



**REQUEST STRATEGIES AND EXTERNAL
MODIFICATION DEVICES USED BY THAI FEMALE
ESL SPEAKERS IN THE WORKPLACE**

BY

RATCHANEEKORN ITTIRITPAISAN

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN CAREER ENGLISH FOR
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
LANGUAGE INSTITUTE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2021
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ENTITLED

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BY THAI FEMALE ESL SPEAKERS IN THE WORKPLACE

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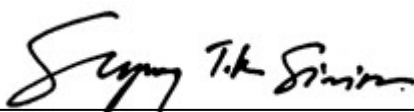
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Independent Study Title	REQUEST STRATEGIES AND EXTERNAL MODIFICATION DEVICES USED BY THAI FEMALE ESL SPEAKERS IN THE WORKPLACE
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ABSTRACT

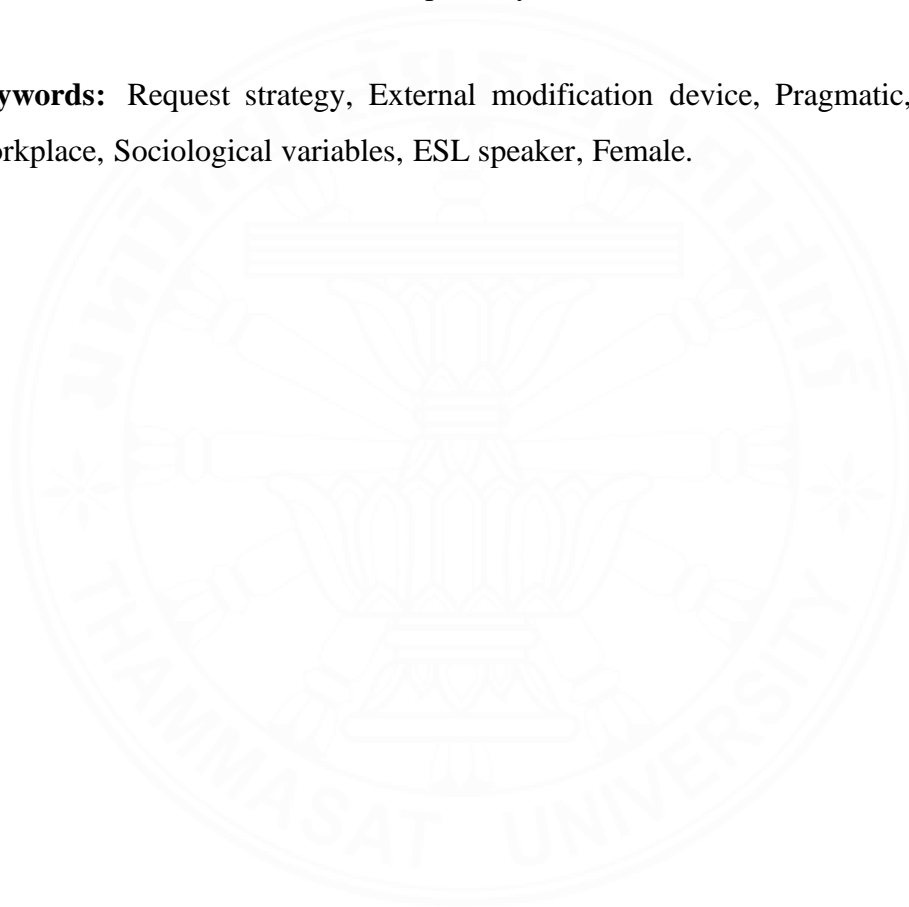
This study aimed to investigate the request strategies and external modification devices used by 20 Thai female ESL speakers in the workplace and explore the effect of social variables, namely, power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition on the participants' requests. The three request directness levels with nine sub-items and the main concept of external modification devices by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) were used to analyze the data from a written discourse completion task that consisted of 12 scenarios in different social variables.

The results found that query preparatory at a conventionally indirect level was the most frequently used by Thai female ESL speakers and the politeness structure consisting of past modal form was also highly used. In terms of external modification devices, the participants used devices in about four-fifths of the responses. The grounder device was the most frequently used, followed by disarmer, apology, and alerter. The power of the hearer was the main effect on the use of the directness level by the participants since they tended to use the indirect requests when the power of the hearer was higher. Furthermore, when the ranking of imposition was great and the

relationship was distant, the participants tended to use external modification devices for mitigating request imposition.

Questionnaire and interview data reveal that the respondents learned how to make appropriate requests in English mainly from learning in classes and experiences. It can be concluded that the female participants were aware of politeness when making requests in the workplace. However, as these results emerged from WDCT, their request utterances in real life can be possibly different.

Keywords: Request strategy, External modification device, Pragmatic, Politeness, Workplace, Sociological variables, ESL speaker, Female.



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Ratchaneekorn Ittiritpaisan

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the globalization era today, the demand for people who use English as a lingua franca has increased in Thailand, because English has been used for various activities, especially in the workplace and business. As we see, Thai education has English as a compulsory subject from primary school to the high school level to attempt English to be the main international language that all Thai people can use fluently.

However, effective use of a language does not depend on only having the ability or knowledge of linguistics and syntax but also includes pragmatic use. Brown (1980) stated that the use of the language of each person is influenced by the linguistic components, social environment, and traditional factors around the speaker. Moreover, second language learners who are good at grammar in the target language can probably make pragmatic failures in communication, (Kasper, 1990; Thomas, 1983).

In a conversation, there are many functions of speech and different cultures have different pragmatic uses and preferences. Therefore, awareness of pragmatics and politeness is important when people interact with others in society, especially in cross-culture conversation, because pragmatic failure can lead to offense or misunderstanding in context. Olmen, (2017) defines linguistic politeness as “the ways that people intend to express with the consideration of interlocutor’s feelings and desires. This is to keep a good relationship, give respect to the hearer. It also shows the manner which is the rule of each society culture.” Moreover, Klyukanov (2005) explained that “in intercultural communication (ICC), if interlocutors from the different cultures are able to emphasize on and aware of cultural norms of each other, those communications would be achieved.”

Requests are a challenging function because they can create face-threatening to both speaker and hearer (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The level of directness should be considered, with the social variables including social distance, and the power of interlocutor. Moreover, the ranking of imposition in conversation also requires awareness, especially in workplace communication, as there are many people of various

statuses, e.g. seniors, colleagues, staff, or people from various cultures who work together for the same purpose. Polite and proper communication might support and promote the atmosphere in the workplace that leads to productivity at work.

Consequently, this present study would like to investigate request strategies and external modification devices of the upper intermediate to advanced learners who attend a master's degree in English major in various situations and social variables in the workplace context to see how Thai female ESL speakers produce the requests.

1.2 Research Objectives

The purposes of this study are as follows

1) To explore request strategies and external modification devices used by Thai female ESL speakers in the workplace.

2) To investigate how social variables (power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition) affect the request strategies and external modification devices used by Thai female ESL speakers.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to answer following questions

1) What request strategies and external modification devices do Thai female ESL speakers use in the workplace?

2. How do social variables (power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition) affect the request strategies and external modification devices by Thai female ESL speakers?

1.4 Definitions of Key Terms

1) Request strategies refer to the way that people express to ask or demand someone to do something.

2) External modification devices refer to the words, phrases, or sentences that people use to reduce the directness of a request act. They can come before or after the main sentence of request.

3) Social variables refer to three variables which are power, social distance and the ranking of imposition that people are expected to consider to express in a proper way in communication.

4) Thai ESL speakers refer to females living in Thailand and using Thai language as their mother tongue who are able to communicate in English or have to use it in everyday life as a lingua franca. This study refers to master's degree in English major students.

5) Workplace refers to the place where native speakers and non-native speaker used English for work as a lingua franca.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study does not analyze the accuracy of language rules or grammar in English but focuses on the request strategies and external modification devices that participants use in each situation. The scenarios are considered which possibly occur in the workplace. Also, non-verbal communication will not be focused on in the present study.

The data from participants may be the deliberated answers that they might express differently in the real situation or verbally because the present study will collect the data from the written form which is Discourse Completion Task.

The participants in this study were only female master's degree students in English major. As English is the main language used in class and the requirement in this program, participants are determined to have upper intermediate to advanced level of English proficiency.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The result of this study might be guidance for English learners who have lower proficiency to use more proper pragmatics in each situation that could happen in real life and the workplace. In contrast, it might reflect the circumstance of the English curriculum in Thailand and can benefit those who are involved in Thai education for using this updated information and different areas of the research on pragmatics to improve lessons in the future to be more suitable for Thai learners.

Moreover, in a cross-culture society, people should learn other pragmatics to understand and adapt themselves in that society for reducing the conflict, so the finding may be another source for people who have different cultures from Thai to understand request strategies in English.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters as follows

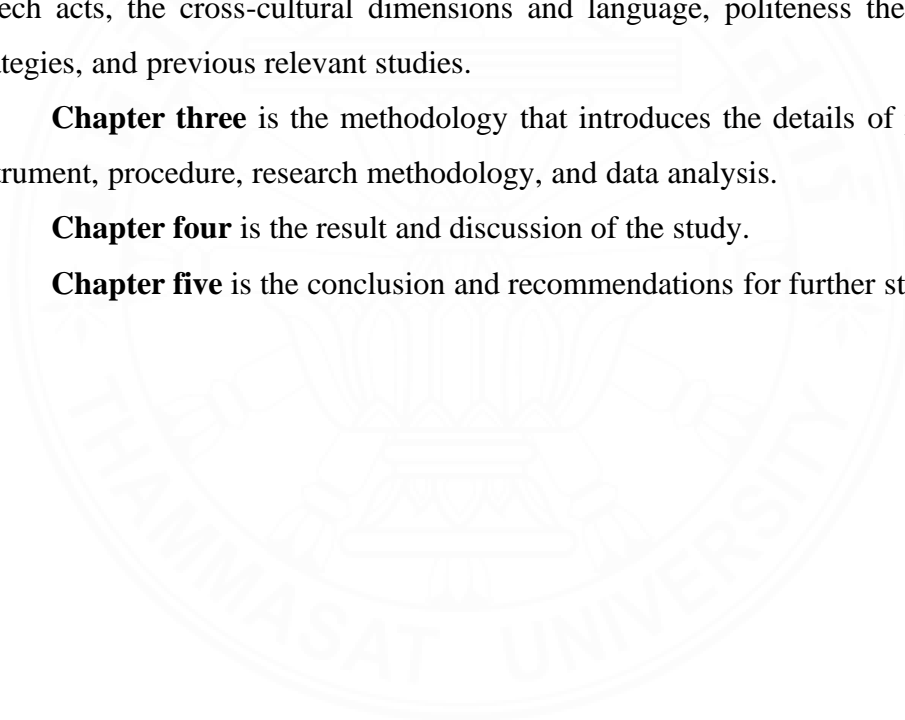
Chapter one is an introduction which consists of the background of the study, research questions, research objectives, definition of terms, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and organization of the study.

