A COMPARISON OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN STUDENT ACADEMIC EMAIL
REQUESTS TO FACULTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Emails have become one of the most commonly used medium for students to make requests to professors in institutional settings for their convenience and efficiency. However, many international students studying in the U.S. may feel it difficult to write email requests to people in a higher status where power asymmetry should be maintained. Some international students may write inappropriate email requests unintentionally because they use their L1 pragmatic norms when writing emails to American English speakers. To contribute to the understanding of email requests in the institutional context of university settings, this study combines speech act research with discourse analysis methodology to examine how native speakers of American English and native speakers of Chinese formulate email requests to faculty. This study collected authentic emails written by Chinese and American students who studied in a U.S. university. Along with each email the participant submitted, information related to the recipient was collected. I use the methodology of discourse analysis to investigate how imposition level of emails and senders' entitlement to make the request affect students' language choices. These findings demonstrate that Chinese students have some pragmatic infelicities in their email requests, such as underuse of internal and external modifications for high-imposition requests, pre-assuming that the requestee would grant the request, not acknowledging the imposition posed on the requestee. Chinese students use different, culturally influenced requestive strategies than American students when writing email requests. This study finally offers pedagogical implications for teaching email requests to English learners. This study contributes to our understanding of the requestive patterns of Chinese and American students as well as the similarities and differences between emails written by American students and those written by Chinese students. It contributes to the field of cross-cultural pragmatic studies on the speech act of request by L2 speakers.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis compares and contrasts the speech act of requests in academic emails to instructors written in English by university students in the United States who are native speakers of Chinese and those written by native speakers of American English. Emails have become one commonly used and important medium for communication in institutional settings for their convenience and efficiency. In American universities, writing emails is one of the most common communication methods between faculty and students. Emails used in academic settings entail functions such as collecting students' assignments, announcing course arrangements, and delivering course materials, etc. The purposes of students' emails to instructors, however, are usually to make requests: to ask for recommendation letters, to ask for feedback on course essays, to make office appointments, and to ask for an excused absence in a class, etc.

However, making a request can be a face-threatening act that impacts the negative face of the requestee and the positive face of the requester (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The imposition levels of the requests vary dependent upon request types and whether the actions required are inside or outside of the instructors' responsibilities. For example, a student making an appointment during the instructor's office hour is a part of the instructor's responsibility while a student requesting the instructor to write a recommendation letter may not be, depending on the relationship with the instructor. Therefore, the latter request poses a larger threaten on both the student's and the instructor's faces. Even though it is not totally inappropriate to request instructors to perform tasks that are not a part of their responsibilities in most institutional contexts, they are still face-threatening because the senders want recipients to spend time on something they would not do otherwise (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011). Therefore, if a request is made culturally inappropriately, the act can harm both the requester and the requestee.

Making requests politely is one factor that contributes to the acceptance of

requests, but many people may feel it not easy to write email requests to people with a higher status where power asymmetry should be maintained, and it can be more difficult for English as a second or foreign language learners. International students, most of whom lack knowledge of American norms and pragmatic competence, may find it even harder to write emails to instructors. International students studying in the U.S., as second language learners of American English, tend to use what is appropriate and polite in their own cultures and assume that it will also work well in American culture. However, different cultures have different redressive language, the usage of which varies among cultures. The determination of what cultural norms to use in specific situations is highly related to sociolinguistic factors and the contexts of the conversations; the interplay between linguistic choices and contexts are too complex for many international students to master in a short period of time. Even lexical markers that are known to second language learners as conveying "politeness" can convey impolite meanings (Aijmer, 2015). For example, international students are usually taught that "please" is one politeness marker that softens the tone of an utterance, but "please" can be ironic and offensive (Aijmer, 2015). Therefore, many international students are not able to formulate polite requests, and they could even construct offensive requests unintentionally.

When faculty and staff working in American universities receive such emails, they could feel offended and refuse the students' requests. The unclear communication could have negative impacts on relationships between students and teachers. In this way, cross-cultural miscommunication occurs between people from one culture and people from another culture. There may even be stereotypes that students from certain cultures are rude; however, in fact, they simply do not know American politeness norms. Chinese culture and American culture are different in many aspects, and Chinese students studying in the U.S. are very likely to have the problem of structuring polite academic email requests.

Another factor that makes writing proper email requests more complicated is that

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email, as a communicative medium, has become commonly used since the 1990s, and people still have different understandings of what type of medium email writing is. An email can be regarded as both written message and speech that was written down (Baron, 2003). Therefore, it is likely that email writers choose forms they think are appropriate based on their understanding of the nature of emails. People who consider an email as a verbal message that is written down tend to write an email in informal ways, which would be considered too informal and inappropriate by people who consider an email as written messages. International students may also have questions about the nature of emails and therefore use inappropriate conventions in their emails.

Another motivation for this study is to explore whether Chinese students demonstrated adequate pragmatic competence when writing email requests. Many Chinese students studying in American universities have Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores more than 95 in total, indicating they are proficient users of English by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Papageorgiou, Tannenbaum, Bridgeman, & Cho, 2015). However, most Chinese students may have low pragmatic competence that does not match their high proficiency levels as indicated by their TOEFL scores since the test examines test takers' grammatical competence and neglects their pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is an important language competence referring to speakers' abilities to use speech acts to express their illocutionary intents. Thomas claims that pragmatic failure can lead to miscommunication, and pragmatic failure has two sources: sociopragmatic failure and pragmalinguistic failure (Thomas, 1983). Sociopragmatic failure means that speakers cannot identify social variables involved in the situations and know how to choose appropriate languages in specific contexts (Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistic failure refers to speakers lacking abilities to understand intentional meanings of utterances (Thomas, 1983). The current study investigates differences between academic email requests made by native American English speaking students and analyzes whether

Chinese students have adequate pragmatic competence when writing email requests. Results of the study can encourage second language educators to put more effort into teaching pragmatic knowledge.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic politeness theories employed in request studies

Many studies have explored linguistic politeness in the speech act of request. Fraser (1990) points out that there are four influential linguistic politeness theories: the social norm view, the conversational-maxim view proposed by Grice (1975) and supplemented by Lakoff (1973), the face-saving view as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), and the conversational-contract view as proposed by Fraser (1975) and Fraser and Nolen (1981). Among the four approaches to linguistic politeness theories, Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-saving view is the most known. Previous studies on request strategies have adopted Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory as the framework for their studies (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009; Hong, 1996; Lee, 2004; Murphy & De Felice, 2018; Ogiermann, 2009; Zhu, 2012). Brown and Levinson (1987) adopted Goffman's (1967) notion of "face" into their theory (as cited in Fraser, 1990, p. 232). They believe that some acts are threatening to face and need softening, and speakers use strategies to soften face-threatening acts (FTA) to achieve politeness. Positive politeness strategies are redressive acts that appeal to the hearer's positive face—that is, the hearer's desires that his/her action or value is appreciated. Negative politeness strategies are redressive acts that appeal to the hearer's negative face—his/her desire that his/her freedom be unhindered, and his/her personal life not be intruded into. Off-record strategies are where utterances contain more than one possible communicative intention. A speaker constructs off-record utterances by saying something that is either more general or different from what he or she actually means. In this way, the speaker can provide defensible interpretations to the utterances if the hearer finds the utterance inappropriate. On record means that speakers clearly state what they really want to convey. On record strategies include baldly on record and with-redress. Brown and Levinson state that the weightiness (Wx) of FTA is determined by three independent sociolinguistic factors: social distance, relative power, and absolute ranking of

imposition. The sociolinguistic variables such as social distance, social power, and imposition level that help determine what linguistic politeness strategies to use as proposed by Brown and Levinson's (1987) are used in the current study.

Studies of request strategies and modifications

Many previous studies have explored requestive strategies, lexical/phrasal modifications, and external modifications in requests in terms of linguistic politeness theories in various languages. Ogiermann (2009) conducted a cross-cultural study on direct and indirect request strategies, and internal and external modifications in English, German, Polish, and Russian. The study shows that the examined languages prefer interrogatives to imperatives, indicating that conventional indirectness is preferred when making requests. The amounts of imperatives, grounders—an utterance given before or after the head act to provide a reason for the request, and hearer-oriented perspectives all have a geographical distribution that increases or decreases from West to East, showing different emphasis on indirectness.

To further explore the most indirect requestive strategy—hints, Weizman (1989) studied the universality of use of requestive hints across Australian English, Canadian French, and Hebrew using the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) data for requests. He found that the frequency of requestive hints is relatively low, and people who use hints tend to choose the most opaque sub-strategy—" stating potential grounders." These findings indicate that the opacity of hints makes the act of asking unacceptable requests appropriate.

Economidou-Kogetsidis (2009) compared Greek learners of English's use of request modifications. They found that Greek learners of English underused lexical/phrasal modification such as downtoners (e.g. 'possibly', 'perhaps'), understaters (e.g. 'a bit', 'a little'), and "please", and they incorrectly connected "please" with direct strategies such as want-statements or need-statement, making a request less polite. Learner requests overused most external modifications such as disarmer (e.g. 'I know you

don't like lending your notes, but could…'), preparator (e.g. 'I'd like to ask you something…'), and grounder (e.g. 'I missed the class yesterday.').

House (1989) conducted a study within CCSARP to compare and contrast the functions of one lexical mitigation—"please" in British English and its German equivalent "bitte" in requests and also examined the use of requestive strategies in standard and non-standard situations. The study shows that in standard situations—where the requester's right to make the request is high, the requestee's obligation to perform the request is high, and degree of difficulty to perform the request is low, query-preparatories strategies and imperatives are common and "please/bitte" collocates with them more frequently. In non-standard situations, imperatives occur infrequently, and query-preparatories are more common when face-threat is greater; however, "please/bitte" is more prohibited.

Murphy and De Felice (2018) examined the influences of lexical modification device "please" in British and American English requests and found that the frequency of "please" in both varieties of English was associated with the rank of imposition, social power, and linguistic forms involved in the request. The study shows that "please" in British English is associated with low-imposition requests, while "please" in American English is not associated with imposition levels. British and American requests both use conventional requestive strategies, but American English uses fewer "please". This, however, is not an indicator of less politeness because Americans use other forms of mitigation. "Please" in British English is highly associated with low-imposition requests, indicating it is a politeness marker. The absence of "please" in some situations may make the request impolite. However, "please" in American English is less tied to routine, the use of which is depended more on power relation, familiarity, and intimacy.

In research studies on Chinese request strategies, Hong (1996) conducted an empirical study on Chinese request patterns with social power and social distance as variables using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The study indicates that in low

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social status to high social status, high social distance relationship, subjects tend to use a title and formal form of "you" (*nin*) to show their respect. When two interlocutors are socially equal and mutually familiar, one interlocutor uses preparators—utterances placed before requests to provide preconditions for the request such as "Ni you qian ma?" (Do you have money?) and less formal terms to address the other interlocutor. In high social status to low social status, high social distance relationship, participants also use polite address forms and "qing" (please). However, fewer strategies were used in this situation, indicating the speaker's authority over the hearer.

Following request strategies put forward by Ervin-Tripp (1976), Ling (2003) did a contrastive study between Chinese and English request patterns with social relationship and rank of imposition as variables. She found that the general functions of request strategies in Chinese and English are similar, but the influences of social distance and power are greater on Chinese. The results show that Chinese speakers prefer indirect strategies to direct strategies. When the speaker has a higher social status than the hearer, imperatives and need statements are used most frequently, which is similar to the pattern in English. When the speaker is an elderly relative, imperatives and non-explicit directives are preferred. When interlocutors are about the same age, with a close social distance and imposition degree is low, imperatives are also the most common strategy. Permission directives are most frequently used when the speakers have a lower social status. In contrast to English where elderly people usually use need statements, younger relatives use need statements to the elderly in Chinese. The imposition level also affects the speech act of requests. Permission directives and hints are preferred in high-imposition requests.

Zhan (1992) explored the linguistic politeness strategies by analyzing a few Chinese classical books. He states that speakers may not use negative politeness strategies if they think the face-threatening act quality is low or the social distance with the hearer is low.

Studies on politeness and requests—English versus Chinese

Chinese and English polite requestive acts are realized differently. Nash (1983) finds that when making requests, American speakers rely on the negative politeness strategy of hedging, which is a word or phrase that softens the force of a request. Chinese speakers tend to employ positive politeness strategies by satisfying the hearers' "wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to, and so on" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 129). The results reflect the individual-centered and situation-centered characteristics of American and Chinese society, respectively. Chinese requestive politeness is primarily achieved by offering pre-grounders — reasons and justifications for making the requests given before requestive head acts, complimenting, apologizing, showing appreciation (Nash, 1983; Chen, 2006; Zhu, 2012). Making a request without first offering reasons before making the request would be considered rude by Chinese (Gu, 1990). This inductive way to structure requests is a notable characteristic of Chinese politeness in requests. A difference between Chinese and English politeness is that Chinese politeness in requests is manifested at the discourse level through the use of supportive moves instead of being manifested at sentence level through syntactic structures (Chen, 2001).

Studies of email requests

Leopold (2015) investigated email requests across industries in the United States, focusing on the influences of sociolinguistic variables and request types on the choices of strategies. He found that direct strategies occur more than indirect strategies for low imposition requests. Imperatives are the most frequent direct strategies across all gender, status, and social distance groups. 68% of imperatives were mitigated with "please". Other mitigators co-occur with imperatives include "just" and "let". Males used more direct requests than females, and they mitigated more when writing to the opposite sex. Senders used more direct strategies with more mitigators when they have a professional and distant relationship with the recipients or when the recipients have a higher status.

However, imperatives, the most direct strategy, was used most rarely with the superiors and the most frequently with the subordinates.

Lee (2004) investigated the requestive strategies in emails written by Chinese learners of English and compared and contrasted the use of requests in Chinese and English and how requests were used by college students to two different cultural groups—Chinese-speaking English teachers (CSET) and native English-speaking teachers (NEST). The author also explored the cultural beliefs reflected in the choices of request strategies in the context of Hong Kong. The study shows that Chinese make direct requests in both intra- and inter-cultural communication. Chinese learners of English do not use imperatives, but they use more performatives (e.g. 'I'd like to…', 'Please write…') when they make requests to CSET. More preparatories (utterances that refer to the preconditions of the request, such as the hearer's availability, ability and willingness to perform the request) and more lexical modification "please" are used when they write to NEST. The linguistic structures reflect the Chinese value of speaking respectfully in a softer tone to teachers. Students were submissive to the power and distance between them and both groups of teachers, which confirms Ida's (1989) study that shows politeness in Chinese culture is a normative value rather than an instrumental value. Chinese in Hong Kong use more requestive hints than people from mainland China because of the influences of western cultures. The study was conducted in Hong Kong, which was colonized by the British for one hundred years, and therefore the results cannot represent request patterns of mainland Chinese.

Some studies on email requests point out pragmatic failures in academic emails sent by English as a second or foreign language learners to instructors in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts. Some of the pragmatic failures are made by native Chinese speaking students.

Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) compared English native speakers' and non-English native speakers' email requests and explored instructors' responses to the emails.

The results show that both native and non-native speakers of English had a number of pragmatic failures in their emails, which were mainly caused by insufficient and inappropriate modification, not acknowledging imposition on instructors, only focusing on students' needs and time, and insufficient and student-centered explanation for making the request. This study did not indicate which group of non-native speakers were involved in the study.

