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指導教授：黃瓊之博士

Advisor: Prof. Chiung-chih Huang (Ph.D.)

漢語兒童請求時的禮貌

Mandarin-Speaking Children's Politeness in Requests



研究生：陳郁彬

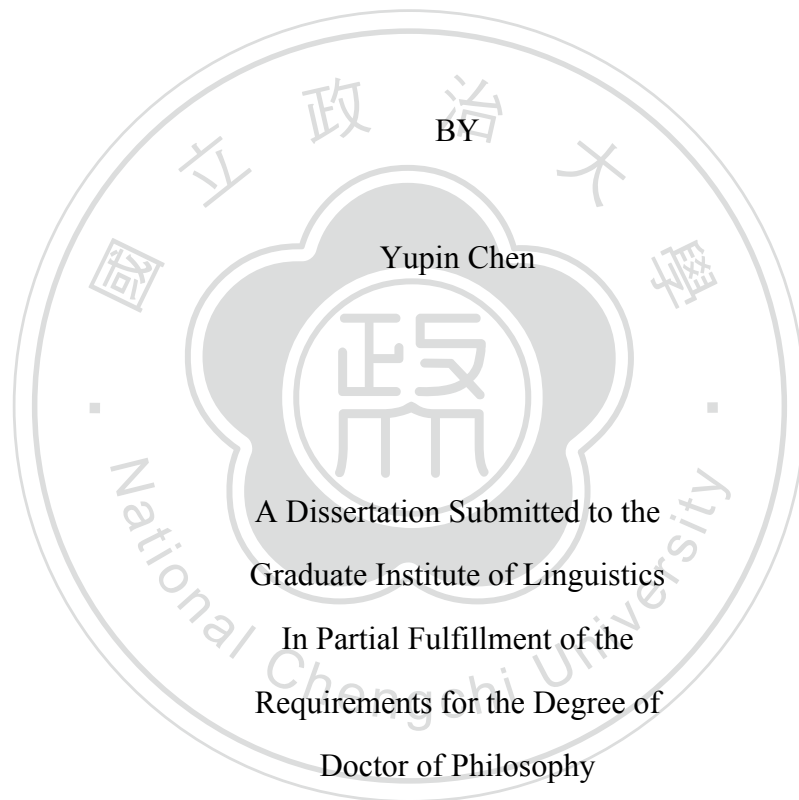
Student: Chen, Yupin

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MANDARIN-SPEAKING CHILDREN'S

POLITENESS IN REQUESTS



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Yupin Chen

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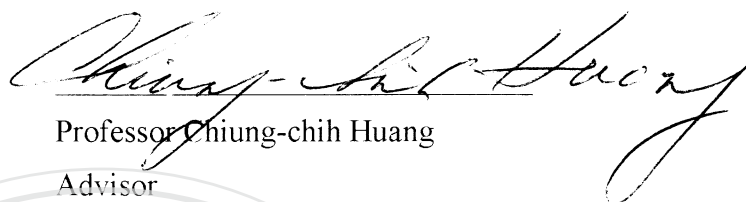
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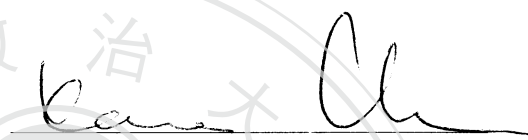
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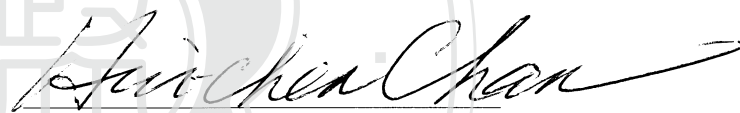
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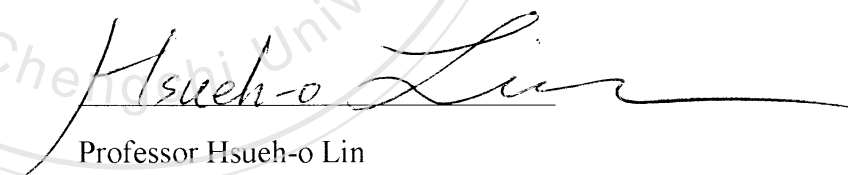
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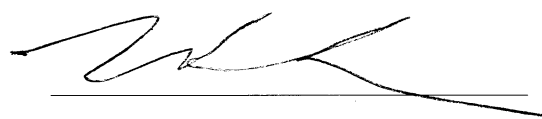
defended on July 2, 2010.


Professor Chiung-chih Huang
Advisor

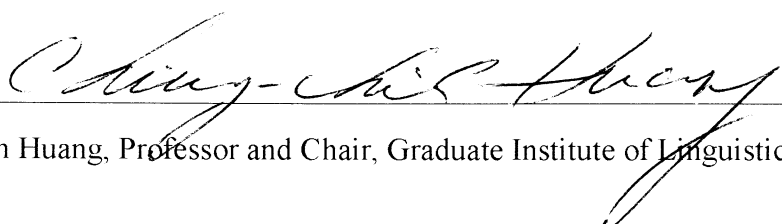

Distinguished Professor Kawai Chui
Committee Member


Professor Hui-chen Chan
Committee Member


Professor Hsueh-o Lin
Committee Member


Professor Miao-Ling Hsieh
Committee Member

Approved:


Chiung-chih Huang, Professor and Chair, Graduate Institute of Linguistics



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xi
Chinese Abstract	xiii
English Abstract	xvii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	7
2.1 Politeness	9
2.1.1 Politeness theories	9
2.1.2 Children's politeness	23
2.2 Requests as a Speech Act	28
2.2.1 Requests and/or directives	30
2.2.2 Children's requests	32
2.2.3 Directness of request forms	39
2.3 The Present Study	49
Chapter 3 Methodology	55
3.1 Subjects	57
3.2 Data	59
3.3 Data Analysis	60
3.3.1 Cases of requests	61

3.3.2 Cases of politeness	66
3.4 The Coding System	69
Chapter 4 Findings	81
4.1 Children's Requests	82
4.1.1 Children's various request forms	83
4.1.2 Request forms and contexts	92
4.1.3 Request repertoire across ages	103
4.2 Children's Politeness in Requests	107
4.2.1 Children's use of social deixis	107
4.2.2 Directness of request forms and politeness	129
4.3 Persuasive Tactics	150
4.4 Effectiveness	153
4.5 Summary	175
Chapter 5	179
5.1 Discussion	180
5.2 Conclusion	191
5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies	193
References	199
Appendix A	209
Appendix B	211
Appendix C	213

List of Tables

Table 1. Frequencies of Children's Request Forms	84
Table 2. Distributions of Request Forms within Contexts across Time in Percentage	94
Table 3. Frequencies of Social Deixis	108
Table 4. The Directness of Request Forms across Age	131
Table 5. The Directness of Request Forms with Respect to Status across Age	133
Table 6. Distributions of Directness of Request Forms Regarding Cost across Age	144
Table 7. Distribution of Tone of Speech with Regard to Status across Time	147
Table 8. Distribution of Tone of Speech Regarding Cost across Age	149
Table 9. Distribution of Compliance across Major Request Forms	154
Table 10. Effectiveness of Request Forms with Respect to Status	160
Table 11. Effectiveness of Request Forms Regarding Cost	163
Table 12. Effectiveness of Different Tone of Speech across Age	172

List of Figures

Figure 1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs	16
Figure 2. Directness of requests	43
Figure 3. Children's uses of request forms in two major activities in percentage ...	97

國立政治大學研究所博士論文提要

研究所別：語言學研究所

論文名稱：漢語兒童請求時的禮貌

指導教授：黃瓊之博士

研究生：陳郁彬

論文提要內容：(共一冊，分五章)

本研究主要探討台灣漢語兒童在日常家庭對話中，對父母行使請求時的語言表現及禮貌現象，以了解漢語兒童的語用發展歷程與現象。研究的重點主要是在兒童表達請求的言語行為時所使用的語言形式，以及人際關係中會影響兒童禮貌表現的因素及其反應在語言形式的使用情形。透過對兩位以漢語為母語的兒童長期互動的觀察，本研究發現，兒童在表達請求時，採用多元的語言形式，包含祈使句、直述句、帶有語尾助詞的祈使句、以及表達個人慾望或需求的陳述句。考量這些語言形式使用的情境後進一步發現，兒童傾向在一般的日常對話中多以表達個人慾望的陳述句為表達請求的主要語言形式，而在合作互動的情境中，主要的請求語言形式則絕大多數為祈使句；這樣的語言功能分工，在兩歲半左右可以明顯觀察得到。

另外，透過兒童語言形式表達禮貌的觀察顯示，兒童普遍會依照人際互動的一些因素來選擇表達請求時所適用的語言形式，尤以有效性及地位高低為主要的兩個考量因素。觀察中發現，兒童大量使用祈使句及表達個人慾望需求的陳述句來表達請求，而其他的語言型式相對上則少得許多，主要的因素很有可能是這兩類的語言型式，在他們與父母互動中最能有效達到他們的溝通目的。此外，兒童也會依照他們在表達請求時與他們父母間的地位高低來考量請求所要使用的語言形式。儘管觀察結果指出，兒童傾向使用能有效達到溝通互動目的的語言形式來表達他們的請求，必要時，他們也會依照互動雙方的地位關係進行語言形式的微調，這樣的語言表現有明顯的系統性；而這樣的系統性，進而突顯了兒童約略在三歲前即對禮貌在語言形式使用的影響有了初步的系統與了解。

除了句法結構外，兒童也會透過詞彙單位來傳達他們在請求所應注意的禮貌，例如，必要時，他們會使用「幫」、「請」、及「我們」來修飾或削弱請求時可能對對方所造成的影響。這些詞彙的使用在發展上屬於略晚才習得的語言形式。

最後，研究的結果也指出，雖然兒童表達請求時，使用較為間接而有禮的語言形式，未必較能有效地達到他們的溝通目的，

但是如果在表達請求的同時，也進一步說明理由者，達到溝通目的的的機率則有明顯的增加。另外，從語言形式和表達請求的情境及人際地位的互動中發現，兒童表達請求的基本語言形式極有可能為表達個人的慾望與需求的陳述句，儘管祈使句在所觀察的語料中使用的頻率最高。這樣的論點，不但符合其他文獻中針對兒童語言發展的發現，也貼近兒童語言發展為連續過程的觀點，且也反應了人類語言發展的基本歷程。



Abstract

This study aims to investigate Mandarin-speaking children's requests and their linguistic politeness so as to contribute to the understanding of children's pragmatic development as well as linguistic development. The present study is mainly concerned with what linguistic devices children utilize to issue requests in spontaneous interactions with their parents and what interpersonal factors may have an influence on children's uses of request forms. These two issues were discussed through examinations over children's spontaneous interactions with their parents in family settings.

On the basis of the longitudinal data produced by two children, it has been found that when requesting, children draw upon various linguistic devices, primarily including simple imperatives, WANT statements, imperatives with sentence-final particle, and declaratives. Such a variety of request forms can be observed from an early age on, at around two years old, but demonstrates no remarkable development, judged simply by these formal devices used at different ages. When situational contexts are also taken into account, nevertheless, a developmental pattern regarding the request forms is thus revealed. In terms of situational contexts, children are found to use simple imperatives primarily to convey their requests when involved in interactive activities with their parents, whereas they tend to utilize both simple imperatives and WANT statements when having common talks with their parents.

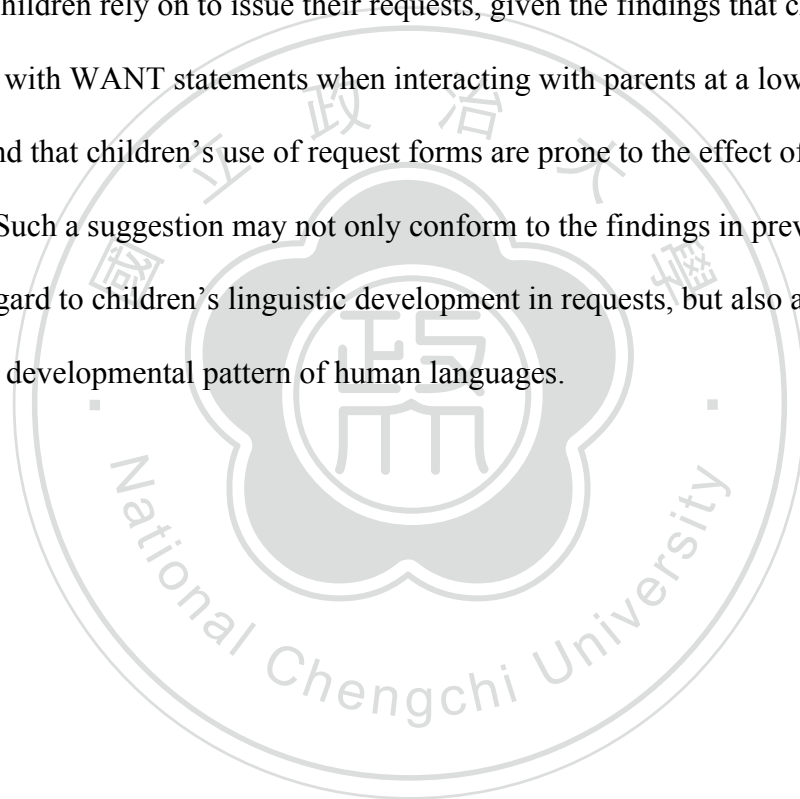
Such a division of labor can be noticeably observed when children are about two and half years old.

As to children's linguistic politeness when making requests, the results reveal that children are aware of the influence of certain interactional and interpersonal factors on the appropriate use of linguistic forms. Children are inclined to draw upon comparatively more effective forms to issue their requests, and therefore children by and large request with pure imperatives and WANT statements, since these two request forms may effectively obtain the desirable compliance from their parents. In addition to effectiveness, children may also take interpersonal status and request cost into consideration when judging which request forms to use in the immediate context. Such consideration of interpersonal status when determining the appropriate request forms to use may thus reflect children's awareness of politeness at around the age of three.

In addition to syntactic structures, children are also found to draw upon lexical items to show their deference to politeness. Children may use such lexical forms as *qing* 'please', *bang* 'to help with' and *women* 'let's; we' to mitigate the illocutionary force in their requests. These forms, despite their low frequencies in the data, may thus reveal children's sensitivity to politeness when making such a face-threatening act as requests. The use of these polite lexical forms also discloses a comparatively late development in linguistic politeness; children may not use such polite forms until they reach the second half of their second year. A late development is also observed in the respect of children's use of reasons to justify their requests. The results show

that children's justification may generally increase the effectiveness of their requests, but such use is infrequent and only observed at a later age, around the age of three.

Finally, the results of the investigation into the data may suggest that WANT statements are highly likely an earlier developed request form and the prime linguistic forms children rely on to issue their requests, given the findings that children tend to request with WANT statements when interacting with parents at a lower status as a child and that children's use of request forms are prone to the effect of interpersonal status. Such a suggestion may not only conform to the findings in previous studies with regard to children's linguistic development in requests, but also accord with the general developmental pattern of human languages.



Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Children were born to be social animals. Ever since children were born, they have been exposed to an interactional environment and endowed with the basic need to interact with people in all sorts of social or interpersonal situations (Tomasello, 1992). To become a capable and competent language user who is able to use language appropriately in social situations, it is indispensable for children to develop their pragmatic ability, in addition to the acquisition of linguistic competence, including phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. They are required not only to learn the fact that '[l]anguage is social behavior' (Tomasello, 1992, p. 67), but also to develop the ability to convey their communicative intents clearly and appropriately (Ninio & Snow, 1996); in particular, children are called upon to develop the appropriate and well-received ways to issue speech acts or control acts (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990).

Among all speech acts, requests or directives have been well documented and extensively explored by researchers in various disciplines, including sociologists,

psychologists, anthropologist, educators, and linguists. The major issues concerning researchers in this respect include the structure of children's requests (e.g. Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, 1980; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984), the directness and indirectness of children's requests (e.g. Garton & Pratt, 1990), children's production and comprehension of requests (e.g. Leonard, 1993; Babelot & Marcos, 1999), and children's strategies of requests (e.g. Wood & Gardner, 1980; Axia, 1996). It is generally agreed among these studies that children's requests are an early-developed communicative ability. Even in prelinguistic stage, children have already been able to demonstrate their communicative intents with gestures, sometimes accompanied with vocatives (Bates et al., 1975; Bates, 1967; Bruner, 1981; 1983; Kelly, 2007). In addition, researchers mostly emphasize that children's development of requests also reveals children's awareness of socio-interactional knowledge: context, shared knowledge, politeness, and social relation and status between interlocutors (e.g. Garvey, 1974; Ervin-Tripp, 1977, Wood & Gardner, 1980; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990; Babelot & Marcos, 1999; Chen, 2006).

Correlated with requests, politeness is also alluded to by studies on children's requests. Most studies attribute children's various strategies to politeness. They point out that children's utilization of various request strategies may result from their awareness of politeness. In some studies, politeness is even the main focus of investigation. It is pointed out that requests tend to be subject to some socio-interactional factors, and these factors may spur children's adjustment of linguistic devices drawn upon to issue requests. Such adjustment of linguistic forms can therefore reflect children's linguistic politeness and thus politeness may be the

integral factor in the performance of requests (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). Focusing on children's development or use of politeness, most studies are mainly concerned with developmental stages of children's politeness. They take pains in exploring how children express or become aware of politeness at a particular age (e.g. Wood & Gardner, 1980; Axia & Baroni, 1985; Axia, 1996). The findings in this respect so far are divergent; some studies suggest a late development (e.g. Axia & Baroni, 1985; Axia, 1996), while others reveal an early systematic use of politeness, e.g. Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). Axia (1999) argues that children's development of politeness embarks from five years old on and matures at school age around eight years old. However, Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990) analyzed politeness into three aspects, including social indices, social tactics, and persuasion. They found that children at different ages tend to systematically, though varying across ages, exploit these three aspects of politeness.

The above findings and arguments pertaining to either request or politeness, however, are mostly based on observations and examinations on English-speaking children or children from the western cultures. It seems that studies on Mandarin-speaking children's directives or requests have long lagged behind. Despite the fact that some studies have proposed an overall discussion of children's pragmatic development (e.g. Hsu, 1996 & 2000; Zhou, 2002), there remains a lack of systematic analyses of children's ability of directives or requests, including their request repertoire (linguistic forms or devices utilized by children to issue requests), request strategies, and their social awareness and politeness reflected in their requests or directives. In addition, although politeness has been found to be influential in children's requests, Mandarin-speaking children's development or ability in

performing politeness, nevertheless, has remained underexplored. Children's politeness in their preschool years is especially neglected, although a few studies have been concerned with school-age children's politeness, e.g. Hsiao (1999). The present study, therefore, aims to examine Mandarin-speaking children's repertoire of requests, including strategies, formal variations, and systematic distributions of the formal variations. In addition, since the performance of requests may reflect children's social and interpersonal knowledge, this study also considers children's development in this respect by observing and examining their politeness when they are making requests. Two major issues are in question: (a) Mandarin-speaking children's repertoire of requests, including how children convey their requests, what formal variations are utilized by children to encode their requests, and whether systematic distributions of the formal variations can be observed and generalized in children's spontaneous speech, and (b) Mandarin-speaking preschoolers' politeness in requests, including their linguistic enactment of politeness, age differences in the development of politeness, interactional or interpersonal factors that may influence children's performance of requests, and the relationships between politeness and compliance; that is, whether being polite is correlatively effective in making requests.

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 is mainly literature review. In this chapter, a review on speech acts theory and politeness theory is presented. In addition, studies on child language in the respects of requests or directives and politeness are also reviewed. Based on the review, research questions of the present study will be proposed. Chapter 3 introduces subjects and data to be observed in the present study. Moreover, given the findings and suggestions in the literature, Chapter 3 also explicates how the data are managed and analyzed. Above all, in Chapter 3, a

coding system created to manage the data is presented in detail. Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis. Chapter 5 discusses the relations between the findings in this study and those in the literature and points out the implications of this study and concludes the entire study. Last but not least, the final chapter, namely Chapter 5, also indicates limitations of this present study and suggests the potential issues or directions for future studies.



Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study attempts to explore Mandarin-speaking children's requests to their mothers and their linguistic enactment of politeness in requests. In such a study on politeness, crucial concepts or theories of politeness should not be neglected. Therefore, a part of the review deals with the major politeness theories, including Lackoff's (1973; 1975), Leech's (1983), and Brown and Levinson's (1987). Although these politeness theories are well established, they may not be directly applicable to child politeness. The application of these theories to child discourse is yet to be mature. Further studies concerning such application are desirable.

As the following review will show, many studies on child politeness focus on the linguistic enactment of politeness in interactions. They are concerned with what linguistic devices children utilize to encode their politeness in a particular situation at a particular stage of pragmatic development. These studies are based on the belief that politeness is conveyed via a certain degree of formal modification made to linguistic

forms. Among them, the framework proposed by Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues (1990) seems convenient for studies on child politeness development. Their framework integrates issues discussed in the theories of politeness as well as studies on child language. Also, the framework is constructed on the basis of observations on children's politeness in daily conversation. Therefore, a part of the review discusses studies on child politeness, and the framework in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s study is the major focus.

In addition, a number of studies on child politeness investigate children's speech acts to understand their development of linguistic politeness, requests in particular. Researchers by and large agree that requests with the inherent face-threatening property play a perfect role in the exploration of politeness. Given the property that requests involve one's desire to be fulfilled by asking the other, whenever one performs such a speech act, s/he places a certain degree of threat on both parties. Modifications on linguistic forms of requests can reduce or avoid such threat, which in turn is believed connected with politeness. In order to elucidate the relationship between requests and politeness in child language, this study thus examines requests, following most of the previous studies. Hence, theories of speech acts and studies on child requests are also included in the review.

As an outline, this chapter consists of two main subparts. The first part reviews the theoretical proposals of politeness and children's politeness in their conversations with adults and peers. The second part presents the review of studies concerning requests as a speech act as well as requests in child language use. The last part of the chapter presents the research scope and research questions of this study.

2.1 Politeness

One crucial respect in children's pragmatic development is to acquire appropriateness of language use. An integral part of appropriate use of language is politeness, particularly in performance of speech acts in interaction. When requesting, for instance, a requester most of the time prefers a compliance to his/her requests. For the compliance to be met, the requester thus needs to perform the request intents appropriately. The requester should pay attention to all potential factors that may influence the appropriateness and effectiveness of the request. Among these factors lies politeness. Although politeness may not be the sole determinant factor of the success of a speech act, it is indeed indispensable. Therefore, for children to appropriately and successfully perform a speech act, they are required to acquire politeness in the course of their linguistic development.

2.1.1 Politeness theories

Although politeness is significant and essential in daily conversation and interaction, not until late 1970s did linguists pay serious attention to the significance of politeness in pragmatics (Kasper, 1990; 1996). Thereafter, politeness has become the main issue concerning many linguists studying pragmatics. Among all the studies concerning politeness, the politeness theories proposed by Lakoff (1973, 1975), Leech (1983), and Brown & Levinson (1987) seem to be the most well-received and provocative ones.

Lakoff (1973) adopted Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle to account for

politeness. Lakoff's politeness theory consists of two main rules: (a) be clear and (b) be polite. Underlying these two rules are three sub-rules or sub-maxims, including (1) don't impose; (2) give options; and (3) make the hearer feel good. By the rules and sub-rules cited above, it can thus be inferred that for Lakoff politeness seems to be a device to avoid offense and displeasure. Despite the maxims, Lakoff did not specify how the degree of politeness should be assessed by the speaker and the hearer in interaction; how the interlocutors should compute with respect to each maxim so as to know which maxims to follow at a particular situation.

Leech (1983) also proposed his politeness theory on the basis of Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975). In Leech's framework, politeness or Politeness Principle (PP for short) is considered as a component of Interpersonal Rhetoric (hereafter IR). The other two components of IR, according to Leech, are Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP, henceforth) and Irony Principle. These three principles are equally important in Leech's pragmatic theory. In Leech's opinion, Grice's CP regulates how people should convey their messages when interacting with one another and how the addressee of an utterance should do so as to infer the implicature of the utterance when addressed in an indirect way. In Leech's opinion, CP, however, fails to explain why people often convey their messages indirectly when they can do so in a direct way. Therefore, in order to redeem CP's disadvantages, Leech emphasized that PP is a necessary complement to CP.

For Leech (1983), PP and CP are complementary to each other. CP and PP, however, do not work completely in isolation. They do not operate individually in an orderly fashion or as alternatives to each other. According to Leech, CP and PP

interact and they are in a ‘trade-off’ relation (Leech, 1983, p. 82). Basically, PP has a higher status over CP. PP enables interlocutors to maintain ‘social equilibrium and the friendly relations (Leech, 1983, p. 82)’. Nevertheless, CP can win over PP in certain situations. For example, when interlocutors are involved in a highly cooperative activity or discourse, where they may be asked to cooperatively finish a task at hand within a time limit, CP plays the main role instead of PP. Hence, Leech argued that when interacting, interlocutors always face a tension of ‘a clash between the CP and the PP so that they have to choose how far to “trade off” one against the other (Leech, 1983, p. 83)’ in a particular situation.

Following Grice’s framework, Leech (1983) accounted for politeness with a set of maxims and sub-maxims as Lakoff (1973) did. Leech’s PP consists of six maxims and each maxim contains two sub-maxims which form a pair. The maxims are as follows (Leech, 1983, p. 132):

- (I) TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
 - (a) Minimize cost to *other* [(b) Maximize benefit to *other*]¹
- (II) GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
 - (a) Minimize benefit to *self* [(b) Maximize cost to *self*]
- (III) APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
 - (a) Minimize dispraise of *other* [(b) Maximize praise of *other*]
- (IV) MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
 - (a) Minimize praise of *self* [(b) Maximize dispraise of *self*]
- (V) AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives)
 - (a) Minimize disagreement between *self* and *other*
 - [(b) Maximize agreement between *self* and *other*]

¹ The square brackets belong to the original text.

(VI) SYMPATHY MAXIM (in assertives)

(a) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*[(b) Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*]

It is clear in the above citation that in Leech's view politeness seems determined and maneuvered with respect to a set of scales. The set of scales, according to Leech (1983, pp. 123-127), comprises: (a) The Cost-Benefit Scale: refers to the cost or benefit of a speech act to the speaker or the addressee; (b) The Optionality Scale: refers to the amount of choice which the speaker gives to the hearer when performing a speech act; (3) The Indirectness Scale: refers to the effort that the hearer should make to infer the intended illocutionary act; (4) The Authority Scale: refers to the relative power that the speaker has over the addressee; and (5) The Social Distance Scale: refers to how familiar the speaker is with the addressee (See also Fraser, 1990, p. 226). Hence, when performing a speech act, the speaker may do it in a more direct way as the speaker's authority is greater over the hearer or the hearer's cost with regard to the speech act is little.

Leech (1983, p. 83) also highlighted a distinction between 'ABSOLUTE POLITENESS' and 'RELATIVE POLITENESS'. 'ABSOLUTE POLITENESS' refers to the degree of politeness that is inherently associated with an illocutionary act. For example, directives, such as orders and commands, are impolite by nature, while commissives, such as offers and invitations, are polite by nature. 'ABSOLUTE POLITENESS' is evaluated by the set of scales that has been discussed above. The set of scales has a positive and negative pole. When the speaker maximizes the inherent politeness of an illocutionary act, 'positive politeness' is being performed, and when

the speaker minimizes the inherent impoliteness of an illocutionary act, ‘negative politeness’ is being performed. The set of scales that has been reviewed above, according to Leech, basically deals with the ‘ABSOLUTE POLITENESS’.

On the other hand, ‘RELATIVE POLITENESS’ refers to the degree of politeness that may be shifted with respect to the context or situation, culture, or language community in which a particular illocutionary act is performed. In terms of ‘ABSOLUTE POLITENESS’, such utterances as *Tell me what you see in the map* is inherently more impolite than those as *Would you mind telling me what you see in the map*, but there may be situations in which the latter instead appears to be less polite than the former, e.g., when both parties of the dyad are involved in a cooperative task with a time limit. Therefore, despite the fact that a particular illocutionary act may have inherent ‘ABSOLUTE POLITENESS’, the actual degree of politeness varies with the relative situations where an illocutionary act is carried out.

Apparently, Leech’s (1983) PP seems to be a very refined proposal and able to accommodate actual language use. It is, however, not immune from criticism. As pointed out by Fraser (1990), Leech’s PP seems too complicated for interlocutors to assess and compute. When the speaker is making a speech act, it appears difficult for the speaker to know what maxims s/he should apply, what pragmatic scale is immediately relevant, how the speaker should formulate the maxims and scales, and so on. In addition, it is also pointed out by other researchers that Leech’s framework also implies that the number of maxims and scales that are required to explain politeness may not be limited; there may be an infinite number of maxims and scales, as many as it needs to account for a particular situation involving politeness. It seems

that new maxims or sub-maxims can always be added to Leech's PP (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Dillons et al., 1985; Fraser, 1990; Lavandera, 1988; Reiter, 2000; Turner, 1996).

The politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) seems probably to be the best received and known among all recent theories or accounts of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.61) based their politeness theory on the notion of 'face', or 'the public self-image', posited by Goffman (1967). They stated that:

face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.61).

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 62) further divided face into two categories on the basis of interlocutor's desires or wants. One is 'negative face: the want of every "competent adult member" that his actions be unimpeded by others', and the other is 'positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.' To put it simply, the former pertains to the reduction of imposition on the addressee or both interlocutors in interaction, and the latter pertains to our 'desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62).'

Based on these two aspects of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) organized their politeness theory and accounted for politeness with the idea that certain speech acts

are intrinsically threatening to ‘the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker. They thus dubbed speech acts of this sort as ‘face-threatening acts (or FTAs)’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). According to Brown and Levinson, for example, orders, requests, advice, warnings, and threats are basically threatening to the addressee’s negative face. Speech acts, such as disapproval, criticism, challenges, and interruption are threatening to the addressee’s positive face. On the other hand, a speech act can also be threatening to the speaker’s negative or positive face. As pointed out by Brown and Levinson, such acts as thanking, accepting one’s apology and accepting one’s offers are threatening to the speaker’s negative face, and apologizing, confessing, and accepting compliments are threatening to the speaker’s positive face. In order to avoid or at least to mitigate the force of an FTA, language users may thus exploit politeness. From politeness, language users in turn develop a set of linguistic devices or linguistic strategies. By using these linguistic devices or strategies, according to Brown and Levinson, language users can not only successfully get their message across but also conform to politeness without (unintentionally) threatening anyone’s face.

A primary part of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory is to utilize linguistic strategies to minimize the potential threats underlying an FTA. Brown and Levinson claimed that interlocutors should attend to the potential face risk to each other in interaction and use appropriate linguistic strategies to avoid the imposition on interlocutors’ negative face and/or positive face. The implementation of FTAs is schematized as follows by Brown and Levinson:

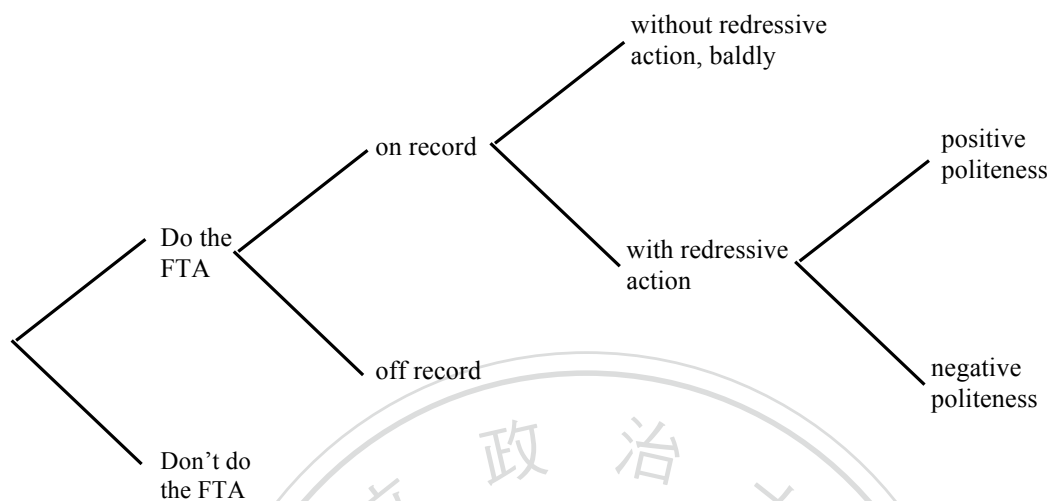


Figure 1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69)

As shown in Figure 1, when performing an FTA, according to Brown and Levinson, one can choose to do the FTA ‘on record’ or ‘off record’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69). By performing the FTA ‘on record’, one clearly and unambiguously conveys the intended act for the addressee to do. In other words, performing an FTA ‘on record’ means to explicitly encode the communicative intention in the utterance and the addressee of the FTA needs not infer to deduce the intended act. Brown and Levinson further argued that when performing an FTA one can further do so with or without ‘redress’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69). Performing an FTA without redress means to convey one’s communicative intent straightforwardly via clear, unambiguous, concise linguistic forms, such as, “Don’t stop!” Such FTAs without redress can be utilized, according to Brown and Levinson, only when both parties of the interaction agree on the suspension of face demand.

