than 您 ‘you (formal)’ in the Chinese data. This may represent cultural transfer, but, in my view, the relationship between the student and the instructor may be close enough to address the instructor with 你 ‘you (informal)’. By contrast, none of the Russian participants use ты ‘you (informal)’ to address the instructors.

As usual, in the 15 Chinese requests with preparatory strategy, the majority (10 cases) are made with null subjects. Of the 5 that involve second-person subjects, 4 are
implicit, as in (166) and only 1 is explicit, as in (167).

(166) 老师，我家里有些事情耽误了些时间，所以作业没完成。能多给我点时间么？(C 25)

Teacher, family matters took up some [of my] time, so [my] homework is not yet completed. Can [you] give me a bit more time?

(167) 老师，因为我家里发生了一些急事，所以没能按时交作业。请您能不能给我延长一些时间？(C 24)

Teacher, because my family has some urgent matters that came up, (so) I am not able to turn in the homework on time. Please [may I] ask if you can give me some extension?

As has been noted elsewhere, not mentioning the subject reduces the intensity of the request, especially if the subject is ‘you’. Without mentioning the hearer, the speaker can avoid directly assigning the requested action to the addressee; this makes the request less intrusive and more tentative. This is probably a major motivation for the use of null subjects in Chinese. However, such omission is not common with finite forms in Russian, though it is grammatical possible; on the other hand, there is one case that involves a modal plus the infinitive where the dative subject pronoun (implicitly second person) is omitted (168). The one request in English that has an omitted subject (169) is a grammatical mistake (Daniel E. Collins, personal communication).
(168) Простите, профессор, что я обращаюсь к вам с такой просьбой, но это важно для меня. Можете ли перенести выполнение задания на послезавтра? (R 14)

Excuse me, professor that I am turning to you with such a request, but it is important for me. Can you extend the deadline for turning in the assignment to the day after tomorrow?

(169) I wanted to let you know I couldn’t finish my paper due to family-related stuff. I understand it’s passed the deadline, but I was wondering if you could give me an extension? (AE 16)

In the English requests addressed to an instructor with preparatory strategy, it is common to add certain elements such as *is there any way* (173), *is it possible* (174), *I was wondering* (175), *is there any chance* (176), before the ‘can’ or ‘could’ structure to make the request even more tentative and polite.

(173) Sir, I was unable to finish the paper due to some family issues. *Is there any way* I can get it to you in a couple of days? (AE 6)

(174) I had a personal problem and could not finish my paper. *Is it possible* that I could have more time? (AE 5)

(175) I wanted to let you know I couldn’t finish my paper due to family-related stuff/ I understand it’s passed the deadline, but *I was wondering* if you could give me an extension? (AE 16)

(176) I have family circumstances going on. *Is there any chance* I could have an extension? (AE 23)
7.8.4. Alerters

Nineteen of the Chinese participants address their instructors by the title 老师 ‘teacher’ before starting the actual request. One of them used both an attention-getter apology and a term of address: 对不起，老师 ‘sorry, teacher’. One of the Chinese subjects uses an expression of embarrassment, otherwise usually an external modification, as an attention-getter in this situation.

Although Russian the participants can also address their instructors by titles such as профессор ‘professor’ (4 cases), Ludmila Isurin suggests that this is due to interference from American English (personal communication). Five other Russian participants used the more native form of respectful address with first names plus patronymics. Attention-getters in the form of apologies are also used in Russian requests.

The fewest alerters are used in the American English requests. There are three cases of the term of address professor, and one case of sir. Only one apology is used as an attention-getter.

7.8.5. External modifications

With regard to the external modifications used for this request, a noticeable number of grounders are utilized to accompany the core request in all three languages, though to a varying degree. All the Chinese and English requests are provided with
grounders, but this is not the case for 10 of the Russian ones. Some of the Russian requests as in (177,178) stand alone, without any external modifications, which (judging from the data) would be considered too abrupt by the Chinese or American participants. The fact that the Russian participants provide fewer external modifications may lead to the impression that Russians are direct.

(177) Можно я принесу мою работу через несколько дней? (R 23)
Can I bring my work in a few days?

(178) Пожалуйста, перенесите срок моего домашнего задания. (R 21)
Please extend the deadline of my homework.

7.9. Situation 9: Asking an instructor to give a make-up exam

7.9.1. Weight of the request

The weight of this request in three languages is quite high. The Russian participants rate it the highest, with a mean of 4.0, while the American English and Chinese speakers assess it the same, with a mean of 3.8. One Chinese participant completely avoided making this request due to the extreme imposition which it might put on the addressee (C9).
7.9.2. Core request strategies

The most common strategy of this request for all three language groups is the preparatory strategy, which is also the most common type overall. As in all the other situations besides those involving close friends, the American participants do not select the mood derivable strategy (imperatives) in their responses; however, some of the Russian and Chinese participants do, as in (179–80).

(179) 老师，我病了，不能参加期中考试了。给我一次补考的机会好吗? (C 19)

Teacher, I was sick and could not take the mid-term exam. Give me a chance to retake it, is it ok?

(180) Ирина Сергеевна, разрешите мне сдать экзамен через неделю. (R 10)

Irina Sergeevna, allow me to take the exam in a week.

This is more common in the Chinese requests (6 cases) than in Russian ones (4 cases). The reason for this is possibly that the Russian participants assess weight of the request higher than the Chinese participants do. Note that, in the Russian example (180), even though the verb is in the imperative structure, the locution conventionally asks for permission; thus its requestive force is smaller than a straight forward request with mood derivable.

A rather forceful way of formulating the request is to present it
presuppositionally, as if already granted, by inquiring when the exam can be taken. This can be found in five of the Russian requests, as in (181), and one case of the American English ones (182), in which the speaker provides an official excuse (often a prerequisite for make-up exams in American university courses). None of the Chinese requests in Situation 9 are made in this presuppositional form, though the possibility is attested elsewhere.

(181) Из-за болезни Я не смогла прийти на экзамен. Когда мне можно его пересдать? (R 15)

Due to illness I could not take the exam. When can I retake it?

(182) I have a doctor’s excuse for missing the exam. When could I make it up? (AE 20)

If the request is made by inquiring when to retake the exam instead of by checking whether it is possible first, the speaker seems to assume that the instructor will agree. Unless this is actually the case, the speaker runs the risk of sounding presumptuous.

Explicit performative strategies are used in two Russian requests, as in (183), and in one Chinese request, where it is followed by a tag question (184). This usage is very formal in Chinese.
Я вас очень прошу разрешить мне пересдать экзамен, потому что я был очень болен. (R20)

I am asking you earnestly to allow me to retake the exam, because I was very ill.

老师您好！我因为生病所以未能参加期中考试，请求您给我一次补考机会好吗？谢谢！(C20)

How are you, teacher! Due to sickness, I was not able to take the mid-term exam. Please you give me a chance to do a make-up exam, is it okay? Thank you!

Explicit performatives are not attested for any of the requests in the American English data. If they occurred, would be regarded as extremely formal (Daniel E. Collins, personal communication).

Due to the high-imposition nature of the request, it is not surprising to find the hint strategy, as in (185–86). Hinting is the most indirect of any requestive strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69). Three of the American and 5 of the Russian participants resort to hinting in this situation.

I’m sorry I missed the exam. I hope you’ll find it beneficial to me to make it up soon. (C11)

Елена Анатольевна! Я пропустил экзамен по болезни. Когда у меня есть возможность его сдать?(R16)

Elena Anatol’evna, I missed the exam due to illness. When will I have chance to retake it?
7.9.3. Internal modifications

In Situation 9, the conditional is more common than the indicative in the American English preparatory and intention strategies; the ratio of conditional to present indicative is 12:7. The Russian requests using the preparatory strategy are consistently in the negated subjunctive when they involve second-person subjects, i.e., when the requestee is presented as the agent, in order to make the request sound maximally indirect and hence polite, as in (187).

(187) Извините, не могли бы вы мне разрешить сдать экзамен в другой день? (R 3)

Excuse [me], could you not allow me to take the exam the other day?

In example (187), one can note the additional redress supplied by the lexeme разрешить 'allow', which explicitly puts the requestee in the position of an authority.

When the requestor is presented as the agent, the Russian requests in the preparatory formula are in most cases in the indicative (8 cases). Of these, three feature first-person verbs in the future tense perfective, as in (188); four involve impersonal constructions with the modal можно, as in (189); and one has the negated modal нельзя (190). All of the constructions in (188–90) have modal (irrealis) nuances; possibility is one of the common contextual meanings of the future perfective in Russian.)
(188) Я всю неделю болела. Можно я пересдаю экзамен завтра? Пожалуйста.

(subject in nominative case) (R 8)

I was ill for a whole week. Perhaps I can take the exam tomorrow? Please.

(189) Извините, пожалуйста, что я пропустила экзамен. Можно мне сдать в другой день? (subject in dative case) (R2)

Excuse [me], please, that I missed the exam. Is it possible for me to take it another day?

(190) Извините, мне нельзя сдать экзамен в другое время?(R4)

Excuse [me], is it impossible for me to take the exam at another time?

The form можно can either be a predicative modal that takes a dative subject/experiencer, as in (189), or a sentential adverb, as in (186). In Situation 9, there are two examples of the sentential adverb in combination with the preparatory strategy and a first-person, nominative-case subject. I assume that the illocutionary force of the request is stronger when the subject is in nominative case than when it is in the dative case, because that “the greater the distance from the deictic center, the greater the degree of politeness and the lesser the degree of illocutionary force stemming from the relationship to the speaker’s egocentric deictic reference” (Koike 1989: 187).