Biesenhach-Lucas (2007) investigated how native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English from Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand who are studying in an American university formulate low- and high-imposition requests to faculty. Both native speakers and non-native speakers vary their requestive strategies and lexical modifications based on the imposition level of the request. Students employ more direct strategies than conventionally indirect strategies in the two lower imposition situations. In the highest imposition situation, hints and conventionally indirect strategies are used more than direct strategies. Native speakers and non-native speakers tend to use the same broad strategies, but non-native speakers use fewer syntactic and lexical modifications, and are unable to select appropriate request perspectives from the following four perspectives: a you-perspective (e.g. 'Could you extend the deadline?'), an I-perspective (e.g. 'I would like to make an appointment to meet with you this week.'), a we-perspective (e.g. 'Can we meet sometime this week?'), and impersonal perspective (e.g. 'Would it be possible to get this to get this paper to you by Monday?').

Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) collected emails written by Greek Cypriot students studying in an English-medium university in Greece and asked lecturers from the United Kingdom to offer their perceptions on the politeness of six of the emails that used different address terms and modification features. The research shows that Greek Cypriot students tend to use direct strategies, underuse both syntactic and lexical modification and often omit greetings and closings of emails. These factors contribute to pragmatic infelicities and even make emails impolite because students do not

acknowledge the imposition on recipients and give recipients no choices to reject the requests.

Bloch (2002) conducted a qualitative study to examine emails to one teacher written by international students studying in an American university. He categorized students' emails into four groups—phatic communication, asking for help, making excuses, and making formal requests and then analyzed rhetorical forms used for each group. The analysis shows that some students use phatic communication—exchange of words that do not convey real meaningful information—to increase a personal relationship between the teacher and the student. When making excuses for missing classes or not handing in assignments on time, some students write straightforward excuses without apologizing, making the teacher feel the students are challenging his authority as a teacher; some students, in contrast, not only explain why they make the excuses but make promises or compliment the teacher as well. Asking for help is simpler than making excuses because it would normally be regarded by the teacher as more positive than making excuses. Emails asking for help allow students to ask questions that they feel inappropriate to ask face to face, and thus give students more ways to narrow the distance between students and the teacher. Bloch (2002) then examined a formal email request from a student that he did not know. The student's email contains more specific information about the writer and more formal language than those contained in the previous three types of emails.

Chen (2001) analyzed and compared Taiwanese and American students' email requests to professors in one American university by examining email openings, closings, information sequences, and linguistic forms in different request types. The study shows that Taiwanese students tend to use formal address terms to convey deference politeness while American students use first names or formal address terms as determined by social distance. When making requests, giving reasons is one of the most common strategies that Taiwanese students use. Taiwanese students use gift-giving strategy—to fulfill the

recipient's wants for promoting his/her self-image (e.g., compliment, emphasizing the professor's expertise and professional achievements) significantly more than American students do. Taiwanese and American students use similar syntactic structures in email requests but differ in the choices of internal modifications. American students use more internal modifications including past-tense modal verbs (e.g. 'would', 'might'), downtoners (e.g. 'possibly', 'maybe') and past progressive tense (e.g. 'I was wondering…').

Zhu (2012) conducted a study in a university in mainland China to compare English major and non-English major students' competence to make academic email requests in English to their instructors. Non-English major students have a lower pragmalinguistic competence than the English major students because they use more direct request strategies and fewer and more limited syntactic and lexical modification. Zhu (2012) believed that though English-major students had better sociolinguistic competence, they did not have native-like sociolinguistic competence because students were not able to choose requestive strategies according to social variables involved in contexts. Furthermore, Zhu (2012) compared the current study with Zhu's (2011) research on English email requests written by British English speakers, finding that in English emails to instructors, English-major students used much fewer indirect requestive strategies, syntactic and lexical modification than British students did, which make their emails less polite.

Chen (2006) conducted a longitudinal case study involving a Taiwanese graduate student, indicating that the student wrote differently to peers compared to authority figures. The student's early emails to faculty demonstrated a number of pragmatic infelicities such as delayed request head acts, inappropriate, lengthy and irrelevant reasons to support the requests, student-centered perspective and help-needed tone, and preferences for want-statements. However, as my study will show, American students also delayed request head acts; therefore, delaying request head acts is not a pragmatic

infelicity. Emails written in the latter period of the study had better pragmatic competence, but the student still displayed her humbleness intentionally by saying "I know I'm not an outstanding student" when asking for a recommendation letter, delayed her statement of purpose because she thought that these strategies constructed an identity which she preferred to perform.

Discourse/conversation analysis of requests

Many studies on email requests adapted the CCSARP approach. The data collected are isolated or elicited using methods such as the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) or role plays. However, these types of data collection methods cannot capture authentic language. This method isolates request sentences focusing on features such as sentence structures and directness of the request. Request sentences are grouped into different categories based on the CCSARP coding scheme. However, the interaction aspect of requests is overlooked in many studies. The approaches of discourse analysis and conversation analysis enable researchers to examine naturally occurring discourse in contexts. Data can be analyzed in sequences of information instead of in single utterances.

Curl and Drew (2008) used the conversation analysis approach to explore the syntactic forms that native speakers of English use when making requests in telephone calls. They used a corpora of recordings of telephone calls made within Great Britain to compare two forms of requesting—requests in everyday interactions and requests in after-hours medical calls. The study revealed that speakers' choices of request forms suggest their evaluations of their entitlement to make the request and the contingencies that are associated with the granting of the request. When speakers choose conventional forms, such as "could/can you…" and "I want…", speakers believe they have the right to make the request and the conditions for granting the request are fulfilled. When speakers choose forms like "I wonder if" and "if possible", they think that they may lack entitlement and are orient to the contingencies associated with the request.

Ilmuro (2006) used the method of conversation analysis to identify the placement of the function of accounts in the speech act of requests in email interactions. Four Japanese graduate students who studied in North American universities participated in the study by submitting email requests that they had written and the responses that they had received. The researcher analyzed the action accomplished, the resources that were used to perform the action, and examined how the accounts orient to preference organization. The results of the study suggest that L2 speakers orient to preference organization by using accounts and delaying the request action. L2 speakers place their accounts mostly in pre-request, post-request, and pre- and post- request positions. Pre-request accounts were used as pre-requests to elicit offers and to avoid accusations about the request. Post-request accounts were used to strengthen the request head act. When accounts occur both before and after the request head act, the accounts functioned similarly to pre-request accounts and post-request accounts. They also used affordances of emails, such as smiley faces and boundary markers, to delay request actions, which are dispreferred actions.

Purpose of the current study

Many previous studies on email requests followed the categorization system of CCSARP (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Zhu, 2011). These studies adopted preconceived categories for grouping request strategies such as query-preparatory, need-statement and imperative and then categorized authentic data into those categories. However, authentic email requests are more varied and could adopt strategies that are not included in the CCSARP system. The current study does not use pre-determined categories and will discover patterns in authentic email requests from students to instructors.

Although researchers have discussed the limitations of CCSARP in analyzing speech acts, not many studies examined requests made by L2 speakers from the conversation analytic perspective (Ilmuro, 2006). Studies that focused on written requests made by L2 learners are even fewer. To better understand requests by L2 speakers of

English, researchers could conduct more studies using discourse/conversation analysis method (Ilmuro, 2006). To further analyze email requests, this study will employ a method of discourse analysis that avoids pre-conceived categories and investigates characteristics of naturally-occurring emails in context instead of in single, isolated sentences.

Some research studies on mainland Chinese requests were small scale and were conducted in only one or two provinces (Hong, 1996; Ling, 2003), impacting the validity of the results. Participants of previous studies on Chinese students' emails were mostly from Hong Kong and Taiwan where social norms are different from those in mainland China, and no research has examined mainland Chinese academic emails written in ESL contexts.

To further explore requests from students to instructors, the current study focuses on email requests written by native speakers of Chinese who are originally from mainland China and now studying in a Midwestern American university. Academic emails written by Chinese students and emails written by American students and sent to faculty were collected. Research questions of the study are as follows:

1) What types of requests are included in students' email to instructors?

2) How do imposition of the request and requester's entitlement to make the request affect linguistic forms that students choose for each type of email request?

3) What are the differences between the request strategies employed by native speakers of American English and those used by native speakers of Chinese?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This study collected authentic emails written to instructors by Chinese students and American students who studied in a Midwestern university. The study uses a questionnaire that contains two sections to collect data. Section one includes a background questionnaire concerning ethnographic and cultural backgrounds of participants. Section two requires students to submit three to five complete emails from address terms to endings. Chinese students were asked to submit at least one email written to instructors who were native speakers of Chinese if they had written any. American native-speaking students were asked to submit emails they sent to instructors. Students were instructed to replace instructors' names, their names, university, department, major, course information, address, and phone with markers such as FirstName for first names. Along with each email the participants submitted, questions related to the recipient were asked, such as the requestee's approximate age, gender, student and the instructor's academic relationship, and the social distance. The full survey can be found in the appendix.

Native speakers of Chinese who are from mainland China and native speakers of American English participated in the first survey. Fifty-three participants filled out the questionnaire, and fifty responses (thirty Chinese students and twenty American students) met the criteria described in the questionnaire. Each participant was asked to submit three to five emails, and 159 emails were collected. 100 of the 159 emails contained at least one request and were useful for the current study. 44 of the 100 emails were written by American students to instructors. 17 of these were written by graduate students, and 27 emails were written by undergraduate students. 56 of the 100 emails were written by Chinese students to American instructors. 38 of these were written by graduate students and 18 emails were written by undergraduate students.

I will first identify the action of an email, the requester's entitlement to make the request, and the imposition of the request. Emails will be categorized into four major

categories based on the imposition of the email and requester's entitlement to request. Under each major category, emails will be groups into sub-categories according to the actions of the request. Then I examine what request patterns exist under each category, and how students use linguistic forms depending on their entitlement to make the request and the imposition of the request. Finally, I compare Chinese students' emails and American students' emails.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

In the analysis section, I primarily analyze how imposition levels of the requests, the senders' entitlements to make the requests via email, and the relationship between the sender and the recipient affect students' language choices. I categorize the request into four different types, select typical emails under each type, analyze American students' emails, and compare Chinese students' emails with those written by American students.

High imposition, low entitlement emails

Request for an appointment/ mentoring. Requests for appointments and request for mentoring can have high imposition level. For example, if students request mentoring from professors with whom they had never met before or who had no responsibilities to assist them with their schoolwork or research, the imposition level is very high. In some situations, requesters do not explicitly request appointments but request mentoring, but professors have to meet with requesters to mentor them. These requests are for mentoring and appointments. I will discuss the requests for appointments/mentoring with high imposition and low entitlement in this section.

Example 1 (American)

Good morning Dr. First Name Last Name,

My name is First Name Last Name, and I am a sophomore here at the University XX. I am currently taking African-American Experiences, taught by Dr. First Name Last Name. Our class is in the process of constructing a research paper, and my topic concerns racial discrimination in higher education. Dr. FirstName LastName referred me to you because she strongly believes that you would be the right person to talk to about this subject, concerning XX theory. If I could meet with you either in person or by phone, that would be a tremendous help in perfecting my paper.

If you have any questions/comments/concerns, you can email me, or call me at PHONE.

Thanks!

Best,

First Name Last Name

EMAIL

PHONE

The American undergraduate student wrote an email to a professor hoping to discuss her research paper. It has a high imposition level because the professor was requested to provide instruction, which she did not have to do because she was not the student's instructor. The student wanted to talk with the professor about a research paper she was writing. She began the email by introducing herself; then she talked about the background information for the request. She mentioned the names of the course "African-American experiences" and her research paper "racial discrimination in higher education". These terms should be very familiar to the professor since he was an expert. The student used these terms to indicate that she was interested in the professor's field.

She mentioned that another professor referred her and used it as another reason why she was contacting the professor. By mentioning this "authority figure" that advised her to contact the professor, she was giving herself entitlement to contact the requestee. After this, she complimented the professor's expertise by saying "she strongly believes that you would be the right person to talk to about this subject, concerning XX theory", which was used it as another reason to make the request. The student made the request using a conditional at the end of the paragraph. To increase the professor's willingness to grant the request, she suggested that a meeting with the professor would be a great help to

her. The student softened the request by giving the professor more choices on how they could talk about the research project.

After the request, she conveyed her willingness to communicate with the professor via email and phone call about any questions the professor wanted to talk about before complying with the request. By indicating her willingness to talk about any concerns the professor had, she might have more chances to get her request complied. The email was ended with a "thanks" to show her appreciation.

Example 2 (American)

Good evening Dr. First Name Last Name,

My name is NAME, and I am an undergraduate student at the University XX. I am a senior and will be graduating next May 2018. I am currently in the process of applying to graduate programs in XX. I was referred to you by Dr. First Name Last Name, one of my mentors at the University XX.

I am a McNair Scholar, and my research focus is on how_____. As of yesterday, my IRB has been approved, so I will be traveling to XX next month to carry out my interviews. I have been working on this research for 11 months now. Based on your publications and research interests, I was wanting to know if it would be possible to communicate with you more about executing my research successfully, and about the XX program at University XX.

Thank you,

First Name Last Name
EMAIL

PHONE

The email was written by an American undergraduate student to a professor at another university which she was interested in applying to. The student wants to ask the professor to help her to conduct a research project and also wanted to ask a few questions about the professor's program. Acknowledging the high imposition and the professor's lack of responsibility to comply, the student wrote a long explanation before the head act to soften the request. In the first paragraph, she first gave her name and her status. Then she mentioned that she was referred to the professor by her mentor to explain why she contacted the professor. She pointed out that she was applying to the professor's program. In the next paragraph, she introduced her research and the research process. At the end of the paragraph, she made two requests—she wanted to talk with the professor about her research and the program. She gave another reason in the head act—her research interests align with the professor's research interests. She demonstrated that she was familiar with the professor's publication, showing that she had adequate reasons to make the request. She made the request in an indirect way by saying "I was wanting to know if it would be possible…" This request used past tense ("I was wanting") and modal verb ("would") to mitigate the force of the request.

The student first greeted the professor, gave several supportive moves, and then presented her requests at the end of the email. She understood the request was difficult to comply with since she was requesting mentoring from a stranger. To orient to her lack of entitlement and the high imposition, she mitigated the request and used "if it would be possible" to make the request.

I will now give examples of emails in this category that were written by Chinese students. The email below is similar to the one above in the respect that the requester was not familiar with the requestee, and what was requested was not a part of the requestee's job.

Example 3 (Chinese)

Dear Dr FirstName,

This is ... from University of XXX. Your inspiring work as published in [reference information].is impressive. Elaborately as the paper was written, there remains an issue on which we wish to seek more information, if we might:

It's noted that the fluorescence micrographs were acquired by epi-fluorescence microscope (upright microscope?). While we are attempting repeating your experiment in our lab, the images recorded through 20X object lens were unclear and we could hardly see the droplet shape within the channel under bright-field illumination. We would be grateful if you could please enlighten us regarding the specifications of 20X long-working-distance objective you selected and more information of optics setup as in your experiment.

Best Regards,

A Chinese graduate student wrote the email above to a professor in another university to request instructions on conducting an experiment. The student began his email with a self-introduction. He complimented the professor's work using words such as "inspiring", "impressive" and "elaborately". However, "elaborately" could suggest that a paper is detailed and complicated. This adjective can have negative connotations when describing an academic paper, which is supposed to be concise and clear. The student used "inspiring" to describe the importance of the research paper, but "inspiring" may be a little extreme. He also complimented the paper as impressive, but his status as a student did not give him the right to tell a professor that his work was impressive. The first email under this section contains a compliment from an American student. She complimented the professor's expertise by expressing her own professor's belief that the professor would be the right person to talk to regarding a theory. In contrast, the Chinese student used

extreme adjectives to compliment the professor directly. Then he made the request at the end of the first email using "we wish to". The phrase "if we might" makes the request indirect because the student was asking permission from the professor to ask a question instead of directly asking a question.