Chapter two is the review of literature related to the concepts of pragmatic and speech acts, the cross-cultural dimensions and language, politeness theory, request strategies, and previous relevant studies.

Chapter three is the methodology that introduces the details of participants, instrument, procedure, research methodology, and data analysis.

Chapter four is the result and discussion of the study.

Chapter five is the conclusion and recommendations for further study.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in six major areas as follows: (1) Pragmatics and Speech acts, (2) The cross-cultural dimensions and language, (3) Characteristics of females' language (4) Politeness theory, (5) Request strategies, and (6) Previous relevant studies.

2.1 Pragmatics and Speech Acts

2.1.1 Pragmatics

Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) defined pragmatics as the investigation of human understanding and implementation of linguistics for conveying the messages in communication. Bachman (1997) explained pragmatic competence as the one component of language competence apart from grammar and context. It is related to illocutionary competence, which is the knowledge of various ways to express ideas, achieve objectives, or extend knowledge. Moreover, it is related to sociolinguistic competence, which is the understanding of cultural differences, figures of speech, and naturalness. Pragmatics study also helps the learners interpret people's intended meaning, presupposition, or purposes in the target language (Yule, 1996).

2.1.2 Speech Acts

As a subfield of pragmatics study, Austin (1962) initially introduced the speech act framework which means the function of utterance when communicating. He divided speech acts into two types which are *Constatives* and *Performatives*. *Constatives* mean the messages that explains something; however, it could be true or false. In a different aspect, *Performatives* are the messages that encourages the action, such as promises, advice, request, etc. The latter can create a negative feeling, so the speaker should use the language in an appropriate way with the situation. Moreover, the utterances can be distributed into three characteristic actions which includes *locutions*, *illocutions*, and *perlocutions*. Locutionary acts are constatives or the actual words uttered with the literal meaning that follow the rule of grammar of the language. Illocutionary acts are

performatives that have implied meaning in utterance or there is the intention to say something for a reason or we could say it is the functions of language, e.g. ordering, warnings, etc. Perlocutionary acts are the effect or reaction of utterance from the hearer when they get the illocutionary acts (Austin, 1962).

In addition, Searle (1979) classified the speech acts into five aspects of illocutionary acts, as follows:

- 1) *Assertives*: It is the statement of facts that could be true or false.
- 2) *Commissives*: It is the way to utter for committing to do some future action such as agreement or disagreement and promises.
- 3) *Directive*: It is an utterance that attempts the hearer to do something such as requests, commands, suggestions, and questions.
- 4) *Declaratory*: It is an utterance that brings a change in the world such as verdicts and pronouncements.
- 5) *Expressives*: It is the way to express feelings or attitudes such as apologies, thanks, and complaining.

As we see in the reviewing of speech acts above, the illocutionary can represent the expression of the speaker in the various functions where it is quite difficult to suppose in advance whether the hearer will understand the real intention of utterance (Yule, 1996).

2.2 The Cross-Cultural Dimensions and Language

According to Samovar et al. (1981), language and culture are inseparably related to each other because culture can help to determine how people interpret the meaning of each message following their thoughts and behaviors.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1980; 1991) influenced many cross-culture studies since they can provide cultural values and help people know basic cultural perspectives to avoid culture shock or making a mistake in intercultural living. Hofstede (1980; 1991) divided the culture dimensions into six types as follows

- 1) *Individualism versus Collectivism* refers to the different degrees between cultures concerning themselves or in the group.
- 2) *Power distance* refers to the degree of acceptance and expectation based on the equality of people. In the culture that has a higher degree it is quite

shaped by the hierarchy explicitly more than the lower degree. For example, in a high-power distance culture such as Asian, the relationship between adults and children are not equal as children should show respect to adults, as we see in Thai culture.

- 3) *Uncertainty avoidance* refers to the degree to the preference of people to deal with or avoid the new situation.
- 4) *Feminine versus Masculine* refer to the view of emphasizing dominant sexual status in society that involves the preference for achievement and competition. Masculine society might represent an unequal aspect between men and women more than feminine society.
- 5) *Long-term versus Short-term orientation* refers to the degree of emphasizing the associated actions from the past to the future.
- 6) *Indulgence versus restraint* refers to the degree of flexibility afforded to citizens by society standards in satisfying their human needs.

Hall (1976) explained the communication styles in intercultural settings by classifying them into two contexts. The first culture is the high context cultures (HCCs) which involve indirect speech acts that people are more aware of, both verbal and nonverbal. In contrast, the low context cultures (LCCs) is related with explicit communication in a directive way. Hall stated that many HCCs tended to have collectivistic characteristics, whereas many LCCs tended to have individualistic characteristics. Thailand has characteristics of HCCs, so it means Thai culture has tendencies of collectivist society in the same way.

2.3 Characteristics of Females' Language

The identities of females' language were explained in a multitude of studies on language and gender. According Lakoff (1975), females were more likely to employ euphemisms, tag questions, hedges, and indirect speech to avoid expressing strong ideas and seek acceptance for their feelings. In addition, Mcmillan et al. (1977) proposed that women often used longer or elaborate words to express more intense feelings and emotions. Similarly, women preferred to use the indirect approach in their communication since they have the relationship orientation (Kapur et al., 2015). The indirect approach is related to the high context cultures (HCCs) in the communication

styles concept by Hall (1976); therefore, female gender has the tendencies of HCCs. Bovee (2007) explained the characteristics of indirect approach, that communication would start with a buffer or neutral statement, followed by the justifications for request, remorse, or the main idea as the conclusion would be focused on preserving the relationship.

In Thai society, according to Panyamethekul & Herring (2007) cited by Jitpaisarnwattana (2018), women had to take care of men and be submissive while the leadership roles belonged to men. Even though Thai men and women are now more socially equal, these perceptions are still evident in Thai society in some areas. This status of women is reflected in their language use since they are expected to express utterances more politely than men (Simpson, 1997).

2.4 Politeness Theory

2.4.1 The Concept of Face

In communication, people might be aware of pragmatic use and politeness for saving others' faces. However, each culture gives the importance of *'face'* differently, especially the major division between Eastern and Western cultures that have explicit differences, so it affects the standards of behavior that are considered polite of each culture. Mao (1994) stated that Western culture looks at face as a self-image but in East Asian societies, on the other hand, the face is directed toward an ideal social identity and public image. For instance, there are many studies that try to find out how face works in the Thai context. According to Ukosakul (2005, p.119 as cited by Srisurak) "face focused in Thai culture are related with dignity, self-esteem, prestige, reputation, and pride which involves the same concept with other cultures in Asian". In addition, Komin (1990, as cited by Srisurak) found that the main Thai notions of face is to protect other's feeling, regardless of the interlocutors' relative status or degree of acquaintance.

According to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), the concept of *face* was acquired from Goffman (1967), who defined *'face'* as the term related to an individual that tried to keep their own self-image from being embarrassed and threatening other faces. There are two perspectives of *face*. First, a *positive face* is the desire to be accepted and interested in by others and another one, a *negative face*, is the desire to not be violated, obstructed, or forced the right by others.

Brown and Levinson (1987) divided the types of face-threatening to the speaker and/or the hearer into four acts

- 1) **Acts that threaten the hearer's negative face** are the acts where speakers predict the future action from the hearer. The communicative act functions consist of expressions that can create a negative feeling to the hearers such as orders, requests, suggestions, warnings, or advice.
- 2) **Acts that threaten the hearer's positive face** are the acts where the speaker does not emphasize on the hearer's feeling or desire. It includes disapproval, complaint, irreverence, ridicule, insults, accusations, disagreements, or challenges.
- 3) **Acts that threaten the speaker's negative face** are the expression or acceptance of thanks and excuses which sometimes a speaker might not want to do.
- 4) **Acts that threaten the speaker's positive face** are the acts that the speaker has to do for getting acceptance from others that might make the speaker feel like they are losing face, such as apologize.

2.4.2 Social Variables

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed three social variables that can determine the degree of politeness and consider strategy use when communicating to mitigate the face threatening acts (FTA).

1) *Social distance* means the familiarity between speaker and hearer, for example, positive strategies like joking may be appropriate for use with our intimate people rather than a stranger.

2) *Power* means the perception of the social status of the speaker and hearer which may be defined as age, experience, seniority, performance, and authority of people. For example, a boss has higher power than an employee, so the employee might not choose the direct speech to use with their boss.

3) *The ranking of imposition* is the level of importance or how demanding is the situation that the speaker asks from the hearer. In this factor, we could say that the more serious and greater demanding, the more politeness should be used. For example, if we

compare between asking to borrow a pen and a car, a pen is seen as the smaller rank of imposition than a car as the cost of a car is more expensive.

2.5 Request Strategies

A request is the function of language in which the speaker asks the hearer to do something. Request can be face-threatening to the hearer since it can disturb their freedom or look forced on them. Moreover, it can threaten the requester's face itself as well, that they might worry about exposing their need and making the hearer lose face (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) project explored request variances between languages (cross-cultural variation), the influence of social factors (sociopragmatic variation), and the similarities and differences in request performance across native and non-native speakers (interlanguage variation). Researchers classified the nine items of request strategies into three levels of directness as follows (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989, p.18):

1) Direct level

1.1 *Mood deliverable utterances* are the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force as a request. e.g., 'Open the door' or 'Open the door, please'

1.2 *Performatives utterances* is when the illocutionary force is explicitly named by the speakers. e.g., 'I am asking you to open the door.'