In other cases, an FTA can be performed on record as well as with redress. Such 'redressive action' (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69) shows that one puts into consideration potential damage to face and attempts to eschew the damage. Redressive FTAs can be achieved through modifications or addition of linguistic forms. FTAs of this sort can involve 'positive politeness' and 'negative politeness' (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 70). Positive politeness is oriented to the positive face of the addressee; that is, what the speaker wants agrees with what the addressee wants. Negative politeness, in contrast, is oriented to the addressee's negative face; in other words, the speaker assures that what s/he wants does not interfere with what the addressee wants. The avoidance of interference can be achieved via 'conventionalized indirectness, for whatever the indirect mechanism used to do an FTA' (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 70). The indirect mechanism can be exemplified with such indirect requests as *Can you pass the salt* (questioning the addressee's ability to do an act or the preparatory condition of a request) and *Would you mind closing the window* (questioning the addressee's desire or the sincerity condition of a request).

In addition, an FTA can also be performed 'off record' (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.69). Doing an FTA off record means to convey one's communicative intention ambiguously with more than one potential candidate for the intended meaning. Attaining the intended meaning of an off-record FTA requires the addressee to make some efforts. Examples are like hints. The speaker can hint to the addressee and ask him/her to perform the intended act through metaphor, irony, or rhetorical questions (e.g., *Is there any juice left?*). Performing an FTA off record thus, according to Brown and Levinson, leaves the intended meaning of the FTA negotiable to some

extent. In addition, Brown and Levinson also suggested that off-record FTAs can become on-record ones once they are conventionalized between interlocutors or even in a speech community.

In addition to the possible strategies for doing FTAs, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed three factors that they claim to influence the seriousness of an FTA. They argued that people, perhaps of all cultures, assess the imposition or intrusiveness of an FTA according to the following factors:

- (i) the 'social distance' (D) of S and H (a symmetric relation)
- (ii) the relative 'power' (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation)
- (iii) the absolute ranking (R) of impositions in the particular culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 74).

In this model, politeness is a function of the sum of the three variables, each of them ranging from 1 to n. Interlocutors thus determine the potential threat to each other's faces and the degree of politeness required in the context by computing the values of these three variables with respect to the context. Therefore, the decision to convey an FTA with a particular linguistic form is considered in terms of the outcome of interlocutor's calculation of these factors with respect to context.

The essence of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory can be summarized as follows: when interlocutors are performing FTAs, they consider both parties' positive and negative faces and they utilize indirect linguistic means or convey FTAs ambiguously so as to avoid intrusion on each other's positive and/or negative faces. According to Brown and Levinson, their politeness theory is universally applicable.

A number of studies, however, have argued that Brown and Levinson's theory failed to account for politeness in such cultures as Israeli, Japanese, Chinese cultures. Fellow researchers who are concerned with the universality of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory argued that the concept of negative face is neither cross-linguistically valid nor universally applicable. As pointed out by Clancy (1986), negative face wants appear to be insignificant and insufficient to explain Japanese politeness behavior, given the fact that Japanese culture is a collective one emphasizing conformity and reciprocity and that it is a social norm for Japanese people to be polite according to its cultural value. According to Gu's (1990) discussion on the comparison between Chinese and western concepts of face, such concepts as *lian* and *mian-zi*, although they may be rendered as counterparts to the concept of face in the western society, seem not congruous with the negative face in Brown and Levinson's framework. The enactment of politeness appears not to lie in the conformity of negative face, either.

Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) also claimed that a crucial part of the framework is to avoid interfering others' desire. One major way to do so is to utilize indirect way to perform FTAs. According to Brown and Levinson, interlocutors can encode their FTAs with particular linguistic forms so as to conform either on-record or off-record politeness. Nevertheless, studies on languages other than English revealed that no absolute politeness value is correlated with a specific linguistic enactment of politeness. It has been shown that indirectness is not absolutely polite cross-culturally and that politeness value correlated with a linguistic device is subject to contexts and discourse. Blum-Kulka (1987; 1990) demonstrated that Israeli people

consider indirect speech acts insincere and rude rather than polite. In addition, Israeli people judge indirectness differently. A linguistic device, on- or off-record, to redress an FTA may be view as direct FTAs, while direct FTAs without redress may be indirect ones in Israeli culture. In Japanese culture, a certain degree of indirectness and politeness should be maintained in social interaction; Japanese people rely heavily on such conventional forms as honorifics and speech formulas to convey politeness (Ide, 1989; Matsumoto, 1988).

Furthermore, the correlation between indirect linguistic enactment and politeness is not absolute and fixed; it may be altered or shifted by situational factors. For instance, when interlocutors are involved in a highly cooperative task, being indirect may thus hinder the accomplishment of the task, which in turn is not polite in this particular situation (Kasper, 1990; Leech, 1983). As suggested by Kasper (1990), in order to adequately describe and assess the correlation between linguistic indirectness and politeness, one has to consider the context where an exchange occurs.

In light of the lack of absolute correlation between linguistic politeness and politeness, other scholars thus propose alternative accounts of politeness. Wolfson (1989) argued that situational factors such as power and social distance have an influence on the extent of politeness. With power and social distance as the two axes, the degree of politeness in a particular situation may thus form a bulgy curve, instead of a diagonal straight line. In other words, the effect of power and distance on politeness is not in a positive correlation. She demonstrated that intimate interlocutors enact politeness the same way as those who are not equal in status and as those who are strangers, whereas non-intimate interlocutors, friends in equal status, and

co-workers remain a certain degree of politeness when interacting. Fraser (1990, p. 232), in contrast, proposed a ‘conversational-contract’ model of politeness. Fraser argued that the requirement and the degree of politeness is negotiated and renegotiated in the immediate exchanges of conversation. Interlocutors judge, on the basis of current utterance and situation, and then determine how polite they should be in the immediate context. In addition, Pan (2000) proposed a situation-based model of politeness to account for the enactment of politeness in Chinese culture. She pointed out that Chinese politeness is highly subject to situations. Politeness in Chinese culture does not have an absolute value. The value of politeness is determined by the communicative goal of the current interaction and the situation in which the current interaction occurs. It is found that Chinese people pay attention to such situational factors as face, setting, goal, role relationship, and power relations between interlocutors. Therefore, Pan argued that Chinese people seem to enact politeness with respect to the situation they are in and use politeness strategies accordingly.

While Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed their face-based framework to be universally applicable and explicable, studies by other scholars, as reviewed above, showed that the face-based theory apparently fails to be universal; Brown and Levinson’s theory seems unable to accommodate the politeness behaviors observed in non-western cultures. This disparity may result from the failure to observe the discrepancy between ‘first-order’ and ‘second-order’ politeness (Fraser, 1990; Pedlow et al., 2004, p. 348; Watt et al., 1992). (Brown and Levinson seem to consider both altogether within their theory.) In Watt et al.’s terms, ‘first-order’ politeness refers to the linguistic enactment of politeness in daily social interaction. ‘Second-order’

politeness, on the other hand, refers to the basis on which the linguistic enactment of politeness is established or the social norm of politeness within a particular society. This basis of politeness may vary across cultures and/or societies. In my opinion, the on- and off-record politeness strategies in Brown and Levinson's theory are in fact the first-order politeness, which in turn are anchored on the face wants between interlocutors, namely, the second-order politeness.

Given the distinction between two types of politeness, i.e., the first-order politeness or linguistic enactment of politeness and the second-order politeness or the conceptualization of politeness (Fraser, 1990; Pedlow et al., 2004; Watt et al., 1992), studies on politeness should thus heed the distinction. This distinction should as well apply to studies on children's pragmatic development. In the course of pragmatic development, children may first learn to enact politeness appropriately with particular linguistic forms, and then as time goes by, they form or generalize the cultural norm of face wants on the basis of linguistic enactment of politeness. One may, however, contend that children, particularly those in the early childhood, may yet to be socialized with the concept of politeness. Even so, children may have been able to enact politeness with linguistic devices in the early childhood, as pointed out by studies to be reviewed below in the following section. It is thus worth of exploring how children perform their politeness strategies before they become fully socialized with the concept of politeness. Therefore, the present study mainly focuses on how preschool children enact politeness with linguistic devices in the process of pragmatic development; what linguistic devices they utilize to encode politeness and whether a developmental difference can be revealed in their linguistic enactment of politeness.

2.1.2 Children's politeness

One of the essential goals for children in the course of their pragmatic development is to develop the knowledge of politeness at the same time they acquire their linguistic competence. The development of politeness includes a process of linguistic socialization in which children gradually become competent of being polite according to the social norm of politeness in the culture they were born in. This development also includes a process in which children develop the ability to enact politeness with appropriate linguistic devices in daily social interaction (Pedlow et al., 2004). The former takes children longer time to accomplish, while the latter can be observed from an early age on, as pointed out by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). By observing children's enactment of politeness at different stages of development, researchers can observe not only children's pragmatic and linguistic development but also their development in the socialization of politeness.

Studies on children's politeness mostly focus on children's linguistic enactment of politeness as well as politeness strategies. These studies are concerned with how children utilize linguistic devices to encode politeness. They have pointed out that children have been able to demonstrate politeness at an early age and that when enacting politeness, they seem to utilize different politeness strategies at different stages or ages. The various politeness strategies and linguistic enactments can thus mirror children's development of politeness, particularly their linguistic politeness.

In the development of linguistic politeness, age is found to be a function of politeness development (Axia, 1996; Leonard, 1993; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990; Wood & Gardner, 1990). In her study on Italian children's requests to ask their parents to

buy them toys, Axia (1996) reported that as children grow older, they not only are more competent to use politeness, but use more politeness in their requests. Axia, however, noted that Italian children generally seem impolite when requesting to the relatives, particularly their parents, although they have the ability to be polite.² In addition, age is found to be influential in children's politeness use. Wood and Gardner (1990) found that children rely on the ages between their interlocutors and themselves to determine the relative status between them; older children are considered to be at a higher status in comparison to younger children when interacting with their peers. With such status difference, older children tend to make requests or orders in a direct way while younger children tend to do so in a more indirect way. As pointed out by Wood and Gardner, the status between interlocutors influences the politeness of a request. Therefore, as children grow older, they become more competent of performing politeness and they also know that age difference between interlocutors has an influence on politeness.

Moreover, it has also been found that children's politeness strategies and linguistic enactment of politeness are sensitive to contexts (Axia, 1996; Ervin-Tripp; Garton & Pratt, 1990). How children perform politeness may not remain the same cross-contextually. This contextual sensitivity of politeness is also supported by children's judgments of politeness, not just by their performance. Garton and Pratt (1990) found that children during the period from 8 to 12 years old may have developed the knowledge that the degree of politeness associated with a particular request form is not absolute. They are aware of the fact that direct requests are not

² Axia (1996) also pointed out that although older children are generally more competent in the enactment of politeness, they seem not to be polite constantly.

always impolite and indirect requests are not polite all the time. The association between politeness and request forms are relative; it may change with respect to the context in which a particular request is conveyed. Therefore, contextual differences have an effect on politeness and children may be aware of this before they turn twelve.

A study conducted by Hsiao (1990) also argued for the contextual sensitivity of politeness in child language. She investigated school-age Chinese-speaking children's request styles and polite strategies. In her questionnaires and interviews, Hsiao found that children's requests and polite strategies formally vary with the addressees' social status and social distance or familiarity. Children were found to use more polite requests to people with higher social status and greater social distance.

Apart from contextual-sensitivity of politeness, the studies reviewed above (Axia, 1996; Graton & Pratt, 1990; Hsiao, 1990) also indicated a late development of children's politeness. Not until they are in grade school can children show a little awareness of politeness.

However, findings in other studies suggested that children demonstrate their politeness in an early age. The study conducted by Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues (1990) can be an excellent example. Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) fine-grained study integrated the key issues concerned in many studies on politeness, such as social distance, power, cost, interactional role, age, status, as well as linguistic redress. They found that children's use of polite forms could be observed from an early age on, around two years old. Children at an early age were found to rely on on-record polite

forms to convey their control acts.³ As they grew older, children became able to perform control acts via off-record strategies such as hint. In the respect of age as a function of politeness, Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues, on a par with other studies, reported that children's polite forms develop with age. Children were found to first use conventional or on-record forms and then develop the ability to use non-conventional or off-record forms.

In addition, Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) observed that children's performance of control acts is subject to contexts. Contextual factors have an influence on the linguistic forms they draw upon to encode their intended control acts, when deferring to politeness. They demonstrated that such contextual factors as rights and costs of a control act influence how children enact their politeness. By rights, Ervin-Tripp et al. meant the ownership of goods, and by costs, they meant the degree of intrusion of a control act. They found that children tend to use polite forms when their control acts affect the owner of goods or when the control act costs the addressee much effort to accomplish. Overall, they suggested that children have demonstrated their ability to utilize linguistic politeness properly since an early age, and their use of polite forms grows even more refined in accordance with social and/or contextual factors at around age five.

On top of that, Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) were also concerned with the correlation between being polite and being persuasive. They examined the effectiveness (or efficacy in their terms) of polite forms used by children in control acts. Their findings showed that the effectiveness of polite forms is sensitive to the power relationship

³ 'Control acts count as attempts to produce change in the actions of others.... The terms "request", "order", and "command" are used in everyday English to indicate types of *directives* to another person to act.' (Ervin-Tripp, et al., 1990, p. 308)

between interlocutors. Young children were found to fail to have their control acts complied even though they used polite forms. On the contrary, older children were found to rely on persuasive tactics to obtain the desired compliance rather than polite forms. Older children may justify their control acts by providing reasons. Ervin-Tripp et al. argued that older children often obtain the desired compliance because they tend to justify their control acts while younger children seldom provide reasons to justify their control acts and thus seldom have their interlocutors comply with their desired intention. Hence, Ervin-Tripp et al. suggested that persuasion should be considered as a separate feature of politeness, apart from social indices and tactics, since persuasion was found to determine the effectiveness of a control act while politeness (social indices and social tactics) seemed not to guarantee the intended compliance; social indices and social tactics mainly serve to identify and indicate one's deference to social relationships and statuses. As suggested by Ervin-Tripp et al., politeness should not be considered as one simple inalienable concept. It should be analyzed into three aspects, including social indices, social tactics, and persuasive tactics. With such analysis, Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues maintained that politeness mainly serves to indicate socio-dynamic relationship between interlocutors, while persuasion functions as determinant of the success of a control act. Hence, being polite may not necessarily entail the success of the intended requests. They therefore suggested that only with the distinction between politeness and persuasion can one explain the non-absolute correlation of politeness and effectiveness.

Based on the findings in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) study, it can be inferred that the development of politeness may involve a process in which a child first learn to use

social indices and then other linguistic devices tactically to defer to the social relationship, namely, social tactics, and finally to be able to offer appropriate or valid justifications for their control acts so as to obtain the desired compliance (i.e., persuasive tactics). Moreover, as pointed out by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), although children are able to be polite — use social indices in their control acts as well as social tactics to tactically deliver a control act, in the development of politeness, they seldom attain the intended compliance; most of the time, their control acts are temporized or neglected. The provision of persuasion, however, seems to increase the effectiveness of children's control acts. Apparently, there exists a split between politeness and effectiveness; being polite seems to manifest only one's deference and adherence to social/interpersonal relationship, while to make a request effective, the provision of justifications appears to be determinant. Therefore, children also have to learn that using polite forms does not necessarily entail the obtaining of their intended compliance.

2.2 Requests as a Speech Act

Ever since Austin (1975) proposed the idea that we can have something done by saying something, speech acts have long been one of the mostly and widely explored areas in the field of pragmatics. Following Austin's proposal (1975), Searle (1975; 1976) further pointed out that speech acts are the minimal units of communication and they are mainly what Austin called the illocutionary acts of an utterance. He further classified speech acts into five basic types and requests or directives are included, as

shown below (See also Levinson, 1983):

- (i) **representatives**, which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc.)
- (ii) **directives**, which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning)
- (iii) **commissives**, which commit the speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering)
- (iv) **expressives**, which express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating)
- (v) **declarations**, which effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing from employment) (Levinson, 1983, p. 240)

According to the typology, *requests* or requesting is paradigmatic cases of the speech act *directives*. Levinson (1983), however, noted that this classification is not only in lack of a systematic criterion to identify an illocutionary act, but also away from completeness. In fact, many other classifications of speech acts have been proposed (e.g. Bach & Harnish, 1979; Ballmer & Brennenstuhl, 1981; Leech, 1983). For example, Leech (1983) considered illocutionary acts in terms of their relative social goals of establishing and maintaining comity, and considered such illocutionary acts as ordering, asking, demanding, begging as *competitive*, since '[t]he illocutionary goal competes with the social goal' (Leech, 1983, p. 104). In addition, Ballmer & Brennenstuhl (1981) categorized speech acts into four basic linguistic functions in correspondence to four different types of linguistic behavior serving different

communicative functions. They termed the linguistic function by which the speaker gets control over the hearer as *appeal*. Apparently, different researchers dub such directive function with different terms, but no matter which term they use to label the illocutionary act, they all are actually dealing with the directive or request illocutionary act. As a result, the present study will consider the illocutionary act that the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something as **requests**.

2.2.1 Requests and/or Directives

According to the taxonomy by Searle (1975), requests are a subtype of directives; another subtype is commands. Theoretically speaking, the difference between requests and commands is fourfold. They are different with respect to the speaker's status or position, extra-linguistic institution, paralinguistic features, and linguistic forms (Searle, 1979). First of all, when a directive is conveyed by a person who is at higher status or position towards one who is at a lower status or position, it is thus a command, or otherwise it is a request. Secondly, a directive is considered as a command when a speaker performs it with an institutionalized power, for example, an authorized armed guard to a common person. Thirdly, commands are usually conveyed with emphatic intonation contour while requests are not. Lastly, commands are by default conveyed via imperatives, usually accompanied with emphatic intonation pattern, whereas requests are by default conveyed via interrogatives (Searle, 1975; 1976; 1979; Levinson, 1983). Although both requests and commands belong to one category of speech acts, the slight distinction between them distinguishes one

from the other as two different paradigmatic types of directives.

Studies concerned with children's development of speech acts or communicative intents, however, consider in different ways how children have the addressee to do things with language. Some researchers, following Searle's (1969; 1975; 1976) taxonomy of speech acts, consider the intention to have an act done by using the other person as an instrument as *directives* (e.g. Wood & Gardner, 1980; Elrod, 1983; Babelot & Marcos, 1999). Others see such intention as *requests*, which according to Searle (1975, 1976) are a subtype of *directives*. Still others dub such illocutionary acts as *instrumental acts* or *control acts* (e.g. Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). Even though these researchers name such a speech act in different terms without literal and lucid explanations, it can be sure that they all refer to and are concerned with one similar illocutionary act; i.e. the speaker's wish or desire to have one thing done is fulfilled by using the addressee as the instrument.

Nevertheless, various terms found in the literature on children's speech acts can be justified. The discrepancy in the terminology may result from the uncertainty whether children are able to distinguish *requests* finely from *directives* as adults do. Also, it is not clear at what age children develop the ability to distinguish these two types of speech acts. Garvey (1975) commented that children may not be able to finely distinguish requests from commands. She clearly stated that the adult distinction among requests, orders, and commands, could not be fairly observed and identified in her child corpus. In addition, it is pointed out in the literature that when requesting, children may use imperative forms (Garvey, 1974; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Wood & Gardner, 1980) as well as interrogative forms. Moreover, studies on

children's comprehension of directives also concur with children's inability to tell requests from commands (Babelot & Marcos, 1999; Elrod; 1983). Elrod (1983) specifically noted that young children tended to interpret different subtypes of directives as one type. From the above review, it is obvious that children at an early age may yet to have the ability to tell commands from requests. Therefore, it seems reasonable to consider all young children's directive illocutionary acts as one single type.

Whether children distinguish requests from commands, however, still requires further studies to clarify. In order not to complicate the issues in question here, the present study thus considers the illocutionary acts to get the addressee to perform an act desired by the speaker as **requests**.

2.2.2 Children's requests

Despite the various terminologies read in previous studies, researchers generally reported that children demonstrate their communicative intents, requests in particular, in their early infancy, even before they are able to produce any linguistic elements (Bates, 1976; Bates et al., 1975; Bruner, 1981; 1983; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Hsu, 1996; Kelly, 2007; Marcos, 2001; Ninio & Snow, 1996; 1999; Zhou, 2002).⁴ Bates et al. (1975) argued that in the prelinguistic stage children have been able to produce such illocutionary acts as requests, or proto-imperatives in their

⁴ Dore (1978), however, on the basis of Searle's (1969) speech act theory, rejected the argument to consider prelinguistic communicative behavior or gestures as speech acts, since these communicative behavior lacked grammatical elements associated with the illocutionary acts.

term, with nonverbal communicative means. As growing older, children then learn gradually to replace these nonverbal means with appropriate linguistic forms. In addition, Bruner's (1981; 1983) longitudinal observation on two children also lends support to this argument that children develop their requests in early infancy. Based on his observation, Bruner pointed out that at an early stage, the two children requested with reaching gestures accompanied by an effortful sound. At a later stage, the effortful sounds were replaced with vocatives or intonational contours and their requestive gestures became conventionalized. As they grew older, the two children gradually substituted the gestures with linguistic forms. Moreover, relying on a large scale of project on children's development of communicative acts, Ninio and Snow (1996) reported that during the time from 14 to 18 months children's ability to request has already developed. Children during this period tend to restrict their request forms to a small set of verb forms, usually imperatives or infinitive forms. Later on, between 18 and 32 months, children's request forms grow in varieties, but they have yet to demonstrate any adult-like forms. According to Ninio and Snow, even though children are unable to request with linguistic forms that adults may generally use, they have been able to match utterances directly onto appropriate intentions with respect to particular interpersonal situations.

Studies on Mandarin-speaking children also remark that children's early development of their pragmatic ability to request. Hsu (1996) observed that early at the one-word stage, children already have had command of different speech acts, including requests, even though at this stage they could yet master little syntactic devices to encode their speech acts. Hsu further commented that not until the age of

three have children acquired all speech acts and complex linguistic forms to encode their speech acts. In addition, Zhou (2002) also observed that Mandarin-speaking children as young as 14 months have been able to perform requests, although they have not been able to respond appropriately to requests.

The literature on children's pragmatic development apparently indicates that the ability to convey requests develops early. The early development of requests has brought abundant studies in this respect. It is therefore worthwhile to explore children's requests, particularly non-English-speaking children, so as to contribute cross-linguistic insights.

Requests reflect a requester's social awareness and social knowledge. When requesting, one is managing to have his/her own needs or desires to be fulfilled by another person. The fulfillment of one's needs or desire may be in conflict with another person's. Thus, in order for one person to successfully perform a request, i.e., to have their requests complied with; s/he may need to pay attention to the social factors that make a particular request effective. Children's requests are also found to be subject to social factors, such as interpersonal relationship, status, power, age, interaction situation, etc. (Babelot & Marcos, 1999; Garvey, 1975; Giovanna, 1996; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Leonard, 1993; Sealey, 1999; Wood & Gardner, 1980). Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) observed that children's production of requests or instrumental languages in their term might require the coordination of both social and verbal or linguistic knowledge. According to Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, social and situational factors may have an effect on children's various request strategies, acts, utterance forms, nuances, and persuasive arguments. Social variables include power,

familiarity or social distance, and situational factors consist of right, obligation, ownership, intrusiveness, disruption, and difficulty to comply. Requests not only conform to these variables and factors but also reflect the effects of these factors. Hence, studying requests enables us to find out what aspects of social relations are important to children when they are performing a speech acts (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984).

Other studies also demonstrate that children's requests can reveal their knowledge of politeness. In a study comparing children's requests and refusals in negotiations, Leonard (1993) indicated that children at this stage (ranging from 3;6 to 5;5) were better at requesting than at refusing and that children's request strategies varied with the degree of politeness required in a particular situation. As pointed out by Leonard, when they needed to make polite requests, children used such politeness markers as *please* or interrogative forms. They also offered reasons to justify their requests. In addition, Axia (1996) found that when asking their parents to buy them an object, children might employ strategic requests pertaining to politeness and indirectness. She found that children could predict how their parents may respond to their requests and modify their requests accordingly. These two studies, namely Leonard (1993) and Axia (1996), therefore further provide the present study with a basis to examine children's politeness in their requests.

In addition to the emergence and the general development of children's speech acts, researchers have also been concerned with the linguistic repertoire, or a set of linguistic forms, used by children to encode a particular speech act. Garvey (1974, pp. 46-47), on the basis of speech act theory, classified requests observed in her child

corpus into direct requests, indirect requests, and inferred requests. Direct requests referred to the cases expressed with either imperative forms, e.g. *Close the window*, or with a performative verb, such as *request or ask*. Indirect requests were further divided into two subtypes, dubbed as Type I and Type II by Garvey. Indirect requests Type I referred to the cases in which the illocutionary act is embedded in such matrix clauses as *I want you....*, *Can you....*, *Would you (be willing to)....*, and *Will you....*. Indirect requests Type II referred to the cases in which the requester requests by referencing the requestee's status and/or other relevant property of the intended illocutionary act, e.g. *You have to close the window*. Indirect requests Type II, according to Garvey, also included the cases in which the matrix clause does not reference the sincerity condition of a request, but other imperative clause, e.g. *See if you can get the window open*. Finally, the inferred requests referred to the cases in which the requester specifies a desire for a state of affairs or something without specifically asking the requestee to perform the intended illocutionary act. In these cases the requestee may need to infer the intended illocutionary act. Cases of this type can be illustrated with *I want some water* and *The window should be closed*.

In addition to classifying request instances on the basis of theories, some researchers sorted out the repertoire of requests out of real data produced by children (Bates, 1976; Carter, 1974; Dore, 1973; Halliday, 1975; cited in Ervin-Tripp, 1977). Ervin-Tripp (1976, 1977) assembled the linguistic devices used by children to request. These linguistic devices thus comprise children's repertoire of request. The repertoire of requests proposed by Ervin-Tripp is as follows:

NEED STATEMENTS (or Statements of Personal Desire)

[e.g.] *I want a green milk shake.*

I'd like to speak to Officer Kernan.

I don't want no more fighting out of the girls.

IMPERATIVES

[e.g.] *Be back here at three o'clock.*

Let my brother alone.

Shut up, you sucker.

IMBEDDED IMPERATIVES

[e.g.] *John, would you please tell that lady to quit?*

Could you come out to 4425 Clemons Street?

PERMISSION DIRECTIVES

[e.g.] *May I have the police?*

Can I speak to her?

QUESTION DIRECTIVES

[e.g.] *Hey, you got a quarter, Mac?*

Boy, what you doin' out there?

HINTS

[e.g.] *I'm the sergeant around here.*

Last person talk to me like that is in his grave.

It's hot out here. (Mitchell-Kernan & Kernan, 1977, p. 192)

In addition, Ervin-Tripp (1977) also reviewed the development of children's repertoire of request. She reported that children first use gestures, name of objects, and such linguistic forms as *want* and *more*. The next development pertained to the

elaboration of vocabulary, inflections, and syntax by specifying of problems, goals, imperative acts, possessives, routines, and structural modifications, such as *Would you like to play the train*, *Will you give me a hand*, *Can you give me a block*, and *You could give it to me*. In the later half of the third year, children would request by indicating conditions that need to be fixed by adults. During this period, children would also be able to request indirectly without specifying the intended act or the benefactor of the intended act. Before they turned four years old, children would be able to produce inferential requests. They might hint and have their addressee to infer the desired act.

As reviewed above, early in the 1970 studies on English-speaking children have generalized the repertoire of children's requests and the development of the repertoire. In contrast, up to date Mandarin-speaking children's repertoire of requests remains little explored and documented, despite the studies accomplished by Hsu (1996) and Zhou (2002). Hsu's study was dedicated to the development of children's linguistic competence and in his study speech acts comprised only a subpart. His study was indeed a revelation and introduction of the issues pertaining to Chinese children's development of language and aims to provoke in-depth studies. Although Zhou (2002) focused mainly on the development of children's communicative competence, particularly on their communicative acts, the repertoire of children's speech acts seemed not to be systematically discussed in her study, let alone the repertoire of requests. As a result, a part of this study is dedicated to the repertoire of Mandarin-speaking children's requests — the linguistic devices used by children to request in naturalistic conversations.

2.2.3 Directness of request forms

As discussed previously (Section 2.1), Austin (1975) proposed that a performative utterance convey three acts simultaneously. These three acts altogether comprise a speech act. They are locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Focusing on Austin's illocutionary act, Searle (1975; 1976) classified speech acts into five basic categories according to the particular illocutionary act a locutionary act, or the utterance, conveys. In his classification, Searle considered the illocutionary acts that the speaker gets the hearer to do something as *directives* and *requesting* as a paradigmatic case of *directives* (See also Levinson, 1983). However, studies on child speech acts revealed that young children might not yet be able to differentiate requests from directives, as suggested by Garvey (1975). In light of this, requests in this study were thus used as a cover term to refer to the illocutionary act with which children's intention is fulfilled by asking their interlocutor to perform the intended act. On the basis of Austin's three aspects of a speech act, in this study an utterance was identified as one with the request illocutionary force by both its illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Therefore, an utterance was considered as a request by the addressee's reaction to the utterance, in addition to the intended intents encoded in the utterance.

In addition to the general classification of illocutionary forces, a speech act can be further categorized in terms of directness of the illocutionary act(s) that an utterance conveys (Searle, 1975). Searle proposed that indirect speech acts, distinctive from a direct one, are 'cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another (in Davis, 1991: p. 266).' The execution of an indirect speech act,

according to Searle, could be relied on the exploitation of the felicity conditions under which the particular speech act was felicitous. For example, to convey an indirect request, one can convey the intended illocutionary act via questioning or stating the addressee's ability to perform the action as in *Can you pass the salt* (by questioning the preparatory condition). In addition, Searle also argued that some of the indirect requests could be conventionally encoded with particular linguistic forms, such as *Can you..., I want..., It is possible that you would/could...* (Searle, 1975). It seems that Searle's proposal of the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is straightforward and clear-cut, but there may actually leave a lot to be desired.

Studies on children's production and comprehension of direct and indirect speech acts have revealed the disadvantages of Searle's proposal (e.g. Axia, 1996; Garton & Pratt, 1990; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). The findings in these studies have pointed out that at least two aspects of the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts proposed by Searle may not suffice. Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) pointed out that Searle's distinction could at best pertain to 'formal' differentiation between direct and indirect speech acts. What seemed formally indirect might be functionally direct in child discourse. For example, expressing one's desire or needs to request the other party of interaction to perform an act may be formally indirect, but functionally direct. Gordon and Ervin-Tripp found that children tend to use *I want...* construction as a direct means to direct their mother's action, and while requesting with this construction, they tend not to provide any justifying reasons. However, this *I want...* construction, according to Searle, was actually considered as an indirect means to convey the intended directive or request, since the request was

conveyed via talking about the sincerity condition of a request. In addition, the formally indirect requests, such as *The macaroni's boiling over* (as a directive to ask the hearer to do something about the macaroni), were found to be easily exploited by children as young as four to direct their mother's action. Indirect as the case *The macaroni's boiling*, children were found to have no difficulty in interpreting such utterance *It's noon* as an indirect speech act (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). These two cases, by Searle's distinctive criterion, were apparent indirect directives, but direct ones for children, since they were cognitively and interactionally direct (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984).

In addition, Babelot and Marcos (1999) pointed out that children rely heavily on contextual clues to determine a particular speech act being direct or indirect. They suggested that for children there seemed no fixed association between a particular linguistic form and its illocutionary force. Therefore, this may imply that children have yet to develop the default association between a linguistic form and the illocutionary force. They develop the association through the process of pragmatic development.

Indirect speech acts can also be further classified. Searle (1975) mentioned that some indirect speech acts were conventional while some are not. For example, the request *Can you pass the salt* was conventional while *The salt is close to you* was not. In addition, Morgan (1978) contended that conventionality of indirect speech acts were composed of a construction carrying a conventionalized meaning encoded with a conventionalized forms, which in turn was used in a conventionalized way with a conventionalized purpose. For example, when the utterance *Can you pass me the salt*

is used (conventionally) in the restaurant to the addressee with whom one is dining together, it thus (conventionally) means a request for the addressee to pass the salt over. Nevertheless, Searle and Morgan did not provide any criteria for the judgment of the conventionality of a particular indirect speech act. The distinction of conventionalized and non-conventionalized indirect speech acts thus seems arbitrary, though factual.