In the second paragraph, the student elaborated on his question. It should be noted that in the email, the student used the pronoun "we" instead of "I" to indicate that this question was not his own question but was shared by many members in his laboratory. Knowing that this was not a problem that one student had, the professor might provide more detailed guidelines for them. At the end of the second paragraph, the student provided a more detailed version of the question. He used mitigators ("we would be grateful", "if you could please") to soften his question. He used the word "enlighten" in the question to express how important the professor's help would be to them.

The student did not give much information regarding the relationship between him and the professor, but it is highly possible that he and the professor had never communicated before because he introduced himself at the beginning of the email. Asking a stranger to help him to conduct an experiment can be a high-imposition request. The professor does not have to answer all questions from professionals and graduate students in his field about the published work. The professor may also need to review his paper, lab reports, and write a long justification for his paper. This email used as many mitigators as the ones written by American students, but it is noted that the request head act is given pretty early compared with American students' emails which usually discuss reasons for making requests first and delay request statements. The Chinese student pointed out the purpose of the email first, and further elaborate the reasons for making the request after giving the request head act.

Example 4 (Chinese)
Hi LastName,

I hope you have a great summer! I came to ADDRESS to visit my husband and will stay in town for several days. I have some questions about the transferring process and your program. So could we schedule a meeting to talk about those when you are available?

Many thanks for your kindly help,

S_FirstName

This email was from a Chinese graduate student to a professor whom she had only met once. The student indicated in the questionnaire that the professor was "in another department", but from the context, the professor is probably in a different university where the student wanted to transfer to that is located in a different town. She was requesting to meet with the professor to discuss her transfer process.

She began her email with a greeting, showing her effort to develop a friendly personal relationship with the professor. Her request was made at the end of the email; before that, she used supportive moves to give reasons for her request. She first told the professor about her trip to the town, where the professor's department was. She then suggested she had "questions about the transferring process and [the professor's] program." This was used as a pre-request and an account. After that, she used "could we" to make her request. Acknowledging the imposition posed on the professor, she did not suggest her preferred time to meet. Instead, she expressed her willingness to meet when the professor was available.

It was not clear from the email whether the professor was responsible for meeting the student or not. The imposition level of the email could be high, because the professor may not be in charge of admissions. He and the student were not familiar with each other, either; it could be summer vacation when the student visited the town.

After comparing the emails written by the two groups of students, we find that

American students provided more details such as the topic of her research project and on which theory she needed more support from the professor. The Chinese student mentioned that she had some questions without specifying what the questions were. Also, the Chinese student gave fewer reasons to support her request. When American students make high-imposition requests, they used "I was wanting to know", "if it would be possible" and other if-clauses. These expressions inquire about the possibility and willingness of the requestees' to comply with requests. "Could you please" is not used by American students.

Example 5 (Chinese)
Dear Prof. LastName,

This is S_FirstName S_LastName, Professor FirstName LastName's PhD student. As a fourth year PhD in Dept XX, I plan to do my preliminary exam in April. I am writing to invite you to be one of my committee members.

My thesis research focuses on inverting 1d and 2d analytic characteristic functions, with its applications in option pricing, sensitivity analysis, Monte Carlo simulation, etc. I have attached some of my presentation slides on SIAM and INFORMS for your reference.

My plan is to take this exam late April or early May. I would really appreciate it if you will be able to become one of the committee members. If so, could you please fill in this online survey about your availability:

https://doodle.com/XXXXXX

Thank you so much for your time and patience! I look forward to your response. Have a

good day!

Yours,

S_FirstName S_LastName

The sender—a Chinese Ph.D. student—sent this email to a Chinese professor in her department. There are two requests in the email: the first one is to invite the professor to be on her dissertation committee, and the second one is to request the professor to fill in an online survey if he agrees to become one of her committee members. The student used a formal tone in this email. She first gave her name and who her advisor was. Then she explained the plan of her preliminary exam as a pre-request.

In the second paragraph, she introduced her research interests. Her presentations slides were also attached to the email to let the professor know her better. In the next paragraph, she explained her schedule of taking the exam, giving the professor more ideas of when he might need to contribute time if he agreed to be on the committee. After that, she intensified her request using "I would really appreciate it if you will become one of the committee members." This sentence expresses the student's eagerness of having the professor on her committee but could also make the request more coercive. Then she used an if-clause to make the second request. The if-clause indicates that the student does not expect the professor to comply with the second request. In other words, the second request was a non-routine request. She ended the request with a sentence showing her gratitude for the professor's time and patience to read the email.

It is part of a professor's job to guide Ph.D. students with their preliminary exams, and being on a committee does not take as much time as being the main advisor. However, the professor also has to read the student's paper and attend her defense, and he does not have to comply with the request. Overall, the imposition is high, and the student's entitlement to make the request is low. Also, the student did not acknowledge

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the imposition posed on the professor or give the professor any chances to reject the request. She expressed her gratitude using "I would really appreciate it". Craig, Tracy, and Spisak (2006) state that when a requester uses phrases such as "I appreciate it", the requester assumes that the requestee would be interested in what happens to the requester, which happens in a "friendly, cooperative relationship" (p. 450). However, this cooperative relationship is not warranted before the professor agrees to be on the student's committee. Therefore, "I would really appreciate it" seems to make the request more coercive because the student already assumed the professor would be interested in helping her.

Example 6 (Chinese)
Dear Dr. Professor,

I would like to continue the summer work we did as my capstone. We can meet at your convenience to discuss about it. Thank you.

Best,
Name

This short email was from a Chinese graduate student to a professor whom she was working with. She did not try to develop friendliness using greetings. She first informed the professor that she wanted to continue to work with the professor using "I would like to continue the summer work". If the professor had told the student that she could continue to work with him, it would be appropriate for the student to report her decisions to the professor. However, if not, this is a high-imposition request because it would take the professor time to guide a student on a research project. In this case, the

request was very abrupt because the student should request the professor's permission to continue with the summer work. The student then requested that she meet with the professor. In this second request, she did not use modifications to soften her request. To make the imposition level lower, she indicated that she could meet at the professor's convenience to discuss the project.

This email lacks mitigation, reasons to support requests, and acknowledgment of imposition involved. The student did not give the professor chances to reject the request, either.

. I did not collect any emails from American students that request that their professors reschedule meetings.

Example 7 (Chinese)

Dear Prof. LastName,

Since there is a department seminar on Friday morning, can we reschedule our meeting to Friday afternoon? I would be available the whole Friday afternoon. Let me know if Friday afternoon works for you. If not, I am pretty flexible to make adjustments. Thank you so much.

Yours,

S_FirstName S_LastName

The email was from a Chinese graduate student to her academic advisor. The student was requesting the professor to reschedule their meeting. She first used "there is a department seminar on Friday morning" to indicate that she had to reschedule the meeting because of uncontrolled factors. However, I think this pre-grounder is not explained clearly enough and therefore needs more details. For example, the student can explain why she needs to attend the seminar. In this way, her professor can see why the

student had to put off the meeting with him to attend the seminar. After the pre-grounder, the student used "can we" to make her request to reschedule her appointment with the professor. The imposition level of rescheduling an appointment with a professor is high— the professor may have to postpone other important work to make himself available during that time, and the student's change of appointment may make his work less efficient. However, the student did not use many modifications. She then indicated her availability on Friday afternoon, and use "let me know" ask the professor to respond to her email. At the end of the email, the student gave the professor more time choices to meet together.

Request for recommendation letters.

Example 8 (American)

Good afternoon Dr. FirstName LastName,

I received an email Thursday evening from University XX for the Graduate & Professional Student Recruitment Initiative Program that takes place there in October:

"Your name was submitted to us by one of your current university advisors as a student who might be planning to pursue a post-baccalaureate degree following graduation. We believe that University XX would be a great place to consider for opportunities at the graduate/professional level. We encourage you to set aside some time this spring/summer to discover what University XX has to offer by logging on to University XX for more information about admission, application and funding at University XX. For the opportunity to personally see University XX for yourself, consider submitting your application to attend our annual Graduate & Professional Student Recruitment Initiative Program. "

I also received an email on the same night from University XX, letting me know that they

have extended their deadline for their XX Program:

"Due to the unfortunate interference from hurricanes Harvey and Irma, the application deadline for the XX Program has been extended to 12 PM CENTRAL TIME on MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017. After then, we will be unable to extend the application deadline for any reason. All of your materials, including BOTH letters of recommendation, must be received AND your application must be submitted in order for it to be reviewed and evaluated! PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION!"

Both applications ask for a letter of support from a faculty member. I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to write my letter(s). I understand it is very short notice. I was not aware of the XX University program until I received this email, and I was not originally going to apply to the XX University recruitment program until my mentor highly suggested to do so.

The letter(s) would be submitted electronically via a link, and they are the same format: why you support me in applying for the recruitment program. With that said, the same letter can be used for both applications.

I know you have had quite the busy semester already, so I would be very grateful if you were able to write me this recommendation, and I thank you in advance for your time and consideration. The XX University letter of support is due by Noon this Monday, September 18th. The XX University letter of support is due next Friday, September 22nd. If this is not possible on such short notice, I completely understand. I want to thank you anyway, and in the future, I will get things to you ahead of the deadline.

Thank you,

FirstName LastName

The email was written by an American graduate student to the advisor of her undergraduate research project to request recommendation letters. The imposition level of requesting recommendation letters is high because the professor needs to spend a long time thinking, writing the letters, and submitting the letters. It is not mandatory for a professor to write a letter for every student who asks. But the requestee was the student's advisor, so the student has a high entitlement to ask. However, the request was made on short notice, increasing the imposition level and decreasing the student's entitlement to ask. Therefore, the student used many supportive moves in her email.

She first copied and pasted two extracts of emails she had received to give the professor an idea of what those two recruitment programs were. She mentioned the date that she received the email to prepare herself to explain later in the email why she requested a recommendation letter on short notice. After citing the programs' emails, she transitioned into the main purpose of the email by pointing out "both applications ask for a letter of support from a faculty member." She then made the request statement using "I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to write my letter(s)." She used past tense ("wanted") and modal verb ("would") to mitigate the request. Instead of telling her professor to write a reference letter, she was asking about the possibility of the professor writing the letters. To avoid any potential accusations, the student explained why she made the request on short notice and introduced how the letters can be submitted. The student tried to lower the imposition involved by saying that she can use one letter for two programs as long as the letter meets specific requirements.

In the next paragraph, the student conveyed her gratitude to the professor for taking the time and effort to write the letter. She gave the application deadlines of the two

programs and expressed her understandings if the professor cannot write the reference letters. By giving the professor opportunities to reject the request, the requester tried to eliminate the request's influence on the requestee's negative face. The student expressed her appreciation for the professor taking the time to read the email as well and promised that she would improve her time management in the future.

Example 9 (Chinese)

Dear Dr. LastName,

I am writing to you to request that you provide a reference for me as I begin my fall internship search. I am trying to apply for a graduate student enployee position for the Dept XX. As attached is the flyer of job description.

I submitted my resume and cover letter to the program coordinator, and now she wanted me to provide one academic reference contact information for her. As my graduate advisor, I believe that a reference from you will provide her with relevant information.

If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Thanks for your consideration and support.

Best,

S_FirstName

The sender—a Chinese graduate student—was requesting that her advisor in the academic program provide her with a reference. She began the email with "I am writing to you to request that you provide a reference for me". In the example above where an

American student asked for a recommendation letter, her request head act began with "I wanted to ask"—which functions as both a syntactic modifier (past tense) and a lexical modifier (subjectivizer)—and if-clause to indicate that the sender does not expect the recipient to comply with the request. After making the request, the Chinese student began to provide more information about the position that she was applying for. She also attached the flyer containing job descriptions. The American student also provided information about the programs she was applying to, but she copied and pasted two short paragraphs in the body of the email. She made it easier for the recipient to read the necessary information. Admittedly, the recipient would know more detailed information reading a flyer, but it would also take the recipient more time to read the flyer, impacting the negative face of the recipient even more.

In the next paragraph, the Chinese student used "As my graduate advisor, I believe that a reference from you will provide her with relevant information" to show the importance of getting a reference from the professor. However, she did not realize that emphasizing her needs for the reference could make her request more coercive, especially when she had not used any mitigations so far in the email. Also, she might not realize that even if the professor was her graduate advisor, it was not necessarily his job to write her a reference letter.

She then assumed the professor would grant the request and asked if the professor needs more information to provide a reference for her. However, the American student did not pre-assume the professor's compliance with his request. She removed any possible objections the recipient might have, apologized on requesting the professor to complete the reference in a short time, and conveyed her appreciation for the professor's support and time more than once. She also expressed her understanding if the professor cannot grant the request.

Another difference is that the Chinese student gave the request head act quite early in the email while the American student delayed the purpose of the writing.

Summary of high imposition, low entitlement emails. The sequence of American students' emails is similar. After greetings, the senders might introduce themselves depending on the relationship between them and the recipients. Then senders began to provide background for their requests. They might point out that they were facing problems which they cannot resolve. They would suggest that the recipients could provide a lot of help and support to them. Some senders complimented professors' expertise to increase the recipients' positive face. Acknowledging their lack of entitlement to contact the professor, they give reasons to support the request by stating that their own professors ask them to seek suggestions and help from the recipients.

Chinese students' emails, in general, contain fewer details than American students' emails. Some Chinese students only provide vague background information about the requests. For example, one student wrote in her email "I have some questions about the transferring process and your program". Without adequate details, the professor might not be able to make a solid decision on whether he wants to meet with the student or not. However, American students explained what they need in more detail. Recipients will better understand why the students make the requests. They could decide whether to grant the requests more easily. If they decided not to, they might be able to direct students to someone who may be more willing to comply with the request.

Chinese students tend to make requests explicitly. For example, "I am writing to invite you to be one of my committee members" and "I am writing to you to request that you provide a reference for me" were used in high imposition emails written by Chinese but none of the American emails contain such formats. American students, in contrast, used a lot of hedging language in the request head act (i.e., "I was wanting to know if it would be possible to communicate with you" and "I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to write my letters"). American students treat the requests as hopes from their own side, while Chinese students focused on their own needs and were informing professors of the needs as if they had assumed the requests would be granted. Another

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difference between the emails written by Chinese and American students is that Chinese students seldom acknowledge the imposition involved in the request, and they often write emails in a way that they had pre-assumed the professor would grant with the request. American students inquire about professors' willingness to granting the request in the emails, but Chinese students are more likely to assume that professors would have no objections with complying with the requests.

High imposition, high entitlement emails

   Request for instruction. Emails under this subcategory were written by Chinese students. I did not collect any emails that requested instruction with high-imposition and low-entitlement from American students. Chinese students wrote emails to ask detailed questions about course materials via emails. These emails have high imposition levels because professors may have to write detailed follow-up emails to comply with the requests. In these situations, American students tend to make an appointment with professors via emails and talk about their questions in face-to-face meetings.

Example 10 (Chinese)

Dear Professor LastName:

Hello, I am S_FirstName S_LastName. I am confused about homework4, Question 1, e. I got a matrix that has no inverse, so that the formula you have given is not applicable. Could you please tell me how to deal with the problem? Thank you very much!

Yours,

S_FirstName S_LastName

Example 11 (Chinese)

Hi:

Yeah, it is so cool. I just realize it. Now I have a clearer understanding of the question. If we are asking to choose the right equation of the regression line, do we need to include error term in the equation? In the slides, it states formally, the equation is $Y = alpha + (ß * X) + error$ but in my statistics class, we use this in the population equation and delete it in the sample one.