1.3 *Hedged performative utterances* are the naming of the illocutionary force that is modified by hedging expressions like modal verbs or verbs expressing an intention. e.g., 'I would like to ask you to open the door.'

1.4 *Obligation statements* are utterances that state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act. e.g., 'You'll have to open the door.'

1.5 *Want statements* are utterances that state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act. e.g., 'I really want you to open the door.'

2) Conventionally indirect level

2.1 *Suggestory formulae* are utterances that contain a suggestion to do something e.g., 'How about helping me open the door'

2.2 *Query preparatory* are utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions such as, ability, willingness or permission as conventionalized in any

specific language e.g., ‘*Could you open the door, please?*’, ‘*Would you mind opening the door for me, please?*’, ‘*Would it be possible to open the door for me?*’

3) Non-conventionally indirect level

3.1. *Strong hints* are utterances containing partial reference to the object of elements needed for the implementation of the act e.g., ‘My hands are full of things.’

3.2 *Mind hints* are utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context e.g., ‘I think I cannot open the door’.

In addition, as requests might show the imposition to the hearer, Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) cited by Aldhulaee (2011, p.18-20); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984, p.203-205) proposed the external modifications devices to reduce that directiveness and impoliteness when making a request based on categorization in the CCSARP.

External modifications are the supportive moves or additional statements that come before or after the requests. For instance,

1) Preparator is the preceding implied statement before making the request. (e.g., You attended this project, right, Could I borrow your notes?)

2) Checking available is the utterance that intends to check if the precondition is true about a hearer’s availableness. (e.g., Are you going in the direction of the town? And if so, is it possible to join you?)

3) Getting a pre-commitment is the preceding utterance with an attempt for getting a pre-committal. (e.g., Will you do me a favor? Could you perhaps lend me your notes for a few days?)

4) Grounder is the utterance that gives the reasons for the request. (e.g., I missed class yesterday, could I borrow your notes?)

5) Sweetener is the way of expressing an exaggerated compliment or appreciation. (e.g., You have beautiful handwriting, would it be possible to borrow your notes for a few days?)

6) Disarmer is the utterance to make an excuse and protect the offense for attempting to possible refuse. (e.g., Hope you don't think I'm being forward, but is there any chance of a lift home?)

7) Cost minimizer is the utterance that shows consideration of the cost to the hearer with the commitment of request. (Pardon me, but could you give me a lift, if you're going my way.)

8) Promise is the promise of reward or what to pay back. (e.g., Could you lend me money, I will do it when it is your turn.)

9) Appreciation is the thankfulness or gratefulness. (e.g., I would appreciate it if you can lend me some money.)

In addition, some categories were proposed by other researchers as follows,

10) Apology is the regretful acknowledgement of an offence. (e.g., I am sorry, but I want to borrow your book for a short time.) (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008)

11) Alerter is the utterance that shows the quick notice before making a request. (e.g., Excuse me, can I borrow your notes for a short time?). (Schauer, 2007)

12) Closing is the utterance for closing the utterance. (e.g., Can you bring us two cups of coffee? Thank you.) (Al-Ali & Alawneh, 2010)

2.6 Previous Relevant Studies

There are many studies conducted on the request strategies by ESL or EFL. So, this section provided two parts, which are request strategies studies that were conducted by discourse completion task (DCT) and request modification devices study.

2.6.1 Request Strategies Studies that Were Conducted by DCT

Haddad (2017) studied the use of request strategies by 30 upper-secondary language learners of English in Sweden who had different cultural backgrounds. However, all of them took the English course at the same levels. This study used DCT to collect the data and a researcher analyzed the data based on the levels of speech acts directness proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The contents for DCT were created into three categories by the degrees of familiarity, power, and status in the relationship between requester and requestee. The finding found that participants mostly used the *conventional indirect strategies*. From a pedagogical point of view, students are expected to express requests that are more polite in categories that are related to the high power of the hearer and a distant relationship apart from only 'Can/Could (I/you/we) ...?'.

On the same framework by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Seidi (2015) focused on the proficiency levels of English and gender towards the pragmatic competence by 34 EFL learners in Iran, which are 16 females and 18 males. The researcher categorized participants in different levels of proficiency into low, intermediate, and advanced by a multiple-choice test which includes cloze passages, vocabulary, and pronunciation subjects in the test. After that, he used the DCT as an instrument to collect the data and analyzed the request strategies. In terms of gender, the result was females preferred to use *conventionally indirect strategies* more than males while males mostly used *non-conventionally indirect strategies*, so it seemed that females were more concerned about politeness than males. Regarding the role of proficiency, it affected the request strategies competency among participants as well. *Direct strategies* were used mostly in the low proficiency group. In contrast, advanced learners preferred to use *conventionally indirect*. It might be concluded that both gender and language proficiency have a significant role in Iranian EFL learners. To be in line with the Seidi's study (2015) in term of gender, the exploring of request strategies by ESL and EFL learners found that females tended to use the indirect and polite requests. (Nugroho, 2012; Hassain, 2020; Sikder, 2021). However, it might depend on the identity of the participants in that particular culture.

Another study also used a written discourse completion task (WDCT) and interview as the instruments of research, but this study aimed to compare request strategies between 30 Thai teachers and 30 Filipino teachers. Onchaiya and Phimsawat (2021) analyzed the data by Schauer's request strategies framework (2009). A quantitative approach was used to count the frequency of strategies used. The result found that both groups preferred to use *conventionally indirect strategies*. However, Thai teachers used direct and imperative strategies frequently more than Filipino teachers. About the non-conventionally indirect strategy, what was apparently different is Hints, as Filipinos used this strategy more than Thai teachers. Another approach is qualitative interviews on the social aspects and linguistic proficiency. The result found that both Thai and Filipinos have a high awareness of politeness on social status and distance. However, due to a lack of English fluency, Thai teachers have more difficulty expressing requests because some of them cannot recall some vocabulary and correct grammar in context to use it appropriately.

2.6.2 Request Modification Devices study

Najafabadi and Paramisivam (2012) investigated the similarity of request modification devices used between graduate and undergraduate Iranian EFL learners and native speakers of American English. The participants have an age range from 20-28. The DCT was used as an instrument in this study and the situations were created following power and social distance variables. The finding showed that Iranian frequently used external modification devices more than native speakers. The language proficiency level aspect in this study was indicated to the low proficiency, intermediate, advanced, and native speaker. The results were interpreted to mean that preparator, pre-commitment, disarmer, reward, and sweetener devices were increasingly used as English proficiency levels increased. In contrast, grounder, imposition minimizer, pre-pre strategy, appreciation, confirmatory strategy, apology were decreasingly used. Regarding the finding, all of them used grounder device the most explicitly. Even though advanced proficiency learners had similarity with the native speakers in terms of frequency of use they used the linguistic formulae differently.

Even though some previous studies were conducted on the request strategies used by EFL or ESL most of them investigated undergraduate students and there is a gap in the research focusing on request strategies and the external modification devices used by upper intermediate to advanced learners who learn in a master degree in English major. Moreover, as we see previous studies analyzed the social variables of only social and power but rarely included the ranking of imposition, so this study would like to fill the gap which uses the workplace scenarios to analyze the requests strategies of Thai females who use English as the second language.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provided five sections: (1) Participants, (2) Methods, (3) Research instruments, (4) Research procedures, and (5) Data analysis.

3.1 Participants

The data of this study were collected from 20 female master's degree students in English major in Bangkok, Thailand to investigate the request strategies in the workplace situation of ESL speakers. All of them are Thai and use Thai as the first language. Only females were included in this study because there were only a few male students to represent male ESL speakers.

According to the master's degree program, students are expected to have English competency and four major skills in advanced proficiency for applying in their occupations. Since this program focuses on English for use in career or work; therefore, all of them had taken the six compulsory courses to possess those skills which are Effective models of communication, Written business communication, Reading skill enhancement, Effective English presentations, Research methodology, and English research report writing. In addition, this program uses English as the main language, so all of them were required to pass an English test or had to take two English courses for people who got scores lower than the minimum requirement. Based on master's degree program requirements, they were determined as upper-intermediate to advanced level.

In terms of work experiences, most of them have work experiences and 14 of the participants have the experiences in the intercultural workplace, so they were anticipated to have the opportunity to make requests in English at the workplace in their real life.

3.2 Methods

In order to answer the first and second research questions as follows, what request strategies and external modification devices do Thai female ESL speakers use in the workplace? and how do social variables (power, social distance, and the ranking

of imposition) affect the request strategies and external modification devices by Thai female ESL speakers?, a quantitative approach was used as the main approach. There were two main concepts of request strategies by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) that were used to analyze the data. The first concept is the request strategies concept that focuses on the levels of directness. Another one is external modification devices that examine supporting statements apart from the main request statement to mitigate directness. In addition, to create the questionnaire, each scenario in WDCT was created based on the social variables by Brown and Levenson (1987) which are power, social distance, and the raking of imposition.

In addition, the qualitative approach was used to support the quantitative data. The interview data from participants who have the most experience in the intercultural workplace and often used English in their work were analyzed into each theme.

3.3 Research Instruments

In this study, three instruments were used which are questionnaire, written discourse completion task (WDCT) and interview.

Firstly, the questionnaire was used to collect the general and demographic data of participants such as, age, English test score, education, and work experience.

Second, WDCT was used to collect the request strategies and external modification devices that participants use. It is the instrument that was initially developed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) in the CCSARP project, which influenced and was a model of many studies on pragmatic and speech acts in cross-culture. WDCT is a data collection tool that asks participants to produce the language, but it has largely limited expression of participants since it has specific situations that control the task, (Kasper and Dahl, 1991). In addition, it is a non-interactive elicitation of data in which participants have a chance to think and write dialogue that they believe is most suitable following their perception of each scenario.