While the Chinese participants do not have the conditional mood as a means of modifying the illocutionary intensity of the request, they make use of the negator 不
‘not’ to fulfill essentially the same function, as in the example of the preparatory strategy seen in (191). Seven Chinese participants use it. Marjorie K. M. Chan (personal communication) has suggested a different interpretation of this A-not-A construction, according to which it is simply a yes/no question; however, I would argue that it does have the function of reducing intensity. Further investigation is needed.

(191) 老师，前些日子我生病了，没有参加考试。
我一直以来对您的课都很认真地听，学得也还可以，您看能不能给我个补考的机会，您也不想您的学生错过考试吧。麻烦你了，老师。(C 2)

Teacher, a few days back I was sick and could not attend the exam. I have been listening to your classes very carefully and I have studied well. Do you think you can (literally, can-not-can) give me an opportunity to do a make-up exam? You won’t want for your student to miss the exam [would you?]. [I] bother you a lot, teacher.

When mood derivable is utilized for this request by the Chinese participants, it is consistently accompanied by tag questions like 好吗? 'is it okay?', as in (179), above, or by polite phrases like 麻烦你 'bother you' (192).

(192) 老师，麻烦您给我一次补考的机会吧，我很需要这次期中考试的成绩。 (C 16)

Teacher, [I] bother you to give me an opportunity to do a make-up exam. I very much need the results of the exam.
In Russian there are four cases of mood derivables. Three of these are used by speakers who assigned the weight to the highest level, and one by a participant who rated it at the second highest level; these participants evidently felt that the situation called for urgency rather than indirectness. However, the force of the Russian mood derivables in this situation is to some extent mitigated by other devices. Two of the requests use the politeness marker пожалуйста ‘please’, and one is introduced by a term of address and accompanied by a grounder. While there is one mood derivable request without any external modifications or politeness markers, but it includes a term of address, which may lessen the force of the request to some degree.

Another internal modification to be considered is the choice of second-person pronouns. The Chinese and Russian speakers consistently use the formal forms of the second-person pronouns in this request (ты and вы, respectively). This is to be expected, given that the requestee (the instructor) has greater power than the requestor (the student).

A further internal modification involves the choice of null or explicit pronouns. All of the Russian requests in Situation 9 are made with explicit subjects. The majority of the Chinese requests with preparatory strategy (11 out of 15) likewise have null subjects. These include 7 with implicit second-person subjects, as in (192), and 2 with implicit first-person subjects.
Teacher, because I was sick [I] could not take the mid-term exam. Can [you] (lit., can-not-can) give me an opportunity to do a make-up exam?

In the American English data, there is no request made with a null subject, nor would any be expected, since English is not a pro-drop language. However, it is noteworthy that all but three of the American English speakers' requests present the requestor as the agent of the desired action rather than the requestee. This is also true of the majority of the Russian in this situation (13 cases). My impression is that, when the weight is high, requests from the speaker’s perspective tends to be preferred, since they are presented as if the speaker is asking for permission, and accordingly sound more polite. Further investigation is needed to verify this hypothesis.

In Situation 9, only 4 of the 19 American English requests with the preparatory strategy include the politeness marker please. In the Chinese responses in the given situation, 请 ‘please’ appears only with the mood derivable strategy (3 out 5 cases). Two of the 4 Russian requests with mood derivable have пожалуйста ‘please’, as does one with the preparatory strategy, seen in example (188), above.

Finally, among the English requests in Situation 9, there are phrasal internal modifications to make the requests sound even more tentative and polite, such as *is there a/any way* (193), *do you think* (194), *is it possible, I was wondering*, and *I was hoping* (195).
(193) I was sick and here is my doctor’s note, so is there any way I can make up the exam? (AE1)

(194) I’m sorry I missed the exam. I was ill and have a doctor’s note. Do you think I could do a make-up exam? (AE10)

(195) I’m sorry I missed the exam. But I was really sick and I was hoping you could let me make it up. (AE25)

7.9.4. Alerters

The use of alerters in this situation is relatively similar with the that in Situation 8, which also involves an instructor. Students from each language address their instructors differently. Eighteen of the Chinese participants address their instructors by the title ‘teacher’ before starting the actual request. Two of the Chinese requests include apologies in the function of attention-getters. In this situation, unlike Situation 8, none of the Russian participants used the term of address ‘professor’; however, five used first names plus patronymics. Attention-getters are also used in some of the Russian requests, where five cases of apologies are found. The fewest alerters are used in the American English requests. There are only one case of professor and one case of Ma’am, and no attention-getters are used altogether.
7.9.5. External modifications

When it comes to the external modifications, all but one of the Chinese and one of American participants use grounders when making this request, i.e., offer rationales or justifications. By contrast, seven of the Russian requests stand alone, without any reason provided; of these, three feature the imperative. Two of the speakers in the given cases rated the weight at the highest level, while one assigned it to level 2. The explanation for this may be that, in this high-stakes situation, some of the Russian students opted to make their requests sound urgent rather than polite.

In addition to grounders, another recurrent external modification in Situation 9 is apologies; this is not surprising, given that the students may sense the inconvenience of their request or feel that it is necessary due to their own shortcoming. Seven of the American English requests, six of the Russian ones, and two of the Chinese ones include apologies before the core requests, as in (196).

(197) I am sorry that I was sick. Would you allow me to make-up the exam? (AE9)
7.10. Situation 10: Borrowing a book from an advisor

7.10.1. Weight of the request

The weight for this request is assessed by the participants in three languages to be from medium to medium high. The Chinese participants assign it the highest weight, with a mean of 3.6. The Russians consider its weight to be slightly less, with a mean of 3.4. The American English speakers assess it to be the lowest, with a mean of 2.9.

7.10.2. Core request strategies

In Situation 10, preparatory is the most frequent strategy in all three languages (American English: 14 cases; Russian: 19 cases and Chinese: 21 cases). By contrast, the mood derivable (imperative) strategy is not favored in this situation. The American participants do not use any mood derivables (imperatives) here, any more than they do in other situations involving instructors or advisors. Only two of the Chinese and three of the Russian participants do, as in (196–97).

(196)

Teacher, there is a book that I need urgently, but I wasn’t able to borrow [it] from the library. I was told that you have [it]. [Is it] convenient to lend it to me to take a look? When [I am] done, [I] will return [it] to you immediately. (C18)
Lend your book, please. I would like to read it very much, but I cannot find it in the library.

Of the other possible core request strategies, one of the American participants uses an expression of appreciation (198), and another uses the mind strategy (201). In both cases, the request propositions are given in embedded clauses. These are conventionalized ways of formulating requests in American English, though they are not common in my data; they are not available to the Chinese or Russian speakers.

(198) I would greatly appreciate your help if you could lend me the reference book, because it is not in the library. (AE22)

(199) I wasn’t able to find that book. Would you mind letting me borrow it for a while? (AE9)

7.10.3. Internal modifications

In this situation, the preparatory strategy tends to be toned down by internal modifications in all three language groups. More of the American English participants used the conditional than the indicative; the ratio between can and could is 5: 8. Likewise, in the Russian data, there is a preference in the given situation for the negated conditional mood with verbs in the second person (9 cases), as in (208), over the
indicative (non-negated present first person (2 cases) or negated future second person (2 cases)) seen in (200).

(200) Вы не одолжите мне книгу на несколько дней? (R5)

Will you lend me the book for a few days?

Similarly, the Chinese participants tend to employ negation to reduce the illocutionary intensity, as in (201).

(201) 老师，能不能看下书？(C4)

Teacher, can [I] (lit., can-not-can) take a quick look at the book?

When addressing an advisor, who is higher in power and usually older, Chinese and Russian students generally are expected to use the non-familiar pronouns 您 'you (formal)' and вы 'you (formal)', respectively. In Situation 10, all of the Russian participants do in fact use вы or the related possessive ваша 'your (formal)', as illustrated by (200), above. Surprisingly, however, six of the Chinese participants utilize 你 'you (informal)' to address their advisor, as in (202).
(202) 老师，你好！我现在正在寻找这本书，它对我非常重要，我必须找到它。但是图书馆没有，你可以将你的书借给我吗？(C22)

Teacher, hello! I am right now looking for this book, it is very important for me. I must find it, but the library does not have [it]. Can you lend your [copy of the] book to me?

The reason may be that, although the advisor is higher in power and typically older, the relationship between the student and his or her advisor is close enough to make 你 'you (informal)' no less respectful than 您 'you (formal)'. Another reason may be cultural transfer, since the Chinese participants are studying in the U.S. and have been influenced by the more informal atmosphere of American academic culture.

More than half of the Chinese requests (13 cases) have null subjects in the core requests, while only four of the Russian requests do; these all involve modal expressions which take dative subjects/experiencers, as illustrated in (203).

(203) Нельзя ли у вас одолжить книгу?(AE9)

Is it possible [for me] to borrow a book from you?

Regarding the verbs used in the requests, American English speakers again prefer to use borrow (20 cases), as in Situations 1, 2, and 4. Although, judging from the previous situations, lend is rarely utilized in English requests to borrow, we do find two cases of this verb in the present situation. Apart from borrow and lend, we also find one
example each of use, take to look at, and see, which do not indicate the borrowing or lending relationship between the speaker and the addressee.

In the Chinese requests, except for one case of 看 'look, see', the verb used is always 借, which, as noted before, can be translated as either 'borrow' or 'lend'. Unlike the English requests, the majority of the Chinese participants use 借 in the meaning of 'lend', with the addressee presented as the agent of the desired action. There are 17 cases of the 'lend' meaning (204) versus 7 of the 'borrow' meaning (205).

(204) 老师，这本书能不能借我用一下? 图书馆没有.(C15)

Teacher, this book, can [you] (lit., can-not-can) lend [it] to me to use a minute? The library does not have [it].

(205) 老师，请问您，我可不可以向您借一本书啊? (C1)

Teacher, please [may I] ask you, can I (lit., can-not-can) borrow a book from you?