With the findings in their study, Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) implied a potential and reasonable account for how indirect speech acts become conventionalized. They found that in routine context children gradually form a cognitively or logically direct link between the formal indirect utterance, a cause, with the intended action, an effect, and this causal link (between the cause and the effect) enables children to produce and comprehend indirect directives effortlessly. This finding can thus reflect that when an utterance is regularly associated with a particular illocutionary act (as in routines), such a particular linguistic form thus becomes routinely associated with the intended action in a particular context, and an indirect speech act in turn becomes conventionalized. Hence, the conventionalization of a non-conventionalized speech act is not only theoretically argued, but also empirically testified. Also, Gordon and Ervin-Tripp's finding lends support to Strawson's (1974) argument that the conventionality of a speech act is fluid; a non-conventionalized speech act may become conventionalized because of frequent or regular use or mutual knowledge shared by interlocutors. Therefore, Gordon and Ervin-Tripp argued that while direct and indirect directives can be 'formally' differentiated, the conventionality of them can be contextually sensitive. In other words, an indirect

directive can be conventional in a particular context, but the same directive can be non-conventional in other contexts.

In light of the insufficiency in Searle's proposal of the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts, it may not be a good idea to directly apply this formal distinction to children's use of speech acts. As discussed above, findings in previous studies (e.g., Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Garton & Pratt, 1990; Garvey, 1975; Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, 1984) reflected that the directness or indirectness of a speech act, particularly directive, is not absolute; it is relatively determined by both its formal manifestation and its logical inference. On the basis of empirical evidence obtained in child discourse and theoretical arguments, a more refined distinction between direct and indirect speech acts should be as seen in the following figure (Figure 2).⁵

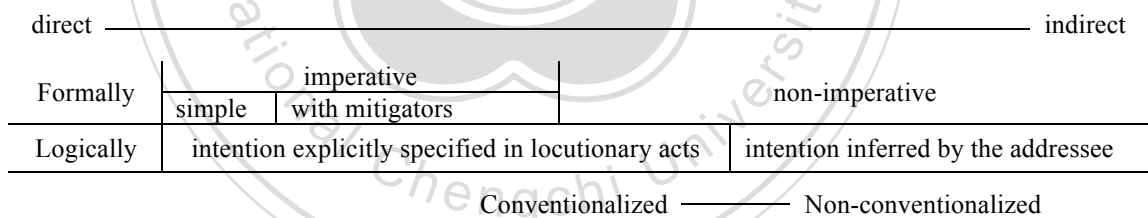


Figure 2. Directness of requests

As seen in the above figure, the scale on the top shows that the distinction of direct and indirect directives is not a clear or distinct dichotomy, but instead a fluid continuum. In this continuum, a directive is either more direct or more indirect, judged by the following two axes: formal representation and logical inference. When a directive is uttered with an imperative form, it is comparatively more direct and

⁵ Please note that the separating lines are only for clear representation. The boundaries are fluid and vague, given that each axis is a continuum.

forceful. On the other hand, when it is uttered with a non-imperative form, such as interrogative and declarative, it is comparatively more indirect and less forceful.

Directives encoded with imperatives can be further divided into two subtypes. One type includes directives encoded with simple imperatives, and the other one includes those imperatives with mitigators, such as sentence-final particles and tag questions.⁶ Such imperatives usually encode the intended act explicitly in their locutionary acts and hence they are also logically direct.

As to those directives expressed with non-imperative forms, they can be further considered logically. Some of the non-imperatives may explicitly indicate the intended action (e.g., *Could you pass the salt?*), while others may provide no information with regard to the intended action (e.g., *It's cold in here.*). The former requires the addressee's little effort (to obtain the intended act) in inferential processing, since the intended act is explicitly coded in the linguistic form. On the other hand, the latter requires the addressee to undergo certain inferential processes so as to procure the intended action, since the proposition conveyed by the linguistic form does not specify the intended act (cf. Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). Hence, directives expressed with non-imperative forms are considered even more indirect than non-imperatives with indication of the intended speech acts, since in the former no information about the intended action is provided.

Lastly, the scale at the bottom of the figure shows that all the requests can be considered as either conventionalized or non-conventionalized ones. The distinction again is a continuum, ranging between the point of conventionalized and

⁶ Whether a sentence-final particle is a mitigator depends on the context. Some particles may serve the function of aggravation in some contexts (Hsu, 1996).

non-conventionalized requests; there is no absolute value as to whether a request is surely conventionalized or not. Basically, the figure shows that when a request is issued with a particular linguistic form that explicitly expresses the intended act, such request is usually a more conventionalized one. In addition, some indirect requests are relatively more conventionalized than others because they require the least effort of logical inference or because they are frequently used in particular situations. Other indirect requests are comparatively more non-conventionalized because these requests may be with neither linguistic nor logical explicitness of the intended act, and thus require the address to make much more effort to infer the intended act or they are simply newly innovated request forms that are infrequently used in a particular situation.

The distinction provided here has at least two advantages. First, the distinction can account for the development of non-conventionalized indirect directives into conventionalized ones. As mentioned above, the distinction is a continuum and it is subject to other interactional factors. The conventionality is determined not only by conventional linguistic forms or logical inference, but also by interlocutors' mutual knowledge. When a non-conventionalized indirect directive is used routinely, i.e., regularly in a particular context with a particular form, it can thus become conventionalized (Strawson, 1974; also in Davis, 1991). In other words, the degree of an indirect speech act's conventionality is thus defined by the regular occurrence of a particular form conveying a particular illocutionary act in a particular context, and such a regular occurrence gradually becomes a part of interlocutors' mutual knowledge and further an element of their pragmatic competence. With this definition,

the conventionality of indirect speech acts may no longer be arbitrary, but mutually defined by interlocutors with respect to the interactional context.

In addition, this distinction allows the addition of novel indirect speech acts. It is possible for a speaker to create a brand new form to convey his/her intended act, provided that the addressee can correctly infer the intended action with appropriate amount of inferential effort. When the speaker regularly uses this novel form in a particular context with a particular interlocutor, this form may become a shared indirect speech act, and in turn may develop into a conventionalized speech act. If, on the other hand, the addressee can never infer the intended action, no matter how many times the speaker uses this form and how much effort the addressee makes to infer, the novel form will not be used as an indirect speech act at all.

In summary, the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts provided here incorporates both linguistic and cognitive concepts. The distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is considered fluid as a continuum. The distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is not dichotomy. In addition, the conventionality of an indirect speech act is also interactionally or collaboratively determined by interlocutors, but not predetermined by linguistic forms or propositions of utterances.

The above discussion only pertains to the directness of a speech act. It does not concern politeness nor does it consider the correspondence between politeness and directness of a speech act. As reviewed in the previous section (Section 2.1), Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model considered politeness in terms of whether an illocutionary force is an FTA (face-threatening act), whether redress is directed

towards the interlocutors' positive or negative face. Leech (1983), on the other hand, proposed six maxims on the basis of his Politeness Principle. In Leech's model, each maxim is associated with a particular type of illocutionary act. These two models on politeness concurred that indirectness is a way to maintain politeness. The more politeness is needed, the more indirectness is required, and vice versa. However, the correspondence is not as straightforward as these two models have suggested.

Ideally, there should be a consistent correspondence between politeness and indirectness, as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983). Some empirical findings indicated that the correspondence between politeness and indirectness is not fixed and not cross-culturally applicable. The correspondence is susceptible to social and cultural factors. Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) found that in mother-child conversations, especially in the conversations between young children and their mothers, children's indirectness in their control acts seemed not to ensure their mothers' compliance. Nor did the indirectness considered polite by their mothers. In other words, the mothers seemed not to expect politeness from their children in those conversational contexts. In addition, Leech (1983) also mentioned that indirectness should be exploited with respect to the relationship between interlocutors and the conversational situations. When indirectness is used when it is least expected, the interlocutor who seems to be polite may be considered to be flattering or ironic.

In addition, interlocutors should also take contexts into account to consider how indirectness is needed so as to conform to politeness. For example, in a task-based discourse in which both participants in the task are designated a task to accomplish with a time limit, no indirectness is expected, since the main and only aim of this

interaction is to finish the task at hand as required. Being indirect would instead make the task even more complicated and difficult to accomplish. In addition, such discourse type usually imposes a highly cooperative relationship on the participants. Being indirect would instead imply to the other participant that one is not being cooperative, which will in turn be judged as impolite (Kasper, 1990; Leech, 1983).

Moreover, different cultures consider indirectness from different perspectives, although in most Western languages, indirectness is viewed as a strategy to avoid intrusion on the addressee. Clancy (1986) indicated that indirectness in Japanese culture expresses empathy between the participants in a conversation, instead of emphasizing distance. In addition, Blum-Kulka (1987) found that for Israeli people, indirectness is considered less polite and insincere. People performing indirectness are seen to be non-committing, lacking of sincerity, and imposing, since the addressee is placed a burden to infer the speaker's intended meaning.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the range of politeness is collaboratively determined by the interlocutors. Different social relationships between the interlocutors and different discourse types the interlocutors are involved in may change the range of politeness. Although indirectness may ideally and inherently convey a certain degree of politeness, the correspondence between indirectness and politeness is not at all straightforward and fixed. The correspondence is obviously susceptible to social and cultural factors. Therefore, for interlocutors to know how politely and indirectly they should interact with each other, they have to first conform to their cultural norms, examine the current discourse type, and then determine how much politeness they should adhere to so as to respect the social relationship between

them.

2.3 The Present Study

By the review above, it is clear that children's politeness develops with age. Young children, although they may have command of linguistic devices and politeness strategies, tend to limit their politeness to particular linguistic devices. With such limited linguistic politeness, young children seldom gain the intended compliance; that is, their politeness is seldom effective in terms of communicative goals. In contrast, older children are found to be able to recognize the detachment between politeness and effectiveness of a polite form and to be able to adjust their politeness strategies according to situational factors and use different linguistic devices accordingly. Generally speaking, researchers agree that older children, particularly those in grade school or above the age of five, demonstrate good command of politeness, both first- and second-order; the former refers to the utilization of linguistic devices to defer to politeness, and the latter refers to the socialization and appreciation of politeness norm in a particular society or culture (Watt et al, 1992). Young children may manifest their first-order politeness via linguistic enactment, even though their second-order politeness has yet to mature. The study therefore attempts to examine how young children enact politeness in dyads with their parents, when requesting; the particular focus is the linguistic devices utilized to encode requests and politeness as well as developmental changes in the linguistic enactment.

In addition, the literature reviewed above points to the influence of situational factors on children's politeness strategies. Children are found to alter their politeness strategies or the linguistic devices to enact politeness in different social situations. Although children are generally inclined to be impolite when interacting with their mothers, they still heed the necessity of politeness with respect to conversational situations. As mentioned in the review, situational factors may include status, social distance, age, cost of an act, and speaker's rights. The relative influence or interaction of any of these factors may imply different degrees of politeness in a particular context. Children have been found amazingly good at the fine-tuning of linguistic devices to defer to politeness since an early age. A particular purpose of this study is thus to explore which factors of politeness may influence children's evaluation of the degree of politeness required in a particular context, when requesting, and what request forms are used to show children's respect to politeness.

The findings mentioned in the review pertaining to children's development of request and politeness so far are mainly based on examinations on children in western cultures. Mandarin-speaking children's development in such respect has been little investigated. It is still unclear whether Mandarin-speaking children also enact requests with various linguistic devices with respect to politeness from an early age on, as do English-speaking children. This study thus aims to explore Mandarin-speaking children's enactment of politeness in their requests in spontaneous conversations. The study hopes to contribute to cross-linguistic comparisons of children's development of requests and politeness as well as to provide cross-linguistic evidence for Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, particularly the linguistic redress of FTAs.

The present study adopts the framework of Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) to examine Mandarin-speaking children's politeness. They have pointed out that younger children mostly utilize social indices to defer the social/interpersonal relationship, then at a later age children use such indices and other linguistic devices tactically to encode politeness, and at around age five children give justifications to further effect a control acts. It is thus expected to observe that children develop first from being able to draw upon social indices to encode politeness, then to encode politeness via social tactics, and finally to do so with persuasive tactics. With the adoption of Ervin-Tripp et al.'s framework, the present study hopes to testify their framework; whether the framework is applicable to Mandarin-speaking children's politeness in requests as well or otherwise whether Mandarin-speaking children's politeness in requests conforms the prediction of the framework.

In addition, it have been pointed out in the literature that in some languages, linguistic enactment can be done via particular lexical items, such as Mandarin Chinese and Japanese (Gu, 1990; Hsu, 2000; Mei, 1994; Nakamura, 1996). In Japanese, people are socially and culturally required to use honorifics to conform to social dynamic relationship (Nakamura, 1996). In Mandarin Chinese, a number of lexical forms are used to defer to politeness as well. Such lexical forms include address terms or social deixis (Levinson, 1983) to establish and indicate social distance and interpersonal relationship between interlocutors, and lexical items, such as *qing* 'please', *bang* 'help', and *mafan* 'please', to issue a request as well as to defer to the social-dynamic relationship between interlocutors (Mei, 1994). In addition to these lexical forms, there are abundant address forms used to establish and indicate

social distance and/or social status in Mandarin Chinese. Compared to learning a syntactic construction to perform such functions, learning lexical items seems a comparatively easier task for children to master. Moreover, Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) study has also pointed out that children first develop the ability to use social deixis to defer to politeness. It is thus predicted that Mandarin-speaking children will first rely on these lexical forms and address forms to enact politeness before they develop the ability to utilize syntactic constructions to convey politeness.

Almost all studies on children's politeness investigate their requests. It seems that requests are the main venue therein researchers attempt to understand children's development of politeness (Held, 1992). As pointed out by Ervin-Tripp (1976; 1977) and Garvey (1974), requests involve the desires or wants of one interlocutor to be fulfilled through or probably in conflict with those of the other interlocutor. With this property, Brown and Levinson (1987) thus considered requests as a sort of FTAs. On performing requests, one is required to pay attention to a set of social or interpersonal information between interlocutors, as reviewed previously. Since requests are FTAs and since politeness is also subject to a set of social meanings, requests turn out to be a perfect locus to study politeness. Observing children's requests not only reflects how they have things done with words, but also reveals their awareness of politeness. Therefore, this study aims to examine children's politeness in their requests.

The present study will first investigate linguistic devices children utilize to convey requests. With the investigation of their requests, this study hopes to amass the request repertoire utilized by Mandarin-speaking children. This study then focuses on the examination and discussion of Mandarin-speaking children's politeness in their

requests. The major attention will be on the linguistic enactment of politeness at different ages, since the meta-knowledge of politeness, or social norm of politeness, develops late, as pointed out by a number of previous studies (e.g., Axia, 1996; Garton & Pratt, 1990; Hsiao, 1999). With the examination on the linguistic enactment of politeness, this present study attempts to discuss in mother-child conversations what social or situational factors affect the need of redressed requests. The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What kind of linguistic devices do Mandarin-speaking children draw upon to perform their requests? Do children use various linguistic devices systematically to issue requests? Is there any age-related development in this respect?
2. If there are systematic variation of request forms found in children's requests, what factors of linguistic politeness may have an influence on their uses of a particular request form? In addition, what lexical devices may be used by children to enact their politeness at different ages when requesting? Do Mandarin-speaking children provide justifications for their requests in addition to being polite? Is effectiveness of a request more important for children?
3. If children's request forms are subject to polite factors, is there a developmental trend in children's linguistic politeness?

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Pragmatic studies on children's development of speech acts and politeness can be pursued in various ways. There are mainly three methodological strategies that can be utilized to study children's pragmatic development. Many studies in this respect conduct experiments to explore children's pragmatic development. Researchers design and perform experiments according to an *a priori* protocol and have children perform responsive replies. With the experiment results, researchers thus answer how children perform speech acts and politeness. Children may be tested to understand their interpretation or knowledge of a particular speech act and/or politeness conveyed in utterances. They may also be experimented on to elicit how they produce a particular speech act or politeness. Experiments enable researchers to collect a great deal of comparable data within a short period of time. Experiments, however, may reflect only a small part of children's pragmatic development; the results are basically generated out of experiment designs, mostly responses to stimuli (Ervin-Tripp, 1990; Tomlin, et al., 1997).

Other researchers may rely on structured interactions to elicit children's and adults' uses of speech acts and/or politeness. They may invite the subjects to a laboratory room and provide all the subjects with identical props or toys to manipulate while interacting with each other. For example, the Harvard study on children's pragmatic development utilizes such an approach to collect children's and their mothers' uses of communicative acts (Ninio & Snow, 1996; Zhou, 2002). Those four different sets of toys were meant to create four different contexts or situations so as to observe whether subjects interact differently with respect to contexts. Except for the toys, subjects were given full freedom to interact with each other; they were not just asked to respond to pre-designed questions or stimuli. With such experiment design, the researchers were able to collect various communicative acts. One advantage of such methodological strategy is that it not only allows researchers to collect a great deal of comparable data but also enables subjects to interact spontaneously to a certain extent.

A last methodological strategy utilized by researchers to explore children's pragmatic development is to collect speech in authentic conversation (e.g. Dore, 1977; Ervin-Tripp, et al., 1990; Garvey, 1975; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). Authentic conversation refers to spontaneous speech produced by interlocutors without *a priori* designs as to conversation topics, physical contexts or settings, and interaction styles. Spontaneous speech or naturalistic conversations reveal actual communication between interlocutors. On top of that, spontaneous speech provides clues to the influence of contextual, situational, or functional factors on speech, given that these factors are reported to be influential in how people convey speech acts and politeness (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). One major drawback of such methodological strategy,

however, is that it is time-consuming to collect a representative amount of spontaneous speech. Even so, the authenticity of spontaneous speech is irreplaceable.

As an endeavor to explore children's linguistic politeness so as to shed a light on children's pragmatic development, this study will thus utilize spontaneous speech between children and their parents to examine how children convey requests and how they enact politeness while requesting, as does Ervin-Tripp et al.'s study (1990).

Spontaneous speech to be examined in this study belongs to the Language Acquisition Lab of the Graduate Institute of Linguistics of NCCU, directed by Dr. Chiung-chih Huang.¹

3.1 Subjects

Subjects investigated in this study are two girls. Both of them were observed longitudinally. One of the girls (CH1) was observed during the age from 1;7 to 3;2, and the other (CH2) from 1;10 to 3;0. As suggested by Hsu (1996) and Zhou (2002), children are able to produce requests after they have reached 14 months old.

Following the developmental pattern suggested by Hsu (ibid.) and Zhou (ibid.), these two children's spontaneous speech produced from two years on was recruited for investigation. Attempting to disclose children's any potential gradual development during the period from 24 months old to 36 months old, this study followed the design in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) study and observed these children's spontaneous requests produced at an interval of about six months. With the design, speech

¹ I am thankful to Prof. Huang for allowing me to use the data for the present study.

produced by these children at three different ages is to be investigated in this study; speech produced by CH1 at the ages of 2;0~2;1, 2;6~2;7, and 3;0 and that produced by CH2 at ages of 2;0~2;1, 2;6~2;7, and 3;0 will be investigated for their requests and politeness. In the analysis, each of the ages comprised one time point of observation: 2;0~2;1 (mean age 24.5 months old) as Time 1, 2;6~2;7 (mean age 30.5 months) as Time 2, and 3;0 (mean age 36 months) as Time 3. Grouping data according to children's ages may not be ideal. These two children's MLT (Mean Length of Turns), nevertheless, suggested that their respective pragmatic development was comparable,² and thus such grouping would not distort the development pattern to be observed here.

Both subjects live in the Taipei area of northern Taiwan. Judged by their parents' occupations, these children are both from the upper-middle socioeconomic class. Both children were looked after by a babysitter or grandparents during the day and spent the night, weekends, and holidays with their parents. When interacting with their parents, both children speak Mandarin Chinese.³ Occasionally, the parents may speak regional languages in Taiwan such as Taiwan Southern Min or foreign languages such as Japanese or English, but only restricted to lexical forms. Except for these lexical forms, never did the parents speak these regional languages or foreign languages to the children beyond the scope of an utterance. These children are physically healthy and do not have problems with social tasks.

² An MLT test run by CLAN program indicates that at Time 1 these two children's ratio of utterances over turns (U/T) is 1.05~1.17 and their ratio of words over utterances (W/U) is 1.28~1.35; at Time 2 U/T is 1.07~1.22 and W/U is 1.25~1.30; at Time 3 U/T is 1.12~1.13 and W/U is 1.14~1.26.

³ Here Mandarin Chinese refers to Taiwan Mandarin Chinese, which may be linguistically different from Beijing Mandarin (or *Putonghua*) to some extent.

3.2 Data

Data investigated here were drawn from a larger database, consisting of longitudinally collected spontaneous speech produced by the two subjects. As discussed previously, in order to truthfully reflect children's development of politeness and requests, spontaneous speech was utilized in this study. The data observed in this study were mostly naturalistic conversations between the children and their mothers. Spontaneous speech or naturalistic conversations in this study refer to unstructured conversations produced by the children and their parents themselves. During their interaction, no predetermined topics, activities, procedures, or tasks were given to the children and their parents. Interlocutors, namely, children and parents, determined all by themselves what to talk about, what activity to carry out, and what to play with.

Although there were not pre-determined activities or topics, all the data recruited for observation here were balanced according to situational contexts or activities. All sessions of conversations in this study contain similar activities and interactions, including common talks, cooperative activities, narratives and book-readings, and role-playing. With the data, the present study hopes to observe developmental pattern in the respect of requests and linguistic politeness ----- how children utilize linguistic devices to demonstrate their adherence to politeness in interaction.

All of the spontaneous speech to be observed was collected at the subjects' homes. The observer paid two visits each month to record the conversations with a camcorder. Since the data collection was carried out at the subjects' homes, children were very familiar with the physical setting of the house and they would not feel uneasy or nervous during the recording. In addition, the observer started the data collection after

paying several previous visits. On these previous visits, the observer spent some time with the children and the parents in order to get familiar with the children and also make the recording task clear to the parents. With such previous visits, the children would thus get used to the presence of the observer and the camcorder. During data collection, it was inevitable that children might occasionally look at the camcorder or observer, but this did not affect the children's performance of speech.

During each visit, the observer would not start the recording until the children had been used to the presence of the observer and the camcorder. Each session of the recording lasted for one hour or so. Normally, the recording was not suspended unless it was necessary to do so — when the children needed to use the bathroom, for example.

The overall length of the data examined in the study was about nine hours long. All the recorded and observed conversations were further transcribed into Chinese characters.⁴ All the data were transcribed according to the CHAT format suggested by the CHILDES project (MacWhinney, 2000). The transcribing conventions are shown in Appendix A.

3.3 Data Analysis

As an endeavor to examine children's requests and politeness in their requests, cases of requests produced by children in the data were identified first. Then the

⁴ The transcribing was conducted by the assistants of the Child Language Acquisition Lab of the Graduate Institute of Linguistics affiliated with NCCU, Taipei, and the researcher of this study is one of the assistants.

politeness involved in each case of requests were examined.

3.2.1 Cases of requests

Given the discussion and review on speech acts and requests in the previous chapter, cases of requests in the data were identified according to the principles in the following. All utterances produced by children were first functionally determined whether they convey an illocutionary act of request in the immediate context. As discussed above, an utterance was identified as a case of requests according to the addressee's response or reaction to the utterance, i.e., the perlocutionary act of the utterance. For example, such utterance as *The water is boiling* can convey a request if the addressee of the utterance does something to the boiling water as a response. The utterance may only be considered as a statement, if the addressee does not do any act in reply, otherwise, for example, when talking about pictures or illustrations in a book.

After identified with the illocutionary act, a request case was then to be analyzed according to its linguistic form. As discussed in the literature on speech acts and children's request repertoire (e.g., Ervin-Tripp, 1976; 1977, Garvey, 1975; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Searle, 1975), requests may be conveyed via various linguistic forms. The formal identification was done with regard to the syntactic structure as well as other linguistic elements with which a request was conveyed. A request can be encoded with imperative forms, such as *gei wo* 'give me', *dakai* 'open it', and *he shuei* 'drink the water'; interrogative forms, such as *ke-bu-keyi gei wo* 'Can you give

it to me?'; and declarative forms, e.g., *Wo xiang he shuei* 'I want to drink water' and *Dianhua xiang-le* 'The phone is ringing'. With the formal identification, a request case was then coded accordingly.

In addition to the simple syntactic analysis, a request was also considered in terms of complex linguistic forms. Complex linguistic forms include a tag question attached to a declarative or an imperative, for example:

(1) *Bang wo dakai, haoma/hao-bu-hao?*

Help me open all right?

'Help me open it, all right?'

(2) *Wo xiang he shuei, keyi ma?*

I want drink water, can PRT

'I want to drink water, can I?'

The tag questions, *hao-bu-hao* or *haoma*, attached to the request utterance can in turn serve as a syntactic test for imperative utterances: an imperative utterance can be appended to with such tag questions while other non-imperative utterance cannot, e.g., **Wo bu hui nong, hamao* 'I can't do it, all right?'.⁵ Other complex linguistic forms could be embedded sentences. This type of complex forms may include interrogatives embedded in a declarative as an indirect question, for example:

⁵ I am thankful to Prof. Miao-ling Hsieh, one of the committee members, for her suggestion to provide this syntactic test for imperative utterances.

(3) *Wo xiang-shuo ni shi-bu-shi keyi dakai chuanghu.*

I think you is-not-is can open window

‘I wonder whether you can open the window.’

The above complex linguistic forms were analyzed respectively as tag questions ((1) & (2)) or embedded questions (3). A last type of complex forms could be reduced imperatives. Some cases of requests could be conveyed without encoding the action linguistically, but with the desired objects instead. For example, in order to get a book, the speaker could request the addressee to get the book by simply saying *Shu* ‘the book’, instead of *Shu nalai* ‘Bring me the book’. Such case was thus considered as reduced imperatives, if observed in the data.

Moreover, request cases were further considered in terms of lexical forms utilized to encode a request intent. As pointed out in the literature (e.g., Mei, 1994; Nakamura, 1996), certain lexical forms may serve to mark a request intent as well as to defer to politeness. In Mandarin Chinese such lexical items may include *qing* ‘please’, *bang* ‘to help’, and *mafan* ‘please’, for example.⁶

(4) *Bang wo dao shui.*

Help me pour water

‘Help me pour water.’

⁶ The lexical form *bang* was considered as a request marker on the basis of Sealey (1999). She points out that children, when requesting, may take advantage of their ‘being a child’ to ask the addressee perform an act. By so doing, children are indeed showing their addressee their inability to do an act. In Mandarin, the lexical form *bang* serves a similar function to indicate one’s inability.

(5) *Qing guan men.*

Please close door

‘Please close the door.’

Thus, such lexical forms were particularly identified, if found in the data. With the above formal identification, this study may then collect the linguistic elements, both syntactic structures and lexical items, which are utilized by Mandarin-speaking children to convey their requests, and hence to amass their request repertoire.

Apart from the formal identification of request instances, in response to the distinction between direct and indirect requests proposed in the previous chapter, a request was further considered in terms of logical inference. Despite the fact that a request intent, direct or indirect one, can be conveyed with various linguistic forms, such as *I want...*, *Can you...*, *May I...*, *I am wondering if...*, etc., the intended illocutionary act can be explicitly or implicitly encoded in the locutionary act or the proposition of the utterance. As discussed both in Searle (1975) and Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984), a request intent can be conveyed via conventionalized indirect means. By utilizing conventionalized linguistic structures to encode his/her intended act, the speaker can convey a request intent via manipulation of the felicity conditions; s/he can query the preparatory condition or express the sincerity condition. Whichever means the speaker chooses to convey a request, the locutionary act or proposition of the utterance may indicate the intended act to be performed by the addressee, and hence the addressee can effortlessly perceive the illocutionary act without any further inference. On the other hand, a request intent may be conveyed implicitly in the locutionary act, without specifying the intended act clearly in the utterance. Requests

conveyed by this means, according to Searle and Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, may be considered as non-conventionalized indirect requests. When receiving such requests, the addressee needs to undertake a series of inference in order to procure the intended illocutionary act. As pointed out by Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, children may be able to perform requests via such non-conventionalized means as well as conventionalized means, and thus this study also considered both means to requests. Therefore, a request intent, once identified, was further coded with respect to the explicitness of the illocutionary act. Those requests with explicit illocutionary act in the proposition were considered as requests with explicature and those without explicit act were considered as requests via implicature.

As mentioned above, an utterance was identified as a request with respect to its surrounding context, particularly the addressee's response, namely the perlocutionary act. The addressee's response to a request utterance was thus considered. Each response was analyzed according to its proposition content as positive compliance, temporization, alternative, or non-compliance. Positive compliance referred to the cases in which the addressee either acknowledges the request verbally with affirmative responses or complies with the request non-verbally by carrying out the intended act. When the addressee did not immediately comply with the request in the adjacent turn, but in a further following turn, the response was thus considered as temporization. In addition, when receiving a request, the addressee may offer an alternative to the intended act, instead of performing the intended act immediately. Cases like this were considered as alternatives. At last, a request may be rejected directly or indirectly. The children's requests may not be complied by the addressee, neither in the contiguous turn nor in a further following turn before another request or

any reformulated request is performed. Such cases were thus analyzed as non-compliance.

As a recap, an utterance performed by the children in the study was analyzed with respect to its locutionary act or proposition of the utterance, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Cases with the illocutionary act of requesting or directive were identified as the target cases of the present study, namely, request, judged by the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts the utterance may convey. Then, each request case was further analyzed according to its locutionary and perlocutionary acts. In terms of the locutionary act, a request case was formally analyzed with respect to imperatives, declaratives, and interrogatives. Also, the locutionary act of a request was analyzed as to whether the intended act was explicitly conveyed or implied in the proposition of a request. Finally, the addressee's responses to a request, i.e., the perlocutionary act, were considered as to whether the request was immediately complied, temporized, altered, or rejected.

3.2.2 Cases of politeness

Given instances of requests identified, each request instance would then be examined according to the politeness associated with it. The politeness was considered under the framework of Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990). In their study on English-speaking children's politeness, Ervin-Tripp et al. analyzed the politeness in children's control acts in terms of social indices, social tactics and persuasive tactics. According to Ervin-Tripp et al., social indices refer to linguistic markers that reflect

or maintain or alter the social relations and status between interlocutors (Ervin-Tripp, p.c.; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990; Levinson, 1983). Such indices or deixis include address terms, honorifics, or other indices.⁷ Social tactics refer to strategic uses of social indices and linguistic elements to mitigate or hedge a request so as to adhere to the requirement of politeness. Persuasive tactics refer to reasons or justifications that children provide after or before the request at the first attempts or retries (Ervin-Tripp, p.c.; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). Based on the distinction among social indices, social tactics and persuasive tactics, the politeness associated with all the request instances would be considered and coded accordingly.

In Mandarin Chinese, there are a number of address terms, particularly the terms used to address family members. These address terms and other honorific titles are good example of social indices or deixis (Levinson, 1983). Normally, it is obligatory for the speaker in Chinese culture to address the addressee with proper address terms when there is an obvious social distance or difference in status between them. For example, in child-mother conversation, children should address their mothers with the address term *mama* 'mother'. Thus, a request utterance would be encoded with respect to whether an address term was used, when observed in the data.

As to the consideration of social tactics, the focus of this study would be on children's strategic uses of different request forms with different directness of illocutionary force with respect to the requirement of politeness in the immediate context. The strategic uses of linguistic elements to mitigate or aggravate a request would considered in terms of the coding used for request forms. As mentioned above,

⁷ According to Levinson (1983), it is conventional for linguists or pragmaticians to refer to such terms as social deixis while for philosophers and sociologists to refer to them as social indices. Following the linguistic convention, the study will use social deixis.

the syntactic structure(s) utilized to encode a request intent would be considered as to the syntactic constructions used to encode requests and the utilization of accompanied linguistic elements, such as sentence-final particles or tag questions . Given such syntactic coding, the politeness of a request would not be coded again separately so as to avoid redundancy.

As pointed out by Garvey (1975) and Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984), a speech act such as request may not solely consist of only one utterance conveying the illocutionary intent. A request can be conveyed via a structured sequence wherein persuasion is a part.⁸ As mentioned in Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984), a persuasion or persuasive adjuncts can precede or follow the intended request, and it can be ‘reasons, promises, threats, and so forth, which justifies the request or persuade the hearer’ (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984, p. 301). With such persuasion, the speaker not only takes into consideration the addressee’s negative face, but also enhances the effectiveness of his/her requests, as reported by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). On the basis of Ervin-Tripp et al.’s report, persuasion preceding or following a request would be considered as well, for its effect on the success of a request. Therefore, a request was coded with or without a persuasion and then further judged its politeness.

In summary, the study followed Ervin-Tripp et al.’s (1990) study, and also analyzed politeness in terms of social deixis or indices, strategic uses of request forms, and persuasive tactics. A request instance was coded whether and which social deixis was utilized, whether linguistic forms were manipulated to hedge or aggravate a

⁸ According to Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984), the sequence of a request or an instrumental act contains the following components, including attention-getters, framing moves, persuasive adjuncts, instrumental moves, responses, and remedies (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984, p. 301), and each of such components is optional. A request can be conducted with any one of these elements; it does not require all the elements to prevail.

request, and whether a persuasion was provided. With such coding, the politeness of a request would be further considered and discussed.