Since this study aimed to explore request strategies use of Thai female ESL speakers in the workplace context and see how social variables affect their requests, WDCT, which has high control of diversity of participants' responses, might help the researcher to categorize the data into each item of request directness levels and external

modification devices. Furthermore, the answers from participants might reflect the participants' accumulated experience in each situation.

According to the limited time of this study, WDCT would be probably suitable because the researcher can collect sufficient data in a short time rather than collect data by ideal instruments, such as role-play and observation of authentic discourse that are quite time-consuming. So, the data from participants might be the deliberated answers that are not natural or used in the real situation or verbal speech as it might have other factors intervene in that circumstance.

The written discourse completion task part consists of 12 scenarios which are designed from the various social variables, namely, power, social distance, and ranking imposition following Brown and Levinson's social variables concept (1987). The situation was created from what the participants are expected to know or experience and some situations might have the specific occupation for the explicit image.

Power is the social status perception that requester looks at a hearer which is divided into lower (-P), equal (=P), and higher (+P).

Social distance is the familiarity between the requester and hearer which is divided into distant relationship (+D) and close relationship (-D).

The ranking of imposition is the degree of demanding that requester ask to interlocutor. It is divided into less imposition (-I) and great imposition (+I).

Table 1

The 12 scenarios designed by social variables in WDCT

Items	Scenario type	Power	Social distance	The ranking of imposition
1	-P -D -I	Lower	Close	Less
2	-P +D -I	Lower	Distant	Less
3	-P -D +I	Lower	Close	Great
4	-P +D +I	Lower	Distant	Great
5	=P -D -I	Equal	Close	Less
6	=P +D -I	Equal	Distant	Less
7	=P -D +I	Equal	Close	Great
8	=P +D +I	Equal	Distant	Great
9	+P -D -I	Higher	Close	Less
10	+P +D -I	Higher	Distant	Less

11	+P -D +I	Higher	Close	Great
12	+P +D +I	Higher	Distant	Great

The last instrument is interview which consisted of three questions. The first question is whether they have any difficulty or problem for making requests in English in the workplace. The second is whether their request strategies have ever created the misunderstanding or offense to a foreigner interlocuter. The third question is whether they have learned and imitated requests strategies and external modification devices from native speakers of English or if communicating with foreigners who do not have Thai as L1 language affects your requests.

3.4 Research Procedures

The scenarios in questionnaires were distributed in English form, then they were sent to an expert who has expertise in discourse analysis for reviewing and revising until they are appropriate and effective to analyze. Due to the pandemic circumstance, the questionnaires were sent to 20 participants via email in a Google form. The data collection period was about one month from April 2022 to the middle of May 2022 which intended to provide enough time for participants to do the task without pressure. After receiving all 20 questionnaires back from participants, the data were analyzed scenario by scenario as the part of data analysis which will be described in the next section.

After that, three participants who have a lot of experiences in the intercultural workplace were selected to interview. Then, the data from interviews were interpreted to see their experiences in learning and use of request.

3.5 Data Analysis

Initially, the written data gathered from WDCT were analyzed and classified into the three directness levels with nine sub-items of request strategies framework by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) as was reviewed in the 2.4 section in literature review chapter. Thus, the word, phrase, and sentence would be interpreted to meet the characteristic of each strategy in every single use, for instance, “*Send me an annual marketing report*” might be identified as a direct level which is a ‘mood deliverable’ utterance as the

sentence begins with the verb. Then, the frequency and percentage were counted and calculated in Microsoft Excel program to see which strategy was mostly used in each scenario that have the different social variables.

In the same way, the messages apart from the head act that may be stated before and after main request were defined as the external modification devices and interpreted to meet these following categories every single use, i.e., preparator, checking available, getting a pre-commitment, grounder, sweetener, disarmer, cost minimizer, promise, appreciation, apology, alerter and closer (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Schauer, 2007; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Al-Ali & Alawneh, 2010). Then, data were counted and calculated to see the frequency and percentage. For example, “*Excuse me! I could not attend the meeting yesterday, could I borrow your notes?*” This response may be categorized in two categories which are ‘alerter’ and ‘grounder’.

After that, to find how social variables affect the request of participants, each request strategy and external modification device used in each scenario were compared to see the differences. Regarding the 12 scenarios in WDCT, as they identified three social variables in each situation, the total of request strategies and external modification devices used in each variable aspect were counted and calculated. Then, they were compared with the same group as follows; three aspects in the group of power variable which are -P, =P and +P were compared together to see the effect of social variables. Two aspects in the group of social distance variable which are -D and +D were compared. Lastly, two aspects in the group of the ranking of imposition were compared. Moreover, the total of request strategies and external modification devices in each situation with three social variables combination were also counted and calculated to see the overall effect of each situation.

Lastly, to explore the request experiences of participants, the interview data from participants who have the most experiences in cross-cultural communication were analyzed along with their request strategies and external modification.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the requests strategies data gathered from 20 female master's degree students in English major in Bangkok. The findings are divided into four sections as follows:

- (1) Demographic data of participants
- (2) Request strategies and external modification devices used by Thai female ESL speakers in the workplace
- (3) The finding on how social variables affect the request strategies and external modification devices
- (4) The cross-cultural communication experiences in making the requests

4.1 Demographic Data of Participants

In the first part of the questionnaire of this study, the participants were requested to provide their personal information which included age, educational background, English test, occupation, and the experience in an intercultural workplace.

Table 2

Demographic data of participants

Demography of Participants		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	• 20 – 29 years old	14	70
	• 30 – 39 years old	4	20
	• 40 years old or above	2	10
	Total	20	100
Educational background in bachelor's degree	• English major	8	40
	• Thai major, Technology (Logistic) and, Arts and Design	2 (each)	10 (each)
	• French major, Education,	1 (each)	5 (each)

	Engineering, Nursing science, Public Administration, Library Science Total	20	100
Master's degree program English test	• Passed the TU English requirement	15	75
	• Took the English courses	5	25
	Total	20	100
Working experience in intercultural workplace	• None	6	30
	• 1 – 3 years	5	25
	• 4 – 6 years	5	25
	• 7 – 9 years	1	5
	• 10 years or above	3	15
Total	20	100	
Opportunity to use English in workplace	• Always	5	25
	• Often	6	30
	• Sometimes	9	45
	• Never	0	0
	Total	20	100

Table 3

Where participants have learned how to make a request appropriately

Channel	English classes	Experiences	Books	Medias
Participants N = 20 (%)	16 (80)	14 (70)	9 (45)	8 (40)

4.2 Request Strategies and External Modification Devices Used by Thai Female ESL Speakers in the Workplace

The second part of the questionnaire is the written discourse completion task (WDCT) that consists of 12 situations. Participants were asked to produce a speech act of the request in writing which they think is most appropriate in each situation. All data were analyzed to meet the nine items in categories of directness levels and 12 external

modification devices as described in the methodology chapter. The findings were counted and calculated, then they were demonstrated in terms of frequency and percentage in Table 4, 5, 6 and 7 below.

4.2.1 Request Strategies Used by Thai Female ESL Speakers in the Workplace

Table 4

Request strategies (Directness levels) by Thai female ESL speakers in the workplace

Directness Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Direct level		
1.1 Mood deliverable	24	9.60
1.2 Performatives	2	0.80
1.3 Hedged performative	9	3.60
1.4 Obligation statements	6	2.40
1.5 Want statements	13	5.20
(Total of direct level)	54	21.60
2. Conventionally indirect level		
2.1 Suggestory formulae	21	8.40
2.2 Query preparatory	165	66.00
(Total of conventionally indirect level)	186	74.40
3. Non-conventionally indirect level		
3.1 Strong hints	8	3.20
3.2 Mind hints	2	0.80
(Total of non-conventionally indirect level)	10	4
Total	250	100

As the WDCT of this study has 12 situations, so the anticipated number of responses were 240 from the 20 participants or 20 responses per scenario. In this study, there were two responses that participants did not want to request or have the pattern to say in some situation, so overall, the amount of the request head acts was 238. However, as we see in Table 4, the total of request head act displayed as N = 250 which means that there were some participants who used more than one head act in a situation, for example,

Scenario 8 (Participant 14)

“Could you check this again? I think there is something I need you to improve it.”

The response *“Could you check this again”* can be counted as one head act which is query preparatory and *“there is something I need you to improve it”* can be identified as another head act which is want statement.

Table 4 shows that query preparatory at conventionally indirect level was used more than half (66.00%) of all directness levels. The details of their structure were showed in Table 5.

Table 5

Query preparatory formulae expressions by the participants

	Query preparatory formulae	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Could you/we/I + v1...?	77	46.67
2.	Can you/we/I + v1?	42	25.45
3.	Would you mind/ Do you mind if...?	27	16.36
4.	Is it possible, Is it ok, Would it be possible to...?/ Is it possible, Is it ok, Would it be possible for you if I...?	9	5.45
5.	May/Might I + v1...?	7	4.24
6.	Would you + v1...?	1	0.61
7.	Is there any chance I could ask for + N...?	1	0.61
8.	Do you have time to + v1...?	1	0.61
	Total	165	100

The grammar formulaic sequences or structures that were used frequently are *Could (you/we/I) + V1...?* (46.67%), follows by *Can (you/we/I) + V1...?* (25.45%) and *Would you mind...?* (16.36%) as shown in Table 5, for example

Scenario 1 (Participant 3)

“Could you please bring the printed document from the printer to me?”

Scenario 2 (Participant 20)

“Can I postpone the meeting about the marketing project to the evening?”

Scenario 3 (Participant 4)

“...Would you mind lending me your car?...”

Regarding Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-threatening concept, the request is the act that threatens the hearer's negative face. The participants frequently used questions to make their requests which is conventionally indirect. It was in alignment with the previous research that elicited data from the native speakers (Blum-Kulka & Olshain, 1984; Trosborg, 1995) and from EFL learners (Srisurak, 2011; Haddad, 2017; Onchaiya and Phimsawat, 2021).

In addition, the use of past modal verbs such as ‘Could’ and ‘Would’ in the request was determined as more polite and indirect than their present forms (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). So, the responses of participants showed that they were aware of politeness when producing requests.