A variety of verbs are used in this request in Russian. The most frequent verb is одолжить in the meaning of 'lend' (11 cases) and 'borrow' (4 cases). Other verbs used include 'use', 'work' and 'take'; there is also a case with no explicit verb and the modal adverb можно 'may, is it possible'.

When the verb in the meaning of ‘borrowing’ is used, it indicates that the request
is made from the speaker’s perspective. This makes the request sound as if asking for permission, so accordingly the requests sound more polite. As noted elsewhere, there is a greater tendency to use this lexical form of internal modification in the American English data than in the data from the other two languages.

The politeness marker 'please' is surprisingly little used in American English in this situation. Among American English requests using preparatory strategy, there are only four examples of this internal modification, exemplified in (206).

(206) Can I use you reference book please?(AE4)

In Russian there are three cases of пожалуйста ‘please’. The Russian requests which use mood derivables (3 cases) all include пожалуйста ‘please’. In the Chinese data, there are two cases of 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’, which strictly speaking is an attention-getter rather than an internal modification.

A final internal modification to be noted is the embedding of 方便 'convenient' in the mood derivable to make a conventionally polite form of request. All three of the Chinese requests that feature imperatives include this modification, as illustrated by (196), above.
7.10.4. Alerters

The responses in this situation tend to feature terms of address. The Chinese students address their advisors by using 老师 'teacher' (17 cases), as in (207), 教授 'professor' (3 cases), 先生 'sir' (1 case) or combination of 教授 'professor' and 先生 'sir' (1 case), or 向导 'advisor' (2 cases), or they put the surname before 老师—for instance, 王 Wang.

(207) 老师，您好！我可以从您那儿借一本书吗？因为图书馆没有。(C7)

Teacher, hello! Can I borrow a book from your place? Because our library does not have [it].

The American students may much less use of terms of address in this situation. There are only three cases of professor used as in example (208).

(208) Professor, can I borrow the reference book, please? (AE3)

There is no use of профессор ‘professor’ in the Russian data for this request. The Russian students commonly call their advisors by their given names plus patronymics (6 cases), as in (209).
Людмила Ивановна, вы не могли бы дать мне эту книгу на время? Я ее везде ищу, даже в библиотеке ее нет.(R18)

Ludmila Ivanovna, could you give me your book for a short time? I am looking for it everywhere, but even the library does not have it.

There is no use of attention-getters in the American English requests. The Chinese requests include greetings (5 cases) as attention-getters, while some of the Russian informants utilize apologies (3 cases).

7.10.5. External modifications

Considerably more external modifications are used for this request than for any of the other requests for borrowing. The most frequent type is grounders (specifying reasons), which occur in 22 of the Chinese requests as in example (207), 19 of the American English ones as in (198), and 15 of the Russian ones as in (209).

There are also 4 Chinese requests using imposition minimizers, and 2 English requests do that as well. The Russian participants do not use imposition minimizers; instead, they sometimes check whether the book is available (210), a strategy that is not utilized by the Chinese and American participants at all.

(209)  У вас есть книга …? А можно у вас одолжить буквально на пару дней? (R2)

Do you have the book…? And is it possible to borrow it from you literally for a couple of days?
7.11. Situation 11: Asking an instructor to make an appointment for consultation

7.11.1. Weight of the request

There is a wide range of mean weights in this situation, the mean weights range from medium high to high. The Chinese participants assess the weight of this request as 3.8 (high), and the Russian participants as 3.4 (medium high). By contrast, the American English speakers value the weight of the request to be 2.4 (medium low). This discrepancy evidently reflects different cultural perceptions about academic rank and student privileges.

7.11.2. Core request strategies

Preparatory is the most common strategy in Russian and American English requests. There are 11 cases in Russian and 7 cases in American English. However, in American English there are also 7 cases of hints being used. In the Chinese requests for this situation, the number of want strategies (12 cases) used in this situation exceeds the number of preparatory strategies (7 cases). Judging from the results of my study, the most typical way for Chinese students to make an appointment with an instructor is with a statement of the students’ desire (12 cases) or need to discuss the thesis (3 cases), along with a check on the instructor’s availability, which may be put either prior or subsequent
to the statement of desire or need. In the questionnaire, 15 of the Chinese participants make their requests in this way, as in (211).

(211) 老师好，老师，我想向您请教一些关于论文的问题，不知道您什么时候能有时间？(C1)

Teacher, how are you? I want to ask you some questions about [my] thesis. [I] do not know when you will have time?

This way of making requests is also available in Russian and English, but is less frequent than in my Chinese data. Six of the Russian participants make their requests in this way; however, one of the Russians introduces a variant by emphasizing the need for an immediate appointment, instead of checking the instructor’s availability (212).

(212) Здравствуйте! Как замечательно, что я вас встретил здесь! Я очень хочу вас попросить назначить мне время для консультации. это просто необходимо мне сейчас! (R14)

Hello! How remarkable that I met you here! I very much want to ask you to assign some time to me for a consultation. This is simply indispensable for me right now!

Six of the American English speakers also make their requests by stating their needs or desires, as in (213).

325
(213) I need to make an appointment with you to talk about my thesis. Do you know when you are free? (AE5)

No mood derivable (imperative) is used in the Chinese and English requests. However, despite the relatively higher weight assessed by the Russian participants for requesting an appointment, there is still one case of mood derivable in the Russian data (214).

(214) Здравствуйте, будьте добры, уделите мне 30 мин вашего времени на мою диссерацию. (R13)

Hello, be kind, allot me 30 minutes of your time for my dissertation.

The participants sometimes only check the availability of the instructor, which I have classified as using the hint strategy (cf. the external modification preparator). While only two Chinese requests are made this way as in example (215), which is a hint, a considerably larger number of Russian and American students do (7 and 9, respectively), as in (216–17).

(215) 老师好！您现在有时间吗？(C3)

Hello, teacher! Do you have time now?
(216) У вас будет сегодня свободное время обсудить мои последние результаты?

Do you have free time today to discuss my latest results? (AE6)

(217) Do you have any time to meet with me to discuss my thesis? (AE13)

I would argue that solely checking on availability is less polite than combining that strategy with the desire strategy, since it presupposes the instructor's willingness to meet.

7.11.3. Internal modifications

All seven of the English requests with preparatory strategy feature first-person subjects; the ratio of *can* (indicative) to *could* (conditional) is 4:3. In the 12 Russian requests with preparatory strategy, there are an equal number of first- and second-person subjects. When the subject is ‘you’, the locution is negated and conditional, which, according to Mills (1993), is the most polite conventionalized form of requesting (218). When the subject is ‘I’, the indicative form is used, and there is no negation.

(218) Простите, профессор, вы не могли бы мне дать консультацию по одному вопросу?(R4)

Excuse [me], professor, could you not give me consultation about one question?
In the seven Chinese requests with the preparatory strategy, only one features negation (219).

(219) 能不能向您请教一下论文的一些问题？(C6)

Can [I] (lit., can-not-can) ask you for a bit of advice on some questions on the thesis?

Example (219) also illustrates the issue of null subjects. In the Chinese data, slightly fewer core requests with preparatory feature null subjects (3 cases) than explicit ones (4 cases); this is unlike all of the situations examined previously. Five of the preparatory strategies have first-person subjects, i.e., present the requestor as agent, while two have second-person subjects, i.e., present the requestee as agent. In other words, a majority of the Chinese requests using the preparatory strategy are made from the speaker’s perspective.

The final internal modification that needs to be considered in this section is the use of the politeness marker 'please'. This is not common in this situation; it occurs twice in the American English data, as in (220) and four times in the Russian data. There is only one case of 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ used in Chinese request for information about the instructor’s availability. I need to mention here that one of the four uses of  пожалуйста ‘please’ is in a request with the preparatory strategy. This provides
additional proof that the imperative does not necessarily accompany the imperative only.

(220) Hi, can I please make an appointment with you to discuss my paper? (AE21)

The fact that only two American participants utilize please with the preparatory strategy may be due to the relatively smaller weight assessed by the American informants in this situation.

7.11.4. Alerters

Students from each language address their instructors differently. In the Chinese data, sixteen Chinese participants address their instructors by the title 老师 ‘teacher’ before starting the actual request. Other terms of address are also used, such as three cases of 教授 ‘professor’ and one case of 导师 ‘advisor’. Twelve cases of greeting as an attention-getter are also used in Chinese requests. The greetings are usually accompanied by terms of address (10 cases).

Eight of the Russian participants used first names plus patronymics to address their professors. Apologies are used as attention-getters in seven of the Russian requests, and greetings, which did not appear in Situation 8, 9, and 10, are found in four others.

The fewest alerters are once again found in the American English requests. There are only two case of professor, one case of ma’am, and one use of advisor (which
according to Daniel E. Collins (personal communication) is highly improbable as an American English term of address). Both apologies (4 cases) and greetings (6 cases) are used as attention-getters in the American English data.

7.11.5. External modifications

The most frequent external modifications found with this request are grounders, which state the ‘reasons for making the request, and preparators, which are used to check on the availability of the instructor. These modifications are particularly common in the Chinese data (211), where all but three of the requests use one or the other strategy.

7.12. Situation 12: Asking an instructor to write a letter of recommendation

7.12.1. Weight of the request

The weight for this request is medium high to high. The Chinese and Russian participants give it a higher mean weight (3.9 and 4.1, respectively) than the American participants (3.5).
7.12.2. Core request strategies

The majority of the Chinese and Russian participants employ the preparatory strategy in this situation. (18 and 19, respectively). While some of the American English speakers also use preparatory (9 cases), others use the intention and mind strategies (7 cases and 7 cases, respectively). Indeed, there are more cases of the mind strategy, e.g., (221), in Situation 12 than in any other.