3.2 The Coding System

Given the above identifying methodology of requests and politeness above, the conversations to be investigated in the study were coded accordingly. The coding format is in the CLAN format, following the one suggested in the CHILDES project (MacWhinney, 2000). The codes in the coding system are explicated as follows:

I. Requests

A. Form:

Theoretically speaking, the default form used by speakers to encode a request is not imperatives. Imperatives are the default form of commands (Levinson, 1983; Searle, 1975). Empirical evidence provided in studies on children's pragmatic development, however, suggested that children, particularly when requesting their mothers to do an act, tend to use imperatives. Therefore, imperatives in the data were also judged with respect to the context and determined if they served the function of request. The formal categories included in the coding system here were based on Ervin-Tripp's (1977) repertoire of children's requests and the data observed in this study. The coding used for formal elements is as follows:

a. Imperatives: imperatives refer to the syntactic structure with a

covert second person subject. They can also be further modified or aggravated with other linguistic forms, such as hedgers, sentence-final particles or tag questions. Based on the overt linguistic elements appended to an imperative utterance, imperatives could be further identifies as (i) simple imperatives (PIP)⁹: referring to the cases of typical imperatives without any lexical or syntactic modification or aggravation in any forms; (ii) imperatives with sentence-final particle (IPP): referring to the cases of modified imperatives, particularly with sentential particles, such as *o* ‘oh’, *ma*, ‘a question particle’ *a* ‘ah’ and *la* ‘an interjective particle’.¹⁰ (iii) imperative with a tag (IPT): referring to the cases of imperatives modified with tag questions, such as A-not-A tag and question markers, including *haoma* ‘all right’, *keyima* ‘OK’, *xingma* ‘OK’, etc.

b. Interrogatives: this category refers to any interrogative forms, including interrogatives involving *wh*-words, interrogatives answered with simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’, and interrogatives embedded in other syntactic structures, such as another interrogative or a declarative. Theoretically speaking, interrogatives seem to be the basic form used for requests (Levinson, 1983; Searle, 1975). Hence, interrogatives were

⁹ Letters in the parentheses hereafter refer to the codes used in the coding system of this study.

¹⁰ These particles has been discussed in Hsu (1996; 2000).

also taken into consideration here. The cases of interrogatives observed in the current data and the codes of them includes:

(i) WH interrogative (WHI): referring to the WH interrogative used to convey a request intent; (ii) A-NOT-A interrogative (ANA): referring to the requests expressed with such A-not-A forms as *ke-bu-keyi* or *neng-bu-neng* ‘can; could’ in the matrix clause; (iii) Embedded interrogative (EMI): referring to any interrogative forms that are embedded in other structures, such as an interrogative or a declarative; and (iv) yes-no interrogative (YNQ): referring to an interrogative form that requires either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as reply.¹¹

c. Declarative (DEC): requests may also be conveyed with a declarative. Any request cases that were neither conveyed with interrogative nor imperative were subsumed in this category. Request forms in this category cannot be tagged with such tag questions as *hao-bu-hao* or *haoma*. This category excluded WANT/NEED structure, which was considered separately as a different category, since some studies has pointed out a specialized function of such structure in child discourse (e.g., Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1990; Ervin-Tripp, 1977); children were found to rely heavily on the structure to perform their requests to their mothers.

¹¹ The coding system here only included yes-no interrogative, since this was the only type of interrogative forms observed in the current data. Other interrogative forms may include WH-interrogatives and embedded interrogatives, but these were not found in the data at hand.

d. WANT/NEED structure (WAN): it has been discussed in the literature (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1990; Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984; among others) that children tend to request with a statement conveying their desire or wants. In this study, all declaratives conveying wants and desires were coded and considered — cases involving expressions with such modals as *yao* ‘want’, *xiang* ‘think’, or *xiangyao* ‘want’.

B. Explicitness of the intended act:

As discussed previously, when requesting, speakers may explicitly convey the intended act in the proposition of a request. Even if they are requesting indirectly with another illocutionary act, speakers may still explicitly convey the intended act in the proposition of their request utterances. In other cases, however, speakers may eschew directly expressing the intended act in the proposition of their requests, and receiving such requests, the addressees are thus required to infer the intended act. Such cases of requests are usually considered as inferential requests (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). Therefore, cases of requests in this study would further be coded according to the explicitness or implicitness of the intended act in the proposition.

a. Explicitness (EXP): referring to the cases in which the intended act of a request is explicitly expressed in the proposition of an utterance. For example, the illocutionary act is explicit in such utterances as

Da-kai ‘Open it’ and *Ke-bu-ke-yi da-kai* ‘Can you open it’.

b. Implicitness (IMP): referring to the cases in which the intended act of a request is implicitly expressed in the proposition of an utterance. For example, the illocutionary act is not expressed in the locutionary act of such utterances as *Dian-hua* ‘(meaning) The telephone is ringing (intention: Answer the phone)’ and *Shui kai-le* ‘The water is boiling (intention: Turn of the gas).’

C. Compliance:

As discussed above, the preferred second or adjacency pair of a request is usually compliance to the request. In some situations, however, the addressee (namely, the parents) may reply to a request in other ways, such as temporization (delaying the compliance), alternative (offering an alternative to the originally intended act), and non-compliance (refusing to perform the intended act or shift the conversational topic). Thus, codes were design to encode such replies as well (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). It is assumed that the more immediate the compliance is, the more effective the request is considered. With a descending scale of effectiveness, the following part presents the coding used to deal with compliance.

a. Positive compliance (PCP): referring to replies in which the addressee either directly performs the intended act or positively acknowledge and fulfill the speaker’s request.

b. Temporization (TEM): referring to delayed compliance that the addressee gives in reply to the speaker’s request. A temporization or

delayed compliance is considered as compliance provided by the addressee in a further turn, instead of the addressee's immediately adjacent turn.

c. Alternative (ALT): referring to such replies wherein the addressee offers another way to comply with or to recall what the speaker has requested.

d. Non-compliance (NCP): referring to the cases in which the speaker's request is obviously or blatantly refused or rejected.

D. Context:

As mentioned in the previous chapter (Chapter 2), children's requests and politeness seem to be subject to and sensitive to context. Contextual and interpersonal factors may influence the appropriate uses requests forms so as to defer to politeness. In addition, Pan (2000) also pointed out that politeness in Chinese culture seems to be subject to the power relation and hierarchical order between interlocutors and that the settings of interaction determine such hierarchical structure. Hence, in this study the context of interaction was also coded according to the codes listed in the following:

a. Common talks (CMT): referring to activities in which children are involved together with their parents every day. Such activities include having meals, bathing, getting dressed, etc. In addition, this category also accommodates conversations without engaging the interlocutors in any particular activities.

b. Role-playing (RLP): referring to activities in which children and their mothers are involved in any imaginative games that are initiated

either by children or parents. In such imaginative games, both parties of the interaction are assigned a particular role that is neither a child nor a mother.

c. Narrative (NAR): referring to activities in which both interlocutors are involved in a narrative of their personal experiences, innovative stories, recalling old stories, or book-reading.

d. Cooperative activity (COA): referring to activities co-constructed by both interlocutors. Such activities may include games in which children and mothers take turns to play — playing with toys — or other activities to which both interlocutors appear to be equally involved and engaged in the activities.

E. Tone of Speech

A request can be aggravated or mitigated with linguistic as well as paralinguistic forms (Ervin-Tripp, et al., 1990; Garvey, 1975; Hsu, 1996). The aggravation or mitigation of requests can be maneuvered with intonation contour or repetition of forms. For example, a request can be aggravated when the child conveys the request in a louder voice or a forceful intonation. A mitigated request may be delivered with a lengthening, in a crying tone, in a bashful or timid tone or in a ‘play-the-woman’ tone. Thus, utterances with request function were further coded according to their tone of speech. They were coded as either aggravated (AGG) to indicate that the request was reinforced or mitigated (MIT) to indicate that the request was hedged. Utterances without any

aggravation or mitigation were regarded as one issued with a plain tone (PLA).

II. Politeness

As stated previously in Chapter 2, this study followed the framework of Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) to investigate Mandarin-speaking children's politeness. In their study, Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues analyzed politeness into three aspects, namely social indices (or deixis in this study), social tactics (or syntactic modification with respect to interpersonal factors in this study), and persuasion (provision of justifications for their requests). Their analysis incorporated and integrated the factors that are functions of politeness as have been discussed in the literature; the factors include familiarity (or horizontal distance) between interlocutors, status (or vertical distance) between interlocutors, costs of an intended act, rights or obligation pertaining to an act, as well as situations or context. Hence, the coding for politeness in this study would cope with these functions of politeness and the three aspects pertaining to politeness proposed by Ervin-Tripp et al., and then with the coding children's politeness would be analyzed accordingly.

As a preliminary study on Mandarin-speaking children's politeness, this study may not consider the influences of all the factors on politeness discussed in the literature. The present study only focused on the effects of status and cost on children's linguistic politeness. Since the present study aims to observe children's politeness in their requests towards their parents. The familiarity between children and parents is thus fixed and thus this factor is not managed

here. The vertical distance between children and parents also appears to be fixed; mothers are at a higher status. The status, however, can be subject to change in such contexts as role-playing, cooperative activities or imaginative games. In such contexts, children may instead be at a higher status with respect to their parents (Chen, 2003). Therefore, the relative status between children and mothers are coded as to whether the children, when requesting, is at higher status (coded as HST) equal status (as EST) or lower status (as LST).

In addition, as pointed out in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) study, politeness is susceptible to the cost of a request and the obligation that a requester has to perform a request. The cost of a request refers to how much effort that the addressee should take to fulfill a request or how intrusive a request for the addressee may be. According to Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), the cost of a request can be determined with respect to which one of the interlocutors has authority over the ongoing activity, who owns the goods in question or the territory in which the ongoing activity occurs, whether both parties of an interaction is jointly involved, and whether a request may potentially impose intrusiveness on the ongoing activity. They considered a request to be low cost when all the four factors are at a low level, as medium cost when all of them are at a neutral level, and as high cost when any two of them are at a high level. Given with the preliminary evaluation, the cost of a request was further judged by the addressee's reaction or response to the request (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). On the basis of the same criteria used in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) study, the cost of a request were coded as HCT for high cost requests, MCT for meddle cost requests, and LCT for low cost requests.

In addition to the coding for social or interpersonal factors of politeness, politeness strategies and linguistic forms were coded. Politeness strategies were coded according to the framework proposed by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). Moreover, as discussed above, a number of lexical items may also serve politeness function in Mandarin, in addition to abundant address terms used to indicate and defer social distance and/or hierarchy. Such lexical items were also coded. The coding system for politeness strategies and politeness forms is explicated in the following.

A. Politeness strategies:

Politeness strategies, according to Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), contain three subcategories; each can reveal children's respective development of politeness. They are social deixis, social tactics, and persuasive tactics. All of the three subcategories were to be coded accordingly.

- a. Social deixis: referring to linguistic elements used by children in their requests to indicate social relationship or hierarchy between their mothers and themselves. The best candidates for this category are address forms or other honorific terms. When an address term is used this way, it is to be coded as ADT; when a request is not accompanied with any social deixis, the request is thus coded as NSD. In addition, children may also mitigate requests by switching person involved in the requests. By default, a request involves a second person, namely 'you'. In some cases, a requester may use first person plural pronoun, namely 'we', to issue a mitigated request. Such requests would be coded as PRN if

observed in the data.

- b. Social tactics: referring to any strategic maneuvering of linguistic elements to enact pertinent politeness in requests. As suggested by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), social tactics is done via syntactic modification or variation. In other words, whenever children utilize different linguistic forms to perform requests, they are considered to demonstrate such tactics. Therefore, the category is not coded separately; social tactics were examined by means of the formal variation found in the coding of requests and the formal coding of politeness in the following.
- c. Persuasive Tactics (PER): referring to any utterance prior to or following the request utterance whereby children provide reasons to justify their requests. When found in the data, an utterance of such would be coded as PER, but if no such cases found in children's requests, the request utterance would instead be coded as NPR.

B. Politeness forms:

As discussed previously, a number of lexical items in Mandarin function to mitigate the force of a request, such as *qing* 'please' and *bang* 'to help'. With such function, these lexical items can be utilized to defer to the immediate requirement of politeness in interaction. These lexical items would thus be coded according to their respective forms. For example, when *qing* 'please' is observed in a request, it

would be coded as QIN, and when *bang* ‘to help’ is found, it would be coded as BAN.¹²

After the coding process, the coded data were then examined for inter-rater reliability with regard to the coding system presented and discussed above. In this study, the inter-rater reliability was evaluated with the Cohen’s kappa value. The Cohen’s kappa coefficient indicated that the inter-rater reliability reaches an agreement that is nearly perfect ($k = 0.84$) (Landis & Koch, 1977).¹³ The disagreed-upon or incongruous parts were further resolved via discussion with a third rater, who was also familiarized with the coding system utilized in this study.

¹² These lexical items are coded with three initial letters because the CLAN program only allows three-digit codes.

¹³ According to Landis & Koch (1977, pp. 159-174), the Cohen’s kappa value falling within the range between 0.81 and 1 means an ‘almost perfect agreement’ between the two raters.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

It is hypothesized in this study that children utilize various linguistic forms to strategically convey their requests and such various forms may develop with children's age, as is mentioned in the literature (reviewed in Chapter 2). Children at an early age may draw upon a limited number of linguistic forms to convey their requests, and as they grow older they develop the ability to use more complex and/or a wider variety of linguistic forms to reach their communicative goal — to request their addressees to do an act as intended by themselves. In addition, as pointed out in the literature, children's utilization of request forms is strategic. They tend not to monotonously use one particular form, say imperative, to perform requests, but instead they seem to adjust their use of request forms with respect to contextual or social factors, such as status, cost of requests, situational activities, etc. Moreover, it is assumed that each of children's request forms may individually convey the request illocutionary act to a different degree of directness, which in turn may imply different degrees of politeness. A request form is by default more or less polite than another, or

is relatively more polite in some situations while less polite in others. Such degrees of politeness are not invariable; they may be altered by interpersonal or interactional factors. While developing their pragmatic as well as linguistic competence, children should also develop the knowledge that certain request form is relatively more polite in a particular interactional situation or to a particular addressee. In other words, children are required to develop the knowledge of the influence of interpersonal and interactional factors on the politeness of a request and the request forms they use. It is, nonetheless, not crystal clear what particular factors play a significant role in determining children's use of request forms — whether children have been aware of the effect of status on request uses or whether they depend on only effectiveness (easiness for them to reach their communicative goal or obtain the desirable compliance with a particular request form) to determine the uses of request forms. In this chapter, all these hypotheses are to be testified and discussed based on spontaneous speech produced by children when interacting with their parents.

4.1 Children's Requests

It has been reported in some studies that children demonstrate their communicative intention in their early infancy with various gestures. When entering linguistic stage, children gradually replace such nonverbal means to communication with appropriate linguistic forms (e.g., Bates et al., 1978; Bruner, 1983; Kelly, 2007). It is therefore assumed that children tend to utilize particular linguistic forms to perform a speech act and their utilization of forms can in turn reflect their linguistic

development. In addition, it is also assumed that such form-function relationship (between linguistic forms and speech acts) develops with age. As children grow older, they expand their repertoire of request forms; they use various and plausibly structurally more complex linguistic forms to convey a particular speech act. This development can also be observed in children's conveyance of requests.

4.1.1 Children's various request forms

Children are found to utilize various linguistic forms to encode their requests. After the observation on the spontaneous data, it has been found that children, when requesting, seem not solely to utilize one single linguistic form persistently. Six different requests forms were observed, including simple imperatives, WANT statements, imperatives with sentence-final particle, declaratives, imperatives with a tag, and yes-no interrogatives. Among these forms, the former four types, namely simple imperatives, WANT statements, imperatives with sentence-final particle, and declaratives, appear to be the major formal devices drawn upon by children to encode their requests. The other two forms, imperatives with a tag and yes-no interrogatives, at the moment seem infrequently used. Frequencies of these six formal devices are summarized in the following table. (See Table 1 in next page.)

Among all the request forms, imperatives appear to prevail throughout the data. Nearly half of request cases in total, as well as at each age, are found encoded with imperatives, as shown in Table 1 above. WANT statements are found to account for 27.43% (mean of 25%, 23.68%, and 35.21%) of all requests cases, which makes

WANT statements the secondly prevalent forms used to request throughout all ages as well as at each age.

Table 1

*Frequencies of Children's Request Forms**

	Time1 (N)	Time 2 (N)	Time 3 (N)	Total
Simple Imperatives	42.31%(22)	50.0%(57)	45.07%(32)	46.84% (111)
WANT Statements	25.0%(13)	23.68%(27)	35.21%(25)	27.43% (65)
Imperatives with Sentence-Final Particle	9.62%(5)	12.28%(14)	2.82%(2)	8.86% (21)
Imperatives with a Tag	0	0.88%(1)	0	0.42% (1)
Yes-No Interrogatives	0	0.88%(1)	1.41% (1)	8.44% (2)
Declaratives	23.08%(12)	12.28%(14)	15.49%(11)	15.61% (37)
Total	(52)	(114)	(71)	(237)

* The mean age is 24.5 months at Time 1, 30.5 month at Time 2, and 36 month at Time 3.

In addition, children also request with other linguistic forms sporadically.

Declarative forms, among these less frequently used request cases, account for more than 15% of all requests observed in the data. Imperatives with sentence-final particle account for nearly 9% of the requests observed. Imperatives with a tag appear to be considered accidentally used, because of the sole instance found in this study. Last but not least, yes-no interrogative forms are also found used to encode requests by children, although only two cases are found in the data. Like the sole case of requesting through imperatives with a tag, these two cases of yes-no interrogative forms can be conservatively considered to be accidental or less frequently used ones. Children may be able to produce such linguistic forms at the moment, but they may

not yet steadily associate such forms with the illocutionary force of requests.

Based on the frequencies summarized in Table 1, it appears that children, when requesting, do not solely draw upon a particular linguistic form, although they frequently request with simple imperatives. Such a command of using various linguistic forms to convey their requests develops from an early age on; children may be able to use various formal devices to encode their request as early as 24.5 months old or so. Given these various forms, it is therefore reasonable to wonder if such a variety of request forms reveal some systematicity. The question as to what systematicity may lie underneath such a formal variety and what may contribute to the formal variety will be discussed in a section in the following (Section 4.2), where children's politeness in requests is in question.

These four major formal devices utilized by children to convey their requests can be illustrated with the following excerpts from the data.

(1) (From YOU, at 2;0, Line 152)¹

Context: Mother offered YOU a pudding and asked YOU if she would like to have it.

*MOT: 要 吃 這個 [= pudding] 嗎?
 Yao chi zhe-ge ma
 want eat this pudding PRT²
 '[You] want to have this [referring to pudding]?'

%com: MOT is showing YOU a cup of pudding.

*MOT: <要> [/] 要 吃 嗎?
 Yao yao chi ma

¹ The arrows at the end of utterances indicated the target cases in question.

² The glossary of glossing abbreviations is listed in Appendix C.

want want eat PRT

‘Want to eat this?’

*YOU: <給我> [] 給 我 [% reaching for the pudding] . ←

gei wo gei wo

give me give me

‘Give me that; give me that.’

(2) (From LGW, at 2;1, Line 794)

Context: LGW would like to have a pudding, while her father asked her to wait till her mother came home. As soon as her mother came home, LGW asked for the pudding.

*LGW: 媽媽 來 了.

Mama lei le

Mom came LE

‘Mom came back.’

*FAT: /hei/ 媽媽 來 了.

Mama lai le

Mom came LE

‘Hey, Mom came back.’

*LGW: <我> [] 要 吃 布 丁. ←

Wo yao chi bu-ding

I want eat pudding

‘I want to eat pudding.’

*YPC: 0 [=! laughing] .

*MOT: 妳 要 什麼?

Ni yao she-mo

You want what

‘What do you want?’

*MOT: 她 說 什麼?

Ta shuoshe-mo

She say what?

‘What did she say?’

*FAT: 她 說 她 要 等 妳 回 來 吃 布 丁
Ta shuota yao dengni hui-lai chi bu-ding
 She say she want wait you back eat pudding

啦.

la

PRT

‘She said that she would not eat the pudding until you came back.’

*MOT: 喔 你 要 等 我 回 來 吃 布 丁 喔.
O ni yao dengwo hui-lai chi bu-ding o
 Oh you want wait me back eat pudding PRT

‘Oh, you would not eat the pudding until I came back?’

(3) (From LGW, at 3;0, Line 499)

Context: LGW was reading an interactive book with her father and she was trying to put on shoes for the character in the book.

*LGW: 有 鞋 子.

You xie-zi

YOU shoes

‘There are shoes.’

*FAT: +^ 還 有 鞋 子.

Hai-you xie-zi

More shoes

‘There are other shoes.’

*FAT: 幫 他 穿 鞋 子 對 不 對?

Bang ta chuan xie-zi dui-bu-dui

Help him wear shoes right-NOT-right

‘[We] should help him put on the shoes, right?’

*LGW: 爸 我 不 會 弄.

←

Ba wo bu-hui nong
 Dad I can't do
 'Dad, I don't know how to do it.'

*FAT: 可以 呀.
Keyi ya
 Can PRT
 'You can [do it].'

*FAT: 你 把 它 這 xx 起來 啊.
Ni ba ta zhe qilai a
 You BA it this up PRT
 'You put them up together.'

(4) (From YOU, at 2;6, Line 1553)

Context: YOU and her mother were role-playing. They were playing cooking games and YOU asked her mother to have pudding together with her.

*YOU: 快點 吃 布丁 喔 :-.
kuai-dian chi bu-ding o
 hurry eat pudding PRT
 'Come on and eat some pudding.'

*MOT: 哇 :- 喔.
Wa o
 Wow PRT
 'Wow...'

*MOT: 好棒 喔 :-.
Hao-bang o
 good PRT
 'How nice!'

Excerpts (1) to (4) illustrate children's requests with simple imperatives, WANT statements, declaratives, and imperatives with sentence-final particle respectively. In

excerpt (1), the girl used a simple imperative form to ask her mother for the pudding. With the same intention to have pudding, the girl in excerpt (2) used WANT statement to make her request. Excerpt (3) illustrates that the girl asked for help from her father with a declarative, when her father and she were reading an interactive book and she was supposed to dress the characters in the book with paper outfit-miniatures. Finally, in excerpt (4) the girl and her mother were playing cooking games with the child as the cook and she asked her mother to enjoy a pudding together with her by using an imperative form with sentence-final particle.

In addition, excerpts (5) and (6) exemplify how children use imperatives with a tag question to request and request through asking yes-no questions.

(5) (From YOU, at 2;6, Line 990)

Context: The girl's mother was talking about sugar to YOU.

*MOT: 這個 是 什麼 妳 知道 嗎?

Zhe-ge shi she-mo ni zhi-dao ma

This is what you know PRT

'Do you know what this is?'

*YOU: 糖糖.

Tang-tang

Sugar-sugar

'Sugar.'

*MOT: 對 -: 這個 是 糖糖.

Dui zhe-ge shi tang-tang

Right this is sugar

'You're right. This is sugar.'

*YOU: 我 可以 吃 嗎? ←

Wo ke-yi chi ma

I can eat PRT

‘Can I have some?’

*MOT: 嗯 -: 不 可以 [= shaking the head].

En bu ke-yi

Mm not can

‘Mm...you can’t.’

*YOU: 為什麼?

Wie-she-mo

Why

‘Why?’

*MOT: 因為 這個 是 要 加 在 咖啡 裡面的。

Yinwei zhe-ge shi yao jia zai ka-fei limian-de

Because this is to add in coffee inside

‘Because this is to be added to coffee.’

(6) (From YOU, at 2;6, Line 1393)

Context: YOU and her mother were leaving her grandparents’ place and going upstairs. While they were leaving, YOU asked to take something with her.

*MOT: Let’s go.

*YOU: 拿 這 [= GMO’s bracelet] 上去 好不好? ←

Na zhe shang-qu hao-bu-hao

take this up-go good-NOT-good

‘Take this upstairs, all right?’

*MOT: 不行 # 那 奶奶的。

Bu-xing na nainai-de

No-way that grandma’s

‘No, that’s grandma’s.’

*YOU: 這 我的。

Zhe wo-de

- This mine
‘This is mine.’
- *MOT: 奶奶 # 高佑萱 拿 妳的 手環 [= loud].
Naiani Gaoyouxuan na ni-de shuo-huan
Grandma YOU take your bracelet
‘Grandma, YOU is taking your bracelet.’
- *YOU: <這> [ʅ] 這 我的.
Zhe zhe wo-de
This this mine
‘This is mine.’
- *MOT: 妳 把 她 趕 出去.
Ni ba ta gan chu-qu
You BA her drive out-go
‘Grandma, you should ask her to stay out.’
- *YOU: 不行.
Bu-xing
No-way
‘No.’
- *MOT: 放好 # 這 奶奶的.
Fang-hao zhe nainai-de
Put-well this grandma’s
‘Put it well; this belongs to grandma.’

Excerpt (5) above illustrates the child asked a yes-no question to obtain a permission to have some sugar while her mother was talking about the use of sugar. Although the utterance is formally a yes-no interrogative, it functions as a request for permission in the immediate context. In excerpt (6), the child asked for the possession of a bracelet that did not belong to her with an imperative with a tag question; this request,

however, was turned down later by her mother.³ As mentioned previously, these two formal devices are rare in the data observed here; there were two cases of yes-no interrogative requests and only one case of requests through the use of imperative with a tag question. From the excerpts (5) and (6), it seems that these two formal devices are found to be produced only by one of the two children. Because of the rarity and the biased distribution of these two linguistic forms of request in the data, requests with these two formal devices will not be pursued in further discussion.

Based on the observation, it can be deduced that children draw upon a variety of linguistic forms to convey their request intents from an early age on (as early as two years old). Among these request forms, simple imperatives and WANT statements perform the foremost role in the conveyance of children's requests. In addition to these two major linguistic forms, declaratives, imperatives with sentence-final particle, imperatives with a tag, and yes-no interrogatives are also drawn upon to perform requests by children. These various request forms can therefore mirror children's linguistic competence. At about this age (younger than three years old), children may have developed such constructions as declaratives, imperatives with or without sentence-final particles or tag questions, and yes-no interrogatives, and they have been able to extend most of these syntactic constructions to their communicative goal, particularly request intention.

4.1.2 Request forms and contexts

Given that children, when requesting, use diverse linguistic forms to encode their

³ Given the imperative test provided in Chapter 3, this utterance is clearly imperative, since it is accompanied with a tag question *hao-bu-hao*.

communicative intent, it is thus reasonable to query why children request with a variety of linguistic forms, instead of one single invariant linguistic form. Based on the findings in previous studies, children's request forms may change pertaining to the context wherein a request is conveyed (Axia, 1996; Bosco et al., 2004; Ervin-Tripp; Garton & Pratt, 1990; Hsiao, 1990; Pan, 2000). It is hence assumed that the diversity of request forms observed in the study is also motivated by different communicative situations in which a child is requesting his/her parents to do an act.

Table 2 below summarizes the percentages of each of the request forms observed within each contextual situation across three time points of observation. It is revealed in Table 2 that simple imperatives and WANT statements by and large turn out to be the most frequently used requests in all contexts throughout the three time points. In common talks, more than one-third of all the requests are conveyed with either simple imperatives (35.29% at Time 1, 41.94% at Time2, and 34.78% at Time 3) or WANT statements (35.29%, 37.1%, and 34.78 respectively at three time points). In cooperative activities, declaratives appear to be quite frequent at Time 1 while simply imperatives and WANT statements appear to be less frequent than declaratives and they seem to be equally frequent at this time. However, simple imperatives are disproportionally used by children to convey their request intents at Time 2 (66.67) and Time 3 (53.57%). The percentages of simple imperatives at these two time points outnumber those of WANT statements by nearly 25 times and declaratives by nearly four times at Time 2 and almost double that of WANT statements and outnumber that of declaratives by almost five times at Time 3. In addition, simple imperatives also take the lead in narratives or book-reading activities and role-playing games. In narratives, the use of requests is skewed toward simple imperatives, particularly at

Time 2, except that at Time 3 WANT statements appear to be equally frequent.

Table 2
Distributions of Request Forms within Contexts across Time in Percentage

Contexts	Request Forms	Time 1 (N)	Time 2 (N)	Time 3 (N)
Common Talks (CMT)	Declaratives	23.53 (4)	12.9 (8)	21.74 (5)
	Imperatives with Particles	5.89 (1)	4.84 (3)	4.35 (1)
	Imperatives with Tags	0	1.61 (1)	0
	Simple imperatives	35.29 (6)	41.94 (26)	34.78 (8)
	WANT statements	35.29 (6)	37.1 (23)	34.78 (8)
	Yes-No Interrogatives	0	1.61 (1)	4.35 (1)
	Total	100(17)*	100(62)	100(23)
Cooperative Activities (COA)	Declaratives	44.45 (4)	16.67 (6)	10.72 (3)
	Imperatives with Particles	11.11 (1)	13.89 (5)	0
	Imperatives with Tags	0	0	0
	Simple imperatives	22.22 (2)	66.67 (24)	53.57 (15)
	WANT statements	22.22 (2)	2.77 (1)	35.71 (10)
	Yes-No Interrogatives	0	0	0
	Total	100(9)	100(36)	100(28)
Narratives (NAR)	Declaratives	0	0	12.5 (2)
	Imperatives with Particles	7.69 (1)	16.67 (1)	0
	Imperatives with Tags	0	0	0
	Simple imperatives	69.24 (9)	83.33 (5)	43.75 (7)
	WANT statements	23.07 (3)	0	43.75 (7)
	Yes-No Interrogatives	0	0	0
	Total	100(13)	100(6)	100(10)
Role-Playing (RPL)	Declaratives	30.77 (4)	0	20 (1)
	Imperatives with Particles	15.38 (2)	50 (5)	20 (1)
	Imperatives with Tags	0	0	0
	Simple imperatives	38.47 (5)	20 (2)	40 (2)
	WANT statements	15.38 (2)	30 (3)	0
	Yes-No Interrogatives	0	0	20 (1)
	Total	100(13)	100(10)	100(5)

* The numbers in parentheses are tokens of requests observed in that particular contextual situation.

The occurrences of narrative situation, however, are quite rare at Time 2, so the frequent uses of simple imperatives in this situation at this time may not be as significant as they appear, although the percentage shown in the table appears quite high (83.33%). Finally, the percentages of request forms in role-playing games show a quite different picture from those in the other contextual situations. As seen in Table 2, simple imperatives take the lead in children's conveyance of requests, with declaratives coming in the second place at Time 1. At Time 2, imperatives with sentence-final particle take the place of simple imperatives as the most frequently used request form, and simple imperatives are even outnumbered by WANT statements. At Time 3, simple imperatives come in the first place instead. Nonetheless, the occurrences of requests in this context at Time 3 are so few (only 5 occurrences observed) that the distribution may not be meaningful. On the whole, simple imperatives take the lead in both common talks and cooperative activities. It seems safe to say that simple imperatives appear to be the most preferred request forms used by children to encode their requests in parent-child interaction.

On the other hand, WANT statements follow simple imperatives and appear to be the secondly prevalent requests forms observed in the data. As shown in Table 2 WANT statements appear to be comparable to simple imperatives in common talks across three time points. In contrast, the percentages of the use of WANT statements in cooperative activities seem not equivalent to those of simple imperatives, although the percentages of simple imperatives and WANT statements are equal at Time 1 (22.22%). At Time 2, the percentage of WANT statements is drastically lower than that of simple imperatives (2.77% of WANT statement as to 66.67% of simple imperatives). Although the use of WANT statements in cooperative activities

increases a lot at Time 3, it is not comparable to that of simple imperatives (35.71% vs. 53.57%). Overall, children tend to draw upon simple imperatives and WANT statements to issue their requests most of the time, particularly in common talks.

Following the uses of simple imperatives and WANT statements, the uses of declaratives appear to be notable as well. In common talks, declaratives turn out to be a thirdly important request forms drawn upon by children, next to simple imperatives and WANT statements at all times. In cooperative activities, however, the uses of declaratives at Time 1 seem to double those of both simple imperatives and WANT statements. At Time 2 declaratives continue to exceed WANT statements, but become much fewer than those of simple imperatives by nearly four times (16.67% vs. 66.67%). The uses of declaratives continue to decrease and at Time 3 the uses of declarative appear to be drastically lower than those of both simple imperatives and WANT statements. In narratives, declaratives are only observed at Time 3 and the uses at this time are incomparable to those of simple imperatives and WANT statements. In role-playing, declaratives display a different pattern of uses. At Time 1, the uses of declaratives appear to be lower than those of simple imperatives but nearly double those of WANT statements. However, no occurrence of this request forms is found at Time 2, while at Time 3 declaratives resume in use.

With a general observation, it appears that children's request forms are not really susceptible to contextual situations. Overall, children seem to rely mainly on simple imperatives and WANT statements across the three ages, and occasionally they utilize declaratives to issue their requests as well. With a careful examination, however, children's requests seem indeed sensitive to contextual situations. As seen the Table 2, the occurrences of such contexts as role-playing and narratives appear to be much

fewer than the other two contexts, to simplify the discussion and to accentuate the distribution of request forms across contexts, four contextual situations are further lumped into two major types: common talks and interactive activities. Common talks refer to ordinary daily interactions wherein children are interacting with their parents as their original role — a child and without any particular activity, whereas interactive activities refer to situations in which children and their parents are involved in a particular activity, such as cooperative games, role-playing games, or book-reading activities. Given these two major activity types, children's use of request forms in these activities across three time points is summarized in the following figure.