The second most frequently used request strategy was mood deliverable at a direct level. The participants used it in 9.60% of their requests; however, the frequency is quite lower than the first one, query preparatory. This strategy can be indicated by the verb preceding the head act or the kind of directive information, for example,

Scenario 8 (Participant 2)

“[Hey, I already look up on your work, it looks nice, however there were some parts I think it is not meet the standard that we brief.] So please take a look at those areas and revise it again. Please take a look at those areas and revise it again.”

Scenario 6 (Participant 4)

“[Can you see my monitor if the file has been downloaded], so shut down the computer for me.”

The data showed that the participants used ‘please’ up to 70% of the mood deliverable responses. According to Barron (2016), ‘please’ is seen as the simple politeness marker for L2 learners that can mitigate the force of request when social variables are neutral. However, if these three social variables which are power of hearer, social distance and the ranking of imposition are heightened, ‘please’ may be

considered as impositive force rather than softening component. However, this topic was quite hard to interpret as to whether the participants have the intention to soften or emphasize their request by using ‘please’. Moreover, in terms of pronunciation, the stress and intonation would be another factor to interpret this issue.

The third most frequently used request strategy was suggestory formulae at conventionally indirect level. They employed it in 8.4% of their requests in the workplace context. This strategy doesn’t have a strict structure but it can be implied from the suggestive references to the hearer to do something, for example,

Scenario 12 (Participant 12)

“...It would be great if we're update the new computer for the better performance.”

On the contrary, there were the two lowest frequencies in 0.80% of request strategies which are performatives at direct level and mind hints at non-conventionally indirect level. The first one can be implied in the structure of “I’m going to ask you to...”. Another one was mind hints. The participants rarely produced implied requests since the hearer might not interpret this request in such a way as the requester’s intention since their real intention were not provided in the utterance.

4.2.2 External Modification Devices Used by Thai Female ESL Speakers in the Workplace

This section explains how the external modification devices were found in the requests of participants from WDCT.

According to 238 responses of the requests from 12 situations, the total use of the external modification devices was N = 354. Table 6 presents how each external modification devices were used in each request.

Table 6

The characteristics of the external modification devices were used in each request

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
The combination of devices	105 responses	44.12
One device	83 responses	34.87

None of used	50 responses	21.01
Total	238 responses	100

The participants expressed the external modification devices up to about 79% from the overall. The combination of devices in a speech act of request was the most frequently used (44.12%) which start from two devices combination until six devices combination and some requests used the same devices more than one time, for example

Scenario 10 (Participant 11)

“Excuse me, [may I borrow your book?] I think it could benefit me in my role. I will take a note and give it back to you as soon as I finish.”

This example included with three external modification devices.

“Excuse me” is alerter, “I think it could benefit me in my role” is grounder and “I will take a note and give it back to you as soon as I finish” can be indicated as cost minimizer.

Whereas, in this study, there was only 21.01% that didn’t used any external modification devices in their requests, only the main request exists in the speech act. The use of these devices of the participants seems as the buffer message in indirect approach that provide the neutral messages and explanation before asking something from the hearer which can threaten the hearer’s negative face Bovee (2007). This result might be due to the characteristic of femininity language that is similar to Kapur et al. (2015) who proposed that female had the indirect approach tendencies.

Next, the frequency of 12 external modification devices used by participants were shown in Table 7.

Table 7

External modification devices used by Thai female ESL speakers in the workplace by the rank of frequency

External devices	Frequency	Percentage
1. Grounder	135	38.14
2. Disarmer	30	8.47
3. Apology	30	8.47
4. Alerter	30	8.47
5. Preparator	23	6.50

6. Promise	22	6.21
7. Sweetener	20	5.65
8. Closing	18	5.08
9. Cost minimizer	16	4.52
10. Checking available	11	3.11
11. Appreciation	10	2.82
12. Getting a pre-commitment	9	2.54
Total	354	100

Grounder or giving the reason was most frequent (38.14%). The participants giving the reason of the request, both before and after, produce the main request to their hearer. for example,

Scenario 6 (Participant 18)

“[Can you help me...?] *because I have an errand and can not wait to shut down my computer?*” (Giving the reason before expressing the head act of request)

Scenario 7 (Participant 17)

“*Next weekend I have to go to the music festival that I can't miss.* [Can you...?]” (Giving the reason after expressing the head act of request)

The second highest frequency consists of three devices which are disarmer, apology and alerter (8.47%). Participants commonly used them preceding the head act of request; however, disarmer, which is an excuse speech for attempting to refuse and apology or regretful acknowledgement, were also found following the head act but only a number of the participants used it, for example,

Scenario 6 (Participant 10)

“*I know it's too much to ask for your assistance...*, [would it be possible for you if I ask...?]”

Scenario 11 (Participant 10)

“*Sorry for bothering you,* [but could you perhaps make some suggestions...?]”

Scenario 5 (Participant 9)

“*Excuse me,* [could you please stop singing...?]”

The findings above were parallel with Schuaer's proposal (2007) cited by Aldhulaee (2011); alerter and grounder are essential elements of request since they draw the attention of the hearer and identify the reason of the request being produced. Moreover, in the gender aspect, Holmes (1995) found that women produced apology more often than men for maintaining the relationship and as the remedies for offense since women are particularly vulnerable in the interaction.

Apart from grounder, the other external modification devices did not have obvious distinction from each other in term of frequency. The two fewest frequencies were appreciation or thankfulness (2.82%) and getting a pre-commitment, which is the utterance with an attempt for getting a pre-committal (2.54%).

4.3 The Finding on How Social Variables Affect the Request Strategies and External Modification Devices

This section presents the frequency and percentage of request strategies and external modification devices to show how social variables which are power (P), social distance (D), and the ranking of imposition (I) affect the directness levels and the external modification devices.

4.3.1 The Effect of Social Variables on the Request Strategies

Table 8

The effect of each social variable on the request strategies

Directness Levels	Social Variables							Total of each social variable (100)
	Power (P)			Social Distance (D)		The Ranking of Imposition (I)		
	(-P)	(=P)	(+P)	(-D)	(+D)	(-I)	(+I)	
	Frequency (%)							
1. Direct Level								
1.1 Mood deliverable	8 (33.33)	13 (54.17)	3 (12.50)	12 (50)	12 (50)	15 (62.50)	9 (37.50)	24
1.2 Performatives	1 (50)	1 (50)			2 (100)	1 (50)	1 (50)	2
1.3 Hedged	8 (88.89)		1 (11.11)	2 (22.22)	7 (77.78)	2 (22.22)	7 (77.78)	9
1.4 Obligation	1 (16.67)	5 (83.33)			6 (100)		6 (100)	6
1.5 Want statement	9 (69.23)	3 (23.08)	1 (7.69)	4 (30.77)	9 (69.23)	2 (15.38)	11 (84.62)	13
(Total of direct level)	27 (50)	22 (40.74)	5 (9.26)	18 (33.33)	36 (66.67)	20 (37.04)	34 (62.96)	54
2. Conventionally Indirect Level								
2.1 Suggestory formulae	4 (19.05)	6 (28.57)	11 (52.38)	5 (23.81)	16 (76.19)		21 (100)	21
2.2 Query preparatory	52 (31.52)	53 (32.12)	60 (36.36)	96 (58.18)	69 (41.82)	96 (58.18)	69 (41.82)	165
(Total of conventionally indirect level)	56 (30.11)	59 (31.72)	71 (38.17)	101 (54.30)	85 (45.70)	96 (51.61)	90 (48.39)	186
3. Non-Conventionally Indirect Level								
3.1 Strong hints	2 (25.00)	2 (25.00)	4 (50.00)	2 (25.00)	6 (75.00)	4 (50.00)	4 (50.00)	8
3.2 Mind hints	1 (50.00)		1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	2
(Total of non-conventionally indirect level)	3 (30.00)	2 (20.00)	5 (50.00)	3 (30.00)	7 (70.00)	5 (50.00)	5 (50.00)	10
Total	86 (34.40)	83 (33.20)	81 (32.40)	122 (48.80)	128 (51.20)	121 (48.40)	129 (51.60)	250

Table 8 presents how each individual variable effects the directness level of requests by the participants. Firstly, the analysis of the power variable found that when the power of a hearer is lower than a requester (-P), direct level strategies were increasingly used by the participants as follows, the direct level strategy was used in scenarios that included (-P) in 50% from the total of direct level, it was used in (=P) scenarios in 40.74% and (+P) scenarios in only 9.26%. On the contrary, the conventionally indirect level was increasingly used when the power of the hearer is higher than the requester. In addition, query preparatory was highest used in every situation; however, *Could (you/we/I)...?* structure would be used more frequently when the power of the hearer is higher than the requester as follows, the participants used this

structure in scenarios that included with (+P) in 19.39% of the query preparatory frequency, (=P) scenarios in 15.15% and (-P) scenarios in 12.12%.

However, the effect of the social distance and the ranking of imposition to a direct level and conventionally indirect level is opposite to the power variable. As a direct level strategy was used more frequently in the distant relationship scenarios (+D) and the great imposition scenarios (+I) more than in the close relationship (-D) and lesser imposition scenarios (-I).

In particular, the obligation statements strategy was used 100% in (+D) and (+I) situations. It can be interpreted that when it related to work or duty even if there is great imposition or in distance relationships, the participants tended to use a direct request. In addition, the conventionally indirect level was used higher in (-D) scenarios and (-I) scenarios than (+D) and (+I). By going into details, the frequency of suggestory formulae strategy was found conversely with the total of conventionally indirect level data, as they were used mostly in (+D) and (+I) scenarios, especially in the great ranking imposition scenarios (+I), all suggestory formulae strategy was found in these scenarios (100%).

In addition, the non-conventionally indirect level or hint request were affected by only the social distance since it was used mostly when the distance between requester and interlocutor is high (+D) in 70% but was used in the close relationship scenarios (-D) in 30%.

Lastly, 5.04 % of overall were produced the head act of request two times in one situation. In 5.04 %, the scenarios that included (+I) variable produced the head act of request twice up to 91.67%. It can be interpreted that when the ranking of imposition is great, participants try to repeat what they want for getting the commitment rather than in the less imposition scenarios.