Those two emails above are written by two female Chinese undergraduate students to their course instructors to request instruction on course content. The second one is a follow-up email of another email sent by the professor that was not collected. The professor provided an answer to a previous question. The imposition level of the two emails is high because the questions these two students asked are quite complicated. The course-related questions need lots of explanations from the instructors, and it will take the professor time to write long emails to respond. If the students were unable to understand after reading the first response, the professors might have to email the students back and forth several times to answer follow-up questions. It would be more efficient for the professors to have the students to their office hours to talk about the questions. Therefore, the students' entitlement to ask these questions in emails is low.

The two students did not mitigate their requests much in the email. Both of the emails include specific explanations of their questions. In the first email, the student used "could you please" to make the request, and the second email contains an information-seeking interrogative. The sender of the second email did not ask about the pre-conditions of the professor granting the requests. One explanation is that they have emailed back and forth a couple of times, so the student might feel confident the professor will grant the request.

Reporting work and asking for feedback. When students report the progression they have made on their own projects to professors, they want feedback, assistance, and directions from their advisors. Professors also need preparations on their side before giving students feedback. Therefore, I categorize these emails in high-imposition, high-entitlement category. Usually, students were primarily reporting their work; seeking feedback was a secondary action of the email.

Example 12 (American)

Hey Professor LastName,

Sorry that getting these results took longer than I expected. It took me a while to find a typo in my original transcription of the EOS from the IAPWS-95 paper. I had mistyped the 5th digit of one of the parameters, and that was enough to produce wrong results. After transcribing the parameters a second time though, I was able to find the typo. Luckily, the IAPWS-95 paper has a table of values (table 6.6) to verify code implementations with, so rest assured I have the parameters written correctly now.

I am including several things.

An updated powerpoint

An updated excel document with the typo corrected

A python script to generate S_0. The script can also be run to show verification of the implementation of IAPWS-95 equations.

A csv of S_0 vs T

A matlab script for fitting the S_0 data.

In the powerpoint, I go through some plots showing the verification of my python code. I reproduce a few plots from the paper. Then, I show the result of S_0 vs T and S_0 vs

1000/T. Sadly, the minimum temperature listed in the paper was 251.165 K at 209.9 MPa. I extrapolated the equation as far as I could (235 K) before there were numerical problems. However, even 235 K is far above the temperature range in the paper by Professor LastName. I explain this in the powerpoint. Lastly, I go through some initial fit possibilities. I welcome any suggestions you have for better fits from what I have tried so far (I am sure you, or Professor LastName, have better intuition about options to fit the data with).

Please let me know if you would like to set up a time to meet to discuss anything I am sending. I can certainly go into far more detail about my implementation in person if you prefer.

Thanks,
S_FirstName

S_FirstName S_LastName

Dept XX

University XX

Email

Phone

Example 13 (American)

Hey Professor,

Please find attached the equation of state for water from IAPWS. It can be found on page

44 of the included pdf. I have also typed up the equation into the attached power point along with the isothermal compressibility. Also attached is the excel sheet with the required coefficients. I wanted to share it with you first cause it seems like a very complicated equation, so I wasn't sure if there was another version you were thinking of.

Thanks

S_FirstName S_LastName

Dept XX

University XX

email

Phone

The two emails above were written by an American graduate student to one of his thesis committee members. The student was reporting research progress he had made. In these two emails, the student first described what he had been doing with his research. In the first email, he used "I welcome any suggestions you have" to elicit the professor's feedback. Then he suggested that he would love to meet with the professor to discuss his research using "please let me know if you would like to set up a time to discuss anything I am sending." In this way, the student indicated that he did not expect the professor to meet with him but offered to meet with the professor if the professor wanted to. In the second email, the student stated the reason why he wanted to share the equation with the professor in the last sentence. The email ends with a requestive hint, which suggested the students hoped the professor would comment on the equation. Requesting is not the main action of the email, but the student was also seeking any potential feedback the professor might have. The student used a hint which orients to the possibility that the professor had another version of the equation. The student did not explicitly point out what he wanted

the professor to do. Therefore, the professor can decide on whether to give feedback or to meet or not.

Example 14 (Chinese)

Dear Xxx,

How are you recently? Hope you will be well soon.

In this week, we worked on the DP measurement and found there were one leak on the air hoses connection, where the hose was connected to inlet of indoor nozzle. Therefore, we obtained higher indoor air flow rate than the real value. Now, these leaks are fixed and the gaps among the three balances are narrowed from 700 W to 300 W. And if necessary, I can calculate the results for XXXX tests again and improve the accuracy as well.

In addition, may I ask a few questions?

1. We will have a meeting with XXXX tomorrow morning, will you join the meeting? If not, I believe I can meet with them alone and it should be a short meeting.
I plan to report the XXX and the status of the XXXX: we have purchased all the fittings and valves we need.

2. Could you please give us some suggestions of the first version of final report? Is there any structural problems?

3. Could you please help us find the rubber hoses and pipe insulation for the installation of the chiller? The dimensions of them are attached.

Thank you so much for your help!

Wish you all the best,

XXX

The email was from a Chinese graduate student to her academic advisor. Although this student also asked many questions in her email, I consider she has more entitlement to ask those questions via emails than the previous Chinese students' emails under the "request for instruction" category because she was not asking questions that need lots of detailed explanations from the professors.

The student first reported her work in the first paragraph, and she asked three questions in the rest of the email. I will only discuss the two high-imposition, high-entitlement requests here. The student requested that the professor give feedback on her final report using "could you please. This is a high-imposition request, and she had the right to ask the recipient to give her feedback on the report since the recipient was her advisor. When using "could you please", her expectation for the professor was made explicit, which is different from previous American student's email, which used a requestive hint ("I welcomed any suggestions you may have"). The American student indicated that the professor did not have to give suggestions. The Chinese student added another question to clarify which aspect of the report she wanted feedback on. This question makes the imposition level of the request lower since she gave the professor an area to be focused on when giving feedback. Then, she requested that the professor help her find equipment for their experiments. In this request, she used the pronoun "us" instead of "me". I think she was emphasizing that more than one person in the research group needs the "rubber hoses and pipe insulation", making it more legitimate for her to ask the request. She also used "could you please" in the request.

Example 15 (Chinese)

Hi prof.LastName,

This is my updated poster. Please check it, any suggestions will be appreciated.

Firstname

The email was from a Chinese graduate student to his supervisor. In this short email, the student asked his supervisor to give feedback on his poster. This email has two sentences: the first one pointed out what the attachment of the email was, and the second one was the request head act. Similar to the previous email, the student requested that the professor give him feedback. This student may need to use the poster in a conference presentation. The student used an imperative to make the request, adding "please" at the beginning of the sentence to intensify the request. He tried to soften the request by saying that "any suggestions will be appreciated". However, this request is direct and demanding overall. This email does not contain sufficient details explaining why he was making the request. The head act is much more direct, and it does not give the requestee an option not to comply with the request, either.

Request for an appointment.

Example 16 (American)

Good evening, Dr. LastName.,

I am reviewing the assignment #1 prompts and I'm having a difficult time organizing my thoughts. I was wondering if you were available to meet tomorrow (October 1, 2018) to discuss possible approaches.

Thank you,

FirstNameLastName

Email@illinois.edu

The email was written by a native American English speaker who was a graduate student to her course professor. The student begins her email by explaining the reason why she was making the request. She had difficulties understanding the assignment prompts and she had to ask her professor for help; this would be a possible topic for the meeting. Then she made the request indirectly using "I was wondering if…" However, she intensified the imposition level of the request by adding a specific date that she wanted to meet. She did not give the professor many options, and the only date she mentioned was the day after. Making an appointment with a professor in the near future can increase the imposition level. However, we cannot conclude that the student made the imposition very high since we do not know whether the professor would hold office hours "tomorrow". If he would, he was responsible for seeing students on that day, so the student did not intensify the action by trying to make an appointment in near future. Also, if the professor did not have office hours on that day, the student was not entitled to make an appointment on such short notice. The form of this request does not match the forms of the majority of low-imposition, high-entitlement requests written by American students, indicating that it might be a high-imposition request.

Rescheduling a meeting. Some emails that request that a professor reschedule a meeting have been discussed under the high-imposition, low-entitlement category. But emails that ask professors to reschedule a meeting can also be a high-imposition, high-entitlement request.

Example 17 (Chinese)

Dear Professor FirstName,

I am S_FirstName S_LastName in the ProjectName Project. Name and I have received an email from Name that we need to reschedule our meeting time for a couple of

weeks. And we can do any of the following times:

Wednesday: 12:00 -3:30pm

Thursday: 12:30 - 5:30 pm

Hope any of these times work for you!

Best,

S_FirstName

The Chinese undergraduate student wrote an email to a professor whom she worked for. The context of this email may be that some students working for the professor were informed that they should reschedule their meeting time. The student was reporting this new information to her employer and requested that the professor reschedule their meeting. The student did not ask the professor to reschedule a meeting because of the change of her own schedule, which means she was not asking the professor to do her a favor. Instead, she was asked by other people to change their meeting schedule. Therefore, the student was more entitled to make the request, and the student can expect the professor to comply with the request. Therefore, she briefly reported the new information she had received and gave her and her group member's availabilities to the professor.

Summary of high imposition, high entitlement emails. Requesting feedback and instructions from professors can have a high imposition level. Chinese students gave long explanations of their problems and then used "could you please" when emailing the professors, which is a structure that American students did not use in any context. Other emails in this section are requesting feedback on papers or posters from academic advisors or course instructors. Usually, reporting work to advisors is the main action of

these emails, and seeking feedback is a request after students reported their work. American students are more indirect when asking for feedback than Chinese students. One of them used "I welcome any suggestions" to elicit feedback. It indicates that the writer was willing to receive feedback, but he did not require his professor to give feedback. However, Chinese students can be straightforward when asking for feedback. "Please" with imperatives, "could you please" are used by Chinese students to their academic advisor. Also, they may not provide substantial information to professors, either.

Low imposition, high entitlement emails

   Request for information. "Request for information" is the category that contains the biggest number of emails, indicating that one primary purpose of students writing an email to professors is to request information about courses, research projects, etc. Most emails under this category are shorter and more direct than emails in other categories.

Example 18 (American)
Dear Professor LastName,

I have heard of an online quiz that was open today on XXX but I am having trouble finding it. I was hoping you could explain where it is and when it is due.

Thank you very much,

S_FirstName S_LastName
NetID

   The email was written by an American undergraduate student to her chemistry professor, asking where she could find an online quiz. She first said that she "heard of"

the online quiz was already open. By saying "heard of", she admitted that her sources of information might not be accurate. Therefore, if the professor responded that the quiz was not open yet, she could easily admit that she got the information wrong. She said that she could not find the quiz, which was the reason why she made a request. She used "I was hoping" to make the request. Compared with "Where is the quiz and when is it due", she phrased the request as her hope. The request has low imposition level, and the student was entitled to make the request since the professor should inform his student how to find the online quiz.

Example 19 (American)

Good evening, Dr.LastName,

FirstNameLastName here, I'm emailing you in regards to the CEFR readings. I am still a bit confused on what I am supposed to be reading. I see that my name is under section 1 and 5, which is fine. But exactly what sections or pages are those? Section 5 is within the 26-44 pages (which we are all supposed to read, right?)

Best,

FirstNameLastName
Email@illinois.edu

The American undergraduate student wrote the email to her course instructor about assigned readings. She first identified herself; then she stated that the purpose of writing the email was to ask about one reading assignment. After that, she explained why she was confused about the readings and asked her questions directly, followed by a statement for confirmation that explains why she was puzzled. When explaining her reasons for making the request, she used "a bit" to soften the force of the request. By

saying that she was only a bit confused, she avoided accusing the professor of failing to make the requirements of the reading assignment clear. Therefore, she mitigated a possible face threat. The imposition level of the request is low, and it was the professor's job as the course instructor to clarify—the student is entitled to make this information-seeking request

Example 20 (American)

Hello,

My name is S_FirstName S_LastName and I am in your 11am MWF section of Class XX. I am wondering, are the problems labeled "Lecture 12 assignments" due during Monday's lecture on October 1st? On Compass, the assignments are labeled as due October 1st; however, I thought I remembered that the homework from lecture yesterday (Friday) was not due on Monday.

Please let me know if I should complete the Lecture 12 assignments for Monday. Thank you!

Best regards,
S_FirstName S_LastName

The sender of the email, a male American undergraduate student, began the email by introducing himself. In the questionnaire that I used to collect data, he indicated that the recipient of the email, his course lecturer, did not know his name. The student was requesting information about an assignment deadline. He first used "I am wondering" to soften his question about the deadline. He further explained his doubts about the deadline by stating that the deadline labeled on their course website was October 1st, which was

different from what he remembered. He used past tense "I thought I remembered" to avoid potential accusations. Instead of saying "I remembered", he indicated that he "thought he remembered", decreasing possible "offenses" to the lecturer by admitting that he could be wrong. He ended the email with an expression of gratitude.

Example 21 (American)
Professor LastName:

I know you previously sent an email regarding the material on our exam from chapters 2 to chapter 3. With that being said, I believe we only have to do those inquisitive assignments by tonight. However, chapter 4 still says it is due tonight by 11:59pm. Will the chapter 4 deadline be moved back? Please let me know!

Thank you so much,
S_FirstName; S_LastName

The email is from an American undergraduate student to her course instructor. She wanted to know if the professor announced the deadline for an assignment. She first established a common ground between her and the professor by mentioning that the professor had sent an email to her about an exam from chapters two to chapters three. Then she explained how the email made her think that she only needed to finish "those inquisitive assignments by tonight." She pointed out a discrepancy between the professor's email and the deadline of chapter four elsewhere, which made her confused about the deadlines of chapter four. In this way, she gradually built an argument that the deadline of chapter four should not be "tonight". Then she used an information-seeking interrogative to ask the deadline of the assignment. She did not use mitigations in this low-imposition request. The email ends with "please let me know" and an exclamation mark that expresses her strong feeling that she wanted the professor to reply. It may also

be an expression of urgency since the deadline is that night.

Example 22 (American)

Professor FirstName; LastName:

Based on the assigned reading for week 2, the students need to begin with chapter 3 from the text book. Will we be responsible for reading and learning the material in chapters one and two on our own, or will that material not be covered in this course? I am asking for clarification to organize my studying. I apologize for emailing you on this holiday, but when you get the chance please let me know. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

S_FirstName; S_LastName

The email was from an American undergraduate student to her course instructor about reading assignments in the course. She began the email by stating an arrangement the professor had made regarding assigned readings to establish a common ground between the requester and the requestee. The student asked her question about readings in the next sentence. She asked whether the materials in the first two chapters were covered in the course. If so, she would read the materials on her own. She asked an information-seeking question to request information about the course. After the request, she mentioned why she wanted the information to increase her right to make the request. Because she did not have the entitlement to ask the professor to reply to her email on holiday, she apologized to soften her request. The student also used "please let me know" in the same sentence to express her wish to receive the professor's response.

Example 23 (American)

Greetings,

My name is S_FirstName S_LastName, and I am a Freshman in Dept XX.

I took four years of Class XX in High School which satisfies the language requirement.

Last year, I also took one semester of Class XX (5 credit hours) at University XX.

Currently on my DARS report, it does not look like Class XX is fulfilling any requirement. Is it possible to have the Class XX course count towards my liberal education electives?

My UIN is UIN.

Last semester (Fall 2017) NAME suggested that I send you an email concerning these liberal education elective requirements, but I never received a response. I was wondering if you knew the correct person I should consult to resolve my inquiry?

Thank you,

S_FirstName S_LastName

This email was written by a native American English speaker who was a freshman in the university to his academic advisor. The student never met the advisor in person when he wrote the email. He first introduced himself and explained why he wrote the email. He was requesting information about whether the courses he took during high school study fulfilled university level course requirements. Therefore, he first explained the situation and used "is it possible" to ask about one specific course counting as an elective course. Then he gave his UIN, which the advisor might need to check his academic records.