(221) Would you mind writing me a letter of recommendation for my job application? (AE9)

Although it is a standard procedure for a student to ask an instructor to write a recommendation letter in the USA, it still requires considerable effort and time to accomplish the request; thus fairly indirect strategies are appropriate in this situation. Moreover, in asking for a letter of recommendation, students are asking not so much for an evaluation as for an endorsement; this explains the use of the mind strategy as a way of sounding out the instructor's feelings about the student's performance.

Even though Russian participants ascribe a relatively high weight to this request, there are still four informants who employ the mood derivable strategy (imperatives), as do two of the Chinese participants. As in the other interactions with authority figures, the American participants do not use mood derivable at all in this situation.
7.12.3. **Internal modifications**

In all nine of the English requests involving the preparatory strategy, *could* is employed, and 8 of the 9 cases are made from the hearer’s perspective (second-person subject). In the Chinese requests with preparatory strategy, there are slightly more cases with second-person subjects, implicit or explicit, than first-person subjects (11 case versus 7 cases). In the Russian requests with preparatory strategy, the dominant form has a second-person subject (17 out of 19); however, in these cases the Russian participants compensate for the possible greater imposition imposed on the addressee by using the more indirect form with the negated conditional, as in (222).

(222) Просфессор, я подаю документы на новую работу. Вы не могли бы написать мне рекомендательное письмо?(R8)

Professor, I am sending [my] dossier to apply for a new job. Could you not write me a letter of recommendation?

In the remaining two cases where a first-person subject is used, indicative form of verb is used.

Negation of the verb is also used to reduce the force of the request more or less in seven of the Chinese examples, as in (223).
Teacher, can [you] (lit., can-not-can) help write a letter of recommendation?

Eight of the English preparatory strategies feature additional phrases preposed to the core request, which is presented as a complement clause, such as *Do you think* in

(223) *I was wondering* in (224), and *I was hoping.*

(223) I’m applying for a job and need a recommendation from someone. *Do you think you could* write me a good one? (C5)

(224) I am applying for a job and *I was wondering* if you *would* be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me? (AE10)

In a similar fashion, both the Chinese requests with mood derivable are followed by a tag question to reduce the direct force of the request.

This is assessed as a high-imposition request by the Chinese and Russian participants. The majority of the Chinese participants (23 out of 25) use 您 ‘you (formal)’ instead of 你 ‘you (informal)’. Not surprisingly, all of Russian speakers use вы ‘you (formal)’ to address their professors in this situation.

One of the other internal modifications discussed in previous sections is the use of real vs. null subjects. In this situation, in the Chinese requests with preparatory strategy, a majority of the requests (11 out of 18) have null subjects. All of the Russian examples
involve real subjects, since without an explicit pronoun the conditional structure would be ambiguous for person.

There are four cases of пожалуйста 'please' in the Russian requests; three of them accompany mood derivables, and one a preparatory strategy. This provides further evidence the пожалуйста ‘please’ is not restricted to the imperative. There are only three used of please in American English requests: two of them are in the requests with intention strategy and one in the request with preparatory. There are three cases of 请 ‘invite’ in Chinese requests. However, it would be translated as invite. It is very polite to use in the requests involving with instructors.

7.12.4. Alerters

A considerably higher percentage of Chinese participants use terms of address in this request than the speakers of other languages, the American English informants use it the least. There are only 4 cases of terms of address used in American English: three cases of professor and one case of sir. There is only one instance of an attention-getter, a greeting.

The Russian participants also used Профессор ‘professor’ (3 cases), as in example (233). However, a more common way of addressing instructors in Russian is to
use first names plus patronyms (6 cases). There are two uses of apologies as attention-getters in the Russian data.

(233) Уважаемый профессор, если вам не трудно, напишите, пожалуйста, рекомендательное письмо. (R13)

Dear professor, if it is not difficult for you, please write me the recommendation letter.

As in all situations involving instructors/advisors, in Chinese the most preferred term of address is 老师 ‘teacher’ (17 cases) as in example (234). 教授 ‘professor’ is also used, but with much less frequency (3 cases). In the Chinese data there are six cases of greetings (6 cases), all of which are accompanied by terms of address.

(234) 老师，我现在再找工作。帮我写封推荐信，行吗？(C13)

Teacher, I am now again looking for jobs. Help me write [a] recommendation letter, is it okay?

7.12.5. External modifications

More Chinese requests (19 cases) are provided with external modifications than Russian or English. This is the only situation in which the English and Russian data have
the same number of requests (10 cases) which stand alone, without any external modification (235–36).

(235) Would you be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me? (AE13)

(236) Вы не могли бы мне написать рекомендательное письмо, пожалуйста. Could you write me a letter of recommendation please.(R1)

In all three languages, the most frequent external modifications found with this request are grounders (23 cases in Chinese, 16 cases in Russian and 12 cases in American English). Russian participants usually use less external modifications than speakers from other languages, but in this situation much more external modifications are use than American English, since Russian participants assess the weight of the imposition noticeable high. All three languages also use compliment and appreciation in the request to make the request more likely to be realized.

7.13. Situation 13: Asking a librarian to help find a book

7.13.1. Weight of the request

The weight for this request is considered to be medium low. The Chinese students assess it to be the highest, 2.5 (medium), American participants view it to be the lowest, 1.6 (low), and Russian participants value it to be in the middle, 2.0.
7.13.2. Core request strategies

The preferred strategy for this request from all three cultures is the relatively indirect preparatory type, which is most common in the American English data (20 cases), even though the weight of the request is considered to be the lowest by the American students. All of these English requests are made from the addressee’s perspective, i.e., have second-person subjects, and the same is true the 12 Russian requests with preparatory strategy (237–39). Twelve of the 16 Chinese preparatory requests also have second-person subjects.

(237) Can you help me find this book please? (AE17)
(238) I’m sorry, but I can’t seem to find this book. Could you help me, please? (AE25)
(239) Вы не могли бы мне помочь найти книгу? (R1)

Could you help me find this book?

None of the American participants use mood derivable (imperative), and only two of the Chinese do (240); however, nine of the Russian participants employ this strategy (241–42).

(240) 麻烦您帮我找一本书，好吗？我已经找了好长时间了。（C7)

[May I] bother you, help me find a book, is it ok? I have already been looking for [it] for a long time.
The hint strategy is also employed for this request by participants from all three cultures. The similarity among the requests with hint strategy from all three cultures is that the hint is made either by checking on the availability of the book or by asking the location of the book instead of directly asking the librarian to help find it (243-245).

(243) Вы не подскажете, где находится эта книга?(AE8)
Will you not tell where this book is?

(244) 你好！请问你知道这本书应该放在哪里吗? (C9)
Hello! Please do you know where this book should be located?

(246) Do you know where this book is located? (C5)
7.13.3. Internal modifications

The internal modifications in this situation resemble those in the other situations involving university personnel. For preparatory strategy, the conditional is preferred in both the American English (13 out of 19) and the Russian responses (12 out of 12); all of the Russian examples also feature negation.

Another way of modifying the illocutionary force of the core request is, as noted elsewhere, tag questions. In this situation, as in others, these are primarily characteristic of the Chinese responses. All of these Chinese examples with the mood derivable strategy (imperative) are followed by tag questions in this manner.

As could be predicted from the situation, all of the Russian and Chinese requests feature the formal/deferential rather than the informal second-person pronouns.

Of the 16 Chinese requests with the preparatory strategy, half involve null subjects.

The politeness marker please is found in 6 of the 20 cases of preparatory in the American English requests. The Russian equivalent пожалуйста is usually (though not exclusively) paired with the imperative; in the given situation it occurs in 7 of the 9 cases of this strategy. In Chinese, there are 6 cases of 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ to ask for information. I consider请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ as an attention-getter. There are other 3 cases of 请 ‘please’: one is used with imperative and other 2 with preparatory.
7.13.4. Alerters

Terms of address are used by participants from all three language groups in this situation, though not extensively. Six of the Chinese students address the librarian with老师 ‘teacher’, as in (247).

(247) 老师，我需要一本书，可是在书架旁边找了很久也没找到。能麻烦老师给我找一下吗? (C17)

Teacher, I need a book, but I’ve looked a long time by the bookshelves and have not found [it]. Can [I] bother [you] teacher to look [it] a bit for me?

This can be explained by the fact that librarians have similar status to instructors in Chinese academic culture. Indeed, the fact that some of the Chinese participants view librarians with the same degree of respect as teachers may explain why the Chinese students ascribe more weight to this request than the participants from the other language groups.

One of the Chinese participant uses先生 ‘sir’ (248), while three of the American English speakers use the equivalent sir (249); this is the only situation in which this form of address appears. Finally, two of the Russian participants use the librarian’s imagined first name plus the patronymic, as in (242), above, and (250). This form of address presupposes that the speaker is at least casually acquainted with the librarian.
Sir, can you help me find a book? I’ve looked for a long time, but haven’t found [it]. Thank you!

Sir, can you help me find a book please? (AE23)

Igor’ Ivanovič, could you help me find this book?

Attention-getters are more frequent than terms of address in this situation. Eleven of the Chinese participants begin their requests with the greetings 你好 (5 cases) ‘hello (informal)’ or 您好 (6 cases) ‘hello (formal)’. By contrast, only one of the American participants uses the greeting Hi to start the request, and there is no similar usage among the Russian examples. Instead of greetings, apologies are a more common means of initiating the service encounter in the American English and Russian data. There are 8 such apologies in the English responses, as in (251), and 11 cases in the Russian responses, as in (252).

Excuse me, but could you help me find this book? (AE13)

Excuse [me], will you help me find the book?
7.13.5. External modifications

When it comes to external modifications, considerably more Chinese participants (16) provide reasons when making the requests, as in (248), above, than Russians (3) or American English speakers (9), as in (253–54). Most of ‘reasons’ in all three groups are placed prior to the core request.