According to the findings, the participants were concerned about the directness level of their requests by the power of the hearer more than other variables. They would rather use the indirect request when making a request with their boss or their senior that have the higher degree of power in position, age, or experiences than themselves. It could be assumed by Hofstede's cultural dimension concept (1980; 1991) that Thai culture has remained having a high degree of hierarchy among people. On the contrary, the western culture or the area that uses English as the first language might be concerned

about the power of the hearer lower than Thai society as they have more ideas about equity in their society.

On the three social variables combinations aspect, the direct level of request was not found in the (+P +D +I) scenario which have all social variables at high ranking, the participants used the conventionally indirect level instead which is the highest used in 10.22% when compared with other scenarios. However, although the direct level was found to be used in the (-P -D -I) which has the opposite variables ranking with (+P +D +I), the conventionally indirect level was still the most used in the scenario and it was the second rank of conventionally indirect used compared with other scenarios (see Appendix B). It could be interpreted that the participants were also aware of politeness even though the three social variables which are power of the hearer, the social distance and the ranking of imposition were low.

4.3.2 The Effect of Social Variables on the External Modification Devices

Table 9

The effect of each social variable on the external modification devices

External Modification Devices	Social Variables							Total of each social variable (100)
	Power (P)			Social Distance (D)		The Ranking of Imposition (I)		
	(-P)	(=P)	(+P)	(-D)	(+D)	(-I)	(+I)	
	Frequency (%)							
1. Preparator	5 (21.74)	10 (43.48)	8 (34.78)	6 (26.09)	17 (73.91)	8 (34.78)	15 (65.22)	23
2. Checking available	4 (36.36)	6 (54.55)	1 (9.09)	7 (63.64)	4 (36.36)	5 (45.45)	6 (54.55)	11
3. Getting a pre-commitment	2 (22.22)	5 (55.56)	2 (22.22)	5 (55.56)	4 (44.44)	6 (66.67)	3 (33.33)	9
4. Grounder	38 (28.15)	51 (37.78)	46 (34.07)	56 (41.48)	79 (58.52)	59 (43.70)	76 (56.30)	135
5. Sweetener	4 (20.00)	6 (30.00)	10 (50.00)	9 (45.00)	11 (55.00)	7 (35.00)	13 (65.00)	20
6. Disarmer	16 (53.33)	4 (13.33)	10 (33.33)	14 (46.67)	16 (53.33)	7 (23.33)	23 (76.67)	30
7. Cost minimizer	4 (25.00)	7 (43.75)	5 (32.25)	6 (37.50)	10 (62.50)	6 (37.50)	10 (62.50)	16
8. Promise	17 (77.27)	5 (22.73)		12 (54.55)	10 (45.45)	1 (4.55)	21 (95.45)	22
9. Appreciation	1 (10.00)	8 (80.00)	1 (10.00)	6 (60.00)	4 (40.00)	2 (20.00)	8 (80.00)	10
10. Apology	16 (53.33)	3 (10)	11 (36.67)	13 (43.33)	17 (56.67)	20 (66.67)	10 (33.33)	30
11. Alerter	6 (20.00)	13 (43.33)	11 (36.67)	18 (60)	12 (40)	23 (76.67)	7 (23.33)	30
12. Closing	5 (27.18)	11 (61.11)	2 (11.11)	8 (44.44)	10 (55.56)	12 (66.67)	6 (33.33)	18
Total	118 (33.33)	129 (36.44)	107 (30.13)	160 (45.20)	194 (54.80)	156 (44.07)	198 (55.93)	354

According to the findings in Table 9, the ranking of imposition variable affected the eight external modification devices which are preparator, checking available, grounder, sweetener, disarmer, cost minimizer, promise, and appreciation. They were increasingly used when the ranking of imposition is great (+I). It obviously affected these three devices as follows; the promise was used up to 95.45%, appreciation was used 80%, and disarmer was used 76.67% compared with the less imposition situation. However, when the ranking of imposition is lesser (-I), getting a pre-commitment, apology, alerter, and closing devices were higher used than in the greater imposition scenarios.

Besides, the social distance affected seven devices which are preparator, grounder, sweetener, disarmer, cost minimizer, apology, and closing devices, which were higher used when the requester and hearer relationship is distant (+D) than when they are familiar with each other (-D), especially, the preparator that was used as a majority in 73.91% compared with familiar relationship. On the contrary, checking available, getting a pre-commitment, promise, appreciation, and alerter devices were used increasingly when they are not familiar (+D).

Moreover, the results showed that in the scenarios included, (+D) and (+I), the total of external modification devices used by the participants had a higher frequency compared with (-D) and (-I).

The last social variable, the power, impacted only the use of sweetener device by the participants as it was increasingly used when the power of the hearer is higher. Another device, the promise, was used in a contrary way to sweetener since it was used mostly in (-P) scenarios but was not found any used in (+P). Moreover, there are up to 8 devices were used highest in the equal power instead.

According to the data, the ranking of imposition and social distance variables were the main factor on the use of external modification devices by the participants since the external modification devices were used higher in the distant relationship and the great ranking of imposition situations while the power of the hearer had minor influences.

If we considered results when the three social variables were combined, (-P -D -I) scenario had the least frequency of use of external modification devices which is only 2.26% of the overall. Nevertheless, the (+P +D +I) scenario was not the most

frequent as it should be relative to the former situation that was in 7.91% but the most frequent of external modification devices were used in the (-P +D +I) instead in 11.30% of overall. This result can possibly emerge from other factors apart from these three social variables. Moreover, the grounder device was found as the highest frequency in every scenario, especially in (-P -D -I) but except in the (-P -D -I). However, the alerter device which is the grabbing attention from hearer utterance was used by the participants in every scenario. (see in Appendix B)

4.4 The Cross-Cultural Communication Experiences of Participants in Making the Requests

According to the methodology chapter, it explained about the limitation of WDCT that the answers from participants may be different. If they faced these situations in their real life, their requests could be possibly changed as they might have many factors intervening. So, this section presents the experience of participants who have working experiences in an intercultural workplace for more than seven to twenty years and often use English in their work to show the actual requests that might happen in their real life.

4.4.1 The Problem or Difficulty to Produce the Requests in the Workplace

There were three main reasons for problems and difficulties in making the requests that the participants found as follows:

1) The lack of English proficiency. Based on the information from the interview, lacking proficiency in English is one of the reasons that caused difficulty to produce the requests in the proper way. In the first period of working in an intercultural workplace, some of them might not be fluent in English much, so their request produced may have an obstruction.

“I thought in Thai language first then translated to English in my head. According to the slow translation process from the mother tongue language, sometimes the conversation by the interlocutor was moved on, so I had to find the opportunity to ask them later.” (Participant 4, personal communication, May 7th, 2022)

2) Thai culture. Since Thai culture has been shaped by the hierarchy explicitly, so most Thai people pay attention more to the power of the hearer when they need to make a request. As they had the feeling of *Kreng Jai*, so they were not sure that *Can/Could (You/we/I)...?* or query preparatory pattern that they had learned in class is enough or not for a request. According to Klausner (1993), *Kreng Jai* behavior by Thai people can show the feeling of being reluctant to impose on the interlocutor who has higher power which may be another way to express respect to them.

“I have to overthink which structure is proper, especially when asking the great imposition request to my boss who is a native speaker, such as asking for personal leave when the company was quite busy.”
(Participant 4, personal communication, May 7th, 2022)

However, it happened only at the beginning of their work. After that their language skill and pragmatic knowledge have been gradually developed in the better way from their experiences.

3) Other variables interference. Another problem by the participants is the use of direct speech unintentionally. This happened when they were in the constraint time situation or had many things to handle at that time. For example, they would like to ask the hearer who they are not familiar with to wait, their speech turned out to be very short and direct in a way as they did not want to say “wait.” (Participant 1, personal communication, May 17th, 2022) That can possibly emerge from the effect of physical and mental variables in the real situation that are hard to avoid for the speaker. However, this perspective may be seen as the problem as it is the aspect of females that are concerned more about the direct messages that can create offense to others (Lakoff, 1975). On the other side, this circumstance is possibly seen as an ordinary situation that can happen to men.

4.4.2 The Misunderstanding or Offense to Foreigner Interlocutors by the Requests

According to the interview data, this topic can be divided into two reasons.

1) Word choice. The result found that the participants did not have much trouble making offense or misunderstanding to foreigners in the workplace because the native speaker tried to understand the requests that they produced. However, some of them might have to work via online platform and the instant texts which were short and concise were possibly making misunderstandings.

“I ever asked my colleague that ‘Can I swap my session at 1.00 P.M. with your 3 P.M.?’ It means I would like to change the shift but my interlocutor understand that he was asked to work it on both shifts.”

(Participant 4, personal communication, May 14th, 2022)

Apart from the directness levels of request, the word choice is also very important. Especially, if the hearer is from outer expanding or use English as a lingua franca like the group of participants in this study. They believe that selecting the vocabulary that is easy to understand and pronouncing it clearly and correctly can reduce this problem.

2) The lack of proper external modification devices. In addition, when they asked their colleague whom they are not familiar with to help or to do something without giving the reason, it could make the hearer have a doubt or question on the request. This may not exactly cause the offense but the requestee was more willing to accept the request if the reason was provided specifically. This is in line with the findings in Table 7 which stated that the grounder, which is the external modification devicen was used most frequently by participants and it also was used increasingly when the relationship between requester and interlocutor is distance as was analyzed in 4.3.2 section.

“I asked my colleague to do the questionnaire for my research. The most of my colleague that I am not familiar with returned to me that, ‘Why you choose me to do your questionnaire? we have rarely talked to each other.’ So, I had to give them more specific answer.”

(Participant 4, personal communication, May 14th, 2022)

Moreover, if they used the sweetener device to express the compliment to their hearer or showed that their help is necessary, the requestees would be glad to do the request easier. Holmes (1995) explained the compliments of women, that they tended to give the compliment to their women interlocutor more than to the men interlocutor. So, the gender of the addressee can be another factor in producing the external modification devices at the request of the participants.