In the next paragraph, he complained that his previous inquiry into the course arrangement was not replied to and asked whom should he contact regarding the problem. He first explained what he had done in the previous semester to refresh the recipient's memory. Then he used "I was wondering" to ask who the right person he should contact. It might be mitigated because it is a complaint in the form of a request.

Example 24 (Chinese)

Hi Prof. LastName,

I'm available at 3:30pm tomorrow. I did some measurement and data analysis last week, but I wonder if there's some specific topic of our talk. Maybe I can do more preparation for it. Thank you! See you tomorrow!

Best,

S_FirstName

The email was written by a Chinese graduate student to her advisor who was a native speaker of American English. The student first confirmed her availability the day after. She might have emailed her advisor a couple of times before she wrote this email. She had made an appointment with the advisor and was asking whether there would be a topic for their meeting. She used "I wonder if" to mitigate the force of the request. She first reported what she had done with data analysis, suggesting this could be a potential topic for the meeting. Then she asked if the professor had a specific topic in mind. The imposition level of the request is low—the professor only needs to reply to the email to grant the request—and as the student's advisor, he was supposed to inform the student of the topic of their meeting. After the request head act, she provided another reason to further explain why she made the request.

Example 25 (Chinese)

Dear Prof. LastName,

Could you please give me the account number for project? We need the number to schedule the experiment.

Best wishes,

S_FirstName S_LastName

This email was written by a Chinese graduate student to his advisor. The student made a request at the beginning of the email and provided a short post-grounder for the request. This is another situation where the student has the entitlement to make the email and the professor is likely to grant the request. However, the student did not say which project they wanted to work on nor which is "the experiment" they wanted to schedule. If the professor and the student had not talked about one specific experiment, this email lacks background information and can cause difficulties in communication. The student used "could you please" in this context. This is noticeable that none of the emails written by American students use "could you please" in any context.

Example 26 (Chinese)

Dear Xxx,

How are you recently? Hope you will be well soon.

In this week, we worked on the DP measurement and found there were one leak on the air hoses connection, where the hose was connected to inlet of indoor nozzle. Therefore, we obtained higher indoor air flow rate than the real value. Now, these leaks are fixed and the gaps among the three balances are narrowed from 700 W to 300 W. And if necessary, I can calculate the results for XXXX tests again and improve the accuracy as well.

In addition, may I ask a few questions?

1. We will have a meeting with XXXX tomorrow morning, will you join the meeting? If not, I believe I can meet with them alone and it should be a short meeting.
I plan to report the XXX and the status of the XXXX: we have purchased all the fittings

and valves we need.

2. Could you please give us some suggestions of the first version of final report? Is there any structural problems?

3. Could you please help us find the rubber hoses and pipe insulation for the installation of the chiller? The dimensions of them are attached.

Thank you so much for your help!

Wish you all the best,
XXX

The email was from a Chinese graduate student to her academic advisor. The request for instruction has been discussed in previous sections;, now I will analyze the first request--a request for information. After reporting her work in the first paragraph, she asked several information-seeking questions in the rest of the email. Before asking questions, she first used "may I ask a few questions?" as a pre-request to elicit her other questions. She then asked if the professor would be available for a meeting with another person using unmitigated information-seeking interrogatives.

Request for instruction. When students have submitted an assignment, a paper, or have questions about course materials, they would ask their course instructor or academic advisor to give some suggestions. Request for instruction can have a high imposition level when students request feedback on theses, research projects, etc. These requests for instruction have been discussed earlier in this chapter, so I will only discuss low-imposition requests for instruction in this section.

Example 27 (American)

Hey Dr. LastName,

I was unsure about the extra credit assignment so I went ahead and did extra work for it. If you have any tweaks you'd like me to make please let me know.

Best,

S_FirstName S_LastName

The email was from an American undergraduate student to his course instructor. The student was reporting his work on an extra-credit assignment, but he requested comments from the professor if the professor wanted him to change anything. The student expressed his willingness to make any revisions at the professor's discretion, so he used "please let me know."

Example 28 (American)

Good evening, Dr. LastName,

I have a few questions regarding the class that I am hoping you can clarify for me.

1. For the reflection videos we were assigned a few peers to review. I have done all 3 of my assigned videos and sent in the evaluation form. However, the website also says we need to be leaving comments on their video for feedback as well, BUT when I go to hit reply the only option is to record another video as feedback rather than written. Is this the way I am supposed to leave feedback for them? Or is there a comment feature on flipgrid that I haven't located yet?

2. Classmate and I met with our UNIV partners this past Monday and they mentioned

something about needing real context for the project. Are we supposed to be contacting real schools to set things up? I didn't think we were supposed to, rather we are just creating lesson plans and tools for potential use in the future. I am not sure if OtherInstructor is having different expectations from our class or not?

3. This project in general I am a bit confused on. Or maybe I have the idea and I am thinking too much into it. Basically we are picking an age to work with, target language, telecollaboration will be incorporated into the lessons. We need to have 10 lesson plans or 2 weeks worth of materials for the unit and then create the resources, upload them to the group website? If so, then I have a pretty good understanding of the assignment. It seems as though we have a lot of wiggle room, which is nice!

Thank You,

FirstNameLastName

Email@illinois.edu

The American student wrote the email to a professor to ask questions about her course projects. The professor was the instructor of the course as well as her advisor in the graduate program. After greeting the professor, the student made the request using "I am hoping that you can clarify for me." She used a requester-centered perspective statement,"I am hoping", and expressed her wish that the professor can comply with the request. By using "hoping", the student emphasized her desire that the request could be granted but did not assume that the professor would grant the request. She made the purpose of the email explicit by pointing out that she was hoping the professor would answer the question. Then, she listed a few topics that she wanted to discuss with the professor. She needed some short instructions on how to comment on her peers' assignments. She checked her understanding of a course project and asked one question

about the course project. These questions need short explanations, which would not need much time from the professor; therefore, the imposition level of the email is not high. After listing her questions, she ended the email with "Thank You" to express her appreciation.

The email has one request for confirmation with "I am hoping" and several information-seeking questions. As the instructor of the course, the professor was responsible for answering his student's questions about the course materials and assignments. It is possible that the professor felt overwhelmed by the list of questions when he received such a long email. However, since the first two questions are requesting two pieces of short information, and the third question is asking for confirmation, the student was not requesting too many details from the professor.

Example 29 (Chinese)

Good morning Professor,

This is the abstract that I prepare to submit to LAB for the presentation. Could you please help me check whether it is appropriate?

Also, the schedule of Oak Ridge workshop and NCNR summer school seems already be determined, may I book the hotel on June 17 in PLACE? Thank you very much.

Best,

S_FirstName

This email was written by a Chinese graduate student to his academic advisor. He made two requests in the email: the first one was to check his abstract for a conference; the second one was a request for permission, which I will discuss in the next section. In the first paragraph, the student used "could you please" to make the request. Since the requestee was the student's advisor, he would be responsible for proofreading his

student's abstract for an academic conference. However, there was also imposition involved because the professor needs some time to comment on the abstract. Although commenting on an abstract is not a simple task, it is not as time-consuming as revising a large paper. Thus, the imposition level of the request is not high.

Request for permission. Another type of request that students make is requesting permission from their advisors or course professors.

Example 30 (Chinese)

Good morning Professor,

This is the abstract that I prepare to submit to LAB for the presentation. Could you please help me check whether it is appropriate?

Also, the schedule of Oak Ridge workshop and NCNR summer school seems already be determined, may I book the hotel on June 17 in PLACE? Thank you very much.

Best,

S_FirstName

This email was written by a Chinese graduate student to his advisor. The student made a request for permission in the second paragraph. The student first explained that the schedule of the workshop had been determined, which means that he was able to decide which day's hotel he should book. Therefore, he was asking his professor for permission. The second request was made with "may I". The student used "thank you very much" to appreciate his professor's time and help.

Example 31 (American)

Hi Prof. LastName,

I am interested in completing some extra problems for bonus points in Class XX. I

understand that you may send these problems in a few weeks. May I please be added to the list to be given the extra credit problems?

Thank you in advance.

Regards,

S_FirstName S_LastName

The email was from an American undergraduate student to his class instructor to request to be added to a list of students who can obtain extra credit from the course. The student first talked about his interest in extra credit opportunity and mentioned the instructor's arrangements in the course to establish a common ground between them. After that, the student requested that the instructor add him "to the list to be given" extra credit assignments. The student used "may I please" to make the request. The professor may have told his students about the extra credit questions, and the student informed the instructor of his interest in earning extra credit. The imposition of the request is low because to grant the request, the instructor needs to add the student to the list. The task is not difficult to finish and it does not take a long time. Besides, every student in the class should have the opportunity to finish extra credit assignments. Therefore, the student is also entitled to make the request.

Request for an appointment. Another type of request that many students make is requests for an appointment with professors. There are different categories involving different levels of imposition and entitlement. I have discussed a few emails requesting an appointment with high-imposition. In this section, only those emails with a low imposition level whose requesters have high entitlement will be discussed.

Example 32 (American)

Hi FirstName,

I prepared all of my data and am ready to analyze it, but when I tried running some commands that were similar to the ones you have in the Sample Project, they don't work. I've done some research online, but haven't found any answers.

Was there supposed to be a second R lab for Week 2? I feel like I'm missing some of the information needed to use this software.

Would you be free to meet tomorrow morning (Friday) around 10:45 or 11:00?

Thanks,
S_FirstName

       This email was written by an American graduate student to his professor. The student had the professor for an online course outside of his major. The student had emailed the professor twice before sending this email. After a short greeting, the student began to talk about his progression in a course assignment and a problem that he encountered. He explained that he could not run commands as shown in the professor's sample project. To prepare for his request, he further demonstrated a meeting with the professor was necessary since he had tried but failed to solve the problem on his own. Then he requested information about the course arrangement—he asked if there would be a lab where the professor could help students using the software he had mentioned.

       In the next paragraph, he made another request: he wanted to meet with the professor the day after during a specific period of time. He used "would you be free", which is softer than "will you be free". The student did not explain why he wanted to meet with the professor, but based on the previous information, he wanted to learn how to use the software with the professor if there was not a second R lab for the second week. Due to the nature of email communication, the requester cannot immediately receive the

requestee's response to the first question, and the requester has to construct all the information in one turn. Therefore, the student made the second request in this email. When requesting an appointment, the student only gave the professor one choice, without realizing the high imposition posed on the professor and his low entitlement to make such a request. In the questionnaire, the student wrote that "On the day I proposed to meet with her, I already had plans to meet another professor in the same building, which was far from the campus building I usually worked in." This explained why he mentioned a specific time for the meeting, but without providing such information to the requestee, the requestee may find the request demanding. However, he used "would you be free" to make the request, which orients to the possibiliy that the professor would not be free during that time slot.

Example 33 (Chinese)
Dear professor Lastname:

I hope I could talk about my course plan with you when you are available. I want to talk about course plan. Thank you!
Attach is my course plan.
By the way, May I talk to you in today afternoon ? Or next week? Thank you!

Have a wonderful day!

Yours sincerely,

First Name

    The email was from a Chinese graduate student to her academic advisor to request

an appointment to discuss her course plan. She used a hope-statement ("I hope I could talk about my course plan") and a want-statement ("I want to talk about course plan") in the first paragraph to make the request and support her request. She requested that she meet with the professor and gave a time period that she wanted to meet. It is noticeable that the student made the request at the very beginning of the email, which none of the American students did. She added "thank you" with an exclamation mark to express her genuine appreciation for the professor's advice. Then she told the professor she attached her course plan in the email, which would be useful for the meeting. In the next paragraph, the student used "by the way" to begin another request. It is probable that the student was trying to ask when she could meet with the professor to talk about her course plan. However, her use of "by the way"—a phrase usually used to introduce another topic that is not connected with what has been talked about—makes it possible that she wanted to make another appointment for other purposes. Therefore, her language choice makes what the student wanted to discuss confusing. After this request, the student used another "thank you" to show her gratitude for the professor.

The student was requesting advice on her course plan from the professor. It was her academic advisor's responsibility to give her advice on the course plan. Therefore, she did not have to use external or internal modifications intensively. However, I noticed that she used "I hope" and "I want" in the email. "I hope" orients to her wish that the professor could talk to her, but "I want" focuses on her own needs and is more direct. This direct request may make her request less well-received by her American academic advisor.

Seeking advice from advisors or course instructors. Another type of email that students wrote a lot is asking for advice from academic advisors. Usually, the advice that students ask is about course registration. Sometimes, students ask their professors' opinions about their schedules and conference registrations, etc.

Example 34 (Chinese)

Hi Professor,

Did you receive the email copied by NAME? Professor LastName seems not willing to let me miss any section to take the XXX tour. So which choice do you recommend me to take? It will be the best if I can leave PLACE on DATE with all of you and fly to PLACE, and attend the XXX training before the summer school. But that means I need stay one night in PLACE. What do you think?

Best,

S_FirstName

In the email, a Chinese graduate student consulted his academic advisor about his time arrangement. It seems that the student needed to attend a summer school or a conference, so he had to be absent for some classes, but another professor disagreed. Therefore, he asked his advisor what to do with the situation. Besides, he needed to spend an extra night in one place; then his advisor may need to pay for the hotel. Therefore, he also needed his advisor's permission.

First, the student brought up an email sent by another professor to remind his advisor about the background information of the situation. He summarized the email content to bring up his question. Then he consulted his advisor's opinions by asking "which choice do you recommend me to take?" The student did not give his own preference but only asked for his advisor's suggestions. He then began to ask another question. He used "it will be the best" to give his preferred arrangements without mitigation such as "I was thinking". He explained his plan and mentioned the possible troubles or difficulties of this plan. He requested suggestions from his advisor using "what do you think?"

The student asked his advisor two questions in the email. He did not mention his own opinions on the first question, and he stated what he wanted to do when asking the second question. When asking both questions, he stated that he was willing to listen to the advisor's ideas and do what the professor suggested him to do.

Example 35 (American)

Thanks for getting back to me.

Do I have to officially request University XX to send in a transcript again, or should I just email admissions and ask them to look at it again for the Dept XX credit?

I do not already have credit for Class XX, so I would need to take the exam. If I wanted to take Class XX and Class XX, should I try to sign up for those classes right now, or would I have to just wait for the proficiency exam to sign up? I did already sign up for Class XX and Class XX, should I remove those then? I get your point about not taking a whole Dept XX class again as a refresher.

Thanks for all the help,
S_FirstName S_LastName

The email is from an American English speaker who is an undergraduate student to his academic advisor. The student requested information about class registration. The student asked several questions directly without modifications.. He used "or" to list two options he had under the if-clause to indicate that he was aware of the two options and wanted to ask for the professor's opinions. He expressed the appreciation at the end of the email using "thanks for all the help". This email request for suggestions on course registration, but it is very similar to emails containing requests for information. The

student wrote his questions quite directly without many mitigations. Below is another email requesting advice for course registration.

Example 36 (Chinese)

Dear Dr. LastName,

After taking 4 classes this week, I think Class XX and Class YY may not fit me very well. Dr. LastName who is teaching Class XX told me that for this semester, this class is mainly designed for undergrads rather than grad students. And for Class YY, I felt that this class is more related to doing reading research instead of teaching reading, while the latter currently interests me more. So I think I will take two classes this semester. One is Class CC, and the other one is Class DD. Would you please tell me your opinion of my class schedule? Or would you like to recommend other classes for me to take?

Thanks for your consideration and time. Happy Labor Day!