(253) Извините, я не могу найти нужную мне книгу. Не могли бы вы мне помочь?
(R20)
Excuse [me], I can not find a book I need. Could you not help me?

(254) Hi, I was looking for this book, but I can’t find it. Would you mind helping me?
(AE14)

Apart from grounders, the only external modifications used in the Chinese data are appreciations (thanks in advance, 3 cases), as in (248), above, and compliments (2 cases).

In Russian, there are only 4 requests with external modifications. Other than grounders, there is also one case of preparatory. Compared with situation 12, the weight of the request is smaller; this may explain why fewer external modifications are used.
7.14. Situation 14: Asking the receptionist if the chair is in the office

7.14.1. Weight of the request

The weight for this request is low to medium low. The Chinese students rate it the highest, at 2.1, while American students assess it at 1.6 and Russians at 1.4. This is a request for information. Weights in this low range are also found with the other requests for information.

7.14.2. Core request strategies

Preparatory, which is the most common strategy in most of the other situations, is used in only three of the English requests here, e.g., (255), and only one of the Russian ones (256). The Chinese participants do not utilize this strategy at all for the given request.

(255)  Excuse me, can you tell me if the chair is here right now? (AE15)

(256)  Могу я узнать в офисе ли декан сейчас? (R21)

Can I know if the chair is in the office?

Mood derivable is used by five of the Russian participants, as in (257), and one of the Chinese participants, as in (258). Predictably, none of the American English-speaking participants uses it, since the situation does not presuppose that the requestor
has power over the requestee or close relations with her.

(257) Скажите, пожалуйста, декан у себя в офисе? (R23)

Please tell [me], is the chair in the office?

(258) 我想找系主任。如果看到他，麻烦你告诉我。谢谢！(C22)

I want to talk with (literally, I want to look for) the department chair. If [you] see him, [I] bother you to tell me. Thank you!

Imperatives of verbs of saying, like Скажите in (257), are conventionalized in requests for information in Russian and thus may have lost some of their direct force. In the Chinese request (258), mood derivable is used with a conditional clause. 麻烦 'bother' precedes the verb, which is a polite way to ask someone for help.

In the Russian data, the intention strategy is common in this situation (13 cases), as in (259). In American English requests the inquiry strategy is the most used one (22 cases) as in example (260).

(259) Вы не скажете, декан в офисе? (R12)

Will you tell if the chair is in the office?

(260) Hi, is the chair available right now? (AE14)
In the American English data, two of the requests utilize the forms *I was hoping...* or *I was wondering...,* with the verb in the past tense, preceding the question in order to sound more polite (261–262). These ways of requesting are not found in Chinese or Russian.

(261) *I was hoping* you could tell me if the chair is in. (AE11)

(262) Hi, *I was wondering* if the department chair is in the office right now? (AE21)

7.14.3. Internal modifications

There are three American English requests with preparatory strategy, of which two involve the conditional and one the indicative. In Russian there is only one request with preparatory strategy; this is made from the speaker’s perspective and so, as elsewhere in the Russian data with first-person subjects, the verb is indicative rather than conditional. There are only nine Russian requests that are negated, as in (259).

All of the Russian requests utilizing the intention strategy feature negated verbs, as in (259), above. Intention strategy is not used in any of Chinese requests in this situation, while three of the English requests use it, but with positive structure, as in (260).

In Chinese, as noted above, there is a parallel distinction in the second-person pronouns between informal 你 and formal 您. Most Chinese participants used 你 ‘you
(informal)’ (8 cases) instead of 您 ‘you (formal) (4 cases) to address the secretary.

In Russian, in contrast with the usage in the Chinese data, most of the Russian participants prefer to use the formal вы to address the secretary instead of informal ты in this situation. There are 19 cases of вы ‘you (formal)’ or verb forms reflecting the formal category (274–75), but only 2 of ты or verb forms reflecting the informal category (276–77). Example (276), at least, presupposes some degree of friendly acquaintance with the secretary, given the use of her first name without patronymic.

(274) Вы случайно не знаете, декан у себя в офисе или нет?(R20)
Don't you, by any chance, know if the chair is in his office or not?

(275) Не подскажете, декан у себя?(R1)
Will you not tell me if the chair is in his office?

(276) Марина! Не знаешь ли ты где находится Анатолий Михайлович? (R16)
Marina! Do you not know where Anatolij Mixajlovič is?

(277) Привет! Не подскажешь, декан в офисе?(R15)
Hello! Will [you] not tell [me] if the chair is in the office?

In the Russian request (257), there is a politeness marker пожалуйста 'please' used to modify the direct force of the request.

The politeness marker please is not used in the English requests. On the other
hand, four of the five Russian requests using mood derivable strategy contain пожалуйста ‘please’, as in (257), above. The remaining example (259) is remarkable not only for this omission but also for the presuppositional reference to the chair by the pronoun 'he' rather than name or title; this suggests an informal and not very polite approach.

(259) Скажите, а он у себя?(R8)

Tell [me], is he in the office?

7.14.4. Alerters

Several of the responses in this situation, like others that can be envisioned as opening encounters, include terms of address. Thus four of the Chinese participants utilize 老师 'teacher' to address the secretary (cf. 7.13.4), while one uses 小姐 'Miss' (which presupposes that the secretary is a young woman). The use of 老师 reflects the fact that in China students usually treat the department secretary as respectfully as a teacher; this may explain why the weight of this request is larger in Chinese than in the other two cultures. In the American English data, one student uses the generic term Ma’am to address the secretary (260), which again presupposes a female secretary. Some of the Russian informants address the secretary, who is presumed to be a known individual, by first name or first name plus patronymic (261–62).
(260) **Ma’am**, could you tell me if the chair is in the office at the moment? (AE6)

(261) **Anna**, декан у себя? (R19)

Anna, is the chair in the office?

(262) **Ольга Николаева**, здравствуйте, а декан у себя? (R17)

Ol’ga Nikolaevna, hello, is the chair in the office?

Of attention-getters, the phrase *excuse me* is used in nine of the American English examples in this situation, as in (263).

(263) **Excuse me**, do you know if the chair is in his/her office right now? (C8)

The Russian equivalent, the imperative извините 'excuse [me]', is less frequent here, with only three examples, as in (264).

(264) **Извините, декан у себя?** (R22)

**Excuse [me]**, is the chair in his office?

In the Chinese data, there is no similar use of the equivalent of ‘excuse me’; instead 请问 ‘please [may I] ask’ is widely used to initiate this request for information (19 out of 25
examples), e.g., in (265).

(265) 请问系主任在吗?(C1)

    Please [may I] ask, is the department chair in?

    In the Chinese requests, greetings are widely used as attention-getters. Thus in
    Situation 14 there are 12 requests that begin with greetings (266–67). As noted in
    previous sections, Chinese has a distinction in the second-person pronouns between
    informal 你 and formal, respectful 您. When addressing the secretary, more Chinese
    participants use informal 你 than formal 您. Thus eight utilize the greeting 你好, which
    incorporates the informal pronoun (266), and four the greeting 您好, which incorporates
    the formal pronoun (267).

(266) 你好！请问系主任是否在办公室？(C10)

    Hello! Please [may I] ask, is the department chair in the office?

(267) 你好！请问系主任现在在办公室吗? (C24)

    Hello! Please [may I] ask, is the department chair in the office right now?

Greetings are not as commonly used in the American English and Russian requests in this
situation. Only five of the American participants begin their requests with greetings, as in
(268), and only one Russian participant does so, with a very informal salutation and informal address (269).

(268) Hello, is the chair in please? (AE2)

(269) Привет, не подскажешь, декан в офисе?(R15)

   Hi, will [you] tell [me], is the chair in the office?

7.14.5. External modifications

In this situation, as in other requests for information, few external modifications are used. This may be due, at least in part, to the relatively low weight of the request. None of the American English or Russian speakers offer any external modifications, and only three of the Chinese participants do, as in (278). The external modifications used in Chinese requests are grounders (three cases) and appreciation (1 case).

(270) 你好！我想找系主任谈一下期末考试的事情。请问他现在在里面吗？(C11)

   Hello! I would like to have a talk with (literally, I want to look for) the department chair to talk a bit about final exam matters. Please [may I] ask, is he inside [in his office] right now?
7.15. Summary

In chapter 7, I have compared the requestive features of the Chinese, American English, and Russian responses in each of the 14 situations. In this comparison, I have focused on the mean weights of the request and the main core request strategies, internal modifications, alerters, and external modifications used. I have tried to bring out both the similarities and the differences in those spheres of usage across the three languages.

The information about how the participants assessed the weight of the requests has helped me to understand better the choices that they made in the linguistic forms of the utterances in the different contexts. In my data, there are ten situations (situation 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) where the weight of the requests is assessed by native speakers of American English, Russian and Chinese reasonably differently (by which I mean that there is a weight difference greater than or equal to 0.5 between at least two of the languages.)