4.4.3 What the Participants Have Learned from Communicating with Foreigners on How to Produce the Request in English

The responses by the participants were divided into two parts as follows:

1) Learning from the reaction of the interlocutor. The participants found that experiences are the most effective for learning on the pragmatic request because they can notice the reaction of the hearer. The lesson in classes may be the foundation that can acquire the pattern of request; however, they get through in the real situation by trial and error. Then they have learned and could express more proper request speech in the next opportunity.

“I ever asked my passenger to open the window. Some of them understood and were willing to do it but some of them returned to me with the question of why they had to do this. So, I have to change the way to request in more polite speech.” (Participant 2, personal communication, May 15th, 2022)

They suggested that preceding apology devices, such as *“I’m terribly sorry to interrupt you”* and the internal modification devices in the head act, such as *“[Could you] please kindly...?”* can make their request more polite and get the willing reaction from their interlocutor.

As was shown in Table 7, the apology device was the second highest use of the external modification by the participants which help their request be more polite and show the emphasis on the hearer’s feeling of being disturbed.

Moreover, before making a request, they must remember that who is their hearer. It is not only the power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition but they also must pay attention to the culture and personality of people. Sometimes they may stereotype the personality of people they found from a nationality as well. This perspective of the participant is similar to the concept of pragmatic by Samovar et al. (1981) in which language and culture are inseparably related to each other since people's frames of reference and behavior affect their interpretation of messages, including verbal and nonverbal. According to Bachman (1997), the understanding of cultural differences and the naturalness of people is the pragmatic competence that can help people to adapt themselves to a cross-culture workplace.

However, they found that staying humble and being polite would help them achieve their request easier. The structures of polite requests that they suggested are as follows '*Would you mind if...?*', '*Would you mind possibly + VI...?*' or '*Could you please do me a (big) favor? Could you/we/I + VI...?*' The latter is for the very politeness that produces the external modification devices, getting a pre-commitment before the head act of request. These are the structure that they have learned from work training and noticed from native speakers. (Participant 1, personal communication, May 17th, 2022)

This result is in alignment with the study by Najafabadi and Paramisivam (2012) in which getting a pre-commitment device was used by the native speaker group more than the EFL speakers who have lower English proficiency levels, so a getting a pre-commitment device was found in a few respondents in this study.

2) Asking questions to the native speaker. As the participants found that the native speakers rarely used the request by being aware of the power of the hearer because they treat every people equally. For instance, they noticed that *Could/Can (you/we/I) + VI...?* is the basic structure that is normally used for requests by native speakers. They suspected a difference between them, so they asked to the native speaker. The response is "no see the difference in speech act". The participants believe that if we are in doubt, we should ask to find out. However, from their experiences, 'Could' was used in formal writing such as email writing but in utterance, they would rather use 'Can' in the request.

In conclusion, according to Table 3, it presents how the participants have learned the pragmatic request, most of them, up to 80%, have learned in their classroom and 70% have learned by their experiences. The interview data showed that the communication with foreigners can help participants acquire additional knowledge on the actual pragmatic in real life that they might not find in the classroom or academic resources.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a (1) summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings (3) conclusion and (4) the recommendations for the further research.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study aimed to investigate the request strategies and external modification devices used by 20 Thai female master's degree students in an English major. In addition, it was to find out how social variables, which are power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition, affect their requests.

There were three instruments for data collection in this study. The first one was a questionnaire to collect the demographic information of participants including age, English test score, education, and work experience. The second instrument was a written discourse completion task (WDCT) to collect the request strategies and external modification devices. The situations in WDCT comprised 12 situations that have different social variables which are power, social distance, and the ranking of imposition. Lastly, the interview was to collect the experiences in making the requests of participants. The interview questions explored the difficulty and problem of making the requests, the misunderstanding or offense to the foreigners, and their request learning.

The procedures of this study were divided into two main data collection. The first data collection was a qualitative approach; therefore, the written data from WDCT were analyzed scenario by scenario and categorized the request strategies and the external modification devices. This study investigated three directness levels with nine sub-items frameworks by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and 12 external modification devices by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984); Schauer (2007); Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008); Al-Ali & Alawneh (2010). After that, the data were counted by frequency and calculated into percentages to see the overall request strategies by the participants. Then, to find out the effect of social variables, each request strategy and external modification device used in each scenario were compared

to see the differences. For the qualitative approach, the interview data that was gathered from the three participants who have the most experiences in the intercultural workplace and often used English in their work were transcribed and indicated into each theme for supporting the WDCT data.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The summary of the findings was divided into two parts as follows the research questions of this study.

5.2.1 Request Strategies and External Modification Devices Used by Thai Female ESL Speakers in the Workplace

The results from the WDCT instrument that was created into 12 situations in the workplace context showed that 20 Thai female ESL speakers mostly used the query preparatory request strategy at a conventionally indirect level (66%) to ask the hearer. ‘*Could you/we/I + vI ...?*’, were highly used in this strategy followed by ‘*Can you/we/I + vI ...?*’ and ‘*Would you mind/ Do you mind if...?*’. As query preparatory strategy at conventional indirect was commonly used by EFL and ESL in every level of proficiency or even the native speakers. The second-highest frequency of strategy that was used by the participants was mood deliverable at a direct level (9.6%). The third most used was suggestory formulae at the conventionally indirect level (8.4%). On the contrary, the lowest frequencies of request strategies were 0.8% which are performatives at direct level, and mind hints at the non-conventionally indirect level.

Apart from the head act of request, the participants frequently used the external modification devices in their requests (78.99%), and the most frequency of the responses was a combination of devices (43.70%) which have from two devices to six devices in a speech act. The device that was used most frequently was grounder (38.14%). They found that if the reason was not provided to the hearer, the hearer would have a doubt about their request. The second highest used were disarmer, apology, and alerter (8.47% for each). On the other hand, the fewest devices used were appreciation and pre-commitment (2.54% for each). However, pre-commitment was found to be used by native speakers more than EFL learners in the previous study.

According to the results from the questionnaire, most participants have learned how to produce requests from English classes and experiences, so the recognition of requests to be produced in this study can mainly emerge from these two resources. From the participants' view, English classes and training provided basic request syntax but the communication with the foreigners gave them the reaction of the hearer and they could notice how they produce the request for improving their pragmatic with further opportunity.

5.2.2 The Effect of Social Variables to the Request Strategies and External Modification Devices Used by Thai Female ESL Speakers

In terms of social variables effect, the results found that the directness levels of the request were mainly affected by the power of the hearer. When the power of the hearer was higher, the direct level was decreasingly used. However, the participants increasingly used a conventionally indirect level when the power of the hearer was higher. Moreover, *Could (you/we/I)...?* structure that was determined as a more polite request syntax was frequently used when the power of the hearer was higher. Another variable, social distance, affected the use of a non-conventionally indirect level. If the participants were in distant relationships, they used hint requests more than in close relationships. In addition, the ranking of imposition was found that affects the number of requests head act in a speech act. When the ranking of imposition was great or demanding was high, the participants would rather use the head act twice in one speech act. However, the participants were not concerned much about the social distance and the ranking of imposition in the workplace since they highly used the direct strategies in the distant relationship and great imposition situations.

The external modification devices were to mitigate the directness of request, especially in the high ranking of social variables. When considering the high ranking of social variables, the social variable that mainly affected the external modification devices was the ranking of imposition since there were eight devices that were highly used when the ranking of imposition is great i.e., preparator, checking available, grounder, sweetener, disarmer, cost minimizer, promise, and appreciation. For social distance variables, they affected seven devices which are preparator, grounder, sweetener, disarmer, cost minimizer, apology, and closing, as these devices were used

mostly when the relationship between the requester and hearer is distant. Lastly, power variables played the least role in the use of external modification devices by participants since they affected only one device, which is the sweetener, that had the most frequency when the power of the hearer is high. However, when three social variables were interpreted together as one situation, there was a diversity of data due to the contextual factor.

5.3 Conclusion

According to the results, all nine-sub items of directness levels and 12 external modification devices were found in this study by 20 Thai female master's degree students in an English major. The results showed that the participants were aware of politeness when making requests to their hearer in the workplace context since indirect level requests were used most often and they also used the syntax of request which was determined as the polite request to ask the hearer. The power variables have a crucial role in the use of the directness level of the participants since Thai culture has remained influenced by the structure of hierarchy in the organization. Moreover, to mitigate the imposition of the requests, the external modification devices were used in four-fifths of the total responses as it helps to mitigate the directness of their requests as giving the reason for making the request to the hearer was the most important for requests in the participants' opinions. However, gender is another factor since females are rather more aware of indirect and politeness than men (Lakoff, 1975). If the study investigated both genders, the results might be different.

Apart from these three social variables, which are power, the social distance and the ranking of imposition, it could be assumed from the data that the production of requests by the participants also depends on a specific context or the limitation of WDCT in this study and other factors. From the participants' experiences, they found that other factors can also intervene in their production of requests such as culture, the personality of the hearer, and mental or physical factors of the speaker at some moment which could make the request different in the actual speech. However, some of them have the idea that being humble and polite and providing adequate reasons can help the hearer accept the request easier.

In conclusion, as the request is one of the utterances that can harm the feeling of the hearer due to demanding others to do what they want, the utterance and pragmatic should be paid attention to, especially in cross-cultural communication. This study showed that communication experiences with native speakers and foreigners can help the ESL speaker acquire more knowledge on pragmatic requests.

5.4 Recommendations for the Further Study

This study used the written discourse completion task to collect the requests by participants in which the responses might be different from the spontaneous speech as they expressed in real life. Therefore, the further study may use instruments that can get more natural speech from participants such as role-play or observation of authentic discourse by video recording to collect the data.

Due to the limitation of the researcher's circumstance, this study collected the data from only 20 Thai female master's degree students in English major which might not have much significance to the data. To make the result generalizable, the study should include a larger number of participants and have the criteria to choose participants. Moreover, since this study focused on only females, it may not cover all aspects of gender, including males in the samples might show interesting results in this research area.