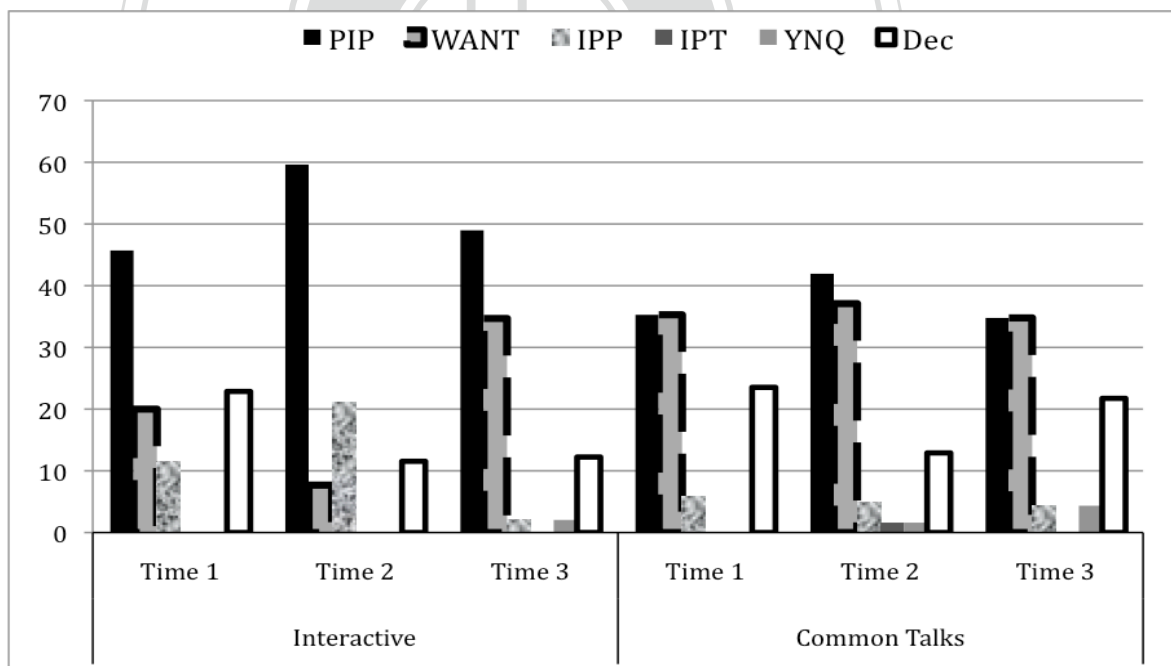


Figure 3. Children's uses of request forms in two major activities in percentage

The sensitivity of request forms to contextual situations can be revealed through the distribution of request forms in a particular contextual situation. As shown in figure 3 above, when children are requesting in common talks, they mainly draw upon

both simple imperatives and WANT statements throughout three ages, as have mentioned above. In the meantime, they may also utilize such request forms as declaratives to convey their requests. The uses of declaratives in common talks, however, not only are incomparable to those of the two major types of request forms but also fluctuate with time — decline by about 10% from Time 1 to Time 2 and increase by roughly about the same amount from Time 2 to Time 3.

By contrast, children seem to pivot on simple imperatives when requesting in interactive activities throughout the time period of observation. As mentioned earlier, the uses of simple imperatives to request in such contextual situations appear to outnumber the other linguistic forms by at least 20%, even the secondly frequent form, i.e., WANT statements, particularly at Time 1 and Time 2. This disproportionate distribution of simple imperatives is greatly clear at age 2;6 (Time 2). As shown in the figure, at Time 2 children's uses of simple imperatives are nearly six times more than those of WANT statements in interactive activities. Even imperatives with sentence-final particle outnumber WANT statement by more than 10% in interactive activities at Time 2. Despite the increase of the uses of WANT statements at Time 3, the uses of simple imperatives retain its leading position in interactive activities. As to the uses of declaratives, although declaratives appear to be the thirdly frequently used request forms at both Time 1 and Time 3, the percentages of the uses of the request forms apparently decrease through time. Therefore, it seems that in interactive activities, children tend to rely on imperative forms to issue their requests, with simple imperatives as the principle request forms. Given the observation, it is therefore clear that children's use of requests form seems subject to contextual situation, and this accords with the finding pointed out in previous studies (Axia, 1996;

Bosco et al., 2004; Ervin-Tripp; Garton & Pratt, 1990; Hsiao, 1990; Pan, 2000; Yont et al., 2003).

The following excerpts illustrate children's uses of request forms in the two major contexts discussed above, namely common talks and cooperative activities.

(7) (From YOU, at 2;6, Line 725)

Context: YOU was playing the piano, but she would like to stop and was trying to close the cover of the piano.

- *YOU: 媽 -: 媽媽 -: .
Ma mama
 Mom mom
 'Mom, mother.'
- *MOT: /ha/?
- *YOU: 媽媽 幫 我 關 這個 [= piano lid]. ←
Mama bang wo guan zhe-ge
 Mom help me close this
 'Mom, help me to close this.'
- *MOT: 妳 自己 關 # 輕輕的 才 不會 受傷喔 -: .
Ni ziji guan qingqing-de cai buhui shou-shang-o
 You self close lightly and won't hurt PRT
 'You yourself close it; do it lightly or you may get hurt.'
- *YOU: 好.
Hao
 Okay
 'Okay.'

(8) (From LGW, at 3;0, Line 229)

Context: LGW and her mother were having beverage. Her mother was drinking red wine, and LGW also wanted to drink something.

*MOT: 你 要 什麼?
Ni yao she-mo
 You want what
 ‘What do you want?’

*LGW: 我 要 東西.
Wo yao dong-xi
 I want things
 ‘I want something.’

*MOT: 你 要 喝 什麼?
Ni yao he she-mo
 You want drink what
 ‘What do you want to drink?’

*MOT: 你 也 要 喝 酒 嗎?
Ni ye yao he jiu ma
 You too want drink wine PRT
 ‘Do you want some wine, too?’

*LGW: 我 要 喝 +/.
Wo yao he
 I want drink
 ‘I want to drink...’

*MOT: 你 要 喝 什麼?
Ni yao he she-mo
 You want drink what
 ‘What do you want to drink?’

*MOT: /ha/?

*LGW: 我 要 喝 黑麥汁. ←
Wo yao he hei-mai-zhi
 I want drink malz beer
 ‘I want some malz beer.’

Excerpts (7) and (8) illustrate requests performed in common talks. Excerpt (7) exemplifies requesting with a simple imperative. This request was made by the girl to ask for help from her mother. Technically speaking, although the request is mainly carried out with an imperative, the imperative is mitigated with social deixis, *Mama* ‘mother’, and a lexical device to show her awareness of politeness, *bang* ‘to help’. The mitigation will be discussed in a following section (Section 4.2). Excerpt (8), on the other hand, illustrates children’s requests with WANT statements. The girl asked her mother to provide her with some drink by expressing her desire to drink something, when she knew that everyone else in the room had gotten a drink.

(9) (From LGW, at 2;6, Line 657)

Context: LGW and her mother were playing building blocks together.

*MOT: 來 放 上去.

Lai fang shang-qu

Come put onto

‘Here, put it on top.’

*LJW: 媽媽 放 [= give mom a building block]. ←

Mama fang

Mom put

‘Mom, you do it.’

*MOT: 媽媽 來 # 媽媽 放.

Mama lai mama fang

Mom come mom put

‘Let me do it.’

*MOT: 現在 蓋 什麼 屋?

Xian-zai gai she-mo wu

Now build what house

‘Now, what kind of house should we build?’

(10) (From You, at 2;6, Line 320)

Context: YOU’s mother invited her to a game and YOU directed where the game should take place.

*MOT: 好 我們 來 玩 圖卡.

Hao women lai wan tu-ka

Good we come play flash cards

‘Okay, let’s play the flash cards.’

*YOU: 好.

Hao

Okay

‘Okay’

*YOU: 來 吧.

Lai ba

Come PRT

‘Come on.’

*YOU: 來 我 這邊. ←

Lai wo zhe-bian

Come me here

‘Come to me.’

%sit: MOT put some toys away in a box.

Excerpts (9) and (10) demonstrate how children request with simple imperatives in interactive activities. In excerpt (9), the child knew that she and her mother were both involved in a block-building game, in which they took turns placing a block. To directly indicate the turn, the girl used a simple imperative to ask her mother to take

the turn. Likewise, excerpt (10) illustrates another interactive activity where a request with simple imperative was performed. This interactive activity was established in the first utterance of the excerpt when the mother used an inviting utterance to initiate a new game. With this inviting utterance, the child then knew that her mother and she were both involved in this game, thus a cooperative activity. As a result, the girl used a simple imperative to direct how the game should proceed.

To sum up, children may have been well aware of the influence of contextual situations on how they should express their requests with appropriate linguistic devices since the second half of their second year. It has been found that children tend to utilize a wider variety of linguistic forms to convey their requests, and in the variety of request forms, WANT statements and simple imperatives appear to be the two major linguistic devices used to request in common talks. By contrast, children pivot on simple imperatives to encode their requests in interactive activities. Therefore, children's request forms seem prone to contextual situations. It is also assumed that this formal variety of requests is systematic and can reveal children's awareness of linguistic politeness. This aspect will be discussed in detail in a following section on politeness (Section 4.2).

4.1.3 Request repertoire across ages

One objective of this study is to explore the development of request forms across different time points and the developmental course of children's linguistic ability is the essential concern of studies concerning child language development. As pointed

out in the previous section (Section 4.1.2), children are found to be inclined to draw upon simple imperatives as the primary request forms and WANT statements as the secondary request forms throughout the three time points. Nonetheless, a careful examination over the distribution of request forms with respect to contexts reveals a developmental pattern of a functional division of request forms in children's requests.

As shown in figure 3 above, it appears that children use the same set of request forms throughout three ages. They appear to use simple imperatives, imperatives with sentence-final particle, declaratives, and WANT statements to convey their request intents at all times. It seems that no developmental pattern of request forms can be evidently observed on the basis the figure.

In fact, the development of request forms becomes noticeable when the distribution of request forms with respect to context is considered. Figure 3 shows that at Time 1 (mean age 24.5 months), when requesting their parents to do an act, children tend to use both WANT statements and simple imperatives in both common talks and interactive activities; with a slight preference over simple imperatives in interactive activities, however, without a clear preference over either one of the two request forms in common talks. When considering the overall distribution of request forms across contexts, we can see that children used a wide variety of requests forms to encode their requests at this time (Time 1), including four major request forms, despite the finding that they may slightly prefer WANT statements and simple imperatives over the others.

At Time 2 (mean age 30.5 months), a division of labor among request forms seems to emerge. As mentioned in the previous section, children's uses of request forms in common talks at this time remain a similar picture to those at the first age,

except that the use of declaratives reduces (from 23.53% to 12.9%). When requesting in common talks, children tend to request with either WANT statements or simple imperatives (37.1% vs. 41.94%). By contrast, children at this time are inclined to disproportionately utilize simple imperatives to encode their requests in interactive activities. As shown in figure 3, when requesting in interactive activities, the percentage of simple imperatives is considerably higher than that of WANT statements, that of imperatives with sentence-final particle and that of declaratives (59.62% vs. 7.69%, 21.15%, and 11.54% respectively). This relatively high percentage of the uses of simple imperatives in interactive activities can therefore represent a developmental change — from a rudimentary preference over a particular type of request forms to a clear and remarkable preference over simple imperatives in interactive activities.

At the third time point (mean age 36 months), the major picture that has developed at Time 2 basically appears unchanged. As shown in the figure above, simple imperatives still appear to dominate children's requests in interactive activities, despite the increase of their uses of WANT statements at this time. Declaratives remain roughly the same as they appear at Time 2, after the decline from Time 1 to Time 2. In addition, children at Time 3 seem to extend the use of request forms to include a wider variety of uses in interactive activities. It can be seen in the figure that yes-no interrogatives appear to be used to issue requests in interactive activities at this time, despite its infrequency. In essence, the increase of WANT statements in interactive activities thus may disclose that children at this time may begin to associate more request forms with request intents in interactive activities, albeit they still manifest a preference over simple imperatives in interactive activities. During

this time, children may have further consolidated their basic deployment of these primary request forms. Simple imperatives appear to be the staple syntactic forms used to issue requests; WANT statements seem to be the secondary syntactic devices in children's requests, followed by declaratives and imperatives with sentence-final particle. The relative division of labor among these four major request forms appears quite constant across contextual situations.

Based on the findings presented above, it is clear that children's requests seem to develop with age, from 24 months old to 36 months old, and yet the development appears not to be in complexity or expansion of request forms. When considering contextual factors together with request forms, we can find an interesting developmental pattern, and this development can be seen as a functional development. The pattern develops from a time with a rudimentary association between request forms and their uses in contextual situations and to a time with a noticeable and constant systematic association between request forms and contextual situations. In the course of the development, it seems that Time 2, namely 30.5 months old, is a significant time point in the development of the functional development. Therefore, during the period from 24 months old to 36 months old children's linguistic development may not solely manifest itself in the maturation or complication of linguistic forms; it may also be disclosed through the systematic association between forms and uses in contextual situations. In a nutshell, children's development of request forms appears to be a function of request forms and contexts.

4.2 Children's Politeness in Requests

Previous studies on children's linguistic politeness have pointed out that children may adhere to such factors as status and cost when considering what request form to use so as to convey their requests appropriately (Ervin-Tripp et al.; Garton & Pratt, 1990). It has also been discussed that one of the means for demonstrating children's deference to politeness is to request with an indirect request forms (Blum-Kulka, 1990). Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) further suggested that children's linguistic politeness should be analyzed in terms of their uses of social deixis, social tactics and persuasive tactics. In addition, Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) discussed the distinction between acting politely and acting effectively as well. They argued that children's options for a particular forms to perform a speech act may be motivated by the effectiveness of the form to reach their communicative goal, but rather entirely by the politeness the form may convey or imply. Following the suggestions given in the previous studies, particularly those in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s study (1990), children's politeness in requests is thus examined through the observation of their uses of various syntactic devices as redressive actions and social deixis, and their provision of persuasion. The indirectness of children's request forms is incorporated in the discussion of children's uses of various request forms in adherence to linguistic politeness. In the last part of this chapter, the influence of effectiveness of request forms is presented.

4.2.1 Children's use of social deixis

According to Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), social deixis refers to linguistic devices

which ‘allude to an existing relationship or status (p. 314).’ Social deixis basically includes address terms that are obligatory for addressees to defer to social distance. Following this definition, when a Mandarin-speaking child uses *mama* ‘mother’ to address his/her mother who is already attentive, such address term is thus an instance of social deixis. The use of social deixis is therefore considered as a strategy to demonstrate children’s deference to linguistic politeness.

The data observed in the study were searched for the occurrence of social deixis, including address terms, honorifics, and other linguistic expressions or elements which may indicate politeness, such as *qing* ‘please’, *bang* ‘to help’, and *mafan* ‘please’. The results of the search are shown in the following (Table 3).

Table 3
Frequencies of Social Deixis

	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Address Terms	6	11.54	5	4.39	5	7.04
Person Switch	0	0	3	2.63	3	4.23
No Social Deixis	46	88.46	106	92.98	63	88.73
Total	52	100	114	100	71	100

In general, children mostly appear not to use social deixis when requesting. As shown in Table 3, around 90% of all request instances appear not accompanied with any social deixis. This may show that in family interactions children on the whole seem not to defer to the social relationship between their interlocutors and themselves specifically and explicitly. On the other hand, nearly 10% of the request instances only appear explicitly mitigated with social deixis. Children may either mitigate their requests by adding an address term or by using the first person plural pronoun *women*

‘we; let’s’ to refer to both parties in the interaction. With the low percentage, further investigation into the uses of social deixis may be helpful for understanding this respect of children’s linguistic politeness. A qualitatively analysis is thus conducted to elucidate children’s linguistic politeness.

These children use address terms, one type of social deixis, to mitigate their requests mostly when they are at a lower status as a child. Children generally use address terms to indicate their inability to do an act and their need for others’ help, their desire to switch conversational topics or interactional activities, or their intrusion on the progression of the current interaction. For instance,

(11) LGW, 3;0, Line 496

Context: LGW and her father were reading an interactive book. They were trying to dress the characters in the book.

*FAT: 那 我們 來 幫 他 戴 帽子。
Na women lai bang ta dai mao-zi
 Then we come help him wear hat
 ‘Then, let’s help him put on a hat.’

*LGW: 0 [= stuffing pieces of paper into the aperture in the book].

*FAT: 哇 -: 剛剛 好 對不對?
Wa ganggang hao dui-bu-dui
 Wow just good right-not-right
 ‘Wow, it matches just well, right?’

*LGW: 有 鞋子。
You xie-zi
 YOU shoes
 ‘There are shoes.’

*FAT: +^ 還有 鞋子。

Hai-you xie-zi

More shoes

‘There are other shoes.’

*FAT: 幫 他 穿 鞋子 對不對?

Bang ta chuan xie-zi dui-bu-dui

Help him wear shoes right-NOT-right

‘[We] should help him put on the shoes, right?’

*LGW: 爸 我 不會 弄. ←

Ba wo bu-hui nong

Dad I can't do

‘Dad, I don't know how to do it.’

*FAT: 可以 呀.

Ke-yi ya

Can PRT

‘You can [do it].’

*FAT: 你 把 它 這 xx 起來 啊.

Ni ba ta zhe qi-lai a

You BA it this up PRT

‘You put them up together.’

(12) YOU, 2;6, Line 1476

Context: YOU climbed to a high place, but she was unable to come down.

*MOT: 誰 叫 妳 要 爬 那麼 高?

Shei jiao ni yao pa na-mo gao

Who ask you want climb that high

‘Why did you climb up there?’

*MOT: 妳 怎麼 上去 妳 就 怎麼 下來 啊.

Ni zemo shang-qu ni jiu ze-mo xia-lai a

You how up-go you JIU how down-come PRT

‘You can go up there and you can come down yourself.’

*MOT: 妳 為什麼 每次 要 爬 那麼 高?
Ni wei-she-mo meici yao pa namo gao
 You why every-time want climb that high
 ‘Why do you always climb up there?’

*YOU: 媽 -: [= crying].

Ma

Mom

‘Mom...’

*MOT: 妳 要 跟 我 說 什麼?

Ni yao gen wo shuoshemo

You want to me say what

‘What do you have to say?’

*YOU: 媽 -: 請 幫 我 抱 下來. ←

Ma qing bang wo bao xia-lai

Mom please help me hug down-come

‘Mom, please help me to get down.’

*MOT: 妳 不要 再 爬 那麼 高 了 啦.

Ni buyao zai pa namo gao le la

You no-longer again climb that high LE PRT

‘You should no longer climb up there.’

*MOT: <知道 嗎> [= in Taiwanese]?

/zei-nia mo/ (Zhi-dao ma)

Know PRT

‘Get it?’

*YOU: 嗯 -: .

en

Mm

‘Mm.’

Excerpts (11) and (12) illustrate requests accompanied with social deixis produced by these children when they are in need for their parents' help. In (11), the child realized that she could not do the task alone so she asked her father for help. With this social deixis, which is indicated with the initial address term, *ba* 'dad', the child, on the one hand, showed her respect to the interpersonal relation between herself and her father. The child, on the other hand, not only expressed her need for others' help, but also implied to her father her inability to do such a task alone as a child. Likewise, the request, exemplified in excerpt (12), also shows how children mitigated a request with address term and asked her mother for help. In this excerpt, in addition to a social deixis, the child also used polite lexical units, *qing* 'please' and *bang* 'to help', to indicate her deference to her respectively lower rank or status and her need for her mother to grant her a favor. The use of polite lexical items will be discussed further in a later section. This mitigated request, however, subtly differs from that illustrated in (11). The child in (12) produced a polite request after her mother's hint for her to be polite, since she was not only being naughty and troublesome, but also causing her mother some inconvenience. This case of polite request appears to be elicited by adult's explicit instruction on politeness.

On the other hand, the excerpt below illustrates how these children used such mitigated requests to switch conversational topics or activities.

(13) LGW, 2;0, Line 1505

Context: Mother was talking about characters in fairy tales, and asked LGW for her preference for the character she was mentioning.

*MOT: 你 喜歡 白雪公主 還是 喜歡 萬苳姑娘?

Ni xihuan bai-xue-gong-zhu hai-shi xi-huan woju-guniang

You like Snow White or like Rapunzel

‘Which do you prefer, Snow White or Rapunzel?’

*FAT: 還是 喜歡 青蛙 +/.

Hai-shi xi-huan qingwa

Or like frog

‘Or frog...’

*LGW: 我 +...

Wo

I

‘I...’

*FAT: +, 青蛙王子?

Qingwa-wang-zi

Prince Frog

‘Prince Frog?’

*LGW: <喜歡> [] 王 +...

Xi-huan wang

like king

‘like prin...’

*LGW: 喜歡 <公主 的> [].

Xi-huan gong-zhu de

like princess DE

‘[I] like princess stories’

*MOT: 的 什麼?

De shemo

DE what

‘What princess stories?’

*LGW: 0 [=! coughing] .

*FAT: 萬苳姑娘 還是 白雪公主?

Waju-guniang hai-shi Baixue-gongzhu

Rapunzel or Snow White

‘Rapunzel or Snow White?’

*MOT: 還是 <青> [>] 蛙王子?

Hai-zhi qing wa-wangzi

Or Prince Frog

‘Or Prince Frog?’

*LGW: <媽> [<] 媽媽 我 要 拼圖. ←

Ma mama wo yao pin-tu

Mom mom I want puzzle

‘Mom, mom, I want to play puzzles.’

*MOT: 0 [=! laughing].

*YPC: 0 [=! laughing].

*FAT: 你 要 拼圖?

Ni yao pin-tu

You want puzzle

‘You want to play puzzles?’

As shown in excerpt (13), the child’s parents were originally talking about characters in fairy tales. The child seemed uninterested in the topic, so she then issued a request to switch to another activity with a mitigated WANT statement. In this case, the address term, *mama* ‘mother’, may indicate that the child might know that her request might interrupt the immediate interaction, as her mother was the director of the current interaction. As a result, an address term was used such that her mother would know that she paid attention to the need of politeness in this immediate context.

Alternatively, this instance of social deixis observed in (13) can also be regarded as an attention-getter to catch mother’s attention. Judged by the preceding context, however, the social deixis may not simply function as an attention-getter. The prior context may reveal that mother had attended to the child as she was asking the child

about her preference over fairy-tale characters. Thus, this use of social deixis here may also serve to show the child's strategic use of social deixis to make an interruption, apart from its attention-getting function.

In addition to requesting for help and for change of interactional topics, these children also use social deixis to direct the on-going interaction, as illustrated in the excerpts below.

(14) LGW, 2;6, Line 958

Context: LGW and her mother were talking about an animal mask.

*MOT: 那 他的 鼻子 在 哪裡?

Na ta-de bizi zai nali

Then his nose at where

'Then where is his nose?'

*LGW: 在 這裡 呀 [= pointing at the book].

Zai zheli ya

At here PRT

'Right here!'

*MOT: 哪裡 有 鼻子?

Nali YOU bizi

Where have nose

'Where is it?'

*LGW: 媽媽 給 我 吧 [= taking over the mask]. ←

Mama gei wo ba

Mom give me PRT

'Mom, give me that.'

*MOT: 好 # 給 你.

Hao gei ni

Okay give you

‘Okay, here.’

*MOT: 你 要 做 什麼?
Ni yao zuo shemo
 You want do what
 ‘What do you want to do?’

*MOT: 收起來?
Sho-qi-lai
 Put-away
 ‘Put it away?’

*LGW: 0 [= put the mask away].

(15) LGW, 3;0, Line 1360

Context: LGW was playing rock-paper-scissors with a female visitor and she asked for another round.

*FAT: 喔 -: 贏 了/ne/.
O ying le
 Oh won LE
 ‘Oh, I won!’

*FAT: 哇 你 贏 姐姐 了/ye/.
Wa ni ying jiejie le
 Wow you won sister LE
 ‘Wow, you beat sister!’

*ADU: 贏 了.
Ying le
 Won LE
 ‘[You] won.’

*LGW: 那 再 跟 姐姐 再 玩 一次. ←
Na zai gen jiejie zai wan yici
 Then again to sister again play once
 ‘Then [I] could play with you for one more time.’

*ADU: <剪刀 石頭> [>]+...

Jia-dao shi-tou

Scissors rock

‘Scissors, rock...’

*LGW: <剪刀 石頭> [<]+...

Jian-dao shi-tou

Scissors rock

‘Scissors, rock...’

*ADU: <布> [>]!

Bu

Cloth

‘Paper!’

*LGW: <布> [<]!

Bu

Cloth

‘Paper!’

Excerpts (14) and (15) exemplify how these children use a request accompanied by social deixis to direct how an interactional activity should proceed. In excerpt (14), the mitigated request was issued to ask for the ownership of the mask so that the child might end this interaction. In excerpt (15), the child issued a mitigated request by using the address term *jiejie* ‘elder sister’ so that she could reinitiate the game that just ended. The address term *jiejie* is originally a kinship term, but here it is obviously used as a pronoun to refer to the addressee and thus becomes a de-categorized nominal. In other words, the kinship term *jiejie* here is used by the child to eschew using the second person pronoun *ni* ‘you’ to refer to the addressee. Such use of the kinship term may thus imply politeness. These two instances of mitigated requests

may therefore reveal children's awareness of the need to be polite when their request may intrude on their interlocutors (Ervin-Tripp et al, 1990).

Additionally, children's uses of social deixis to defer to politeness can also be observed in cases where they request by using a different personal pronoun, namely the first person plural pronoun *women* 'we; let's', but rather the default implicit or covert second person pronoun *ni* 'you'. Since involving both parties of the conversation, not just the addressee only, this pronoun, *women*, may comparatively convey a weaker illocutionary force. Similar to the use of address terms, *women* are mainly used not only to demonstrate the children's adherence to politeness, or social hierarchical distance between their parents or other people and themselves in specific, but also to reduce the illocutionary force when they are requesting to interrupt the on-going interaction or to initiate a new interaction. For example,

(16) YOU, 2;6, Line 1560

Context: YOU's mother was playing the piano and then YOU joined her by randomly pressing the keys.

*YOU: 唛 # xxx [= pressing keyboard randomly].

Yi

Eh

'Eh?'

*YOU: 我們 來 玩 積木. ←

Women lai wan jimu

We come play building-block

'Let's play with building blocks.'

*MOT: 好.

Hao

Okay

‘Okay.’

*YOU: 我們 來 玩 小 醫生. ←

Women lai wan xiao yisheng

We come play little doctor

‘Let’s play “Little Doctor”.’

%sit: YOU and MOT take toys out of the bucket.

*YOU: 妳 怎麼 了?

Ni zemo le

You what-wrong LE

‘What’s wrong with you?’

*MOT: 我 -: 肚子痛.

Wo duzi-tong

I stomachache

‘I’m having a stomachache.’

*YOU: 為什麼 肚子痛?

Weishemo duzi-tong

Why stomachache

‘How did it start?’

*MOT: 我 吃 -: 太 飽 了.

Wo chi tai bao le

I eat too full LE

‘I ate too much.’

(17) LGW, 3;0, Line 1382

Context: LGW was playing rock-paper-scissors with her father, and she suggested they switch to another game.

*LGW: <我 要 再 玩> [<].

Wo yao zai wan

I want again play

‘I want to play again.’

*FAT: 好 好 剪刀 石頭+...

Hao hao jiandao shitou

Okay Okay Scissors rock

‘Okay, okay, scissors, rock...’

*LGW: 我們 來 玩 一角兩角 <三> [>] 角形! ←

Women lai wan yijiao-liangjiao san jiao-xing

We come play angles triangles

‘Let’s play Angles.’

*FAT: <好> [<].

hao

Okay

‘Okay.’

*FAT: 那 你 跟 姐姐 玩-看看.

Na ni gen jiejie wan-kankan

Then you with sister play-see-see

‘Then you try to play with sister.’

*LGW: 不要 我 要 <跟你 玩> [>]!

Buyao wo yao genni wan

No-want I want with you play

‘No, I want to play with you.’

*FAT: <好 來來來> [<].

Hao lai-lai-lai

Okay come-come-come

‘Okay, come on.’

In excerpt (16), the child issued a request with the first person plural pronoun to suggest the initiation of an interactive activity. The first arrowed utterance shows that the child initiated a new activity different from the previous one by using a suggestive tone to request her mother to play with her. The second arrowed utterance further

reinforces the use of first person plural pronoun to instigate the cooperative activity, although it seems that the child changed her mind soon after she had made a request to set off a new activity. On the other hand, in excerpt (17), the child used a mitigated request to interrupt the on-going game so as to initiate a new game. In this case, the addressee of the child's this very utterance is a visitor who does not come to the child's home regularly. With the less frequent visit that the addressee pays, the social distance or familiarity between the address and the child is thus greater than that between the child and her parents. This use of the first person plural pronoun may also likely reveal children's realization of their obligation to adhere to politeness in the immediate context.

Generally speaking, a great majority of children's request forms appear not mitigated with any social deixis. A careful examination, however, reveals that children's infrequent uses of social deixis may disclose their awareness of politeness. As mentioned above, children's requests are mitigated with addressed terms or by using first person plural pronoun, and these mitigated requests are by and large issued when their status is low as a child as opposed to their parents or other people. In addition, these mitigated requests generally used in situations when these requests may potentially intrude on the on-going interaction. In terms of development, children's uses of address terms to mitigate requests can be observed from Time 1 (24.5 months old) on, while their uses of switching personal pronoun cannot be observed until children reach Time 2 (30.5 months old). It appears that the ability to use first person plural pronoun to mitigate requests and to adhere to politeness is likely to be more mature, compared to the use of address terms. The uses of these two types of social deixis are likely to be strategic to show children's deference to

politeness, since these types of social deixis are found mostly when children's status is relatively low and the cost of the requests is comparatively high, for example, with the potential intrusion on the on-going activity. Based on the findings mentioned above, it seems that children's uses of social deixis are not fortuitous, but rather likely to be strategic and conform to the need of politeness in the immediate context.

In addition to the social deixis presented above, a small number of polite lexemes, which may explicitly or implicitly reveal one's adherence to politeness when used, were found in the data as well. As far as the data at hand are concerned, three occurrences of *bang* 'to help...with...' and two cases of the conventional polite form *qing* 'please' have been observed. The excerpts in the following thus presents all the instances of these two polite lexemes observed in the data.

(18) YOU, 2;0, Line 324

Context: YOU wanted to have some pudding, but she could not open the lid, so she turned to her dad for help.

%exp: SIS sits on FAT's lap.

*YOU: 爸爸 xxx 幫 我 開 -:: ←

Baba bang wo kai

Dad help me open

'Dad, ...help me open it.'

*MOT: 妳 要 送給 高佑荷 吃 嗎?

Ni yao song-gei Gaoyouhe chi ma

You want send-give You-ho eat PRT

'Do you want to give it to You-ho?'

*MOT: 送給 高佑荷 吃 好不好?

Song-gei Gaoyouhe chi hao-bu-hao

Send-give You-ho eat good-not-good

‘Give it you You-ho, all right?’

*YOU: 不要.

Bu-yao

No-want

‘No.’

*YOU: +^ 我 要 吃 -: .

Wo yao chi

I want eat

‘I want to eat it [myself].’

*FAT: 唉 -: 咻 [% pretend that it is hard to open] .

Ai siu

Ah shoo

‘Alas!’

*FAT: 媽媽 餵 妳 吃 [% FAT hand the pudding to MOT] .

Mama wei ni chi

Mom feed you eat

‘Let mom feed you some pudding.’

(19) YOU, 2;6, Line 722

Context: YOU was playing the piano after her mom left the piano and watched over YOU's sister.

%sit: YOU opens the piano lid.

*MOT: <一隻 沒有 尾巴> [>].

Yizhi meiyou yiba

One no tail

‘One has no tail.’

*YOU: <媽媽 # 這個 幫忙 關> [<].

Mama zhege bangmang guan

Mom this help close

‘Mom, help me close this.’

*MOT: <真 奇怪> [/] 真 奇怪.

Zhen qiguai zhen qiguai

Really weird really weird

‘It’s so weird. It’s so weird.’

*YOU: 媽 -: 媽媽 -: .

Ma mama

Mom mother

‘Mom, mother...’

*MOT: /ha/?

*YOU: 媽媽 幫 我 關 這個 [= piano lid]. ←

Mama bang wo guan zhege

Mom help me close this

‘Mom, help me close this.’

*MOT: 妳 自己 關 # 輕輕的 才 不會 受傷 喔 -: .

Ni ziji guan qingqingde cai buhui shoushang o

You self close lightly or won’t hurt PRT

‘You do it yourself. Do it gently or you may get hurt.’

*YOU: 好.

Hao

Okay

‘Okay.’