As illustrations, I will take just a few requestive situations, where the American, Russian, and Chinese participants assessed the weight of the situation differently, to show how their assessment may make a difference in the way they formulate their requests.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core request Strategies</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean weight</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Most used</td>
<td>Preparator Reward</td>
<td>Grounder</td>
<td>Preparator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 Comparison of the three languages in situation 5

As Table 7.2 shows, in Situation 5 (asking a best friend for help with moving), the Chinese participants considered the weight of the request lowest. Concomitantly, there are a noticeable number of imperatives (mood derivables) among the Chinese core requests, while only 5 imperatives are used in Russian requests. This, along with other evidence that I have considered above, suggests that Chinese are verbally very direct with their close friends and do not feel much need to offer redress when making relatively high-imposition requests of them. Russian speakers rated the weight of this request the highest. Therefore, only five Russian speakers use imperative in this situation. Majority of the Russian requests are with preparatory and even more number of requests with preparatory are in Russian than in American English. But still the most used core request strategy in American English is preparatory.
As shown in Table 7.3, in Situation 13 (asking a librarian to look for a book), it was the native speakers of American English who assigned the lowest weight to this request (1.6) and Chinese students who considered it the highest (2.5). As noted above, in Chinese university culture, students customarily treat librarians with almost the same degree of respect and deference as teachers; this may explain why the Chinese students ascribe more weight to this request than do the other groups. It is not surprising, therefore, that we see in the Chinese requests an increase in the use of a relatively indirect strategy, preparatory, and a decrease in the use of the most direct strategy, imperative (mood derivable). Conversely, in the Russian data there is an increase in the use of the imperative and a decrease in the use of preparatory in Russian request. By contrast, in American culture, helping patrons look for books may be considered one of the librarian’s standard duties. Therefore, American English speakers rate the weight of the
request lowest. Accordingly, we can see an increase of preparatory in the American English requests in this situation.

Both these examples show that preparatory is most common strategy used in English requests, regardless of the requestive contexts and the change of the social variables.

My research reveals the similarities and differences in terms of alternatives, core request strategies, internal and external modifications in the three languages in these 14 different situations in academic settings.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Conclusions

In the study I have explored the similarities and differences in the uses of strategies in core requests and in their internal and external modifications by Americans, Russians and Chinese people in specific contexts. My focus has been to compare requests made by students in three different languages, English, Russian and Chinese, in academic settings, specifically on campus, in situations which are closely associated with college students’ life. During the process of analyzing the data, I found answers for all the questions I encountered in my literature review.

The findings have revealed similarities and differences in the requests made by the native speakers from the three different languages in each specific requestive context.

As far as the strategies of the core requests are concerned, the preparatory is the most preferred for requests in all three languages, usually in the forms of 'can' or 'could'
(with first- or second-person subjects) to check the feasibility of the request.

Nevertheless, it is considerably more common in English requests than in Russian and Chinese requests, as shown in Table 8.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core request strategy</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most used</td>
<td>Preparatory 199/349 (57%)</td>
<td>Preparatory 166/350 (47.4%)</td>
<td>Preparatory 163/345 (47.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second used</td>
<td>Inquiry 55/349 (15.8%)</td>
<td>Mood derivable (Imperative) 80/350 (23%)</td>
<td>Mood derivable (Imperative) 72/345 (20.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1 The first two core request strategies used in each language

The study found that the types of requests determine the requestive patterns that native speakers employ. Thus, the patterns for requesting information are distinctively different from the ones for action. In requests for information, the inquiry strategy is the most used strategy in English and Chinese, while in Russian the two most preferred strategies are the intention strategy and mood derivable (imperative).

Except in requests for information, the most preferred strategy in English is preparatory, regardless of the more particular requestive contexts and regardless of the changes in social variables in the requestive situations. Indeed, the English native speakers in my study displayed a marked disinclination to use mood derivables
(imperatives), as it shown in Table 8.2. The mood derivable strategy is, in fact, the least used strategy when the Americans subjects make requests in any of the situations in the questionnaire. Only 3 out of the 349 request utterances collected from the English questionnaires used the mood derivable strategy (imperative).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood derivable (Imperative)</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3/349 (1.1%)</td>
<td>80/350 (23%)</td>
<td>72/345 (20.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2 The use of mood derivable strategy in requests of the three languages

Although preparatory is in general also the preferred strategy for Chinese and Russian requests, mood derivable (imperative) outnumbers it in certain specific requestive situations, such as in situation 2 of requesting lunch money from a friend in both Chinese and Russian, in situation 5 of asking a friend for help with moving in Chinese, and in Situation 13 of asking a librarian for help to look for a book in Russian.

It seems that the social variables—power difference and the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the addressee—have a much more significant influence on the preference of the strategy for the core requests made by the Chinese subjects than the rank of the imposition. There is a pattern in Chinese requests that, when the requests are directed to the addressees who are good friends, there is a strong preference for using
mood derivables (imperative), even though the rank of the imposition may be high. When it comes to making requests to the addressees having the power differences with the speakers, no matter what the rank of the imposition is, we see a considerable decrease in usage of mood derivables (imperative) and greater use of preparatory strategy.

In the Russian responses, as in Chinese, requests made to good friends in general display more usages of mood derivable (imperative). Conversely, when the requests are made to addressees who have higher power, the usage of mood derivable decreases. The difference in the use of mood derivable between Chinese and Russian seems to be that it decreases significantly in Russian when the requests are made to an acquaintance, even though the ranking of the imposition may be lower, while there is no dramatic change in its frequency in Chinese when an acquaintance is addressed. Thus, I conclude that the social variable of familiarity between the speaker and the addressee has decisive effects on the choice of mood derivable (imperative) in Russian requests, while the social variable of power differential between the speaker and the addressee has more influence on its use in Chinese requests.

While the hint and intention strategies are common in Russian requests, they are much less used than preparatory and mood derivable. The study found that the hint strategy is more likely to be used in a situation when the weight of the request is high, but it also could be used to a friend or a stranger within the requests with low weight. The
intention strategy, which inquires about the addressee’s intention (‘will you’ or ‘would you’), seems to be preferable in less formal requestive contexts, and tends to be used more with addressees of equal or less power, in the example, Слушай, не одолжишь словарь на несколько минут? ‘Listen, will you lend [me] the dictionary for a few minutes?’ which is directed to a classmate.

In our data, Russian requests that conventionally question (with negation) the addressee’s ability (вы не могли бы…) not only tend to be used in formal situations, but are used a great deal in informal situations with friends as well. This may be due to the relative high weight in our requestive situations in the questionnaire when dealing with friends (asking for a loan or for help moving). More research on the usage of requests questioning addressee’s ability in low-weight requests with friends needs to be done.

It is surprising to see that Chinese participants use almost as many mood derivable (imperative) as Russian informants in their core requests. However, noticeably more Chinese requests than Russian and English requests are accompanied by external modifications, which are used to mitigate the imposition that the request may produce for the addressee. In general, Russian requests feature fewer external modifications than those in the other two languages. As you can see in Table 8.3, more than half of the 345 Chinese requests (59.1%) are made with external modifications, while only 38.9% of the Russian requests are accompanied with external modifications. The total number of
external modifications used in Russian requests is 194, while noticeably more external modifications occur with respect to Chinese requests, which total 316.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Modifications (EM)</th>
<th># of requests</th>
<th>American English</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>349</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests with EM</td>
<td>174 (49.8%)</td>
<td>136 (38.9%)</td>
<td>204 (59.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># EM</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>316</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145 (62.8%)</td>
<td>111 (38.9%)</td>
<td>197 (62.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposition minimizers</td>
<td>32 (13.9%)</td>
<td>38 (19.6%)</td>
<td>51 (16.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 (9.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>5 (2.2%)</td>
<td>8 (4.1%)</td>
<td>17 (5.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposition minimizers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3 Comparison of the use of external modifications in the three languages

External modifications are used to modify the illocutionary force of the requests and accordingly make the requests sound more polite. It is a tendency that the higher weight of the request, the more the requests are accompanied with external modifications. For instance, in Situation 8 (asking an instructor to extend the deadline for a paper), the weight of the request is assessed by the native speakers of all three languages very high, in the 3.6-3.9 range. All the American English and Chinese requests include external modifications, as do 15 of the Russian requests.
Grounders, which provide reasons or justifications for requesting, are the most preferred external modification for the requests from all the three cultures. Grounders tend to be placed prior to the core requests by all three language groups. The difference among the groups lies in the percentage of grounders standing prior to the core requests among the total number of grounders used. The Chinese requests have the highest percentage of grounders placed prior to the core request, and the Russian requests have the smallest percentage (see Table 8.3). The use of preposed grounders lay more ground to prepare for the oncoming core request and may make the request sound more polite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total # of grounders</th>
<th># prior to core requests</th>
<th>% prior to core requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4 The use of prior grounders in the three languages

It is not surprising to see that the second-most used external modification in American English is imposition minimizer. This may provide another piece of evidence to support the claim that America may belong to a negative-politeness oriented society where people try to minimize the imposition that a speech act may produce. Imposition minimizors tend to be used in requests with higher imposition in all three languages, but
in American English they are also sometimes used in addressing strangers in requests with a very small imposition, such as in situation 4 (asking for a pen from a stranger peer). This may indicate that native speakers of American English tend not to infringe other’s freedom, and even try to minimize the imposition of this low-weight request.

It is surprising to see that the Chinese participants used the most number of appreciations compared to American English and Russian informants in their requests, as shown in Table 8.3. By my observations, in daily life on all occasions, native speakers of American English seem to express appreciation very extensively, even to family members and very close friends, using such expressions as thank you and I would really appreciate it, while in Chinese culture overt expressions of appreciation are seldom used with family members and close friends. The low occurrence of external modification appreciation in the American English, Russian and Chinese data may be influenced by the fact that the data was collected from written questionnaires rather than spoken usage.

The external modification disarmer is only used in the American English data and does not occur in Russian and Chinese data. Conversely, the external modification consequence does not appear in American English data, but it is used in both the Russian and Chinese data, with 1 occurrence in the former and 3 in the latter.
You have two choices, one is to invite me to dinner, and another is to lend me some money, otherwise I will starve to death.

When the consequence external modification is used in my data, it is very playful. It is usually used in informal situations.