Best,

S_FirstName S_LastName

      The email is from a Chinese student to her advisor, asking the professor's advice on her course plan. The student went into the subject matter directly at the beginning of the email. She used "I think" to give her opinion on her current class schedule. After stating her opinion, she provided details to support her opinion. She explained why she did not like the classes she was taking. She used "mainly designed", "felt", "more related" to decrease the certainty of her statements and to mitigate her request. She stated "I think Class XX and Class YY may not fit me very well" first before asking for advice to inform the professor her perspectives of Class XX and Class YY. She used "I think" to

mitigate her informing. After explaining the reasons, she used "I think I will take two classes this semester" to tell her professor what classes she had already decided to take. She used "would you please" to elicit her professor's opinion later, but this action seems to contradict the sentence, "I think I will take two classes", where she informed her professor of her decision to take Class CC and Class DD.

It is clear that the American student's email was asking for his advisor's suggestions on course selection, and he was willing to consider his advisor's opinions. The Chinese student was also asking advice from an advisor, but her use of "I will" conveyed her determination to drop her current classes and take two other classes. The professor might take it as a decision that has already been made and that the student was unwilling to take in any suggestions.

Example 37 (Chinese)
But besides it may takes me a semester to know I don't need a semester, while I will do everything now to ensure what takes me a semester to to do is worth a real length of semester.

I also want to share a sentence that comes from a comics book(I forget the exact words so I will say in my own words): the life itself is miracle, but we don't realize and not treasure that because there are so many lives on Earth that we always ignore that.

I will start reading the article recently. And for the outcome, do you think I could present what I learned from the article to the whole class by the end of the semester like 3-5 min? I think that would be challenging me that make me to say something easily understandable for some complex things. Also how about the honor project is also about:

e-mailing back and forth with professor throughout the whole semester about the topics

covered in computational and systems biology with the connection to our current STAT XXX.

What is your opinion?

Thank you, while I reply e-mail might not be daily but I will definitely reply with thoughtful thoughts.

S_FirstName

2018.9.10

The email above is a follow-up email from a Chinese student to his course instructor. The student asked questions about a course project as well as honor credits. He used the first two paragraphs of his email chatting with the professor to develop a friendly relationship with the professor via email communication. In the third paragraph, the student began to talk about a course project. He first stated that he would begin to work on the project. Headed by "and", the request head act contained a consultative device "do you think" to foreshadow the information-seeking question. The conjunction "and" gives the recipient a view that the following sentence is closely connected with the previous sentence. When the student requested the professor's advice on his presentation, he did it differently from the student in the previous email. Instead of giving his own opinions, he added a consultant ("do you think") to elicit the professor's response. After making the request, he used "I think" to talk about his personal opinions. When eliciting the professor's opinions, the student asked "what is your opinion?"

However, for the second request, we are not sure why the student proposed one potential option for an honor credits project. If the student used the article "the" accurately, the professor and the student had talked about the project before this email was sent. If the professor suggested the student to propose an option, this request is appropriate. However, if they have not discussed the project, the student needs to provide more background before making this request.

Reporting work to employers. In this type of low-imposition request, making a request is not the main action or primary purpose of the email but only a part of the email. The senders of this type of email are employees of the recipients. The senders of the emails are reporting their work to their employers based on employers' instructions or requirements, so the imposition level of these requests is low. The requesters also have high entitlement to make requests because they are not asking the requestees to comply with their own wishes; instead, they made requests to help the recipients to get work completed.

Example 38 (American)

Hello FirstName,

I've updated the Name[1] with the information in the Box folder. Most of it is under the Name tab that you already had displayed. As for the Name, I have created a new tab with Name displayed as pages that can be edited when needed. I have copied the Name you had in Box in these Name. Please let me know if anything seems unintuitive or wrong; I would be more than happy to meet with you again this week to discuss the Name.

Best,

S_FirstName

The writer of the email was a Teaching Assistant working with the professor. The student reported her work in the email and requested information at the end of the email. In the first request, the student asked the professor to check whether her work was adequate and offered to make revisions if needed. The student offered her help in the form of request using "please let me know". The student and the previous student both used "please let me know", but this student was not asking the professor to do something for herself but offering to revise her work if necessary. As a part of the request, she

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[1] The participant used "Name" several times in this e-mail to cover up key terms about a class that would reveal the class. They are not personal names.

offered to meet with the professor by saying that "I would be more than happy to meet with you".

Example 39 (Chinese)
Good afternoon Prof.,

I have talked with FirstName about the table order cancellation (order #: P1677557), she said that we can cancel it by contacting the university business office (FirstName LastName Address@illinois.edu). I am wondering should I contact the business office now to talk about the cancellation?

Regarding the layout of the table, the size of the steel platform is 121-inch x 84.5-inch. The dimension of the two joined optical table is 120-inch x 84-inch. The steel platform could hold the legs of the table without redundant space.

Sincerely

This is an email written by a Chinese graduate student to his academic advisor. The student was the recipient's Research Assistant. Their laboratory ordered a table for research purposes, and this student was in charge of the related matters. The sender and the recipient's relationship is closer than a regular employer-employee relationship. The professor had asked the student to cancel the table order in their previous emails. At the beginning of the email, the student reported the new information he had obtained. He then requested the advisor's directions on this table order using "I was wondering", which indirectly asking the professor's to provide direction for his job.

Summary of low imposition, high entitlement emails. In this section, I analyzed low-imposition requests in which the requesters have high entitlements to make

the requests. When requesting information, native speakers of American English usually ask questions directly without many mitigations. One email used "I was hoping you could explain…" to mitigate the request. An American student used "is it possible" and "I was wondering" when requesting information, but the real purpose of those two requests is to complain. In the requests for instruction and an appointment, students use "I was wondering" and "I was hoping" to mitigate their requests. They do not ask the questions at the beginning of the email—some background information is given before the request statement to establish a common ground between the requester and requestee. After making the requests, students also give more reasons to support their requests. One student apologized for emailing the professor during a holiday. To avoid possible offenses that the requests could pose to the requestee, students used phrases such as "a bit" to reduce the urgency of the request and used "I thought I remembered" to eliminate their degrees of certainty about their understandings or opinions. Some emails that request information contain "please let me know" at the end.

Chinese students' emails, at first glance, are shorter in length compared with American students' emails. This is because Chinese students' emails contain fewer reasons and less background information to support requests. In one of the emails, a Chinese student asked the professor to provide an account number for a project. She made the request at the beginning of the email using "Could you please". In another email, the requester used "I wonder" to request the topic of her meeting with the professor. She gave one reason to support the request. It is noted that the Chinese student mitigated her request using "I wonder if" for an information-seeking request when most American students used unmitigated information-seeking questions.

When requesting an appointment, American students begin their emails with contextual information about the request. For example, some students mentioned they had begun to work on a project and encountered problems that cannot be resolved. These explanations serve as pre-requests. Because of differences between email communication

and face to face communication, students cannot wait for the professors to offer the request. Thus, American students make requests after pre-requests. However, Chinese students tend to make requests at the beginning of the email without explaining why they want to meet with the recipients. To introduce the purpose of the meeting, the Chinese student used "I hope" and "I want" to point out her wishes explicitly. Between the two forms, "I want" is more explicit. When using "I want", the requester seems to be certain that the request would not be rejected. But the phrase "I hope" means that the requester has little or no control of whether the request would be granted.

I did not collect many emails requesting suggestions from advisors written by American English speakers. The only email from American students was similar to a request for simple information. He asked many information-seeking questions. When Chinese students ask advice from an advisor, they may use "I think" to express their opinions. Consultative devices such as "do you think" "what is your opinion" and "which choice do you recommend me to take" are also used by Chinese students to elicit responses from professors.

Reporting work to employers has little imposition to the recipient. The American student used "please let me know" and "I would be more than happy to meet with you" to offer to assist the professor further. The Chinese student used "I was wondering" to soften his request.

Across all the types of requests under this low-imposition, high-entitlement section, American students' emails all contain supportive moves such as reasons for requesting before request head acts. Some emails also contain supportive moves after head acts. American students would increase their entitlement to request by showing that they have encountered a problem that cannot be resolved by themselves so that making the request was necessary for completing an assignment or continuing with their course.

Low imposition, Low entitlement emails

    Request for information.

Example 40 (American)

Hi Dr. LastName,

NAME and NAME and I have been working on our practice day materials for Thursday's class and we are just about finished. There are still a few small changes we want to discuss, but we won't be able to meet as a group again until after class on Tuesday, so our materials will technically be a little late based on the requirements listed on the website. Is that okay, or would you like us to send you our drafts before class, and the final versions later?

Also, would it be possible to use the department copy machines to print all of our materials for the practice day? There are 3-4 printed handouts that we will be distributing, so if we multiply that by 15 students, printing costs could really add up. If not, I completely understand.

Thanks very much,

GROUP NAME

      The email was written by an American graduate student to her course instructor. The student made two requests in the email: first, she requested information from the professor, and second, she requested that she use the department copy machines.

      She began the email explaining what her group has been done recently about the project. She first mentioned that "we are just about finished" to demonstrate that her group has made progress. When saying "there are still a few changes", the student emphasized that they could have submitted the materials, but because of their high expectations for their materials, they want to polish the materials further. Then she

explained that they could not meet again to revise their materials so that they cannot meet the deadline. The explanation leads to her request that she wanted to hand in the materials late. She used information-seeking interrogatives, where she seemed to give the professor an alternative option by asking if he would prefer having the drafts before class. However, she did not give him any options because neither submitting the "drafts" before class nor submit the final versions later gives the professor an option to insist that the final draft should be handed in on time.

In the second paragraph, the student made a different request. She began the email with the request using "would it be possible" to ask the possibilities of using the copy machine. Then she continued to argue why she needed to use the printer. By pointing out they needed to print a large number of handouts, the student demonstrated the necessity to use the department copy machines. To soften the request, she expressed her understanding if the professor did not agree.

The first request in the email is low-imposition. The imposition level of the request is low since the professor did not need to spend extra time to conduct a task for the student. He only had to decide whether to approve or disapprove the request. In addition, the group already had a draft of the materials. Therefore, the change of deadline would not disrupt the class. The second request's imposition level is ambiguous because, from the context, it is not clear what the student was requesting. If the student only requested permission to use a department copy machine, which did not need the professor's work, then the imposition is low. However, if the student wanted the professor to copy the materials, the imposition is high. The professor does not have the responsibility to comply with the request, either.

Example 41 (American)

Hi Dr. LastName,

I hope you've enjoyed your summer and are looking forward to teaching a new group of students next week!

Since I officially graduated earlier this month, I've been going through my course websites on Moodle and Compass in order to save some course materials before I lose access to them.

I noticed that the Class XX course from Fall 2017 is no longer displayed in my list of courses on Compass, even though I still have access to other courses. Would it be possible to restore my access to the Class XX course, at least for a day or two, so I can download the course materials? Statistics is one of those things that I feel I will need to review often in the future.

Thanks very much!
S_FirstName

This email was written by an American graduate student to an American professor who was her course instructor. The student requested that the professor give her access to a course website. The sender was a former student in the course who had graduated when she made the request, which eliminates her right to make the request.

The student begins the email with a phatic greeting to show friendliness. After that, the student began to list several reasons why she was making the requests. She first stated that she had graduated when she wrote the email, which explains why "I have been going through my course websites...to save some materials". This reason also functions as a pre-request. She emphasized that she could still use other course websites to consolidate her rights to make the request. After the sentence, she used "would it be possible" to start the request head act. In the request head act, she asked about the possibility of restoring

access to the course website. The requester knew that she was not entitled to ask the professor to give her course access, so she used the phrase "at least one day or two" to limit her access—she did not want to have permanent access but temporary access only to download course materials. She added a post-grounder to explain why and how important the materials are to convince the requestee to comply with the request. She ended the email with a sentence conveying appreciation with an exclamation mark to intensify her gratitude.

The student requested that the professor take time to give her access to a course website, which is not a high-imposition request. However, the professor does not need to ensure that course materials are accessible to former students. The student acknowledged that she did not have to right to ask for the course website, so she provided many grounders both before and after the request head act.

Example 42 (Chinese)
Dear Prof. LastName,

I am S_FirstName. I am interested in the XXX you talked about in the meeting today. Is it possible to send me XXX thesis so that I can read something about it?

Thank you very much,
S_FirstName

This email was written by a Chinese graduate student to a professor in his department. The professor had worked collaboratively with the research group the student was in, but he was not close to the professor (social distance: 1). The student first identified himself using his first name. Then he expressed his interest in what the professor talked about in a meeting that day. The student might want to use the sentence

as a pre-request. The student started his topic introduction, followed by the request statement. He used "is it possible", an indirect requestive strategy, to ask about the possibility of the professor complying with the request. The request head act is followed by an account ("so that I can read something about it"). The student showed that he was interested in the topic and wanted to explore the topic further, justifying her position as a student eager to learn more about the subject area.

   Summary of low imposition, low entitlement emails. Two emails written by American English speakers used "would it be possible" in the request head acts, while Chinese student used "is it possible". When American students make requests which they have low entitlement to make, they tend to provide substantial details to discuss why they need to make the request and convey how important the request is to increase the chances of getting the request complied with. The Chinese student also used an account, but the student simply mentioned "I am interested" in the topic that the professor talked about. The argument made by the Chinese student is weaker than those made by American students.

Linguistic deficiencies causing difficulties in communication

   Some emails I collected may cause miscommunication or misunderstanding between the requester and the requestee not only because students lacked pragmatic competence but also because of their misuse of linguistic forms. I will analyze some of the emails in this section.

Example 43 (Chinese)

Hi Dr. LastName,

Thank you very much for your recommendation! I'll wait for
Prof. LastName's response. Is Prof. LastName a new professor here? I could not find her information on the department's website. If possible, could I visit you around 2:00 pm on

Monday?

Thank you very much for your kindly help!

S_FirstName

The email was from a Chinese graduate student to a professor in another department whom she had only met with once. The student first mentioned a recommendation, then she talked about another professor, and she asked a question about the status of the other professor afterward. We do not know the context of the request, but it seems that the recommendation was to contact this professor. She made a simple information-seeking question about whether this professor was a new professor and where to find his information. The student made the request directly. Although many other emails contain direct information-seeking interrogatives, this request may be inappropriate because the student may need to ask the department for this information, not the professor. After asking the question, the student added a reason explaining why she asked the question. She might be looking for the professor's information in the department's faculty list to prepare herself for communication with the professor. After she gave this reason, she requested an appointment using "could I visit you" with a requester-centered perspective. Compared with "could you please", it asks permission from the professor rather than requesting the professor to take action, so it is softer. The request was mitigated by a downtoner "if possible", but the student added a time period on one specific day for the appointment.

It is not clear why the student wanted to meet with the recipient, which can cause miscommunication between the professor and her. From the content of the email, the student may want to talk about the other professor in the meeting. American students usually provide adequate background information when they make appointments with

professors, but also use plenty of grounders, and use lexical or phrasal modification in requests of appointments. This email is different from those written by American students in terms of how the student structure the messages.

Example 44 (Chinese)

Hi professor LastName:

I am sorry to bother you and I totally know how busy you are, but I am confused about Class XX.

In the compass, Discussion Schedule is till empty. And link of presentation schedule wiki has no access. Besides, it seems that we can not find this course through piazza. So I am not sure whether I have missed something or not.

How and where could I ask questions about this class?

Thank you very much!

Have a wonderful weekend!