%sit: YOU tries to close the piano lid but is afraid to hurt her hand.

(20) YOU, 2;6, Line 1474

Context: YOU climbed up into the crib despite her mom’s warning, and she could not get out herself.

*YOU: <喔> [/] 喔 我 下 不來 了.

O o wo xia bulai le

Oh oh I down no-come LE

‘Oh, oh, I can’t get down.’

- *MOT: 誰 叫 妳 要 爬 那麼 高?
Shei jiao ni yao pa namo gao
 Who ask you want climb that high
 ‘Why did you climb up there?’
- *MOT: 妳 怎麼 上去 妳 就 怎麼 下來 啊.
Ni zemo shang-qu ni jiu zemo xia-lai a
 You how up-go you JIU how down-come PRT
 ‘You can go up there and you can come down yourself.’
- *MOT: 妳 為什麼 每次 要 爬 那麼 高?
Ni weshemo meici yao pa namo gao
 You why every-time want climb that high
 ‘Why do you always climb up there?’
- *YOU: 媽 -: [= crying].
Ma
 Mom
 ‘Mom...’
- *MOT: 妳 要 跟 我 說 什麼?
Ni yao gen wo shuoshemo
 You want to me say what
 ‘What do you have to say to me?’
- *YOU: 媽 -: 請 幫 我 抱 下來. ←
Ma qing bang me bao xia-lai
 Mom please help me hug down-come
 ‘Mom, please help me to get down.’
- *MOT: 妳 不要 再 爬 那麼 高 了 啦.
Ni buyao zai pa namo gao le la
 You no-longer again climb that high LE PRT
 ‘You should no longer climb up there.’
- *MOT: <知道 嗎> [= in Taiwanese]?
Zhi-dao ma

Know PRT

‘Get it?’

*YOU: 嗯 -: .

En

Mm

‘Mm.’

(21) LGW, 3;0, Line 66

Context: LGW wanted to have some pudding but she could not get the lid open herself, so her mom offered to help her.

*MOT: 打 不開 是不是?

Hit not-open yes-not-yes?

‘You can get it open, right?’

%exp: LGW is opening the lid on the pudding.

*MOT: 那 你 要 說 什麼?

Then you want say what

‘Then, what do you have to say?’

*LGW: 請.

Please

‘Please...’

*MOT: 請 什麼?

Please what

‘and then?’

*LGW: 請 幫 我. ←

Please help me

‘Please help me to get it open.’

*MOT: 好.

Okay

‘Okay.’

%act: MOT get the pudding open.

Excerpts (18) and (19) above exemplify children's uses of *bang* 'to help...with...' to make their requests, and excerpts (20) and (21) show children's uses of the polite form *qing* 'please'. As seen in excerpts (18) and (19), *bang* seems to be used when children's request may intrude on the addressee's current activity or when the request may be relatively more costly for the addressee. In both excerpts, the addressees, the child's father, in (18) and her mother in (19), appeared not to jointly attend to each other before the child issue her request. In both cases, the child's parents' attention was on the child's sister and the child's request might thus disturb their parents and intrude on what they were doing. Used as social deixis discussed earlier, the polite lexeme *bang* can be considered as well a linguistic device to mitigate the request force.

An additional account for the cases of *bang* can be the probability that children have acquired the meaning of the lexical item and use this lexical item strategically to show their respect to others' ability to carry out an act and to indicate to others their inability to do the act (Chen, 2003; Sealey, 1999). As suggested by the semantic of the lexical item, *bang* may not only mean that one who is using the very form is unable to do an act facing them, but imply that one is in need of an aid from a person who may be considered more able. As seen in the above excerpts, the child was not able to open up the pudding so she turned to her father for help by using *bang* as the head verb in her utterance, believing her father was able to do the act. In excerpt (19), the child was intending to replace the lid of the piano only she thought at that moment that she could not do it herself because of the weight of the lid. Likewise, the child requested with *bang* to show her inability and in need for her mother's help, at least at the very first moment when she was thinking about replacing the piano lid. With this

lexical item, children may imply that they are lower at status and weaker in ability.

The use of *bang* can, therefore, be considered as a polite form that adheres to the difference in status and power between their parents and themselves.

Excepts (20) and (21), on the other hand, present children's uses of the conventional Mandarin polite form *qing* 'please'. Similar to the cases of *bang*, children's uses of *qing* appear to reduce the cost that a costly request may potentially bring up. As seen in (20), the child was hinted to use the polite form to ask her mother solve the problem incurred by herself when she should have had listened to her mother's warning earlier. Because of the child's ignorance, the request she was making might cause her mother much trouble, and hence it was costly. It seems that children, during this period of time (from 24 to 36 months), may not spontaneously use such a polite form to mitigate their requests. Rather, they use it when their parents teach them explicitly about this polite form and about politeness (Snow et al, 1990). Children may use *qing* when making a request out of explicit elicitation by their parents, as shown in excerpt (21), wherein the child used the polite form and *bang* together to request her mother to help her with the lid on the pudding, although her mother actively offered to help.

The few uses of social deixis may not be expected, theoretically speaking, according to the social hierarchical distance between children and their parents. Given Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, when two interlocutors differ in social distance, vertically in status or horizontally in familiarity, the one who is lower should redress so as to defer to politeness. Since there is a clear social hierarchy between children and their parents, deference to politeness is thus mandatory. Despite the infrequent uses of social deixis, the illustrations above may reveal that children use

social deixis in interaction in a strategic way; they seem to use social deixis when they really need to, mostly when the request cost is high. In addition, the few occurrences of social deixis may also mean that in parent-child conversations occurring in family setting, the deference to politeness is required only to a limited extent. Moreover, as shown in Table 3, children's uses of first person plural pronoun is not observed until Time 2, while their uses of address terms is observed earlier. The discrepancy may disclose that the use of a different personal pronoun is highly likely a relatively more advanced ability in this respect. Last but not least, the spontaneous use of the conventional polite form *qing* may be a more mature ability that develops at a later age; children may have known the form, but they tend not to use it until they are explicitly encouraged, particularly in parent-child interaction.

4.2.2 Directness of request forms and politeness

According to a number of previous studies, politeness may be enacted with relatively less direct linguistic forms conveying less direct illocutionary forces. Children are found to be able to produce both indirect and direct requests, although a number of studies have argued that the correspondence between directness of linguistic forms and politeness may not be straightforward (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1987; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Garton & Pratt, 1990; Garvey, 1975; Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, 1984). In addition, as discussed in Chapter 3, the directness of request forms should be considered as a continuum ranging from the direct pole to the indirect pole. The directness of a request form should be evaluated in terms of

both linguistic forms used to issue the request and explicitness of intention or illocutionary force encoded in the form. In this study, it is assumed that children may adhere to politeness on the basis of the basic correlation between directness and politeness; namely, they may utilize less direct request forms to issue their requests so as to defer to politeness. In this section, findings in the directness of children's request forms and the correspondence between directness and politeness are to be discussed, based on the framework proposed by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). The findings on children's linguistic developments are presented according to the directness of request forms and the effect of cost and status on children's performance of linguistic politeness. The presentation here focuses mainly on the effect that politeness factors, such as status and cost, may have on children's uses of request forms.

Table 4 below, repeating Table 1, shows the distribution of request forms across age. On the basis of the scale of directness proposed in Chapter 3, the investigation into the data shows that children's uses of request forms appear to polarize in directness. They seem to majorly use either bluntly direct request forms, namely simple imperatives, or comparatively greater indirect request forms, namely declaratives, to issue their requests throughout the three ages, instead of request forms that are medial in the directness scale — imperatives with sentence-final particle, imperatives with tag, and yes-no interrogatives. As seen in Table 4, a majority of children's requests appear to be direct ones, while a small percentage of requests are indirect. The finding here reveals that although children are able to produce both direct and indirect requests at an early age, they may primarily use direct request forms, particularly in interactions with their parents.

Table 4
The Directness of Request Forms across Age⁴

	Time1 (N)	Time 2 (N)	Time 3 (N)
Simple Imperatives	42.31%(22)	50.0%(57)	45.07%(32)
WANT Statements	25.0%(13)	23.68%(27)	35.21%(25)
Imperatives with Sentence-Final Particle	9.62%(5)	12.28%(14)	2.82%(2)
Imperatives with Tag	0	0.88%(1)	0
Yes-No Interrogatives	0	0.88%(1)	1.41(1)
Declaratives	23.08%(12)	12.28%(17)	15.49%(11)
Total	(52)	(114)	(71)

It is generally assumed that the directness of a request form may imply politeness. In Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) and Leech's politeness principle (1983), politeness is mainly contingent on the directness of a linguistic forms. Other studies, however, has pointed out that the relationship between the directness of a linguistic form and the politeness of the form is not as straightforward as it is assumed in theories (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1987; 1990; Clancy, 1986; Held, 1989). To further understand the relationship between directness of request forms and politeness, the directness of request forms will be further examined with reference to children's status as opposed to their parents' and the cost of a request in the immediate context, since it is suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) that interpersonal status and request cost can be two crucial factors in politeness.

Table 5 below shows the percentages of request forms issued when children's

⁴ According to the scale proposed in Chapter 3, some requests forms always explicitly convey the intended action, and thus implicit cases of these forms are left unmarked to avoid confusion.

status is relatively higher or lower than or equal to their parents'. Children and their parents may be involved in different interactional situations, and in various situations, the relative status between children and their parents may be different. For example, children are normally at a lower status, as opposed to their parents, in common talks, while they may be at an equal status in cooperative activities. As shown in Table 5, there appears to be a systematic correspondence between directness of request forms and status. The relatively more direct forms, namely simple imperatives with explicit intention, turn out generally found in situations where children's status is equal to their parents (26.92% at Time 1, 22.81% at Time 2, and 22.54% at Time 3). In addition, simple imperatives are also observed to issue low-status requests at Time 2 and Time 3 (21.05% and 18.31% respectively). On the other hand, the second mostly prevalent request forms, i.e., WANT statements, may be primarily used by children when they are requesting at a lower status (13.46% at Time 1, 22.81% at Time 2, and 21.13% at Time 3).

Occasionally, children may also request with WANT statements when their status are equal to their parents', but the percentages of such requests are comparatively lower than those of requests issued with simple imperatives in the same situations. On the contrary, those request forms whose directness is close to the more indirect pole, namely declaratives with explicit or implicit intention, are mainly observed in situations when children's status is inferior to their parents, but the percentages observed is by and large lower than those of WANT statements. Despite the seeming systematic distribution of request forms across status, a statistic test reveals that such apparent discrepancies appear not significant at all times (ANOVA, $F(2, 45) = 1.503, p > .05$ at Time1; $F(2, 45) = 1.825, p > .05$ at Time 2; $F(2, 45) =$

1.538, $p > .05$). The statistic test also indicates that children are highly inclined to issue their requests mainly with simple imperatives and WANT statements during the time period of observation (ANOVA, $F(7, 40) = 3.849, p < .01$ at Time 1; $F(7, 40) = 2.94, p < .05$; $F(7, 40) = 5.913, p < .001$). Therefore, it is safe to say, for the time being, that children aged between 24 months to 36 months old may have established a rudimentary correspondence between directness of request forms and status, which can be roughly observed in the distribution of simple imperatives and WANT statements, with simple imperatives enacting equal- and low-status requests and WANT statements issuing low-status requests.

Table 5
*The Directness of Request Forms with Respect to Status across Age**

		Time 1 %(N)			Time 2 %(N)			Time 3 %(N)		
		H	E	L	H	E	L	H	E	L
PIP	Explicit	9.62 (5)	26.92 (14)	5.77 (3)	6.14 (7)	22.81 (26)	21.05 (24)	4.23 (100)	22.54 (16)	18.31 (13)
WAN	Explicit	5.77 (3)	5.77 (3)	13.46 (7)	0	0.88 (1)	22.81 (26)	0	14.08 (10)	21.13 (15)
IPP	Explicit	3.85 (2)	5.77 (3)	0	2.63 (3)	6.14 (7)	3.51 (4)	0	1.41 (1)	1.41 (1)
IPT	Explicit	0	0	0	0	0	0.88 (1)	0	0	
YNQ	Explicit	0	0	0	0	0	0.88 (1)	0	1.41 (1)	
Dec	Explicit	0	1.92 (1)	5.77 (3)	0	5.26 (6)	0.88 (1)	0	4.23 (3)	1.41 (1)
	Implicit	1.92 (1)	0	13.46 (7)	0	1.75 (2)	4.39 (5)	0	1.41 (1)	8.45 (6)
Total		100 (52)			100 (114)			100 (71)		

* PIP is for simple imperatives, WAN for WANT statements, IPP for imperatives with sentence-final particle, IPT for imperatives with tags, YNQ for yes-no interrogatives, DEC for declaratives, H for high status, L for low status, and E for equal status. 'Explicit' refers to requests with explicit intention, while 'implicit' to those without.

The correspondence between directness of request forms and status is also found irrelevant to age (ANAOV, $F(2, 141) = 0.042, p > .05$). It can be seen in Table 5 that

children, from Time 1 on, i.e., two years old, seem to use more simple imperatives to request at equal status, and more WANT statements at a lower status, and such inclination remains at Time 2 and Time 3. In addition, the insignificant temporal development of the correspondence between request forms and status may be attributed to the tendency that children mainly rely on simple imperatives and WANT statements as their two primary request forms throughout three ages, since the statistic test shows that the mean percentages of simple imperatives and WANT statements at all times are distinctively higher than those of other request forms.

The apparent consistent distribution between status and simple imperatives and WANT statements can be illustrated with excerpts in the following.

(22) YOU, 2;0, Line 1062

Context: YOU and her mother were playing a doctor-patient game, where YOU was being the doctor while her mother was being the patient.

*YOU: 張 開來 [% mimicking a doctor] . ←
zhang kai-lai
 spread open
 ‘Open your mouth.’

*MOT: 啊 -: [= open the mouth] .
A
 Ah
 ‘Ah...’

*MOT: 有 發炎 嗎?
YOU fa-ian ma
 Have infection PRT
 ‘Is there an infection?’

*MOT: 我 有 發炎 嗎?

Wo YOU fa-jan ma
 I have infection PRT
 ‘Do I have an infection?’

*MOT: 我 有 發炎 嗎?

Wo YOU fa-jan ma
 I have infection PRT
 ‘Do I have an infection?’

*MOT: 嗯?

En
 Mm
 ‘Mm?’

*MOT: 我 有 發炎 嗎?

Wo YOU fa-jan ma
 I have infection PRT
 ‘Do I have an infection?’

(23) LGW, 3;2, Line 761

Context: LGW and her father were putting things in a bag together.

*FAT: 好 # 我們 收起來.

Hao women shou-qi-lai
 Okay we put-it-away

‘Okay, let’s put things away.’

*FAT: 好不好?

Hao-bu-hao
 Good-not-good
 ‘All right?’

*LGW: 你 拿著 然後 我 收. ←

Ni na-zhe ranhou wo shou
 You hold then I put-away
 ‘You hold this and I put things away.’

*FAT: 好 # 我 拿著 你 收.
Hao wo na-zhe ni shou
 Okay I hold you put-away.
 ‘Okay, I hold this and you put things away.’

*FAT: 我 拿著.
Wo na-zhe
 I hold
 ‘I hold this.’

*FAT: 啊 你 收 進來.
A ni shoujin-lai
 Ah you put in-come
 ‘Ah, you put things in.’

*FAT: 來 [= open the bag].
Lai
 Come
 ‘Come on.’

Excerpts (22) and (23) above exemplify children’s uses of simple imperative request forms when they are at a higher or equal status with regard to their parents. In (22), the child asked her mother to open her mouth so that she could examine the potential infection in her mother’s throat with a relatively more direct request form, i.e., simple imperative. Being a doctor, the child knew that her status was higher than her mother’s, who was acting as a patient, in the immediate context and it would be appropriate for her to ask her mother to do an act with a more direct or straightforward request form. In addition, such a direct request form as simple imperative is also used when children’s interactional status is equal to their parents’, as seen in excerpt (23). In this excerpt, the child’s father suggested that they put

things back in a bag together as a cooperative activity. Given the suggestive utterance, the child then knew that her status was equal to her father's and she thus directed her father to hold the bag for her to put things into the bag with a simple imperative, a more direct request form.

In contrast, WANT statements may appear to be the dominant request forms when children's interactional status is relatively lower than their parents' in the immediate context, as mentioned previously, for example:

(24) LGW, 2;6, Line 72

Context: LGW was given a cup of pudding, and she was asking for permission to have the pudding.

*LGW: 我 要 吃 大的. ←
Wo yao chi da-de
 I want eat big
 'I want to have the big one.'

*MOT: 大的.
Da-de
 Big
 'The big one.'

*MOT: 哇 好 大 喔 [= scoop some pudding into a bowl].
Wa hao da o
 Wow so big PRT
 'Wow, it's really big.'

*LGW: 呃 -: [= make nauseating sounds].
E
 Yuck
 'Yuck.'

*MOT: 呃 什麼.

E shemo

Yuck what

‘Why did you yuck?’

*MOT: 呢 什麼 你 不是 要 大的.

E shemo ni bushi yao da-de

Eh what you not want big

‘Eh, don’t you want the big one?’

*MOT: 好 大 喔.

Hao da o

So big PRT

‘It’s really big.’

*MOT: 焦糖 布丁.

Jiao-tang bu-ding

Caramel pudding

‘It’s a caramel pudding.’

*LGW: 我 要 吃 布丁.

Wo yao chi bu-ding

I want eat pudding

‘I want to eat pudding.’

*MOT: 好 好.

Hao hao

Okay okay

‘Okay, okay.’

*MOT: 自己 吃/ho/.

Ziji chi

Self eat

‘You can eat by yourself.’

(25) YOU, 2;6, Line 1053

Context: YOU and her mother were having juice and YOU was asking for more.

%sit: YOU reach out for MOT's juice.

*MOT: 這 我的 [= MOT takes the juice up at once].

Zhe wo-de

This mine

'This is mine.'

*YOU: 嗯?

En

Mm

'Mm?'

*MOT: 這 我的.

Zhe wo-de

This mine

'This is mine.'

*YOU: 我 還 要 [= juice]. ←

Wo hai yao

I more want

'I want more juice.'

*MOT: 不行.

Bu-xing

No-way

'No.'

*YOU: 我 還 要. ←

Wo hai yao

I more want

'I want more.'

*MOT: 沒有 了.

Mei-you le

No LE

'No more left.'

*YOU: 我 還 要 [= drink to the very last drop]. ←

Wo hai yao

I more want

‘I want more.’

*MOT: 自己 喝 自己的.

Ziji he ziji-de

Self drink self’s

‘You drink your own juice.’

*MOT: 給 妳 吃 小 餅乾.

Gei ni chi xiao bing-gan

Give you eat little cookie

‘I’ll give you some little cookies instead.’

The above two excerpts (24) and (25) were taken from the conversations where the children were interacting with their parents as themselves (as a child) and asking for things to meet their physical thirst or hunger. Interacting with their parents as a child, children were requesting at a lower status with respect to their parents. At a lower status, children then drew upon WANT statements to issue their request. As shown in Table 5, WANT statements account for most of the requests issued when children are at a lower status in the current data, and a majority of such requests seem intended to have the children’s parents to fulfill their need or desire. There seems to be a clear tendency for children to make use of parents’ role as a caregiver to issue their low-status requests with WANT statements.

On the other end of the directness scale of request forms are declaratives with explicit or implicit intention, whose directness is comparatively less than those that are discussed above. Although these forms are mostly found when children are

requesting at a lower status, percentages of these request forms show that they are relatively rare in the data. Excerpts (26) and (27) below can illustrate these cases and the situations where they can be observed.

(26) YOU, 3;0, Line 1820

Context: YOU pretended to fall and get hurt.

*YOU: 唉 /i/ [= pretend to fall].

Ai

Ouch

‘Ouch!’

*FAT: 怎麼 姊姊 <也 摔一跤 呢> [>]?

Zemo jiejie ye shuai-yi-jiao ne

How sister too fall PRT

‘How come you fell too?’

*YOU: <好痛 好痛> [<]. ←

Hao tong hao tong

so hurt so hurt

‘It hurts so badly.’

*MOT: 喔 喔 :-.

O o

Oh oh

‘Oh-oh!’

*MOT: <我 揉一揉> [/] 我 揉一揉.

Wo rou-yi-rou wo rou-yi-rou

I rub-one-rub I rub-one-rub

‘Let’s rub at it.’

*MOT: 好 了.

Hao le

Okay LE

‘Okay, you’re fine.’

(27) LGW, 3;0, Line 2394

Context: LGW and her mother were playing with building blocks. LGW was trying to assemble a slide with the blocks.

*LGW: 我 不 會 做 # 做 那 個.

Wo buhui zuo zuo na-ge

I can't do do that

‘I don’t know how to do that one.’

*MOT: 做 哪 個?

Zuo na-ge

Do which one

‘Which one?’

*MOT: 你 要 做 哪 個?

Ni yao zuo na-ge

You want do which one

‘Which one do you want to do?’

*LGW: 媽 我 不 會.

Ma wo bu-hui

Mom I can't

‘Mom, I don’t know how to do it.’

*LGW: 你 教 我 做 溜 滑 梯.

Ni jiao wo zuo liu-hua-ti

You teach me do slide

‘You teach me how to make a slide.’

*MOT: 溜 滑 梯 喔.

Liu-hua-ti o

Slide PRT

‘Oh, a slide.’

In (26) the child issued a request indirectly with a declarative without explicitly conveying her intent in the utterance. Requesting this way, the child was intending to hint to her mother to take care of her after she got hurt. On the other hand, the child in (27) requested with a declarative with explicit intention. By issuing a request indirectly with such a form, the child successfully asked her mother to help her with the assembly of a slide out of the building blocks.

In essence, children are found to demonstrate a rudimentary association between request forms and interpersonal status, albeit such an association is not robustly distinctive. Simple imperatives appear primarily drawn upon to request when children's status is equal to that of their parents'. On the contrary, children may make use of WANT statements or more indirect request forms when they are relatively at a lower status. During the period, ranging from 24 months to 36 months, children may not have consolidated a consistently systematic correspondence between various request forms and status differences, but rather they appear to demonstrate a rudimentary association between directness of request forms and status. As far as the data are concerned, a systematic association in this respect may develop later than 36 months old.

In addition to status, children's request forms may be subject to cost of a request (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990) as well. According to Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), cost essentially means the degree of intrusion a request may impose on the addressee or the current interaction. It is thus crucial to avoid intrusion when requesting so as to respect politeness, since requests are inherently imposing (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and can be intrusive (Ervin-Tripp, et al., 1990). Distributions of directness of request forms with respect to cost across ages are

summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6
*Distributions of Directness of Request Forms Regarding Cost across Age**

		Time1			Time 2			Time 3		
		% (N)			% (N)			% (N)		
		H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
PIP	Explicit	5.77 (3)	5.77 (3)	30.77 (16)	25.4 (29)	14.91 (17)	9.65 (11)	8.45 (6)	51.22 (21)	7.04 (5)
WAN	Explicit	11.54 (6)	5.77 (3)	7.69 (4)	2.63 (2)	19.3 (22)	1.75 (2)	7.04 (5)	22.54 (16)	5.63 (4)
IPP	Explicit	1.92 (1)	1.92 (1)	5.77 (3)	1.75 (2)	7.02 (8)	3.51 (4)	1.41 (1)	0	1.41 (1)
IPT	Explicit	0	0	0	0.88 (1)	0	0	0	0	0
YNQ	Explicit	0	0	0	0.88 (1)	0	0	0	1.41 (1)	0
Dec	Explicit	0	5.77 (3)	1.92 (1)	2.63 (3)	1.75 (2)	1.75 (2)	0	5.63 (4)	0
	Implicit	3.85 (2)	7.69 (4)	3.85 (2)	3.51 (4)	2.63 (3)	0	0	9.68 (7)	0
Total		100 (52)			100 (114)			100 (71)		

* PIP is for simple imperatives, WAN for WANT statements, IPP for imperatives with sentence-final particle, IPT for imperatives with tags, YNQ for yes-no interrogatives, DEC for declaratives, H for high status, L for low status, and E for equal status. 'Explicit' refers to requests with explicit intention, while 'implicit' to those without.

The table indicates that children's uses of request forms appear not to remarkably interact with the cost of a request. Children's requests appear to be skewed toward those with middle or neutral cost, which may require a minimal redressiveness to avoid imposition on the addressee. Such a distribution is especially obvious at Time 2 (30.5 months old) and Time 3 (36 months old). The overall comparison of the mean percentages of requests with different costs shows no significant difference. Yet, a Post Hoc test reveals that the mean percentages of middle-cost requests slightly outnumber the other two types.

The distributions of the directness of request forms in this respect nevertheless demonstrate a remarkably significant difference at all times (ANOVA, $F(7, 40) = 4.429, p < .01$ at Time 1; $F(7, 40) = 4.649, p < .01$ at Time 2; $F(7, 40) = 5.416, p$

< .001 at Time 3). This may thus reveal that children tend to pivot on a particular set of request forms to issue requests. As shown in Table 6, an apparent complementary distribution of simple imperatives, WANT statements, and declaratives can be noticed at first age. At this age, simple imperatives are used to issue low-cost requests, while WANT statements are utilized to express high-cost requests. In contrast, declaratives, with explicit or implicit intention, are by and large drawn upon to make middle-cost requests. Such a distribution may show that low-cost requests are issued with more direct request forms, while middle-cost requests are likely to be formally various. The use of WANT statements to issue high-cost requests may be accounted for in terms of children's construal of parents' caregiver role; children may take advantage of their 'weaker' child role and have their parents fulfill their nursing role by satisfying children's needs. This distribution observed at this time seems to conform to what the theories predict; more direct request forms are used to issue low-cost requests, while more indirect request forms are used for requests with higher cost.

The distribution noticed at Time 1 alters at Time 2. At the second age, simple imperatives appear not to be utilized to issue low-cost requests. Instead, they are mainly used to issue high-cost requests or middle-cost requests. WANT statements, on the other hand, are primarily used to encode middle-cost requests, rather than high-cost requests as they are at Time 1. To make low-cost requests, children may also make use of imperatives with sentence-final particle, in addition to simple imperatives, at this age. As to declaratives, instead of middle- and low-cost requests, they are utilized to encode high- and middle-cost requests. The distribution at Time 2, however, shows no notable systematic correlation, statistically speaking. Simple imperatives are used to issue high-cost requests, which contradicts the appropriate use

of request forms as expected by theory. On the other hand, WANT statements at this time seem to take the place of simple imperatives as the major request forms to issue middle-cost requests.

A whole different picture of the distribution in this respect emerges at the third age. When issuing high-cost and low-cost requests, children restrict their uses of request forms to simple imperatives and WANT statements as the primary request forms at their disposal. In contrast, children turn to a wider variety of requests forms when making middle-cost requests at this age, albeit simple imperatives and WANT statements remain the two staple request forms to issue requests of this sort. It is likely that, children at this time mainly request with relatively direct forms so that they can effectively reach their communicative goal. A section on effectiveness of children's request forms in the following (Section 4.4) will pursue this issue further.

Briefly, the findings show that children's directness of request forms seems not to be evidently susceptible to the potential cost of a request as it is to interpersonal status in the immediate context. Although the results reveal that children may negligibly alter the linguistic to issue their requests according to the cost of the request, the alternation of request forms basically restricts to the deployments of simple imperatives or WANT statements with reference to request costs. In addition, the development in this respect seems to show no remarkable age-related change (ANOVA, $F(2, 141) = 0.380, p > .05$), since children appear to issue middle-cost requests most of the time.

Adjusting directness of request forms is assumed to be a primary linguistic approach to the deference to politeness. Additionally, deference to politeness can also be achieved by manipulating paralinguistic features such as tone of speech

(Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). To lucidly understand children's knowledge of politeness, it seems inevitable to explore the interaction between tone of speech and cost and status.

Table 7
*Distribution of Tone of Speech with Regard to Status across Time**

	Time 1 %(N)			Time 2 %(N)			Time 3 (N)			
	H	E	L	H	E	L	H	E	L	
Aggravation	0	11.54 (6)	3.85 (2)	1.75 (2)	9.65 (11)	12.28 (14)	0	7.04 (5)	11.27 (8)	
Mitigation	0	5.77 (3)	7.69 (4)	2.63 (3)	0	5.26 (6)	0	0	1.41 (1)	
Plain	19.23 (10)	25.0 (13)	26.92 (14)	4.39 (5)	27.19 (31)	26.84 (42)	4.23 (3)	38.03 (27)	38.03 (27)	
Total		100 (52)			100 (114)			100 (71)		

* H stands for high status, E for equal status, and L for low status.

Table 7 above summarizes the distribution of tone of speech with respect to status across ages. As revealed in the table, a majority of children's requests observed throughout the three ages seems primarily issued with a plain tone, without further mitigation to reduce the illocutionary force or aggravation to reinforce the imposition or urgency of a request. At least half of children's requests issued are not modified with any paralinguistic features, whenever they are at a higher, lower or equal status. On the other hand, only a minority of children's requests seems modified through aggravating or mitigating the tone of speech. Even when children are at a higher status, they rarely aggravate their requests. In accordance with the distributions, a statistic test shows that status has no significant influence on how children modify the tone of speech when requesting (ANOVA, $F(2, 15) = 1.076, p > .05$ at Time 1; $F(2, 15) = 2.077, p > .05$ at Time 2; $F(2, 15) = 1.197, p > .05$ at Time 3). In addition, the

effect of status on tone of speech demonstrates no age-related development, either (ANOVA, $F(2, 30) = 0.131, p > .05$); the pattern of children's modification of requests regarding status seems to remain largely the same throughout the three ages.

One aspect may be worth mentioning, notwithstanding the insignificant influence of status on tone of speech. It is assumed for one to mitigate his/her illocutionary force when requesting at a lower status. For children, however, this assumption seems not yet built, at least during the age period observed in this study. When requesting at a lower status, children may occasionally be more inclined to aggravate their requests than they may to mitigate them. Such aggravated requests at a lower status may be attributed to the tendency that children tend to make aggravated requests after their first attempt of requests have failed (Marcos, 1991)⁵ or that aggravated requests are simply more effective in obtaining the desirable action (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990).

It is assumed that when issuing a high-cost request, if necessary, children may mitigate the tone of speech; on the contrary, when issuing a low-cost request, children is free to decide whether to aggravate the tone of speech. Table 8 in the following presents the general distribution of tone of speech concerning request costs. Like what we have observed above regarding the effect of status in this respect, cost also seems not to play an influential role in the modification of tone of speech when children are making requests (ANOVA, $F(2, 15) = .319, p > .05$ at Time 1; $F(2, 15) = 1.243, p > .05$ at Time 2; $F(2, 15) = 1.422, p > .05$ at Time 3), and the effect of cost appears not to change with age, either (ANOVA, $F(2, 35) = 0.539, p > .05$).

⁵ A further investigation into children's aggravated requests reveals that one-third of all the aggravated requests observed in the data are issued in children's retries of their first requests.

Table 8
*Distribution of Tone of Speech Regarding Cost across Age**

	Time 1			Time 2			Time 3		
	% (N)			% (N)			(N)		
	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
Aggravation	3.85 (2)	3.85 (2)	11.69 (4)	14.04 (16)	7.89 (9)	1.75 (2)	7.04 (5)	11.27 (8)	0
Mitigation	3.85 (2)	5.77 (3)	3.85 (2)	4.39 (5)	1.75 (2)	1.75 (2)	0	0	1.41 (1)
Plain	15.38 (8)	17.31 (14)	38.46 (20)	18.42 (21)	36.84 (42)	13.16 (15)	9.86 (7)	57.75 (41)	12.68 (9)
Total	100 (52)			100 (114)			100 (71)		

*H stands for high cost, M for middle cost, and L for low cost.

As shown in the table above, children by and large do not modify their request force according to the potential cost of a request. They seem not to draw upon any paralinguistic features to either aggravate or mitigate their request force such that politeness is met, even when the request cost is relatively high or low. Even though children may intend to modify their tone of speech, the difference between aggravated requests and mitigated ones are not considerable.⁶

An interesting use of tone of speech in this respect can be observed at Time 2 and Time 3. As seen in Table 8, children at this time tend to aggravate their requests when the request cost is high. This association seems counter-intuitive, since it is assumed that one should reduce the request force when the request cost is high and one can decide whether to aggravate a request when the cost is low. A possible account for this is that children aggravate their requests to intensify the ‘urgency’ of the requests (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). Following this account, it is possible that

⁶ A Post Hoc test shows that the mean percentage difference between low-cost and high-cost requests makes no significant difference, and that between aggravated and mitigated requests does not reach a significant difference, either.

children's high-cost requests may coincide with urgent ones, so that they tend to aggravate their requests. Another possible explanation for such counter-intuitive use of aggravated tone of speech is the tendency for children to aggravate their requests when reformulating a request that previously failed (Marcos, 1991), since about one-third of all aggravated requests of this sort are observed during the time of observation.