Apart from the external modifications used, there are also differences in the use of internal modifications and alerters in the three language groups. One example of this is the use of ‘please’. In Chinese, ‘please’ has restricted usages: among close friends, ‘please’ tends not to be used. This is not the case for English in (1) and Russian requests as in (2). In Russian, ‘please’ is normally used with imperatives, but it can also be used in requests with the preparatory strategy as well, only with much less frequency (2). Even in the Russian requests with imperatives, ‘please’ is not a required element (3).

(2) Can I please borrow your camera? If I break it, I’ll buy it. (AE2)

(3) Ты не могла бы одолжить мне фотоаппарат, пожалуйста? (addressing a best friend) (R1)
Could you not lend me [your] camera, please?

(4) Слушай, будь другом, лай мне 10 долларов на обед. Я тебе завтра их отдам. (R25)
Listen, be a friend, give me $10 for lunch. I will give it back to you tomorrow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alerters</th>
<th>Total requests</th>
<th>American English 349</th>
<th>Russian 350</th>
<th>Chinese 345</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term of address</td>
<td>23 (6.6%)</td>
<td>69 (19.7%)</td>
<td>148 (42.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention getters</td>
<td>86 (24.6%)</td>
<td>88 (25.1%)</td>
<td>171 (49.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.5. Distribution of alerters in the three languages

In terms of alerters, which include terms of address and attention getters, requests in the three language groups display both similar and different usages. As shown in Table 8.5, native speakers of Chinese employ alerters far more often than do the informants that are native speakers of the other languages. In particular, the Chinese-speaking participants make wide use of terms of address. They employ them far more often than do the informants that are native speakers of the other languages. Terms of address occur in 148/345 or 42.9% of the possible cases in Chinese requests. They occur in only 23/349 or 6.6% of the possible cases in American English requests, the lowest use in the three languages, while terms of address occur in 69/350 or 19.7% of the possible cases in the Russian requests.

Likewise, my data shows that Chinese-speaking participants utilize attention-getters far more often than do the informants that are native speakers of the other two languages. Attention-getters occur in 49.6% of the total Chinese request utterances. They occur in only 86/349 or 24.6% of the possible cases in American English requests, while
terms of address occur in 88/350 or 25.1% of the possible case in Russian requests. American English informants and Russian participants show extremely close use of number of attention-getters in their requests. All in all, the Chinese participants tend to lay the ground carefully prior to making the actual requests.

When requests for information are made to a stranger or a less familiar acquaintance, we can see a rich use of alerters in all three cultures. Likewise, all three groups customarily use attention-getters, which usually precede the core request to get the addressee’s attention, or a combination of terms of address and attention-getters or greetings before the core requests for information. However, Chinese requests generally feature more terms of address and attention-getters than either Russian or English ones; the English responses have the fewest of all.

All this indicates that it would not be objective to judge the directness or indirectness of the requests solely based on the strategies used for the core requests, although those may be the most salient indicator. The use of alerters, internal and external modifications should also be taken into account when the directness or indirectness is being assessed.

Every culture has its cultural-specific ways to make requests. Keeping the similarities and differences in mind can help resolve the possible misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication, and enable second-language speakers to make appropriate
requests which comply with the rules of the target language so that, ideally, they could achieve their goals without seeming to be discourteous.

8.2. Answers to the questions raised in process of literature review

During the process of analyzing the data, I found answers to all four of the questions I identified as relevant during my literature review. Those questions are all related to the requestive features, such as external modifications (in question 1), core request strategies (in questions 2 and 3), and internal modifications (in question 4).

For convenience, I will list the questions again here before answering them.

1. Is it true that Chinese speakers tend to offer reasons (grounders) in their request utterances more than speakers of American English do as claimed by Liao (1997)?

2. Do Chinese speakers prefer to provide reasons prior to their core requests or subsequent to the core requests? How about speakers of American English and Russian?

3. Is it true that English speakers put restrictions on the use of imperatives and prefer using conventionally indirect strategies in making requests as claimed by Wierzbicka (1985) and Clark and Schunk (1980)?
4. Is it true that Russians prefer using imperatives in requests, as suggested by Mills (1993)?

5. Have Russian request locutions questioning the addressee’s intentions been conventionalized as the most polite forms in any situation, formal or informal as claimed by Mills (1993)?

6. Do Russian request locutions questioning the addressee’s ability tend to be used in formal situations as suggested by Mills (1993)?

7. Do hints tend to be used when the weight of the request is bigger as suggested by Mills (1993)?

8. Is it true that пожалуйста ‘please’ is restricted to imperatives in Russian, as suggested by Mills (1993)?

The answers to these questions are as follows:

1. The most preferred external modification in three languages is grounders, providing the reasons for making the request. Chinese requests use more grounders than American English and Russian requests.

2. Native speakers of all three languages tend to use grounders prior to the core requests, while Chinese requests have the highest percentage of grounder made prior
(75.1%) and Russian requests the lowest (68.4%). 73.8% of the American English grounders stand prior to the core requests.

3. American English speakers display a sharp disinclination to use imperatives and a marked preference for using preparatory in their core requests. Only 3 out of 349 requests use imperatives in the requests. American English speakers tend to use preparatory in their requests all the time, regardless of the change of contexts and social variables.

4. By contrast, Russian requests show a noticeable number of imperatives, but surprisingly, the most used core request strategy in my data is preparatory.

5. Intention strategies tend to be used more in informal situations, and less in the requests with high imposition in Russian.

6. Russian request locutions questioning the addressee’s ability tend to be used not only in formal situations, but also in informal situations involving best friends in the situations where the weight of the request is not; it also tends to be used in situations involving strangers in low-weight requests, such as borrowing a pen from a peer stranger (situation 4).

7. The hint strategy tends to be used in Russian requests when the weight of the request is high. However, it also seems to have become conventionalized in certain situation where the weight may not be very high, as in the situation of making an appointment
8. In Russian ‘please’ is not only used in the requests with the imperative, but can also be used in requests with preparatory.

8.3. Implications for teaching

This research provides insights with important implications for the methodology of foreign language teaching. Every culture has its own culture-specific sociolinguistic rules. Transferring the sociolinguistic rules of the first language into the target language can make foreign language learners misinterpret the illocutionary intent of speech acts in the target language or make their own intents misunderstood by native speakers of the target language.

Thomas (1983) suggests that the students’ metapragmatic ability should be specially developed. Metapragmatic ability refers to the ability to analyze language use in a conscious manner. She distinguishes two kinds of mistakes the students often make: **pragmalinguistic failure** and **sociopragmatic failure**. Pragmalinguistic failure is language-specific, stemming from the differences in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force between native and non-native speakers. It is identified as inappropriate grammatical usages, as judged based on prescriptive rules, and therefore can be corrected in a straightforward way. For instance, *Would you like to clean up?* in English is
considered a conventionalized form to request, but in Russian it may be perceived as a
genuine inquiry about the hearer’s preference. By contrast, sociopragmatic failure is
culture-specific, dealing with students’ values and beliefs, which cannot be corrected, but
only discussed. Thomas recommends that teachers foster discussions of language use in
cultural contexts in order to raise their students’ metapragmatic awareness.

In my view, teachers should stress the similarities and the differences in the two
languages in a particular language area which is being studied and design role-play or
other activities to put language use in cultural contexts, with the goal of making students
aware of different sociolinguistic rules. It would be better to made clear to the students
which request strategies tend to be preferred in the target language in a given context and
what differences there are in the use of alerters and internal and external modifications in
the first and the target language and let students know that strategies of this kind are also
an integral part of requestive speech acts and play an important role in making requests
sound socially appropriate.

The primary instructional time would be devoted to the commonly used request
types or modifications in that context and the request strategies which may not available
in the learners’ first language— for instance, for Russian and Chinese learners of English,
the mind and appreciation strategies (Would you mind... and I would really appreciate
if...). Such L2-specific structures may need to receive more attention; in particular, there
may need to be more discussion of the contexts in which they would be used. It would be beneficial also to introduce other less commonly-used request types in the same discussion in order to provide the students with some options. When the context is changed, it would be better to encourage students to think how the change of the social variables would affect the requests made and explain the possible different sociolinguistic rules which may apply in that context.

Through continual comparison of a particular speech act in the first and target languages and discussion of the possible sociolinguistic rules governing the realizations of that speech act, the learners could become more aware of the differences in the cultures and learn how to form the locutions appropriate in specific contexts in the target language.

8.4. Implication for research

This study has investigated the features of requests across three different languages—American English, Russian and Chinese—and compared their similarities and differences. To my knowledge, there is to date no similar comparison of a particular speech in these three languages.

The findings of this dissertation can be valuable resources for future studies of potential interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies, which are concerned with language
learners’ performance and pragmatic competence in second language learning. The data for this research was provided by native speakers of three languages, so it can serve as a baseline to compare with the learners' realization behavior in order to detect possible deviant realization patterns which may be caused by interference from their first language.

Based on the nature of the research, in order to get a large corpus of data and compare the strategies cross social variables, a written questionnaire was selected as the main data collection method. Future study could be conducted to use other methods such as role-play or even natural observation to complement this study and provide additional validity. A rating scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, is incorporated right after each requestive situation to let participants evaluate the weight of the request. I am aware that this self-rating method may interfere with the participant’s unconscious formation process of the request, but obtaining the rating information is crucial to the research conducted from three languages to compare how participants from different cultures may assess the contexts differently.

Social variables have been proven to be important factors that influence the strategies chosen for the core requests and the uses of alerters and internal and external modifications. The social variables posited in this research are social power, social distance between the speaker and the addressee and rank of the request imposition, in
accordance with Brown and Levinson's (1987) fundamental study of linguistic politeness. However, there could be additional factors which play a role in the way the request is made by the speaker, such as the gender of the speaker and the addressee, the age range of the addressee and so on. Sociolinguistic variables such as participants’ gender and age are probably relevant for the way a request is made and have greater or smaller effects on the way requests are made in a given culture, but due to limitations of time this topic is reserved for future research.