Lastly, apart from the external modification devices, another group of devices that can reduce the directiveness and make the request more polite is the internal modification devices. They are the words or phrases that are used in the head act of request. It is also interesting to explore in the further research because they often happened in the request for reducing the imposition.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASK

This questionnaire is a part of an independent study for a master's degree at the Language Institute of Thammasat University. The personal information will be kept confidential and used for this study only. The questions will be divided into two parts. The first part is the questionnaire to collect the demographic data, English test score, education, and work experience of participants. Another part is written discourse completion task (WDCT) to collect the request strategies and external modification devices (word, phrase, or sentence that come before or after the main sentence of request) that participants use in each situation.

Part 1: Demographic information

1. Age

- 20-29 30-39 40 and above

2. English test score (Please select all that apply)

- TU-GET Score _____
- TOEIC Score _____
- TOEFL Score _____
- IELTS Score _____
- Others _____ Score _____

3. Education

- Bachelor's degree, major _____
- Master's degree, major _____
- Ph.D., major _____

4. Occupation _____

5. Have you ever worked in an intercultural workplace?

- Yes No

6. How many years of experience do you have in the intercultural workplace?

7. Do you have an opportunity to use English to communicate with foreigners in the workplace?

- Always Often Sometimes Never

8. Where have you learned how to make a request appropriately?

- English classes Books Medias Experiences

Part 2: Please read the following situations which consist of 12 scenarios and imagine you were that person in each situation, what you would like to say to request. Please use the usual speech that you think is appropriate. (You can write more than one sentence in each situation.)

1. (-P -D -I) You are a manager at an office. You are printing out the document from your computer but the printer is located far away from you around 20 meters and you notice that the employee who worked together for two years and you are familiar with is walking in that direction. You would like to ask her to bring it for you. What would you say...
2. (-P +D -I) You are a manager at an office. You appointed a new employee who has just worked at this office for a week to talk about the marketing project of this quarter in the morning tomorrow but you just realized that you will not be available at that time. You would like to postpone this meeting to the evening on that day. What would you say...
3. (-P -D +I) You are a manager at the office. You have a very important business in the afternoon today. Unfortunately, in the morning, while you were driving to work, your car was broken. You need to borrow a car from your close assistant who has worked with you for a long time and you know that she does not like others to drive her car. What would you say...
4. (-P +D +I) You are an event organizer leader. You have to work with a new team, so you are not familiar with your staff. You are responsible for the event that will happen in the next two weeks. Unluckily, the necessary accessories that will be used in this event cannot be delivered as scheduled, so the work

process was delayed. This event cannot be completed without staff working overtime on holidays. What would you say...

5. (=P -D -I) 5. You are a content writer at a company and you have urgent content to handle. However, your close colleague who is sitting next to you is singing loudly which distracts your work. What would you say...
6. (=P +D -I) You are a new employee who has started working at this office for only one week. Before leaving your office hours, you uploaded the large file to your computer and it will take over an hour to complete. You have errands after work and cannot wait to shut down your computer. You found that a colleague in the same position as you who has very few chances to talk to each other is working overtime today. What would you say...
7. (=P -D +I) You are an English tutor in a tutoring company. You have scheduled to teach the student at 5 pm next weekend but you just realized that the music festival that you really want to visit will be performed those both days. Your schedule is full and cannot be postponed. You found that your close friend who is an English tutor is available on those days. What would you say...
8. (=P +D +I) You are a content editor in the advertising department at the office. You have to work with a new graphic designer colleague who just worked here for only one week. On the first job, you give him a brief of graphics to match with your content and he has spent the whole week doing it. However, in the final draft, you think there are a lot of areas that have to improve because it does not meet your brief. What would you say...
9. (+P -D -I) You are an employee at the office. You are reporting annual profits to your boss whom you know very well. Then, your boss asks you a question but you cannot hear it clearly because your boss speaks so softly. What would you say...

10. (+P +D -I) You are a new employee in the office. You are responsible for the company's website. It is very new for you and you should learn more about this duty. While you are consulting with your supervisor who is older than you, you find the book that may benefit you on her desk. You would like to borrow this book from her. What would you say...
11. (+P -D +I) You are a junior employee at the office. This is the first time that you are assigned to plan the annual marketing project by your boss. You have a familiar senior employee in the same department as you who is experienced in marketing. You cannot finish this project without advice or suggestion throughout the process. What would you say...
12. (+P +D +I) You have worked as a media production staff at this office for only one week and are not familiar with anyone on the team. Your leader told you on the first day that if you need any help please let him know. In your work process, you found that the computer provided by your office is not performing well and adversely affecting the work. The new computer might support your work performance much better. What would you say...

APPENDIX B

THE EFFECT OF THREE SOCIAL VARIABLES COMBINATION ON THE REQUEST STRATEGIES AND EXTERNAL MODIFICATION DEVICES

This section presents the tables of additional results on the effect of social variables on the request strategies and the external modification devices.

Table 1

The effect of three social variables combination on the request strategies

Directness Levels	Social Variables												Total (100)
	-P -D -I	-P +D -I	-P -D +I	-P +D +I	=P -D -I	=P +D -I	=P -D +I	=P +D +I	+P -D -I	+P +D -I	+P -D +I	+P +D +I	
	Frequency (%)												
1. Direct Level													
1.1 Mood deliverable	3 (12.50)	2 (8.33)	1 (4.17)	2 (8.33)	4 (16.67)	4 (16.67)	2 (8.33)	3 (12.50)	1 (4.17)	1 (4.17)	1 (4.17)		24
1.2 Performatives				1 (50.00)		1 (50.00)							2
1.3 Hedged		2 (22.22)	1 (11.11)	5 (55.56)							1 (11.11)		9
1.4 Obligation				1 (16.67)				5 (83.33)					6
1.5 Want statement		2 (15.38)	1 (7.69)	6 (46.15)			2 (15.38)	1 (7.69)			1 (7.69)		13
(Total of direct level)	3 (5.56)	6 (11.11)	3 (5.56)	15 (27.78)	4 (7.41)	5 (9.26)	4 (7.41)	9 (16.67)	1 (1.85)	1 (1.85)	3 (5.56)	0	(54)
2. Conventionally Indirect Level													
2.1 Suggestory formulae			1 (4.76)	3 (14.29)				6 (28.57)			4 (19.05)	7 (33.33)	21
2.2 Query preparatory	18 (10.91)	13 (7.88)	16 (9.70)	5 (3.03)	16 (9.70)	15 (9.09)	16 (9.70)	6 (3.64)	16 (9.70)	18 (10.91)	14 (8.48)	12 (7.27)	165
(Total of conventionally indirect level)	18 (9.68)	13 (6.99)	17 (9.14)	8 (4.30)	16 (8.60)	15 (8.06)	16 (8.60)	12 (6.45)	16 (8.60)	18 (9.68)	18 (9.68)	19 (10.22)	(186)
3. Non-Conventionally Indirect Level													
3.1 Strong hints		1 (12.50)		1 (12.50)				2 (25.00)	2 (25.00)	1 (12.50)		1 (12.50)	8
3.2 Mind hints				1 (50.00)					1 (50.00)				2
(Total of non-conventionally indirect level)	0	1 (10.00)	0	2 (20.00)	0	0	0	2 (20.00)	3 (30.00)	1 (10.00)	0	1 (10.00)	(10)
Total	21 (8.40)	20 (8.00)	20 (8.00)	25 (10.00)	20 (8.00)	20 (8.00)	20 (8.00)	23 (9.20)	20 (8.00)	20 (8.00)	21 (8.40)	20 (8.00)	250

Table 2*The effect of three social variables combination on the external modification devices*

External Modification Devices	Social Variables												Total (100)
	-P -D -I	-P +D -I	-P -D +I	-P +D +I	=P -D -I	=P +D -I	=P -D +I	=P +D +I	+P -D -I	+P +D -I	+P -D +I	+P +D +I	
	Frequency (%)												
1. Preparator		2 (8.70)	2 (8.70)	1 (4.35)		2 (8.70)	3 (13.04)	5 (21.74)		4 (17.39)	1 (4.35)	3 (13.04)	23
2. Checking available	1 (9.09)	3 (27.27)				1 (9.09)	5 (45.45)				1 (9.09)		11
3. Getting a pre-commitment	1 (11.11)		1 (11.11)		1 (11.11)	2 (22.22)	2 (22.22)			2 (22.22)			9
4. Grounder		11 (8.15)	12 (8.89)	15 (11.11)	13 (9.63)	16 (11.85)	14 (10.37)	8 (5.93)	8 (5.93)	11 (8.15)	9 (6.67)	18 (13.33)	135
5. Sweetener			2 (10.00)	2 (10.00)	2 (10.00)			4 (20.00)		5 (25.00)	5 (25.00)		20
6. Disarmer		1 (3.33)	8 (26.67)	7 (23.33)		4 (13.33)			1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	5 (16.67)	3 (10.00)	30
7. Cost minimizer			4 (25.00)			2 (12.50)	1 (6.25)	4 (25.00)		4 (25.00)	1 (6.25)		16
8. Promise			7 (31.82)	10 (45.45)	1 (4.55)		4 (18.18)						22
9. Appreciation		1 (10.00)				1 (10.00)	5 (50.00)	2 (20.00)			1 (10.00)		10
10. Apology	1 (3.33)	9 (30.00)	3 (10.00)	3 (10.00)	1 (3.33)	2 (6.67)			6 (20.00)	1 (3.33)	2 (6.67)	2 (6.67)	30
11. Alerter	3 (10.00)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	7 (23.33)	4 (13.33)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	5 (16.67)	3 (10.00)	1 (3.33)	2 (6.67)	30
12. Closing	2 (11.11)	1 (5.56)		2 (22.22)	4 (13.79)	4 (10.53)	1 (5.56)	2 (22.22)		1 (5.56)	1 (5.56)		18
Total	8 (2.26)	29 (8.19)	40 (11.30)	41 (11.58)	29 (8.19)	38 (10.73)	36 (10.17)	26 (7.34)	20 (5.65)	32 (9.04)	27 (7.63)	28 (7.91)	354