The email was written by a Chinese graduate student to her course instructor who was a Chinese native speaker. This email is confusing because of the student's linguistic infelicities. The student first apologized to the professor for bothering him. This is an external modification that softens the force of the request. In the next paragraph, she explained her questions about a course website. She used "it seems" to avoid any potential accusations on her previous statements. Then she indicated that she might be wrong about the problems of the website by saying "I am not sure whether I have missed

something or not". After that, she asked if the professor knew where she could ask questions about the course. However, we do not know why the student asked "how and where could I ask questions about this class" to her "course instructor". If the recipient of the email was the instructor of this course, the student could ask the professor those questions. If not, she should not have emailed the professor about another course. It is probable that the professor was the instructor of the course, and the student did not know how to write her second question appropriately.

Example 45 (Chinese)

Hi Professor FirstName

My name is S_FirstName S_LastName, your grader for the course Class XX and luckily one of your Class XX students, too. I'm currently a second-year master's student in our department.

I'm writing to ask about the details of grading job for this course since it's my first time to work as a grader. I'll try my best to be efficient and considerate in my work. If you have anything you want me to know, please shoot me an e-mail or summon me to your office.

Thank you very much!

Best,
NAME

The recipient of the email was an American professor. The sender of the email is a Chinese graduate student who worked as a new rater for one of the professor's courses.

The student knew the professor because he was in another course taught by the professor. The student first introduced himself as a new rater and a student in the professor's class. At the beginning of the second paragraph, he made one request using "I'm writing to ask about the details of grading job…", which makes the purpose of the email explicit. He was requesting the details of the grading job. He added one reason for requesting the details of the grading job after giving the request head act. It was his first time to work as a grader, so it was reasonable for him to request a detailed description of his responsibilities. This request's imposition level is high. If the professor did not have a completed document of the job description, it would take the professor a long time to develop one, or the professor had to make an appointment with the student to inform him of the job description. After making the request, the student expressed his "resolution" of becoming a grader with good work ethics. He strengthened the self-image as a responsible worker. After that, he asked about additional information on the grading job.

This email contains two actions: asking for details about a grading job and asking for any additional information about the job. However, it is confusing why the student made another request for additional information after he had asked about the details of the grading job. The recipient of the email may not know which one was the main action of this email. Besides, the language choice is also inappropriate. "Shoot an email" is colloquial English usually used in informal contexts, whereas "summon" is formal and has negative connotations in the context. The combination of an informal and a formal verb in the same sentence may be inappropriate.

Example 46 (Chinese)

Dear FirstName,

I am a student in the school of XX and I major in XX. I have a few questions about my courses this semester so I want to make an appointment on Friday afternoon around 3

pm.

Besides, I am still not sure whether you are the one that all the students major in XX can have meeting with. Could you please tell me who else can help me about my study as a advisor here?

Thank you for your help.

Best Regards,
S firstname S_lastname

       The email was from a Chinese undergraduate student. The email contains two requests, and it was not clear which one was the main action due to the student did not arrange the sequence of information properly in the email.

       The student requested a meeting with the professor first. She provided an explanation of her problems as an account for the request. She used "I want" to make the request and specify a time slot that wanted to meet. "I want" is self-centered and does not give requestee an opportunity to reject the request. Specifying one time slot makes the imposition higher. However, after making the request, the student suggested that she was not sure whether the professor was the right person to meet with. The student indicated in the online questionnaire that the recipient was her advisor. However, the student asked whether the professor was the right person to contact after making an appointment with the professor.

       When writing the email, the student may suddenly have doubts about whether she should talk with this specific professor after making the first request. Therefore, she asked the second question. To make her email clearer, she could rearrange the sequence of information in her email by delaying the first request.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Request head acts in American students' emails are usually delayed. American students' usually begin their emails with a greeting to establish a friendly relationship between them and the requestees. They might introduce or identify themselves depending on the relationship between them and the requestees. After that, American students give one reason or several reasons from different perspectives for making the requests. Request head acts are given after students have provided adequate background information for requestees to understand why they have to make the requests and reasons to support their requests. Some Chinese emails also follow the sequencing of information mentioned above, but the request head acts in many of the emails are at the beginning of the body of the emails, and supportive moves follow the request head acts. For example, in a request for instruction email, a Chinese student asked his question first, then explained why he was confused about the question. This finding is inconsistent with some previous studies that analyze emails in English written by Chinese students. Chen (2001) compared authentic emails in English that were written by Taiwanese students and American students. She claimed that academic emails from Chinese students to faculty demonstrated a transfer from Chinese politeness and rhetoric strategies to English. Chen (2001) pointed out that the most obvious transferred strategy is that Chinese students delay the request statements. She claimed that the delayed request head acts might reduce the persuasive force of their requests. A case study conducted by Chen (2006) shows that a Taiwanese student used the sequence of information mentioned above. Based on some email writing books, Chen (2006) claimed that providing details and contextual information on why the request needed to be made and delaying request head acts is likely to be viewed as an inefficient email structure by people working in institutional contexts. However, the current study demonstrates that the majority of American students delayed their request head acts, while Chinese students tend to place request head acts at the beginning of emails. We cannot consider delaying request head acts as a pragmatic failure since this is a characteristic of

most emails written by native speakers of American English.

Some American emails with low-imposition, high-entitlement requests end once the request head acts are given, while high-imposition emails may contain more external modification, such as apology, acknowledging the imposition involved, orientation to the possibilities that the professors may not want to agree to grant the request, and expressions of gratitude. However, Chinese emails do not contain such external modification. The results confirm the findings of Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) that emails written by non-native speakers of English had a number of pragmatic failures that were mainly caused by underuse of modifications, employing inappropriate modifications, not acknowledging imposition on instructors, and insufficient and student-centered explanation for making the request.

In the following section, I focus on comparing American and Chinese students' request head acts across various request types.

Table 1: Request head acts in high-imposition low-entitlement emails

High imposition, low entitlement		
Request types	American students	Chinese students
Request for appointment/mentoring	➢ If I could meet with you …, that would be a tremendous help in ... (1)[2] ➢ I was wanting to know if it would be possible to communicate…(1) ➢ I was wondering if you... (1) ➢ Would you be free to meet…? (1)	➢ I am writing to invite... (1) ➢ So could we meet… when you are available? (1) ➢ We can meet at your convenience to discuss…(1) ➢ We would be grateful if you could please ... (1)

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[2] The numbers in parentheses indicate how many times the strategies appear in data.

Table 1 (cont.)

Request for recommendation letter	➢ I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to …(1)	➢ I am writing to request…(1) ➢ I wonder whether I can put your name…(1)
Rescheduling a meeting		➢ Can we …? + Let me know if ... (1)

Table 2: Request head acts in high-imposition high-entitlement emails

High imposition, high entitlement		
Request types	American students	Chinese students
Reporting work and asking for feedback	➢ I welcome any suggestions you have for … (1) ➢ I wanted to share it with you first cause it seems like a very complicated equation, so I wasn't sure if there was another version you were thinking of. (1)	➢ Could you please give us some suggestions…? + Information seeking interrogatives (1) ➢ Please + imperative + appreciation (1) ➢ If you have any questions or suggestions of the revised version, please let me know. (1) ➢ Could you give me some comments about it? (1)
Request for instruction		➢ Could you please tell me…? (1) ➢ Information seeking interrogatives (1)
Request for action		➢ Could you please help us…? (1)

Table 2 (cont.)

Request for an appointment	➢ I was wondering if you were available to meet… (1)	
Rescheduling a meeting		➢ Name and I have received an email from Name that we need to reschedule our meeting time for a couple of weeks. (1)

Table 3: Request head acts in low-imposition high-entitlement emails

Low imposition, high entitlement		
Request types	American students	Chinese students
Request for permission	➢ May I take this as my one excused-without-a-doctor's-note absence? (1) ➢ May I please be added to the list to be given the extra credit problems? (1)	➢ May I book…? (1)
Request for an appointment		➢ I hope I could talk …with you… (1) ➢ May I talk to you in today afternoon? Or next week? (1)
Request for action		➢ Could you please share…? (1)

Table 3 (cont.)

Reporting work to employer	Please let me know if … (1)	➢ I am wondering should I …? (1)
Request for information	➢ Information seeking interrogatives (4) ➢ I am wondering + information seeking interrogatives + Please let me know if I should… (1) ➢ I was hoping you could explain.... (1) ➢ Information seeking question … or…another information seeking question + when you get the chance please let me know. (1) ➢ Information seeking interrogatives + Please let me know! (1) ➢ Is it possible to …? (A complaint) (1) ➢ I was wondering if …? (A complaint) (1) ➢ I'd like to know what about the essay prompts. (1) ➢ I was also wondering if you have uploaded your Prezi presentation and if so, where they would be located. (1)	➢ I wonder if + information seeking question (1) ➢ Could you please give me …? (1) ➢ May I ask a few questions? + Information seeking interrogatives (1) ➢ Do you mean that you will…? (1) ➢ Information seeking interrogatives (1) ➢ Information seeking interrogatives + or + Information seeking interrogatives (1) ➢ Do you know + information seeking question (1)

Table 3 (cont.)

Seeking advice from advisors or course instructors	➤ Information seeking interrogatives + or + another question (2) ➤ information seeking interrogatives (1)	➤ So which choice do you recommend me to take? (1) ➤ [student's opinion] What do you think? (1) ➤ Would you please tell me…? Or would you like to recommend…? (1) ➤ Do you think I could ...[a personal opinion]? (1) How about [student's opinion] What is your opinion? (1)
Request for instruction	➤ If you have any tweaks you'd like me to make please let me know. (1) ➤ I have a few questions… that I am hoping you can clarify for me. + information seeking interrogatives (1) ➤ I was wondering + information seeking questions (1)	➤ Could you please help me…? (1) ➤ Information seeking interrogatives + could you please check this? (1)

Table 4: Request head acts in low-imposition low-entitlement emails

Low imposition, low entitlement		
Request types	American students	Chinese students
Request for permission	➢ Would it be possible to …? (1)	
Request for action	➢ Would it be possible to … + so [a reason]? (1)	➢ Is it possible to …? (1)

American students used a larger variety of modifications across request types and different imposition and entitlement sections except for the request for information. American students used past progressive (I was wanting…, I was wondering…), modal verbs (would, could…), conditional structure, etc. in their request head acts to soften the force of their requests. They inquire about the possibility, willingness, and ability of the requestees' to comply with the requests by using lexical modifiers such as "would you be willing to…" Chinese students used more limited expressions than American students.

American students use more indirect strategies in high imposition, low entitlement and high imposition, high entitlement emails. They either used at least one mitigation in a request head act or requestive hints. For example, they used "I was wondering...", "I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to...", and "I was wanting to know if it would be possible". Past tense ("wanted", "was wondering", "was wanting"), modal verbs ("would") are used and students orient to the possibility that the requestees do not want to grant the request by using if-clause ("if you would be willing to...", "if it would be possible…"). Requestive hints also appear in both high-imposition and low-entitlement, and high-imposition and high-entitlement requests. All the request head acts in reporting work and asking for feedback emails used requestive hints. Instead of explicitly expressing what they want requestees to do, the students suggested that the requestees could provide them with suggestions, but they do not require them to comply with their requests. This

could reduce the threat to the requestees' negative face, which is especially important when the imposition level of the request is already high.

Chinese students' emails, in contrast, are more direct because most of the request head acts make the force of the requests explicit. For example, for the request for appointment/mentoring and the request for recommendation letters where students have low entitlement to make the requests, Chinese students used "I am writing to invite/request…", "Could we meet…", "could you please…" to make these requests. Some students used declarative sentences without mitigations, such as "we can meet…" and "…we need to reschedule our meeting…", which did not show orientation to the possibility that requestees would not or could not grant the requests.

Two imperatives were used by Chinese students for high imposition requests. Although American students used "if clause + please let me know", "Can we… + Let me know if…" and "Please let me know" many times when requesting information, they never used it in high-imposition requests. A Chinese student used "please" with imperatives ("Please check it") to request feedback from his professor. Compared with American students' emails under this category, which contain requestive hints, imperatives that start with "please" are very direct.

Only two high-imposition level emails from Chinese students have modifiers ("we would be grateful if you could please…", "I wonder whether I can…"). However, these modifiers are still different from those in American students' emails. The first example expresses the student's appreciation which is followed by "could you please…", a phrase that American students did not use in any situation. The second example used present tense, but American students tend to use the past tense.

For request for instruction, request for action, and rescheduling a meeting under the high-imposition category, request head acts written by Chinese students used "could you please…", information- seeking interrogatives, and a non-mitigated declarative sentence. Although I did not collect any emails that request action, instruction, or rescheduling a

meeting written by American students under high-imposition, high-entitlement category, compared with American emails with other request types under the high-imposition, low-entitlement section, these request head acts are very different because they are not mitigated.

For request for instruction/information/advice from advisors or course instructors under low-imposition, high-entitlement category, American students used many information-seeking interrogatives ("But exactly what sections or pages are those?"). Some of the interrogatives are followed by "please let me know"; some of them contain an embedded if-clause. Four information-seeking questions are headed by "I am wondering …" or "I was/am hoping you…" It is noted that the number of lexical and syntactic modifications used for those request types is lower than those used for high-imposition requests. A student used a declarative sentence to make the request, which indicated he expected the requestee to comply with the request. Only four request head acts for the request for information are mitigated. Two of them were mitigated, but these two requests are actually complaints in the form of a request for information. Therefore, the requester might mitigate the requests to soften his complaints.

Similarly, Chinese students also used non-mitigated information-seeking questions when requesting instruction or information. One of the information-seeking questions follows "may I ask a few questions", which functions as a pre-request. Another interrogative is headed by "do you know" to elicit the requestee's suggestions. Similar to American students' emails, Chinese students used "I wonder if…" before asking an information-seeking question. Different from American emails, none of the Chinese emails under this category used "please let me know" with interrogatives.

I collected one American email requesting advice from his advisor, and that email contains many information-seeking questions that are not mitigated. Chinese students, however, did not use information-seeking questions for this type of request. They usually explain a problem/challenge or a situation they are facing, then use phrases like "do you know", "what is your opinion", "what do you think", and "which choice do you recommend"

to request suggestions. However, American students did not use such phrases or sentences in these contexts.

American and Chinese students both used interrogatives starting with "may I" when requesting permission from their advisors or course instructors. There was no request for an appointment in low-entitlement, high-imposition emails written by American students, but Chinese students used "I hope…" and "may I…" to make the requests. The forms of these two request head acts align with other request head acts written by American students under this category.

Reporting work to employers and asking for feedback is also a type of low-imposition, high-entitlement request, but the form of this request is different from those in other request types. One reason to explain this is that reporting work to employers does not pose any imposition on the requestees. Instead, the requesters were doing the work to benefit their employers and they followed their employers' instructions. The American students' request head act used "please" with imperatives (please let me know if…) The Chinese student's email, in contrast, was mitigated by "I am wondering…", but the mitigation was not needed here.

For low-imposition, low-entitlement requests, both American and Chinese students soften their request by asking the requestees' possibility of granting the requests. American students used "would it be possible to…" and the Chinese student used "is it possible to…" American students' email head acts are more mitigated because they used modal verb "would".

American students' request head acts for high-imposition and low-entitlement, high-imposition and high-entitlement, and low-imposition and low-entitlement requests are generally more mitigated than low-imposition, high-entitlement requests. Imposition level and the requester's entitlement to make requests are both important factors affecting native speakers' language choices. When the imposition is low and the requester is entitled to make a request, the request does not impact the requestee's or the requester's face.

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Therefore, it is likely that the requestee will comply with the request, so the requester may feel it unnecessary to mitigate the request. However, there are not such obvious differences in Chinese students' request head acts among these four categories. Their request head acts are mitigated in almost the same degree regardless of the imposition involved and the level of entitlement. This indicates that Chinese students may not identify the factors that affect language choices when making requests in specific contexts.