Moreover, it should be noted that the social variables, for instance, social distance, has no clear-cut limits. Social distance is generally determined based on the degree of familiarity. In this research social distance has been categorized into three kinds: strangers, acquaintances and friends. However, depending on how long the speaker and the addressee have been acquainted, the category of acquaintances might present a range of degrees of familiarity that could reflect on the choice of request strategies. Future research could focus more on defining the social variables or include more social factors in the study.

In this dissertation, fourteen situations were designed. While this is not a small number, future research could add further situations, e.g., cases where requests of smaller rank of imposition are addressed to friends, in order to determine whether the rank of imposition influences requestive behaviors oriented to friends and how these differ from
requests with a high rank of imposition. Future research could also be conducted on the reverse power range, which has not been studied in this dissertation, such as in the situations in which instructors or advisors make requests of students.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Taiwanese English. Taipei: Crane.


**English questionnaire:**

Thank you for participating in my survey. We have created 14 situations. Please try to imagine that these situations are real and please write down what you would say in these situations in real life.

**First Part:** Your information:

Age: 18 19 20 20s 30s 40s  
Gender: Male Female  
Are you an Undergraduate or Graduate student? Please circle: Undergraduate Graduate

**Second part:** The 14 created situations:

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
| **1a.** You are a student. Your best friend has just bought an expensive new camera. You are asking your best friend to lend it to you, since you are going to a club activity this weekend. What would you say to your best friend: | **1b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition. Could you underline the one you choose? Thanks.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
| **2a.** You are a student. You are asking your best friend to lend you $10 for a lunch, since you forgot bring your wallet and you are very hungry now. What would you say to your best friend: | **2b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
| **3a.** You are a new student on the campus looking for the medical center. You are asking a male student walking toward you where it is. What would you say to him: | **3b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
| **4a.** You are a student in a computer lab. You reached in your school bag for a pen, but could not find one. You see a girl sitting next to you with extra pens. What would you say to her: | **4b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
| **5a.** You are a moving out next weekend. You would like to ask your friend to help you move. What would you say: | **5b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
| **6a.** You need to know what time it is now and you see that a female classmate sitting behind of you has a watch. You have only talked occasionally with her and do not know her very well. What would you say to her: | **6b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
| **7a.** In a language class when you are reading an article, you come across an unknown word and you see that a male classmate setting next to you has a concise dictionary on his desk, so you are asking him if you could borrow it for a second. What would you say to him: | **7b.** Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 --- 5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.  
1 2 3 4 5 |   |   |   |   |
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8a.</strong> Due to some family-related reasons you are not able to finish a paper on time. You would like to ask your male instructor for permission to extend the deadline. What would you say to him?</td>
<td><strong>8b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9a.</strong> You were sick and missed your exam, so you are asking your female instructor if she would give you a make-up exam. What would you say to her?</td>
<td><strong>9b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10a.</strong> You are asking your advisor who is a male professor if he could lend you the reference book, since you could not find it in the library. What would you say to him?</td>
<td><strong>10b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11a.</strong> You are a student. You want to make an appointment with your advisor who is a female professor regarding your thesis. You see her walking in the hallway next to the department office. What would you say to her?</td>
<td><strong>11b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12a.</strong> You need a letter of recommendation for a job application, and you would like to ask your instructor who is a male professor if he would write a letter of recommendation for you. What would you say to him?</td>
<td><strong>12b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13a.</strong> You are a student. You are asking a middle-aged male librarian to help you find a book which you could not spot on the shelf. What would you say to him?</td>
<td><strong>13b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14a.</strong> You are a student. You are asking a female staff member working in the Department Chair’s office if the Chair is in the office right now. What would you say to her?</td>
<td><strong>14b.</strong> Please judge the imposition in this request on a scale from 1 ---5. 1 is the LEAST imposition all the way to 5, 5 is the MOST imposition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 2 3 4 5
**Russian questionnaire:**

Благодарю вас за участие в данной анкете. Вам предоставлены 14 ситуаций. Представьте себе, что они, действительно, происходят с вами. Напишите, как бы вы ответили на данные вопросы.

**Первая часть:** Личные данные:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Возраст:</th>
<th>18 19 20 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Пол:</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Место рождения:</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Вторая часть:** 14 ситуаций:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Ситуация</th>
<th>Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5: самая мала‌нья, незначительная, – 1, самая большая, очень важная – 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Вы студент(ка). Ваш лучший друг (подруга) купил(а) дорогой фотоаппарат. Вы хотите попользоваться им, потому что в конце этой недели вы пойдете в поход. Вы ему (ей) говорите:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Вы хотите попросить своего друга (свою подругу) отдохнуть вам 10 долларов на обед, потому что вы забыли свой кошелек дома. Вы ему (ей) говорите:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Вы недавно приехали в университет и ещё плохо его знаете. Вам нужно посетить поликлинику университета, но вы не знаете, как туда пройти. Сейчас один студент идёт по улице, и вы ему говорите:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Вы в компьютерной лаборатории. Вы не можете найти свою ручку, но вам нужно записать очень важную информацию. В это время вы видите, что у девушки, которая сидит рядом с вами, есть лишняя ручка, и поэтому вы ей говорите:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Вы переехали на другую квартиру в конце следующей недели. Вы хотите попросить своего друга (свою подругу) помочь вам. Вы ему (ей) говорите:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Вы хотите узнать, который час. Вы видите, что у девушки, которая сидит за вами, есть часы. Вы ее не совсем хорошо знаете, только разговаривали с ней всего несколько раз. Вы ей говорите:</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>На занятия по иностранному языку вы читаете статью и встречаете несколько незнакомых слов. Вы видите, что у парня,</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a: По каким-то причинам вы не можете выполнить домашнее задание вовремя. Вы спрашиваете вашего профессора, может ли он продлить вам срок. Вы ему говорите:</td>
<td>86: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a: Вы заболели и пропустили экзамен, поэтому вы просите вашу преподавательницу, чтобы она дала вам возможность сдать экзамен. Вы ей говорите:</td>
<td>96: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a: Вы просите своего научного руководителя (это профессор-женщина) дать вам книгу, которую вы не могли найти в библиотеке. Вы ей говорите:</td>
<td>106: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a: Вы студент(ка). Вы хотите проконсультироваться со своим научным руководителем (ваш научный руководитель — женщина) о своей диссертации. Вы видите, что она идёт по коридору, и вы ей говорите:</td>
<td>116: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12a: Вам нужно рекомендательное письмо, и вы просите одного профессора (он вам преподавал раньше), чтобы он написал такое письмо. Вы ему говорите:</td>
<td>126: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a: Вы просите библиотекаря среднего возраста, чтобы он помог вам найти нужную книгу. Как вы ему говорите?</td>
<td>136: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a: Вы спрашиваете сотрудницу вашего деканата о том, в офисе ли декан. Вы ей говорите:</td>
<td>146: Оцените эту просьбу по шкале от 1 до 5 (самая маленькая, незначительная, — 1, самая большая, очень важная — 5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for taking your time to complete the questionnaire. Your comments:
### Chinese questionnaire

您参加我们的这次调查中设置了14个情景。想这些情景是真实发生的。您写出在这些情景下您会如何表达您的要求。

#### 第一部分: 您的信息:
- 年龄: 18  19  20s  30s
- 性别: 男  女
- 您的出生地:
- 您的教育程度: 博士  研究生  大学生

#### 第二部分: 14个情景:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1a</th>
<th>你是一名学生。你最好的朋友最近买了一个比较贵重的照相机。你想借他(她)的照相机用一用，因为你这个周末要去参加一个俱乐部的活动。你对他(她)说:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>你是一名学生。现在是午餐时间，你发现你今天忘带饭卡了，钱包也忘带了，你想向你的校友借点儿钱(5-10块)。你对他(她)说:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>你是一名新生。你要去校医院但不知怎么走。于是你问一位正从对面走过来的男生校医院在哪儿。你对他说:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>你是一名学生，你正在一计算机房上网查寻信息。你发现你忘带笔了，但是你需要记下一个重要的信息。你发现做在你旁边的女同学有多余的笔，于是你对她说:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>你下周末要搬家。你想请你的一位朋友来帮忙，你对他(她)说:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>你想知道现在几点了，你看到坐在你后面的一位同班女生戴着手表，你跟她并不十分熟悉，只不过看过几次面而已。你对她说:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>在一语言阅读课上，你读一篇文章时遇到几个生单词，你看到坐在你旁边的同班男生的桌子上有一本简明外语词典，你想借来用用。于是你对他说:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>因为家里发生了一些事情，所以你无法按时交上作业，你想请你的任课男老师能给</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1b</th>
<th>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小 (1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>序号</td>
<td>内容</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>你因为生病了所以无法参加期中考试，你想请你的任课老师给你一次补考机会，你对他说：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小（1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>你的导师是一位男教授，你想向他借一本书。因这本书无法在图书馆借到，而你知道你的导师有这本书，于是你找到你的导师，对他说：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小（1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a</td>
<td>你的导师是一位女教授，你想与她约一个时间请教一下有关论文的一些问题。你的导师正巧走过来，你对她说：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小（1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12a</td>
<td>你正在找工作，你想请你的任课老师(他是一位教授)帮你写一封推荐信，你对他说：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小（1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a</td>
<td>你是一名学生，你想请一位中年男图书管理员帮你找一本书，你在书架旁已找了很久，但没有找到，你对他说：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小（1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a</td>
<td>你要问系主任办公室里的一位女工作人员，系主任现在是否在他的办公室里，你对她说：</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14b</td>
<td>请您衡量这一请求的大小（1为最小的请求，至5为最大的请求)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

非常感谢！结束此次问卷，您的任何感想和建议：