In summary, children are found to utilize various tones of speech when issuing their requests, but a lion share of children's requests are not modified through aggravating or mitigating their speech tone. Even when children do attempt to modify their requests, their modification seems not to be based on their consideration of interpersonal status or request cost. It is likely that they aggravate or mitigate their requests for other factors such as effectiveness or urgency rather than status or cost. Further pursuit in this respect will be presented in a following section (Section 4.4).

4.3 Persuasive Tactics

When requesting, children are likely to provide justifications for their requests so as to be persuasive (Ervin-Tripp et al. 1990; Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). The observation on the data shows that children in question here do provide justifications for their requests, but the cases of persuasion preceding or following a request found in the data appear limited. Three cases of justifications are found during the second age (2;6) and two cases during the third age (3;0). Based on the raw numbers, it can be conjectured that children's persuasive tactics may be on emergence during the

second age, and also that children may rarely provide justifications for their requests when interacting with parents.

Excerpts drawn from the data are presented in the following to illustrate children's use of persuasive tactics.

(28) YOU, 2;6, Line 299

Context: YOU's sister gave mother a doll. When mother got the doll, YOU wanted it back.

*MOT: 喔 -: 這個 是 原住民的 娃娃。

O zhe-ge shi yuanzhumin-de wawa

Oh this is aboriginal doll

'Oh, this is a doll of aborigine.'

*YOU: 這 我的 還 給 我。 ←

Zhe wo-de huan gei wo

This mine return give me

'This is mine; give it back to me.'

%sit: YOU takes the doll away from MOT at once.

*MOT: 好 -: 給 妳 玩。

Hao gei ni wan

Okay give you play

'Okay, let you play with it.'

*YOU: 這 我的。 ←

Zhe wo-de

This mine

'This is mine.'

(29) LGW, 3;0, Line 2397

Context: LGW and her mother were playing with building blocks, and LGW asked her mother to help her.

*MOT: 你 要 做 哪個?
Ni yao zuo na-ge
 You want do which
 'Which one would you like to make?'

*LJW: 媽 我 不會. ←
Ma wo bu-hui
 Mom I can't
 'Mom, I can't.'

*LJW: 你 教 我 做 溜滑梯.
Ni jiao wo zuo liu-hua-ti
 You teach me make slide
 'You teach me how to make a slide.'

*MOT: 溜滑梯 喔.
Lie-hua-ti o
 Slide PRT
 'Oh, a slide.'

*LJW: /m/.

*MOT: 溜滑梯 要 先 這樣.
Liu-hua-ti yao xian zhe-jang
 Slide have to first this
 'To make a slide, you first need to do this.'

As shown in the excerpts, children mostly justify their direct requests issued with simple imperatives. In (28), the child asked her mother to return her doll with a simple imperative and she justified her request by claiming that the doll actually belonged to her. With the persuasion, the child's mother positively complied with the child and returned the doll. Similarly, in (29) the child asked her mother to help her with assembly of building blocks. She issued the request with a simple imperative too, and

the request was preceded by a persuasive utterance, stating that the child was unable to assemble a slide out of the building blocks. Justified with this preceding persuasion, the child's requests successfully won the intended compliance.

As illustrated with the above excerpts, children's justified requests mostly obtain the intended compliance. As far the current data are concerned, four cases out of the total five justified requests are positively complied. It seems that the provision of persuasive tactics may solicit the intended compliance from the addressee and make the request prevail, as indicated by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). In spite of the slight inclination toward the success of persuasive tactics, the general occurrences of them are too infrequent to remark. Other studies in the future may pursue this respect further.

4.4 Effectiveness

It has been pointed out previously that children in question here demonstrate a slight tendency to alter their request forms systematically with their relative status with respect to their parents. To better grasp politeness and communicative appropriateness, it is inevitable to examine the compliance of the alternation of request forms so as to see if the strategic uses of various request forms effectively obtain the desirable compliance — the effectiveness of a request form. The effectiveness of formal alternation is thus to be inspected in terms of these respective factors.

Table 9
*Distribution of Compliance across Major Request Forms**

		Time 1 %(N)	Time 2 %(N)	Time 3 %(N)
PIP	Complied	90.9(20)	61.4(35)	90.63(29)
	Not complied	9.1(2)	38.6(22)	9.37(3)
WAN	Complied	61.54(8)	66.67(18)	84(21)
	Not complied	38.46(5)	33.33(9)	16(4)
IPP	Complied	80(4)	78.57(11)	50(1)
	Not Complied	20(1)	21.43(3)	50(1)
Dec	Complied	41.67(5)	57.14(8)	100(11)
	Not Complied	58.33(7)	42.86(6)	0
Total		(52)	(112)	(70)

*PIP stands for simple imperatives, WAN for WANT statements, IPP for imperatives with sentence-final particles, and Dec for declaratives.

Table 9 above shows the degrees to which children's request forms positively or negatively gain the intended compliance. To simplify the discussion, all four categories of compliance are merged into two, namely positive compliance — by combining temporization with positive compliance, since both show that children eventually gain the desirable compliance, and non-positive compliance — by combining alternation with non-positive one, since both show that children fail to obtain the desirable compliance. Also, cases of imperatives with tag questions and yes-no interrogatives, because of their rare occurrences, are omitted here to simplify the presentation and discussion.

It appears that children can generally obtain the desirable compliance through out three ages. Children's effective requests are principally issued with simple imperatives or WANT statements, judged by the tokens and percentages of each request form. Throughout the three ages, simple imperatives on the whole appear to be the most effective request forms of all. About 90% of requests issued with simple imperatives obtain the desirable compliance (90.9% at Time 1 and 90.63% at Time 3),

except for those observed at the second age, whose effectiveness is lower than the other request forms, with 61.4% of all simple imperative requests. As the second effective request forms, WANT statements generally yield about 70% of compliance on average (61.45%, 66.67% and 84% respectively at three time points).

The effectiveness of these two leading request forms demonstrates a slight development with age. As observed in the table, the percentages of uses of simple imperatives to achieve a successful request are roughly similar at Time 1 and Time 3. The percentages of complied requests at Time 2, however, reveal that simple imperatives are not as effective at this time as they are at Time 1 and Time 3, and also compared to the other request forms, such as WANT statements and imperatives with sentence-final particle, at the same time. Requests issued with WANT statements manifest a gradual development across the three time points. The effectiveness of WANT statement requests increases slightly at Time 2, compared to that at Time 1, and continues to increase at Time 3.

As to the other two request forms, the effectiveness of requests with imperatives with sentence-final particles is also high; at Time 1 and 2, such request forms' effectiveness is even higher than WANT statements (80% vs. 61.54%). The effectiveness of imperatives with sentence-final particles appears to decline with time, and at Time 3, such request forms appear to be the least effective, comparatively speaking. The effectiveness of declarative requests demonstrates a quite different picture from that of the other three request forms. Relatively speaking, declarative requests are quite ineffective in obtaining the desirable compliance at Time 1. As age develops, such declarative requests turn out to be an effective request form, particularly at the third age (100%). Generally speaking, children become more able

to obtain the desirable compliance as they grow older. The interaction between effectiveness of request forms and age is statistically attested to be significantly noteworthy (Two-way ANOVA $F(1, 20) = 31.781, p < .001$).

The findings reviewed above have indicated that simple imperatives appear to be the most effective request forms to obtain the desirable compliance. This request form, however, may incur undesirable compliance, particularly at the second age. On closer examination, it is found that some of these ineffective simple imperative requests do not entirely result from children's inappropriate use of request forms. Rather, these requests are rejected because parents may intend to socialize or discipline children or to teach children common knowledge. For example,

(30) You, 2;6, Line 1388

Context: YOU's mother was teaching YOU about cube sugar.

*MOT: 哇哈 -: 抓到 了 /pibabu/ -: .

Waha zhua-dao le

Wow-ha catch LE

'Ah-ha, I caught you.'

*MOT: 好 换 妳 去 当 鬼.

Hao huan ni qu dang guei

Okay change You go be ghost

'Then, it's your turn to be the seeker.'

*YOU: 好.

Hao

Okay

'Okay.'

*YOU: 那 <妳 去 当 鬼> [/] 妳 去 当 鬼. ←

Na ni qu dang guei ni qu dang guei

Then you go be ghost you go be ghost

‘Then it’s your turn to be the seeker.’

*MOT: 妳 去 當 鬼. ←

Ni qu dang guei

You go be ghost

‘It’s YOUR turn to be the seeker.’

*MOT: 妳 數 一 二 三.

Ni shu yi er san

You count one two three

‘You should count from one on.’

*MOT: 不 可以 偷看 喔.

Bu ke-yi tuo-kan o

Not can peek PRT

‘No peeking.’

(31) LGW, 2;6, Line 675

Context: LGW and her father were preparing for a game together.

*LGW: 紙紙 要 放 在 這邊 [= a box].

Zhi-zhi yao fang zai zhebian

Paper have to put at here

‘Paper should be put here.’

*YPC: 0 [=! laughing].

*FAT: 紙紙 喔 # 不 用 啦. ←

Zhi-zhi o bu yong la

Paper PRT not use PRT

‘Oh, paper; we don’t need it.’

*FAT: 紙紙 放 旁邊 就 好.

Zhi-zhi fang pang-bian jiu hao

Paper put aside JIU fine

‘Paper can be put aside.’

*FAT: +^ 來 給 /bapi/ .
Lai gei baba
 come give dad
 ‘Here, give me that.’

The child in (30) was playing a hide-and-seek game with her mother and they took turns to be the seeker and the hider. After mother had been done with her turn as the seeker, the child asked her mother to be the seeker for another time. Instead of agreeing with the child’s requests, mother directed the child to be the seeker, since it should be the child’s turn to be the seeker, according to the game rules. Therefore, mother did not comply with the child’s request because she was teaching the child how the game was supposed to proceed.

A similar case is presented in (31). In this excerpt, the child and her father were preparing for a game together. While preparing, the child directed her father to put paper in the place where she was indicating. Her direction was declined for the reason that paper was not needed for the game. Like the previous excerpt, the child’s request was not complied because father was teaching the child about the game they were about to play. In other words, such requests may not be directly considered ineffective, since the motivation for the parents not to comply is not purely relevant to the appropriate use of request forms. Therefore, when excluding such cases of uncomplied requests, simple imperatives are nonetheless one of the more effective request forms.

In summary, investigation into the effectiveness of children’s request forms shows that they appear to generally restrict their request forms to simple imperatives and WANT statements, even though they are able to use four different linguistic

forms to issue their requests and obtain the desirable compliance. A plausible explanation for this may be that these two request forms are relatively more direct and effective, compared to the other request forms. They seem to decide which request forms to issue their requests on the basis of the potential effectiveness they have acquired in the interaction with their parents.

It has been pointed out previously that children's deployment of request forms is susceptible to the influence of status. Also, the above presentation just indicates that effectiveness may also have an effect on the use of request forms. It thus seems reasonable to scrutinize the effect of status on the effectiveness of request forms, and hence a lucid picture of children's linguistic politeness can be unearthed.

Table 10 below presents the effectiveness of request forms in children's requests issued at different statuses. Again, the percentages of compliances are merged into two categories to simplify the discussion on requests replied with compliance and uncompliance. In addition, percentages of simple imperatives with a tag and yes-no interrogatives are excluded from the following discussion because they are too infrequent to be remarkable.

Considering in terms of both tokens of occurrences and percentages of effectiveness, simple imperatives appear to be rather effective request forms when children are requesting at a higher status. As seen in the table, when issued at higher status, simple imperatives successfully yield the desirable compliance most of the time, particularly at the first and the third ages. Children's high-status requests at Time 1 appear to be quite effective whichever request form is used. As a seeming complementary distribution, high-status requests at Time 3, however, are only observed to be issued with simple imperatives and manifest a picture of perfect

effectiveness. At time 2, requests of this sort appear to be rather effective as well, when issued with imperative forms (simple imperatives and imperatives with sentence-final particle). The distribution observed here appears to conform to the theoretical prediction that more direct request forms are used to issue high-status requests and such uses should be effective.

Table 10
*Effectiveness of Request Forms with Respect to Status**

		Time 1 %(N)			Time 2 %(N)			Time 3 %(N)		
		H	E	L	H	E	L	H	E	L
PIP	O	100 (5)	92.86 (13)	66.67 (2)	71.43 (5)	69.23 (18)	50 (12)	100 (3)	100 (3)	76.92 (10)
	X	0	7.14 (1)	33.33 (1)	28.57 (2)	30.77 (8)	50 (12)	0	0	23.08 (3)
WAN	O	100 (2)	75 (3)	42.86 (3)	0	100 (1)	65.38 (17)	0	100 (10)	73.33 (11)
	X	0	25 (1)	57.14 (4)	0	0	34.62 (9)	0	0	26.67 (4)
IPP	O	100 (2)	66.67 (2)	0	100 (3)	71.43 (5)	75 (3)	0	100 (1)	0
	X	0	33.33 (1)	0	0	28.57 (2)	25 (1)	0	0	100 (1)
Dec	O	100 (1)	0	40 (4)	0	62.5 (5)	50 (3)	0	100 (4)	100 (7)
	X	0	100 (1)	60 (6)	0	37.5 (3)	50 (3)	0	0	0
Total		100 (52)			100 (112)			100 (70)		

*In the Table, PIP stands for simple imperatives, WANT for WANT statements, IPP for imperatives with sentence-final particle, Dec for declaratives, H for high status, E for equal status, and L for low status. O represents compliance and X noncompliance.

When children are requesting at an equal status to their parents, simple imperatives remain the most effective request forms of all, except at Time 2. At Time 2, WANT statement requests appear to be the most effective. However, the low frequency of this form makes this unremarkable. It would be safe to say that at Time 2 these request forms used at an equal status appear to be roughly equally effective. In

terms of low-status requests, simple imperatives remain the most effective at Time 1. However, WANT statements and imperatives with sentence-final particle seem to be the most effective request forms, particularly at Time 2. And at Time 3, declaratives become the most effective, while simple imperatives appear to be the secondly effective request forms, followed closely by WANT statements.

The effectiveness of requests with respect to status seems to change with age. Simple imperative requests' effectiveness decreases at Time 2 and yet increases at Time 3. Unlike the effectiveness of simple imperatives, the effectiveness of the other request forms seems to increase with age. At Time 2, the effectiveness of imperatives with sentence-final particle and declaratives increases. At the same time, the effectiveness of WANT statements increases and comes in the first place, surpassing simple imperatives. At Time 3, all request forms can overall successfully obtain the desirable compliance. Interestingly, as children grow older, their low-status requests issued with WANT statements become more effective in gaining the desirable compliance.

Given the above findings, it appears that children, when requesting at different statuses, tend to use different request forms, and the effectiveness of request forms also varies with children's status. The interaction between status and request forms does not yield a statistically significant difference at Time 1 (Two-way ANOVA $F(2, 44) = .602, p > .05$), but that observed at Time 2 and Time 3 is attested to be significant (Two-way ANOVA, $F(2, 44) = 6.647, p < .01$ at Time 2 and $F(2, 44) = 4.909, p < .05$ at Time 3). The percentages also exhibit an age-related differences; a statistic test indicates that when growing older, children become more able to obtain their compliance and more able to alter their request forms with reference to status so

as to gain the compliance (Two way ANOVA, $F(1, 138) = 29.096, p < .01$ for compliance, and $F(2, 138) = 9.36, p < .01$). A Post Hoc test on age-related development, moreover, reveals that the effectiveness of children's request is the greatest at Time 3 (36 months old), compared to that at Time 1 and Time 2. This may mean that children at the age of 36 months old appear to be more sensitive to status and more able to utilize different request forms to reach their communicative goal to have the intended act done.

It have been attested that there seems to be an interaction among effectiveness, status and request forms. How about the interaction between request cost and effectiveness? Table 11 below shows the effectiveness of request forms with regard to request cost. Identical to the previous tables regarding effectiveness, percentages of compliance are re-summed into two major categories including complied requests and not complied ones to simplify the discussion. Additionally, percentages of request forms with low occurrences are also omitted to avoid complication of the discussion.

As seen in the table, by and large, children appear to obtain the desirable compliance whichever request form they use to issue their middle- and low-cost requests at Time 1 and Time 3, except for declaratives at Time 1. In addition, the table reveals that effectiveness of children's requests appears to alter with children's age. At the third age, children's requests on the whole produce the desirable effect in cases of middle-cost and low-cost requests. Before this age, children's requests may sometimes yield unfavorable effects. A statistic test proves that such development manifests a robust significance (Two-way ANOVA, $F(1, 138) = 21.399, p < .001$). Therefore, it seems that as they grow older, children are more able to take request costs into consideration and to use appropriate request forms to generate their

desirable compliance from their parents, despite a lack of remarkable systematic distribution of request forms and request costs.

Table 11
*Effectiveness of Request Forms Regarding Cost**

		Time 1			Time 2			Time 3		
		% (N)			% (N)			% (N)		
		H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
PIP	O	33.33 (1)	100 (3)	100 (16)	44.83 (3)	82.35 (14)	72.73 (8)	50 (3)	100 (21)	100 (5)
	X	66.67 (2)	0	0	55.17 (16)	17.65 (3)	27.27 (3)	50 (3)	0	0
WAN	O	16.67 (1)	100 (3)	100 (4)	0	72.73 (16)	100 (2)	20 (1)	100 (16)	100 (4)
	X	83.33 (5)	0	0	100 (3)	27.27 (6)	0	80 (4)	0	0
IPP	O	0	100 (1)	100 (3)	50 (1)	75 (6)	100 (4)	0	0	100 (1)
	X	100 (1)	0	0	50 (1)	25 (2)	0	100 (1)	0	0
Dec	O	50 (1)	28.57 (2)	66.67 (2)	28.57 (2)	80 (4)	100 (2)	0	100 (11)	0
	X	50 (1)	71.43 (5)	33.33 (1)	71.43 (5)	20 (1)	0	0	0	0
Total		100 (52)			100 (112)			100 (70)		

*In the table, PIP stands for simple imperatives, WAN for WANT statements, IPP for imperatives with sentence-final particle, Dec for declaratives, H for high cost, M for middle cost, and L for low cost. O represents compliance and X noncompliance.

With respect to low-cost requests, most of request forms appear to be equally effective throughout the ages, except for declaratives at Time 1 and simple imperatives observed at Time 2. At Time 1, declarative requests appear not to be as effective as the other request forms. At Time 2, WANT statements and the other request forms appear to be relatively more effective than simple imperatives.

The effectiveness of middle-cost requests displays a slightly different picture from that of low-cost requests. Basically, simple imperatives appear to be rather effective request forms in middle-cost requests throughout the three ages. Although

the table shows that the percentage of complied simple imperative requests declines a little at Time 2, simple imperative requests remain rather effective in the cases of middle-cost requests. In addition, at Time 1, declarative requests seem to be rather ineffective, when issued to convey middle-cost requests. At Time 2, the effectiveness of declarative requests increases greatly, while those of WANT statement requests and requests issued with imperatives with sentence-final particle decrease. The increase of declarative requests at the age, however, may result from the fewer instances of declarative requests.

As to the high-cost requests, none of the request forms appear to be effective. As seen in the table, the percentages of uncomplied responses are higher than those of complied ones. Whichever request form the children draw upon to convey their requests of this sort, they are likely to incur more noncompliance than compliance. It seems that parents in general tend to comply with children's low-cost and most of their middle-cost requests, and yet not to comply with most of their high-cost requests.

A closer observation discloses that the less effectiveness of children's high-cost requests appears to be those that may potentially intrude on the other interlocutor. These uncomplied requests are found to be issued in such situations as lack of joint attention with their parents, ignorance due to lack of joint attention, avoidance of answering question by abrupt topic-switching, or parents' implement of their principles of parenting. In these situations, adherence to politeness is thus expected. However, no mitigating linguistic elements, such as social deixis and polite lexemes, or persuasion seem to improve the effectiveness. It is likely that parents are more inclined to reject children's high-cost requests than to comply with them, and seldom

do children attempt to reduce the cost with justification, lexical mitigators or polite forms. The following excerpts can serve to illustrate these aspects.

(32) LGW, 2;0, Line 1505

Context: LGW's mother was asking her of her preferred fairy tale character, while LGW suddenly change the topic by expressing her desire to play with puzzles.

*MOT: 你 喜歡 白雪公主 還是 喜歡 萬苳姑娘?

Ni xihuan Baixuegongzhu haishi xihuan wojuguniang

You like Snow White or like Rapunzel

'Which do you prefer, Snow White or Rapunzel?'

*FAT: 還是 喜歡 青蛙 +/.

Haishi xihuan qingwa

Or like frog

'Or frog...'

*LGW: 我 +...

Wo

I

'I...'

*FAT: +, 青蛙王子?

Qingwaw-wangzi

Prince Frog

'Prince Frog?'

*LGW: <喜歡> [/] 王 +...

Xihuan wang

like king

'like prin...'

*LGW: 喜歡 <公主 的> [/].

Xihuan gongzhu de

like princess DE

‘[I] like princess stories’

*MOT: 的 什麼?

De shemo

DE what

‘What princess stories?’

*LGW: 0 [=! coughing] .

*FAT: 萬苳姑娘 還是 白雪公主?

Wojuguniang haishi Baixuegongzhu

Rapunzel or Snow White

‘Rapunzel or Snow White?’

*MOT: 還是 <青> [>] 蛙王子?

Haishi qing- wa-wangzi

Or Prince Frog

‘Or Prince Frog?’

*LGW: <媽> [<] 媽媽 我 要 拼圖. ←

Ma mama wo yao pingtu

Mom mom I want puzzle

‘Mom, mom, I want to play puzzles.’

*MOT: 0 [=! laughing] .

*YPC: 0 [=! laughing] .

*FAT: 你 要 拼圖?

Ni yao pingtu

You want puzzle

‘You want to play puzzles?’

The above excerpt illustrates the cases where children’s high-cost requests serve to switch the current interactional topic to a new one, but instead turned down by their parents. In excerpt (32), the child attempted to change the ongoing topic that had been initiated by her mother with a request to play with toys. This case is considered a

high-cost because of its abrupt interruption for the ongoing topic: the child's mother was inquiring her of her preference over a fairy tale character. The child did not answer positively, probably due to her uncertainty or her reluctance to answer, but rather asked to initiate a new interaction. With its intrusive property in the immediate context, the child's request for a topic switching was not positively complied, even though it was mitigated with a social deixis.

The excerpt below, on the other hand, illustrates cases where parents refuse to comply positively with children's high-cost requests so as to discipline them and ask them to behave.

(33) YOU, 2;6, Line 1451

Context: YOU climbed and got into the crib, but she ended up not being about to come out by herself.

%sit: YOU climbs up into the crib.

*MOT: 下來.

Xialai

Down-come

'Come down here.'

*MOT: 妳爬那麼高妳等下下不來 喔 -: .

Ni pa namo gao ni dengxia xiabulai o

You climb that high you wait down-not-come PRT

'Climbing up there, you should beware of not being able to come down.'

*MOT: 真的會下不來 喔我跟你說.

Zhen-de hui xiabulai o wo gen ni shuo

Really can come-not-down PRTI to you say

'You may really fail to come down, I warn you.'

*YOU: <我下不來了> [= crying].

Woxiabulai le

I come-not-down LE

‘I can’t get down there.’

*MOT: 打鼓 的 棒子 呢?

Dagu de bangzi ne

Drum DE stick PRT

‘Where is the drum stick?’

*YOU: 嗯?

En

Mm

‘Mm?’

*YOU: 什麼?

Shemo

What

‘What?’

*MOT: 打鼓 的 棒子 呢?

Dagu de bangzi ne

Drum DE stick PRT

‘Where is the drum stick?’

*MOT: 打鼓棒 呢?

Dagubang ne

Drum-stick PRT

‘Where’s the drum stick?’

*MOT: 去 哪裡 了?

Qu nail le

Go where LE

‘Where is it?’

*MOT: 高佑萱 妳 給 我 拿去 哪裡 了 妳 說.

Gaoyouxuan ni gei wo naqu nail le ni shuo

YOU you give me take where LE you say

‘Tell me where you have taken it, YOU.’

*MOT: 打鼓棒 呢?

Dagubang ne

Drum-stick PRT

‘Where’s the drum stick?’

*YOU: 我 下不來 了. ←

Wo xiabulai le

I come-not-down LE

‘I can’t get down there.’

*YOU: <我 下不來 了> [= crying]. ←

Wo xiabulai le

I come-not-down LE

‘I can’t get down there.’

*MOT: 小 老鼠 # 上 燈台 +...

Xiaolaoshu shang dengtai

little mouse up lamp-post

‘Little mouse goes up to the lamp-post.’

*YOU: 0 [=! crying].

*MOT: +, 偷 吃 油 # 下不來 +...

tou chi you xiabulai

steal eat oil come-not-down

‘To steal some oil to eat, but not able to come down.’

*YOU: 媽媽.

Mama

Mother

‘Mother’

*MOT: +, 叫 媽媽 # 媽 不來.

Jiao mama ma bulai

Call mother mom not-come

‘Call for mother’s help, but no response.’

*MOT: 叫 爸爸 # 爸 不來 # 咕哩咕嚕 滾下來。
Jiao baba ba bulai jiligulu guen-xia-lai
 Call father dad not-come rumbling-rumbling roll-down-come
 ‘Call for father’s help, and yet no reply, so it come rumbling down.’

As shown in (33), the child attempted to climb onto the crib regardless of what her mother had warned her of the consequence. After climbing onto the crib, the child realized that she was unable to get down herself and she needed to ask her mother for help. Her mother’s pre-warning utterance and the intrusion of her request on her mothers’ current action add up to a high-cost request. As seen in the excerpt, after requested, the child’s mother not only refused to comply positively, as desired by the child, but teased the child by reciting a familiar limerick to the child. By so doing, the child’s mother turned down the child’s request for help, and as well, she taught the child a lesson that the child should have taken her mother seriously and behaved. Therefore, the ineffectiveness of the child’s high-cost request, though not directly related to the appropriate use of language, is incurred by the child’s ignorance of her mother’s warning.

Excerpt (34) below exemplifies the cases where the ineffectiveness of children’s high-cost requests results from the lack of joint attention between the child and her mother. In this excerpt, the child was asking her mother to fulfill her desire to have some drink, while her mother was in fact talking to the observer and not paying a bit of attention to the child. Again, the child’s request might potentially intrude on the ongoing conversation between the observer and her mother and thus the request was considered costly. Like the previous examples, the ineffective request here is not purely due to the child’s inappropriate use of linguistic politeness, but rather resulting

from the child's failure to build joint attention with her mother.

(34) LGW, 3;0, Line 193

Context: LGW's mother was asking the observer whether he would like to have some wine, while LGW expressing her desire to have some drinking yogurt.

%exp: LJW is tearing flashing cards.

*MOT: 你 喝 酒 嗎?

Ni he jiu ma
You drink wine PRT
'Do you drink wine?'

%exp: MOT is talking to YPC.

*LGW: 我 要 喝 養樂多.

Wo yao he yangleduo
I want drink yogurt
'I want to drink some yogurt.'

*MOT: 你 喝 嗎?

Ni he ma
You drink PRT
'Do you?'

*MOT: 喝.

He
Drink
'You do.'

*LGW: 我 要 喝 養樂多 呀.

Wo yao he yangleduo ya
I want drink yogurt PRT
'I want to drink yogurt.'

%exp: LJW murmurs while reading.

*MOT: 唉 # 那 你 等 我 一 下下.

Ai na ni deng wo yi xia-xia

Well then you wait me one moment

‘Well, then you wait for one moment.’

*MOT: 我 去 對面 拿 個 酒杯.

Wo qu duimian na ge jiubei

I go across take a wine-glass

‘Let me go across the hall and get a wine glass.’

*MOT: 0 [=! laughing].

The parts above present results regarding the effect that interpersonal factors, such as status and cost, have on effectiveness of request forms. In addition to these interpersonal factors, paralinguistic features like tone of speech may also be determinant in the effectiveness of requests (See Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). Table 12 in the following then presents the influence that tone of speech has on the effectiveness of requests.

Table 12
*Effectiveness of Different Tone of Speech across Age**

	Time 1			Time 2			Time 3		
	% (N)			% (N)			% (N)		
	AGG	Plain	MIT	AGG	Plain	MIT	AGG	Plain	MIT
Complied	75.0 (6)	70.27 (26)	71.43 (5)	37.04 (10)	70.51 (55)	77.78 (7)	69.23 (9)	92.98 (53)	100 (1)
Not complied	25.0 (2)	29.73 (11)	28.57 (2)	62.96 (17)	29.49 (23)	22.22 (2)	30.77 (4)	7.02 (4)	(0)
Total	(8)	(37)	(7)	(27)	(78)	(9)	(13)	(57)	(1)

*In the table, AGG stands for aggravated tone, Plain for neither aggravated nor mitigated tone, and MIT for mitigated tone.

Overall, children’s requests successfully achieve the desirable purpose, namely to obtain the addressee’s positive compliance. As shown in Table 12 above, children’s requests spoken in plain tone frequently succeed in procuring the intended compliance.

Around 70% and more of their requests of this sort yield pleasant responses from their parents at Time 1 and Time 2 (70.27% and 70.51% respectively). The effectiveness of these requests even goes above 90% at the third age (92.98%).

Similar to plain requests, mitigated requests appear to be roughly equally effective and seem to increase with age. More than 70% of mitigated requests are successful in reaching the communicative goal children have in mind at both Time 1 and Time 2, with that at Time 2 slightly higher. At Time 3, mitigated requests display a perfect success in obtaining the desirable compliance, but the only instance of the case observed may nevertheless make the effectiveness unremarkable. Thus, it is safe to say that mitigated requests, equal to plain requests, appear to produce the desirable compliance most of the time.

The aggravated requests, on the other hand, manifest a different picture from those of plain and mitigated requests. Although 75% of children's aggravated requests at Time 1 succeed in obtaining the desirable compliance, other requests of this sort observed at Time 2 and Time 3 appear not to be as effective as those found at Time 1. Children's aggravated requests are found to be particularly ineffective at Time 2; the percentage of uncomplied requests nearly doubles that of complied requests (62.96% vs. 37.04%). At Time 3, even though children's aggravated requests succeed for nearly 70% of the time, the effectiveness of this sort is relatively low, compared to plain and mitigated requests. Therefore, it is likely that parents by and large tend to comply with children's requests in mitigated or plain tone, and yet are inclined to prohibit children's aggravated requests.

As to development in this respect, no remarkable difference seems to be observed. As presented above, children's plain and mitigated requests mostly produce

the desirable effect and obtain positive compliance at three ages. The effectiveness of aggravated requests manifests a clear difference across age. It considerably declines at Time 2, and dramatically increases at Time 3. It is possible that children's uses of aggravated tone may mean and function differently at these two times. Children, when reaching Time 3, might be more adept at issuing aggravated requests. Overall, children's requests appear to be quite effective in obtaining the desirable compliance throughout the three ages.

To recap, this section presents the results pertaining to the effectiveness of children's requests and also the interaction between effectiveness and other potentially influential factors, such as status, cost, and tone of speech. The results indicate that children tend to restrict their request forms to the relatively more effective request forms, namely simple imperatives and WANT statements, even though they are able to use four different linguistic forms to issue their requests. It seems that these two request forms may be considered as more effective ones for children, so that they are more inclined to issue requests with them. In addition, the findings also disclose that effectiveness may interact with status, particularly at Time 2 and Time 3. The apparent interaction can be reflected through the appropriate use of request forms with respect to children's status. Request costs and tone of speech, however, are found not to interact closely with effectiveness. Children are likely to procure the desirable compliance most of the time, albeit a small proportion of ineffective requests were observed. As to the development of the awareness of effectiveness, the results show that children, when growing older, may become more aware of effectiveness such that they become more able to obtain the desirable compliance. It therefore seems that the third age, namely 3;0, may be a crucial age in

the awareness of the appropriate and effective way to reach the communicative goal.

4.5 Summary

Based on children's spontaneous speech with their parents in family settings, Mandarin-speaking children's requests and their politeness are scrutinized in this chapter. One objective of this study is to disclose the request forms drawn upon by children to issue their requests, and the development in their uses of request forms. As to politeness in requests, the study is mainly concerned with the factors that may potentially influence children's strategic use of request forms so as to adhere to politeness, and the development of children's politeness across ages.

The findings reveal that the children, when requesting, were found to utilize various linguistic forms from an early age on, as early as 2 years old. They are likely to encode their request intents with simple imperatives, WANT statements, imperatives with sentence-final particle, declaratives, imperatives with a tag, and yes-no interrogatives; with the former four formal devices as the primary request forms observed in the data at hand. Among the four primary request forms, simple imperatives are found to be the most prevalent request forms, while WANT statements the secondly frequent ones.

A careful investigation into the correspondence between request forms and contextual situations reveals that children's uses of request forms appear to be contextually sensitive and the correspondence also manifests an age-related development. The development changes from a rudimentary division of labor between the uses of simple imperatives and WANT statements, with the former

disproportionately used in interactive activities and both more preferred in common talks to a further consolidation of the division of labor and expanded uses of request forms in a wider variety of contexts. It is likely that the second age, i.e., two years and six months old, is an important age in the development of the association between children's request forms and the contextual situations.