Overall, there is some overlap between request strategies written by Chinese students and those written by American students. Both groups of students can use "I wonder" and "is it possible", but Chinese students do not use more complex structures, such as "I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to…" Chinese students were able to use the present tense in request head acts, but American students can use past simple and past progressive as well. Chinese students could use "could you please", "could we" and "may I" in their request head acts, but American students never used "could you please" and "could we". The modal verb "would" is a common verb used to soften requests used by American students, but Chinese students did not demonstrate sufficient ability to use "would" in different contexts. American students used imperatives headed by "please" only for low-imposition, high-entitlement requests, but Chinese students used imperatives for high-imposition, low-entitlement requests. Chinese students also used consultative devices, such as "do you think", for requests for advice from advisors or course instructors.

Several reasons may explain why Chinese emails differ from those of Americans. Most Chinese participants were taking or have taken American academic writing courses. American academic writing conventions require a writer to clearly indicate the main points of the essay in the introduction of the essay. Then, the writer is expected to provide support for the main points in the rest of the essay. A writer is also expected to provide a topic sentence where he/she explicitly indicates the main idea of the paragraph near the beginning of the paragraph. Chinese students may be so used to the conventions of American academic writing that they tend to use the rules in academic email requests. This

explanation can account for a result of the study that Chinese students tend to give request head acts near the beginning of an email. They may assume that this structure can make the intention of their emails clearer and easier to read without realizing that directness is usually dispreferred in requests to people in higher status. Therefore, it is important to add email writing classes to academic writing courses to remind students that academic writing conventions do not apply to all types of writing.

Another reason that can explain Chinese students' misuse of "please" is that they used "please" as the equivalent of Chinese "qing" without realizing that their functions are different. When "qing" first appeared in traditional Chinese literature, it had two meanings: X respectfully ask(s) Y to do something and X respectfully ask(s) Y to allow X to do something. In modern Chinese, the meaning of "qing" has changed to "ask/request/tell/suggest someone do something politely", so it is a word that shows politeness but does not necessarily show respect (Song, 2010). Qu and Chen (2001) suggest that "qing" can be used to decrease the threat on the hearer's negative face unless the two interlocutors have a close relationship. Chinese students are taught that the equivalent of "qing" is "please", so they also use "please" with imperatives and in "could you please" without realizing the pragmatic function of "qing" is not the same as "please". In addition, many Chinese students learn that "could you please" is the most polite form to make a request regardless of the scenarios. It can account for the overuse of "could you please" by Chinese students across request types.

Students' limited English proficiency can also be a hindrance to writing appropriate email requests. I have discussed a number of emails that contain linguistic errors that impede communication. Although other emails that I analyze in this paper do not contain grammatical errors that could lead to miscommunication, it is likely that the students have not mastered complex syntactic structures with multiple modifiers for high-imposition requests.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I have analyzed emails in terms of information sequence, requestive strategies, and external and internal modifications across request types, comparing emails written by American students and those written by Chinese students. As we have seen, there are significant differences between emails written by American and by Chinese students. In this chapter, I discuss implications for the field of interlanguage pragmatics and for teaching ESL/EFL to Chinese students. I will also discuss the limitations of this study and topics for future research.

Implications for Interlanguage Pragmatics

The current study employed the methodology of discourse analysis in order to analyze email requests in context. Most interlanguage pragmatics studies use the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) framework. These studies select request head acts and categorize them into different types according to their directness. However, request head acts grouped into the same category can vary significantly in terms of directness and appropriateness. For example, Lee (2004) categorized "could you", "can I", and "I was wondering if" as preparatories. Zhu (2011) considered "I would like to" and "I want" as want-statements. After coding the request head acts, these researchers consider the requestive strategies in the same category as the same strategy. This categorization framework may not accurately reflect the functions of request head acts properly. As the current study has shown, "I was wondering if" is more mitigated and is usually used in high-imposition requests, while "could you" is never used by American students in any context. Even "I want" can have different meanings depending on what follows "want". For example, "I want you to give me feedback" and "I want to ask if you would be willing to consider feedback" are different. Therefore, it is important to note the actual wording of email requests and analyze them in their social context instead of merely selecting request head acts and analyzing them in terms of semantic features.

Zhu (2011) reported that Chinese students studying in a university lacked

pragmalinguistic competence because they did not use as many indirect requestive strategies and modifiers for enhancing politeness as British students did. However, the frequencies of requestive strategies and modifications are not necessarily related to politeness or appropriateness. Although the current study did not measure the degree of appropriateness of requestive strategies, the analysis has demonstrated that American students did not use many modifications for low-imposition high-entitlement requests, especially when they request information. What strategies to use are correlated with the imposition and the entitlement. In addition, other information that the sender provides, such as greetings, expressions that convey gratitude, and apologies, can all affect the recipient's perception of an email. This study provides a more comprehensive analysis of email requests because request head acts with all the supportive moves are examined across request types.

Teaching implications

This study compares English academic emails written by Chinese students and those written by American students. This study discovered several findings, which have implications for English pedagogy.

The current study confirmed the results of many previous cross-cultural pragmatic studies that many ESL/EFL learners lack pragmatic competence when making requests. Many studies have shown that teaching pragmatics can facilitate language learners' pragmatic competence (Tateyama, 2001; Gu, 2011). Therefore, it is likely that the ability to write email requests appropriately by Chinese learners of English studying in the U.S. can be improved through proper instruction. In recent years, many Chinese students have chosen to receive their higher education in English-speaking countries. However, the differences in pragmatics from the target language, more specifically, the differences in requestive strategies in academic emails, could lead to miscommunication with native speakers of English. Therefore, the teaching of pragmatic competence should be paid more attention to.

The findings of the study indicate that a number of email requests written by Chinese students did not vary much according to contexts. Therefore, Chinese students may not be aware of what factors they should consider when selecting linguistic choices in email requests. The imposition level of a request and the requester's entitlement to make the request are two factors that interplay with linguistic choices. English classes should cultivate learners' awareness of identifying and analyzing these factors in scenarios. The request type, the difficulty to comply with the request, and whether the request falls into the requestee's responsibilities all affect the imposition level of the request. Whether a requester has entitlement to make requests is related to the relationship with the requestee and whether the actions requested are a part of the requestee's responsibilities. Awareness-raising activities can help learners to make connections between American cultural norms, linguistic choices and their pragmatic functions, and can improve their pragmatic competence. L2 learners need to learn what level of imposition is involved in requests and when they have the entitlement to make a request. They need to learn that the factors that determine imposition and entitlement are intertwined with email communication. When they write emails, they should choose appropriate discourse forms to reflect their evaluations of the imposition of the email and their entitlement or lack of entitlement to make the requests. Emails containing typical request types, such as a requests for recommendation letters, requests for an appointment, requests and for feedback, should be used as samples for imposition and entitlement analysis. Teachers should specify the relationships between requesters and requestees.

In consideration of Chinese students' use of strategies and modifications of making requests, linguistic forms that can be used in email requests can be taught explicitly. Explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction in facilitating the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge because it raises learners' pragmatic awareness and improves their abilities to select appropriate forms for specific contexts (Gu, 2011). Therefore, it is suggested that English instructors could choose important request strategies and

modifications used by native speakers of American English and teach them explicitly.

The results of the study show that Chinese students do not use the past tense to soften their requests as well as American students. Both groups of students are able to use "I wonder" to modify their requests, but Chinese students usually write "I am wondering" while American students used "I was wondering…" Therefore, instructors could teach students to use past tense, such as "I was thinking…" and "I was wondering…" to soften the force of a request. The use of modal verbs in requests should also be taught. Both Chinese and American students used "may I…" in requests for permission. This similarity shows that Chinese students are able to use the modal verb, "may", correctly in email requests. Another modal verb that Chinese students used is "could", but they used "could" inappropriately in "could you please…" Since "could you please" is never used by American students in any context, instructors should emphasize that "could you please…" is not appropriate in an email written by students to faculty. "Would" also needs to be taught as it appears in American students' high-imposition requests frequently. Chinese students should learn some formulaic expressions like "would it be possible to…", "would it be possible for you…", and "would you be willing to…"

Request head acts written by Chinese students have no more than one internal modification ("I am wondering…", "I am hoping…"); therefore, instructors should teach students how to use a combination of modifications in one sentence. Examples that have a combination of lexical and syntactic modifications should be provided to Chinese students. Some examples are "I was wondering if it would be possible to…", "I wanted to ask you if you would be willing to…" and "I was wanting to know if it would be possible to…"

Regarding the sequence of information in email requests, it is important to teach students to delay their request head acts. Considering that many Chinese students start their emails with request head acts, they should learn that they should first greet the requestees to establish a good relationship, next, provide enough contextual information to help requestees understand why they are making the requests as well as give sufficient reasons

to support their requests. Request head acts usually do not appear until enough reasons and background information are introduced.

Instructors need to help Chinese students to enlarge their external modifications as well, which are usually used after request head acts. While American students express their gratitude, compliment the requestees to satisfy their positive face, apologize for making the requests and acknowledge the imposition posed on the requestees, Chinese students usually only show their appreciation. They need to learn to use other external modifications to support their requests.

After learners are equipped with the requestive strategies and modifications, they need to study how to match the strategies and modifications with different levels of imposition and entitlement. For high-imposition emails, regardless of the degree of entitlement the requesters have, requests need to be more indirect and mitigated. Imperatives will be inappropriate for high-imposition emails. For low-imposition, low-entitlement emails, requests also need to be mitigated but not as heavily mitigated as high-imposition emails. Chinese students should learn to use information-seeking interrogatives for low-imposition, high-entitlement requests. As for imperatives, instructors need to teach learners not to use imperatives except "please let me know" in requests for information. Learners also should be taught not to soften their requests when they are working for requestees.

To teach email requests, instructors could choose authentic sample emails written by American native speakers to expose learners to target-like input. Instructors can ask students to analyze the action in the email and identify request statements and requestive strategies. After that, students can summarize what strategies match which request types. After metalinguistic knowledge about using the strategies are taught, production activities, such as role-plays and writing tasks, which engage students in different roles and situations where they can get more familiar with the rules taught before and practice target features.

Finally, a discussion about the differences and similarities in the way that requests

and/or email requests are made between Chinese and English cultures could be necessary. The analysis of Chinese students' emails indicates that they may use Chinese cultural norms in English requests. Even though Chinese students who participated in the study had studied English for at least six years, their English is still very likely to be under the influence of Chinese culture. Therefore, in English instruction, it is important to help students understand the differences between their cultures and the norms of the target language.

Limitations of the current study

This study used a discourse analysis perspective to examine academic email requests to faculty and compare Chinese students' and American students' requestive strategies. This study simply pointed out the differences and similarities between English language learners' request patterns and those of native English speakers. The results indicate that, for some request types, the majority of American students who participated in this study used similar requestive strategies, but Chinese students employed different strategies for the same request types. English instructors can show learners how native speakers of American English write requests so that their emails can be more native-like. However, without analyzing recipients' perceptions of the requests, we cannot know whether what Chinese native speakers do differently when making email requests from English native speakers is considered impolite by American English native speakers. Furthermore, native speakers of American English could write impolite email requests. Therefore, pedagogical implications discussed in the previous section can help ESL/EFL learners write emails more similar to those written by American students but do not necessarily help them write emails more politely. To examine the politeness level of requestive strategies used by both Chinese and American students, further studies that recruit a number of English speakers working as instructors in the university who have lived in the U.S. for many years and therefore are considered to be influenced by American cultural norms to rate typical request strategies in terms of politeness level are required.

Another limitation of the study is that we did not ask participants of the survey to leave any contact information, which poses difficulties for us to analyze some emails. Some emails are difficult to analyze because of researchers' lack of background information. For example, in an email that requested an appointment with a course instructor, an American student specified a date and a time slot that he wanted to meet with the instructor. Whether the instructor held office hours during that time or not directly affects the imposition of the request, which in turn could lead to different pragmatic norms. Although the survey required participants to provide some contextual information, it was not adequate for researchers to analyze those emails. Therefore, when designing such surveys, collecting participants' contact information to ask post-survey clarification questions is important.

In addition, to have a more in-depth discussion of the findings of this research, conducting a conversation analysis study on Chinese requests in face-to-face conversations by native speakers of Chinese is necessary. Finally, participants were asked to submit authentic emails they have sent, but the analysis could be more fruitful if participants provide insights into their use of linguistic features and requestive strategies from their own perspectives. In this way, researchers can also understand the influence of culture-specific ideologies and students' own identities on student-faculty interaction in emails.

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APPENDIX A: ACADEMIC EMAILS DATA COLLECTION

Section 1

*Please both sign the consent form and type your name here if you agree to participate in the research (if you need a copy of the consent form, print the consent form please).

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sAT1EPO-OoqDKvpGMq3eTq4MRb83WF8H9DwQXBaZekQ/edit?usp=sharing

_____

Section 2

*You are a native speaker of

       Mandarin Chinese

       American English

       If you are neither a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese nor American English, you do not need to fill out this survey.

*If you are a native speaker of Mandarin, are you from mainland China?

    Yes.

    No. If not, you do not need to fill out this survey.

*If you are a native speaker of Mandarin, how many years have you been in the United States?

_____

*Have you ever been in other English-speaking countries? If you have, where have you been, and how long did you stay there?

_____

*If you are a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, did you receive your high school education in an English-speaking country?

       Yes. If so, you do not need to continue with this survey.

       No.

*Have you ever learnt how to write emails in class?

       Yes.

       No.

*What is your gender?

       Male

       Female

*What is your age?

_____

*Are you an undergraduate or a graduate student?

       Undergraduate.

       Graduate.

*Do you have a major in Linguistics or English?

       Yes.

       No.

Section 3

Description: Please select 3-5 emails written in English that you sent to your instructors here in the US. If you are a native speaker of Chinese, please select at least one or two emails you sent to Chinese native speaking professors and at least one or two emails you sent to American professors. If you are a native American English speaker, please select emails that you sent to American professors.

Please delete sensitive information (for example, your university, department, your and the professor's name, your UIN, class name, program name, etc), and use the following markers to replace the information: the first name of the professor--> FN; the last name of the professor--> LN; your first name--> S_FN; your last name--> S_LN; your UIN-->UIN; a class number--> Class XX; university name--> Univ XX; department name--> Dept XX; any personal name--> NAME; email address--> EMAIL; other address--> ADDRESS; phone number--> PHONE. For example, if you write "Professor Smith", change the email to read "Professor LN".

*Please copy and paste the first academic email here:

_____

*Is the instructor a native Chinese speaker or native American English speaker?

      Chinese.

      American English.

*What is the instructor's approximate age?

_____

*What's the instructor's gender?

_____

*In one or two sentences, describe the relationship between you and the instructor (e.g. The instructor is my thesis advisor, and I meet him every week).

_____

*On scale of 1 to 7, how would you describe your relationship with the instructor (7 the closest, 1 the most distant)?

_____

Section 4-5: Repetition of Section 3

ILLINOIS

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., MC-095
Urbana, IL 61801-4822

Notice of Approval: New Submission

September 19, 2018

Principal Investigator	Irene Koshik
CC	Hanyu Jia
Protocol Title	*Structures of Academic Email Requests*
Protocol Number	19166
Funding Source	Unfunded
Review Type	Exempt 2
Status	Active
Risk Determination	no more than minimal risk
Approval Date	September 19, 2018

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved the research study as described.

Exempt protocols are approved for a five year period from their original approval date, after which they will be closed and archived. Researchers may contact our office if the study will continue past five years.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:
- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
- Requesting approval from the IRB prior to implementing modifications.
- Notifying OPRS of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated events, participant complaints, or protocol deviations.
- Notifying OPRS of the completion of the study.

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