In the examination as to children's use of social deixis and polite forms, it has been showed that only a small number of children's requests are issued with explicit social deixis or polite forms. With a closer inspection, children are found to use social deixis or polite lexemes mostly in situations where they are at a lower status or when their requests may potentially intrude on the interlocutor or the current interaction. It appears that children's uses of social deixis are rather strategic and conform to the requirements of politeness, despite the infrequent occurrences of social deixis observed in the data. In addition, a further examination over the polite forms reveals that children during the period of observation may not spontaneously use the polite form, like *qing*, until they are explicitly instructed or implicitly hinted to.

In the respect of directness of request forms, children are found to use either relatively direct request forms or indirect forms to issue their requests, but they seldom use request forms that may distribute in the middle of the directness scale. In addition, the findings also disclose a slight influence of status on children's uses of request forms. When they are requesting at a higher or equal status, they tend to use simple imperatives most of the time. On the other hand, when they are requesting at a lower status, WANT statements may become a more likely choice, and the requests of this sort generally aim to ask their parents to fulfill their needs or desire.

Request costs, however, seem not to have an observable effect on children's uses

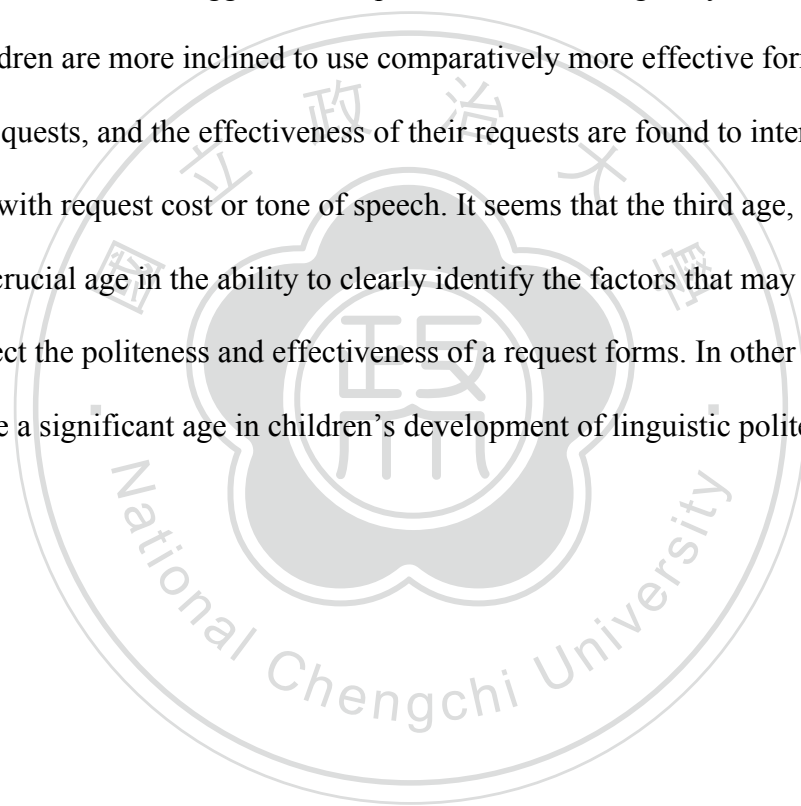
of request forms. Children tend to use either simple imperatives or WANT statements as the primary request forms, regardless of request costs. Tone of speech, moreover, appears not to influence children's utilization of request forms; a considerable number of children's requests appear issued in a plain tone, neither aggravated nor mitigated.

The investigation into children's persuasion shows that children use only a limited number of justifications to make their requests more persuasive. When attempting to make their requests more persuasive, children generally justify their requests issued with simple imperatives and WANT statements. Despite the infrequency of their justifications, children can by and large gain the desirable compliance, as long as they justify their requests. This thus accord with what Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) have found in their study concerning English-speaking children's politeness in control acts.

In addition, the findings show that children are likely to use more effective forms to convey their requests. As a result, a lion share of children's requests observed are primarily issued with simple imperatives and sometimes with WANT statements. When status is also considered, a systematic distribution as to the effective request forms seems to be noticeable. Simple imperatives turn out to be the most effective request forms when children are requesting at an equal status; WANT statements, in contrast, seem to be the most effective request form when children are requesting at a lower status. Such a systematic distribution appears particularly noteworthy at 30 months and 36 months old. Request costs, however, are found not to interact with effectiveness as status does. Whichever request forms are used, children's requests, particularly middle-cost and low-cost ones, on the whole obtain the desirable effect, but conversely their high-cost ones mostly fail to do so. Nonetheless, children's

effectiveness is found to increase with children's age; the older they grow, the more able they can obtain the desirable compliance.

In addition to request costs, tone of speech seems not to interact with the effectiveness of children's requests, either. Children mostly are able to gain the intended compliance from their parents with requests spoken in a plain or mitigated tone. On the other hand, their aggravated requests turn out to be greatly ineffective. In a nutshell, children are more inclined to use comparatively more effective forms to convey their requests, and the effectiveness of their requests are found to interact with status, but not with request cost or tone of speech. It seems that the third age, namely 3;0, may be a crucial age in the ability to clearly identify the factors that may potentially affect the politeness and effectiveness of a request forms. In other words, this age may be a significant age in children's development of linguistic politeness.



Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine Mandarin-speaking children's requests and politeness in their requests so as to shed a light on the understanding of Mandarin-speaking children's pragmatic development in specific and children's pragmatic development and communicative competence in general. To this end, the study observes Mandarin-speaking children's requests spontaneously produced in interactions with their parents in family setting. The main concerns in the study are linguistic devices, syntactic structures and lexical items that are drawn upon by children to issue their requests and/or politeness, factors that may reveal children's linguistic politeness, and age-related development in children's requests and linguistic politeness. This chapter presents a discussion regarding the relation and significance of the findings in this study with regard to other relevant studies. The discussion thus seeks to contribute to children's language development, particularly their

development in communicative competence, on the basis of Mandarin-speaking children's uses of language in authentic conversations with their parents.

5.1 Discussion

It was pointed out in the previous chapter that Mandarin-speaking children by and large draw upon six different syntactic structures to issue their requests, with four of them as the primary ones. They primarily utilize simple imperatives, WANT statements, declaratives, and imperatives with sentence-final particle to issue their requests to their parents. In addition, they may occasionally convey their request intents with imperatives with a tag and yes-no interrogatives. As well as these syntactic devices, Mandarin-speaking children may also make use of lexical devices along with the syntactic structures mentioned above either to mitigate their illocutionary force or to defer to politeness. These lexical devices include *qing* 'please', *bang* 'to help with', and *women* 'we'. The uses of these lexical devices may especially be relevant in the demonstration of children's politeness, given that they explicitly convey one's adherence to politeness, despite their occasional occurrences. Children's uses of these request forms are also found to demonstrate a functional development when the contextual situations are simultaneously taken into consideration. The functional development starts with a rudimentary division of labor among linguistic devices and to a stable division of labor, particularly between imperatives and WANT statements in interactive activities and common talks respectively.

A comparison to the findings proposed by Ervin-Tripp (1977) and Hsu (1996) reveals a general accordance in the development of linguistic devices in this respect. In a review, Ervin-Tripp generalizes the developmental pattern of linguistic devices used in children's requests or directives. Children develop from a stage wherein gestures, name of objects and linguistic forms showing their wants or desire are used, through a stage in which children request via elaboration of vocabulary, inflections, syntactic structures, and structural modifications, and through a stage where children convey their requests indirectly, without the specification of intended acts, and finally to a stage wherein inferential requests may be also used by children to convey their requests. This development, according to Ervin-Tripp, is accomplished before children reach the age of four.

Hsu (1996) conducted a grand research on Mandarin-speaking children's language development and outlined the general pattern of their linguistic development from one year old up to six years old. According to Hsu's report, children between the second and the third year of their age have had good command of the following syntactic structures and lexical elements: simple imperatives, imperatives with sentence-final particle, imperatives with a tag, declaratives, negatives, interrogatives (including WH-interrogatives and yes-no interrogatives), *bang* 'to help with', and *qing* 'please'. In addition to linguistic devices acquired by children, Hsu also points out that children have developed the ability to express their desire and to perform indirect requests before they reach the age of two years old.

Evaluated by the developmental pattern generalized by Ervin-Tripp (1977), children observed in this study generally develop their request repertoire on a par with

the pattern, save that the children appear to be able to convey their request intents implicitly as early as they are two years old, to a limited occasions though. It seems that the developmental pattern in the linguistic devices used by children to convey requests is likely to be cross-linguistically comparable. In addition, a comparison between Hsu's (1996) report and the findings in this study shows that the linguistic devices used by the children recruited in this study conform to the developmental pattern indicated in Hsu's study. The children examined in the study, although no noticeable formal development with age has been found, by and large encode their requests with the linguistic devices as those documented in Hsu's study on Mandarin-speaking children during the age between 24 months old and 36 months old.

In addition, the results also show that children tend to use WANT statements to issue low-status requests may also echo with what has been reported earlier regarding the division of labor between simple imperatives and WANT statements. As what was mentioned above, children are more inclined to use simple imperatives when requesting in interactive activities, while they tend to utilize both simple imperatives and WANT statements when requesting in common talks. Given the findings, it can thus be deduced that such a division of labor may also be related to children's different statuses in these two distinctive contexts. When they are involved in an interactive activity with their parents, children's status can be equal to their parents', particularly in cooperative games, since both parties are cooperating to accomplish a task or collaboratively involved in a game. On the other hand, when children are interacting with their parents in ordinary daily interaction, namely common talks, the

social hierarchy may thus be in effect: they are lower in status with respect to their parents. In order to defer to politeness required at such a lower status, children thus draw upon WANT statements or occasionally declaratives to issue their requests. The use of expressions conveying their need or desire as the preferred request forms at a lower status can be justified by children's taking advantage of their role as a child and their parents' role who to take care of them and fulfill their basic needs (Sealey, 1999).

The findings in the study also indicate that children's language development of request forms can be a functional one. As reported in the findings, the development of children's request forms may lie in the uses of a particular linguistic form in a specific context. As what was reported in Section 4.1.3, children's utilization of request forms appear to develop from a rudimentary association, observed in children's uses of simple imperatives considerably more in interactive contexts while WANT statements seem preferred in common talks to a further consolidation of such an association. Therefore, the functional association here refers to the connection between linguistic forms and their uses with respect to the immediate context.

In addition, such a functional development seems to be evidential when the effectiveness is also taken into account. Effectiveness is assumed in this study to disclose children's appropriate use of request forms such that they can easily obtain the intended compliance. The results presented in the previous chapter reveal that children tend to utilize more effective linguistic forms, e.g., simple imperatives and WANT statements, to issue their requests. In addition, children also demonstrate a slight tendency to use simple imperatives at higher or equal status and WANT

statements at lower status, such that they may gain the desirable compliance effectively. The tendency to use more effective forms to convey the communicative intents may thus suggest that children, when requesting, are likely to attempt to make their communicative goal met, and the tendency gradually becomes noticeable at a later age. It seems that children's utilization of request forms may also be highly related to the probability for the very form to effectively achieve their communicative goal. This aspect of uses can therefore be considered driven by linguistic function.

The second and major objective of this present study is to explore Mandarin-speaking children's linguistic politeness. The focus of the investigation in this respect is to disclose children's uses of social deixis or lexical items, syntactic modifications, or justifications to demonstrate their awareness of politeness required in interaction with their parents. As far as the results are concerned, children seem to demonstrate their linguistic politeness as early as three years old. The finding of an early awareness of linguistic politeness is on a par with what has been found and argued in Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990).

One aspect of children's linguistic politeness can be observed in their strategic uses of social deixis. This issue has been little discussed in literature on Mandarin-speaking children. As mentioned in the previous chapter, despite the rare occurrences in the data, children seem to use social deixis strategically not only to convey interactional meanings but also to demonstrate their adherence to politeness. They use social deixis to avoid the intrusion on the current interaction, as well as to respect the interpersonal status difference between their parents and themselves (cf. Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990). In addition, children may also use other polite lexical items

to mitigate their requests, such as *women* 'we; let's', the first person plural pronoun. The use of first person plural pronoun can turn a request into a cooperative action involving both parties of the interaction. Using these social deixis or polite lexical items, children may thus increase the probability for the intended compliance to be sanctioned by their parents.

In addition to social deixis, children, when requesting, may also provide reasons to make their requests persuasive, in addition to the main illocutionary force of request, and the use of justification appears to accord with the findings presented by Zhou (2002). The use of justification for children's requests may earn more compliance, as has been suggested by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). In the data observed here, however, the use of justification in children's requests appears to be infrequent. Even so, the cases of persuasion show that justifications for requests are observed at a later age, around three years old, and hence such usage may represent an advanced ability to adhere to politeness.

A major linguistic means to defer to politeness, as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987), is to draw upon syntactic modifications such that the imposition of the illocutionary force of requests is reduced, and they dub such modifications as redressive acts. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), one way to redress is to rely on indirect speech acts, on-record or off-record, to reduce the potential imposition of the very speech act. Children's ability to request indirectly has been attested in many studies (e.g., Axia, 1996; Gordon and Ervin-Tripp, 1984; Garvey, 1974; Hsu, 1996; Leonard, 1993; Wood & Gardner, 1980; Zhou, 2002), and thus children's redressive requests can be expected. The findings here, however, indicate

that children tend more to issue their requests with more direct request forms, when requesting to their parents. These results may instead argue against what Brown and Levinson have proposed. Further scrutiny, nonetheless, shows that children may deploy the request forms they draw upon to issue requests with respect to interpersonal and interactional factors, such as status. Children may vary their request forms with regard to their relative status as opposed to their parents. Interpersonal status, according to Brown and Levinson, play a major role in determining the degree of politeness required in the immediate context. Thus, children's sensitivity to status may lend support to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. In addition, the findings that children tend to use different request forms to issue requests with respect to status again accord with what Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990) have found. On a par with their proposal, it is likely that children's linguistic politeness develops early, at around three years old.¹

The view of children's early awareness of linguistic politeness seems to contradict the view that children's politeness actually develops at a later age, when children are in school years (e.g., Axia, 1996; Graton & Pratt, 1990). This contradiction is nevertheless resolvable and understandable. Those studies suggesting a late politeness development are primarily concerned with children's socialization to appreciate the norm of politeness expected in a particular culture or society. They seem to focus mainly on children's spontaneous uses of explicit polite forms, such as the polite marker 'please' or conventional polite syntactic structures, to demonstrate their adherence to politeness. As shown in the findings here, children's uses of polite

¹ They suggest an early development of linguistic politeness, and they also propose that children's linguistic politeness matures at around the age of five (Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990).

forms appear to be infrequent and not spontaneous. Such rare occurrences of spontaneously used polite forms may thus lead the researchers to conclude that children's politeness develops late. In contrast, the studies, this study included, proposing the early politeness development seem concerned primarily with whether children strategically use linguistic forms with respect to interpersonal and interactional factors, under the assumption that children's strategic and systematic uses of linguistic forms may reveal their awareness of linguistic politeness. As pointed out in the findings, children's early aware of linguistic politeness can be disclosed through the slight variations in their uses of request forms with respect to status and strategic uses of social deixis, polite forms, and persuasive tactics. Based on the respective points of view, it can thus be deduced that politeness may have two aspects, politeness norm and strategic utilization of linguistic forms with respect to politeness factors. Children's development of politeness can therefore be approached in either how children are socialized with politeness norm in a particular culture or society, or how they become able to fine-tune their uses of linguistic forms in accordance with politeness expectation. In terms of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the former is concerned with the politeness norm based on a culture or society's 'face' expectation, and the latter focuses on children's ability to utilize linguistic means such that they redress in response to the expectation of politeness norm. Therefore, the findings in the studies proposing early development of linguistic politeness, including the present one, may imply that children are likely to demonstrate their linguistic politeness in early years, and through the use of linguistic politeness they are gradually socialized to learn the politeness norm of the society

they were born in. These two views, in fact, are more convergent than divergent.

The examination over children's linguistic politeness in the present study also indicates that in addition to taking status into consideration, children, when requesting, may seek to use relatively more effective request forms so that they can successfully have their communicative goal met and obtain the desirable compliance. As presented in the previous chapter, children mostly draw upon simple imperatives at a higher or equal status and WANT statements at a lower status, for these request forms tend to successfully yield the intended compliance. The tendency is even more remarkable when effectiveness of request forms is also taken into account. Hence, effectiveness, compared to status, may have a greater influence on children's utilization of request forms. As reviewed in Chapter 2, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed that politeness is a function of status and cost, apart from familiarity between interlocutors, which is not in question here since the familiarity between parents and children is fixed and hence not crucial. Given the findings in the present study, it may seem that for children politeness may instead be a function of effectiveness, status, and cost, in interactions with parents in family setting.

An alternative account for the influence of effectiveness on children's uses of request forms, however, may lie in the politeness theories proposed by Fraser (1990) or Pan (2000). Fraser proposes a contract-based view on politeness; he argues that the expectation on politeness is collaboratively negotiated through the unfolding of interaction by interlocutors involved in interaction. Similar to Fraser's proposal, Pan suggests that politeness expected in Chinese culture tend to be situation-based. In different situations interlocutors are expected to adhere to politeness to a different

extent. In both Fraser's and Pan's views, politeness seems to be a fluid concept, not a rigid one. Based on the findings presented earlier, it seems that in parent-child interaction in family setting the expectation on politeness is minimal; children seem not to be expected to perform too much politeness when interacting with their parents, on a par with Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990). This minimal expectation can be attested with the findings that parents generally comply with children's requests, that children tend to draw upon primarily more direct forms, simple imperatives and WANT statements, to issue requests, and that children infrequently use explicit polite forms to convey their requests. In addition, as indicated by Ervin-Tripp et al. (1990), when children are trying to be more polite, they may not accordingly obtain more compliance; that is, their more polite requests seem to be more ineffective when they are interacting with their parents. The findings in the present study may also reveal a similar tendency. Moreover, children are found to utilize different request forms when requesting in different situations. Therefore, it seems safe to say that in family setting the expectation on politeness in parent-child interaction seems to be minimal (cf. Ervin-Tripp et al., 1990), and the extent of politeness may vary with contextual situations, negotiated by interlocutors.

The previous discussion on the children's uses of WANT statements and that on the effectiveness and politeness of this request form may also suggest that this request form may be direct in children's request repertoire, as proposed by Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984). According to Searle's (1975) taxonomy of speech acts, requesting via expressions of one's need or desire is considered indirect, since the illocutionary act of one speech act is conveyed through that of another. WANT

statements are considered as expressives in Searle's taxonomy, and the use of such an expressive to convey request is thus regarded as an indirect speech act. The findings of the present study, however, show that WANT statements are nearly as effective as simple imperatives, especially in common talks and interactive activities at Time 3, and WANT statements are drawn upon by children to issue their requests at lower status as opposed to simple imperatives that are usually used by children to request in other situations. In addition, Gordon and Ervin-Tripp (1984) have long suggested that according to the use of WANT statements in child discourse, it should be better to consider such request forms expressing one's desire and needs as direct request forms, since such request forms functionally and cognitively convey the request intent directly, especially in parent-child interaction. Therefore, the findings here echo with what Gordon and Ervin-Tripp have proposed and suggested that WANT statements are one type of more direct request forms for children.

Finally, the study adopts the framework used in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s (1990) study to examine Mandarin-speaking children's development in linguistic politeness. The results presented earlier in Chapter 4 may thus show that their framework seems to be a good analytical method to examine linguistic politeness in terms of different levels, including social deixis or polite lexemes, syntactic redressive acts, persuasiveness, and effectiveness. Following the framework, the study can not only discuss the potential factors that may influence children's uses of linguistic politeness, but also examine children's development of linguistic politeness in a systematic way. As mentioned above, under the framework, the present study is thus able to disclose that children may value effectiveness of their requests slightly higher than politeness

factors in interaction with their parents, and that children seem to use different request forms with respect to status difference and contextual situations, though only subtly. Therefore, it seems that the framework used in Ervin-Tripp et al.'s study can be applicable to the inspection of Mandarin-speaking children's linguistic politeness.

5.2 Conclusion

As far as the data at hand are concerned, Mandarin-speaking children are found to draw upon various linguistic devices, both syntactic and lexical, to convey their request intents, including simple imperatives, WANT statements, imperatives with sentence-final particle, declaratives, imperatives with a tag, and yes-no interrogatives. Among these formal devices, the uses of simple imperatives with a tag and yes-no interrogative are likely to be infrequent before the age of three, and the association between these two linguistic devices and the request illocutionary act may be a later development, compared to other linguistic devices observed. Simple imperatives, as pointed out by many previous studies, turn out to be the most prevalent and frequently used linguistic devices in children's requests, and this syntactic structure is usually utilized by children to carry out cooperative requests in collaborative activities and at equal status as to their parents. WANT statements appear to be the secondly frequent linguistic devices in children's requests, and children by and large use this syntactic structure to issue low-status requests. When considering the interaction between uses of linguistic devices and interpersonal relations more carefully, the study thus proposes the possibility to consider WANT statements as the prime linguistic devices

that children may have developed prior to simple imperatives.

Examination on the potential factors that may influence children's uses of requests reflects that children's requests are sensitive to status and effectiveness and reveals that children may have had command of linguistic politeness in early childhood. Effectiveness is likely to be comparatively more influential than status. Children appear to draw upon more effective forms to issue their requests to their parents, including simple imperatives and WANT statements. This finding may mirror that children's appropriate uses of language are likely to be subject to their desire to reach the communicative goal they have in mind. In addition to effectiveness, children's requests are also slightly subject to status. There seems to be a tendency in which children are inclined to use simple imperatives to issue requests when their status is equivalent to their parents', while they tend to use WANT statements instead when their status is lower. It is therefore safe to say that children's linguistic politeness demonstrates early in their pragmatic development, roughly around the age of three, and that status may be in question when children are performing a request. In a nutshell, for children, making their communicative goal met may be a primary concern in performing their linguistic politeness, and status may simply play a secondary role in this respect.

As to children's development in their requests and linguistic politeness, there seems no apparently noticeable developmental pattern in these respects, as far as the data observed are concerned. Children appear to generally utilize the same set of linguistic devices to issue their requests throughout the three ages. The observable and remarkable development lies in the effectiveness of children's requests. As they grow

older, children are likely to obtain more desirable or intended compliance by making appropriate requests. A closer and careful examination on children's uses of request forms, nonetheless, unveils their development in requests. The developmental pattern appears to be more related to the functional uses of the request forms, rather than to the complexity or expansion of children's request repertoire. Children's uses of request forms develop from a stage with a rudimentary functional division primarily between simple imperatives and WANT statements to a stage with a further consolidation of the functional division established in the previous stage.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

With the findings, this study hopes to make a small contribution to children's pragmatic development. Nevertheless, the present study has its limitations. One issue that further studies can work on can be the status of WANT statements in children's pragmatic development and/or linguistic development. Given the overall frequencies of request forms presented previously in Chapter 4, it is understandable to consider simple imperatives as the primary linguistic devices utilized by children to issue requests, since the overall frequencies of children's uses of this form turn out to be the highest; the highly frequent imperative forms are believed to replace those proto-imperative gestures and vocatives used by children in their pre-linguistic stage (e.g., Bates et al., 1978; Bruner, 1983; Kelly, 2007). Such a consideration, however, is simply based on frequencies of a request form, while apparently neglecting the influence of contextual effects and/or interpersonal factors that may determine

children's uses of request forms.

Examining the contextual situations, one may see that children convey their requests mostly with simple imperatives when they are interacting with their parents as a cooperative interlocutor at an equivalent status. In contrast, WANT statements are on the whole utilized to issue children's requests in common talks or at a lower status opposing their parents, as they are children — their original role in the family, and such use of WANT statements appears to be effective in obtaining children's intended compliance when issued in these situations.

In addition, the developmental pattern of children's pragmatic development (Ervin-Tripp, 1977; Hsu, 1996) also points out WANT statement requests should develop prior to simple imperative ones. As reviewed above, Ervin-Tripp indicates that children are able to make requests with such linguistic forms as 'want' and 'more' before they do so by specifying imperative acts. Hsu's (1996) study on Mandarin-speaking children's language development also points to the same development trend as indicated by Ervin-Tripp (1977).

Moreover, Deutscher (2005) discusses the overall development of human languages in general and points out the 'me first' (pp. 218-219) preference in conversation topic selection. He argues that the entire human language system may have developed from the basic motivation to talk about oneself, starting with commenting on or sharing ideas about 'me'. He proceeds to prove this point further with findings of children's language development. He suggests that the difficulty for children to demonstrate the polite order of persons — 'John, Sarah, and me (or I)' (Deutscher, 2005, p. 219) — is the fact that such a hierarchy as 'me, John and Sarah'

is ‘deeply rooted in our perception’ (idid.) and cognitive system. In addition, Deutscher further emphasizes that such a ‘me first’ preference is highly in connection with ‘actor first’ preference in most human languages, wherein the agent, or the actor of an action, always goes before the patient or theme, or the receiver or the affectee of an action. According to Deutscher’s arguments, therefore, the ‘me first’ preference seems to not only determine the primary path of human language development, but also establish the fundamental syntactic structure of most human languages.

Following Deutscher’s (2005) proposal and the findings in Ervin-Tripp (1977) and Hsu’s (1996) studies and this study, it seems plausible that WANT statements can fairly likely be an early developed request form, ahead of simple imperatives and the others, since such a syntactic structure mainly means to express the speaker’s, i.e., ‘me’, personal desire or needs. Given the language development path proposed by Deutscher, simple imperatives may hence be a request form developed later than WANT statements, since imperatives involve a second person actor. Therefore, the development of children’s request forms may start from expressing one’s own desire or needs to use the others as an instrument to fulfill the desire or carry out an act (cf. Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984).

The suggestion to regard WANT statements as children’s prime request form may still conform to the Continuity View on children’s language development. A number of previous studies concerning children’s communicative acts or speech acts has pointed out that children’s basic and early linguistic form to convey their requests is imperative. Based on the Continuity View on child language development, other studies on children’s pre-linguistic gestures or vocatives have suggested that

children's pre-linguistic communicative means are mainly imperative in nature (e.g., Bates, et al., 1975; Bruner, 1981; 1983; Kelly, 2007). As discussed earlier, however, an alternative and equally reasonable account for children's pre-linguistic communicative means may be using such gestures or vocatives to express their own desire or needs. Receiving such a signal, parents then respond by paying attention, performing an act, or replying in any other responsive ways. Even though the function of these communicative gestures or vocatives of children's can be directive, the likely intention that has been conveyed may highly likely be expressive, conveying their own desire or needs. Such expressive gestures and vocatives may then be replaced with WANT statements after children enter the linguistic stage. Hence, WANT statements can prospectively be the first developed request forms in child pragmatics, as indicated by Ervin-Tripp (1977) and Hsu (1996). Nonetheless, this alternative interpretation should be attested by further studies focusing on how parents interpret children's pre-linguistic gestures or vocatives.

In addition, an objective of this study is to disclose children's request repertoire and to show the linguistic devices drawn upon by children to issue their requests. The findings suggest that children's tend to rely on four major types of request forms and two less frequent types to convey their request intents. As an alternative perspective of the same issue, further studies can also endeavor to amass the adult norm of requests, both formal devices and functional uses of these formal devices. Such adult's pragmatic norm can thus provide to further studies on child pragmatic development a solid reference.²

² I am thankful to Prof. Hsueh-o Lin for this suggestion.

Moreover, children's linguistic politeness can also be approached through the understanding of their awareness of different perspectives or points of view. In Leech's (1983) politeness principle, one important aspect of politeness to attend to whether a polite communicative act is self-oriented (speaker-oriented) or other-oriented (addressee-oriented). For children to be good at politeness, s/he should become well aware of different points of view held between two interlocutors. To have a thorough understanding of children's development of politeness, further studies can focus on the interrelationship between children's perspective-taking and politeness.³

Last but not least, more data from more subjects should be recruited so as to consolidate and refine the findings pointed out here, although the data observed is drawn from a longitudinal database. Also, future studies can recruit older children so as to have a grand picture of children's uses of requests and their linguistic politeness in a wider scope. As mentioned above, to attest the proposal of WANT statements as the prime linguistic device in children's requests, further studies may examine children's pre-linguistic gestures and vocatives and their parents' interpretations and reactions to such non-verbal expressions. Last but not least, children's linguistic politeness can also be observed in their interaction with their fathers or mothers and discuss potential systematic differences in their politeness performed towards their fathers and their mothers. In addition, further studies can also observe children of different sexes so as to shed some light on potential gender differences in politeness development.

³ I am thankful to Prof. Hui-chen Chan for pointing this out.

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Appendix A

Transcribing symbols

(Adapted from MacWhinney, Brain. (2000) The CHILDES Project: Tools for Analyzing Talk. Third Edition. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum.)

xxx unintelligible speech, not treated as a word

.

period

?

question

#

pause

-:

lengthening

+...

trailing off

+//.

self-interruption

+^

quick uptake

[= text]

explanation

[% text]

comment on main line

[/]

retracing without correction

0

action without speech

%com

comments by investigator

/.../

delimiters for phonetic notation

„	tag question
<>	portion of utterances been overlapped
[>]	overlap follows
[<]	overlap precedes
%act	action performed while speaking
%sit	situational description

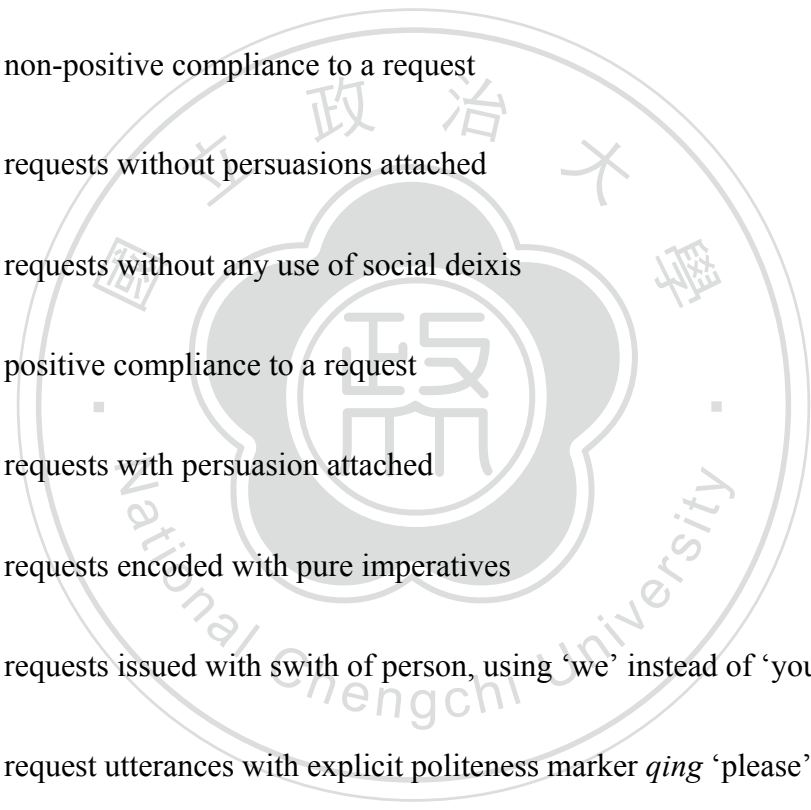


Appendix B

Glossary of Coding Abbreviations (Ordered alphabetically)

The codes listed below are designed according to the format compatible with the CLAN program of the CHILDES project (MacWhinney, 2000). In CLAN program, a code should be in three digits formed with three capitalized letters so as to run computerized preliminary analysis.

ALT	provision of alternatives instead of positive compliance
BAN	mitigation of requests with the lexical form <i>bang</i> ‘to help with’
CMT	requests occurred in common talks
COA	requests occurred in cooperative activities
DEC	requests encoded with declaratives
EST	requests issued at an equal status
EXP	requests with explicit illocutionary act in the proposition
HCT	requests with potential high cost for the addressee
HST	requests issued at a higher status
IMP	requests with implicit illocutionary act in the proposition
IPP	requests encoded with imperatives with sentence-final particles
IPT	requests encoded with imperatives with tag questions



LCT	requests with potential low cost for the addressee
LST	requests issued at a lower status
MCT	requests with potential middle cost for the addressee or neutral in nature
NAR	requests occurred in narrative situations or book-reading activities
NCP	non-positive compliance to a request
NPR	requests without persuasions attached
NSD	requests without any use of social deixis
PCP	positive compliance to a request
PER	requests with persuasion attached
PIP	requests encoded with pure imperatives
PRS	requests issued with switch of person, using 'we' instead of 'you'
QIN	request utterances with explicit politeness marker <i>qing</i> 'please'
RLP	requests issued in a role-playing situation
SDX	request utterances with social deixis
TEM	delayed compliance in a later turn
WAN	requests encoded with WANT statements
YNQ	requests encoded with yes-no interrogatives

Appendix C

Glossary of Glossing Abbreviations (Ordered alphabetically)

BA object marker (把)

DE possessive marker or adjective marker (的)

JIU then, just (就)

LE a change-of state or completeness marker (了)

PRT sentence-final particles

YOU there is/are (有)

