

REQUESTS AND REFUSALS IN ENGLISH AND CHINESE

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I study the speech acts of request and refusal in Chinese and English. The aim of this study is to not only compare the results between Chinese and English in the realization patterns in the two speech acts, but also between my investigation results and those of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP)¹ (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). In addition, it is designed to research the extent to which these two speech acts threaten the participants' face in the two languages, and what part social variables such as relative power, social distance and some cultural factors play in the interactions.

I performed not only a linguistic and pragmatic analysis of the data but also a socio-cultural analysis. The main framework I follow for data analysis is a combination of theoretical models: Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of strategies and Spencer-Oatey's (2005) framework of goals for the role-play. For the analysis of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) data, I used both CCSARP's (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) framework of directness and Brown & Levinson's (1987) model and their framework of social variables of power and distance, except for the fake refusals. I have proposed the approach of *lǐràng/qiǎnràng/círàng* along with Spencer-Oatey's (2005) explanation for the fake refusal phenomenon. In the analysis of cultural influences, I draw on Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) and Triandis' (1994) research. In classifying the request data, Lee-Wong's (2000) method of classification is used. In grouping the data of refusals, I have adopted Beebe et al.'s (1990) classification.

In collecting data, the role-play method is employed, complemented by DCT investigation. In the role-play, Chinese and English subjects are divided into groups and the task for each group is to discuss when, where and how they can make a trip together during a few days holiday. In the course of the discussion, there occur requests and disagreements (classified as 'refusals' in my research), and in the DCTs, subjects are asked to choose from a set of fixed responses, or suggest an alternative of their own. The purpose is to see what differences or similarities there are between Chinese and English in the realization patterns of the two speech acts in various situations.

The results show that, in the role-play, both Chinese and English favour the direct strategy in interaction. The frequency of the direct strategy (in requests) is much higher than that of other research such as that conducted by Zhang (1995), where participants prefer conventionally indirect strategies. However, the results of the DCTs demonstrate a less significant difference between my investigation and the CCSARP languages. The

¹ See 1.8

greatest difference between Chinese and English data lies in the fake refusals. Data analysis also indicates that factors (power, distance and even culture) do not have a large effect on the role-play results though they do influence the choice of strategies in the DCTs. The speech acts of requests and refusals are found to be multifunctional. In the role-play, for example, they often play a more supportive and constructive than a face-threatening role, as Brown & Levinson have claimed. In the DCT data, fake refusals are employed to show good manners.

Conceptually, I have challenged those researchers who claim that Chinese face is different from English face, and who divide Chinese face into two different aspects: *liǎn* 脸 and *miànzi* 面子. Wang (1993: 566) says that “the modern man has only one *liǎn* [face]” and *miànzi* is only one of the synonyms of *liǎn*. Therefore, the Chinese have one face, just as the English do. The conceptualization of Chinese face having two aspects does not seem to be valid. This finding coincides with Leech’s (2005: 27) that “despite differences, there is no East-West divide in politeness”.

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INTRODUCTION

The motivations for my research into this subject stemmed from my interest in the notions of speech acts and illocutionary acts (1.9). My interest started with Green's (1975: 107) challenge of the following five sentences:

1. Will you close the door please?
2. Can you lend me a dime please?
3. Won't you have a seat please?
4. Could you move over please?
5. Do you want to set the table now?

Let us consider the following question: "How should a grammar explain the fact that these sentences with the form of questions are intended and understood not as requests for information but as requests for action, just as the corresponding imperative forms are" (ibid.: 107).

Having taught English grammar for a few years and being familiar with these grammatical rules, I wrote a few books on the subject entitled: *Mysteries Resolved in English for Chinese Learners* series (Li, L. 1998-2001). In grammar, all the five sentences above are called 'interrogatives'. Next we look at how these general questions are composed and find that all of them begin with an auxiliary verb and the verb in each of them is a root form with an inversion of the auxiliary and the subject. They are all used to ask questions. That is almost all English grammar can tell us about them.

However, the grammatical explanations are not so useful from the viewpoint of Speech Act Theory. In my grammar research into syntactic structures, I compared the internal structures of English and Chinese, and discovered a few similar and a few different features between them and also a few laws regarding these features. However, I neglected the pragmatic dimension of language study, which is characterized by the study of language use in context. Green (1975: 108) calls for an adequate theory to account for these linguistic phenomena. This thesis rectifies that omission.

Another motivational facet for this research is the fact that, quite often, Chinese learners of English are misconstrued as impolite or even rude by English speakers, when they communicate in English. What is the apparent problem with the Chinese when they speak English? Aren't the Chinese famous throughout the world for their hospitality, respectfulness, good manners including their polite speech? When they speak English, however, they are often considered to be impolite. Conversely, English learners of Chinese are rarely regarded as impolite. There must be a reason (or reasons) for this phenomenon.

So I decided to do some research into politeness with speech act theory and pragmatics as tools. Specifically, I wanted to study the speech acts of requests and refusals in Chinese and English, which are not only the most commonly used acts but are also 'intrinsically face-threatening' ones.

This study is designed to address the following questions:

1. What differences and similarities are there between Chinese and English in the realization patterns of the above two speech acts? What factors (linguistic, social, cultural, or other) influence the choice of strategies of politeness most? What do the differences and similarities tell us as politeness researchers?

2. Do the above two speech acts really intrinsically threaten a participant's face? To what extent and in what situation do they threaten participants' face? Is there any situation in which they do not?

In my investigation, I used role-plays, supplemented by Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs). In the role-play, I had ten groups of three subjects each, five of native English speakers and five of native Chinese speakers. Of the five English groups, there is one group of lecturers, one family group and the other three are groups of university students, some of whom are classmates or friends and others who didn't know each other before. Similarly, the five Chinese groups also consist of one group of people who work together, a family, and three groups of students, as classmates, friends or acquaintances.

All the groups were given the same task, the planning of a holiday together, making decisions on such things as which city to visit, when to go, where to stay and how to travel etc. Each group role-played for about fifteen minutes and video-recordings were made and transcribed. Finally, their utterances were grouped and classified into different speech acts: requests and refusals, for analysis.

In the DCTs, subjects were asked to respond to discourse contexts, including borrowing money, refusing to lend money, refusing invitations and suggestions, and they were also asked to comment on their feelings after making refusals with regard to their boss, close relative, best friend and an acquaintance. The subjects could also choose to write their own response, if they did not believe the choices offered were suitable. The questions also systematically varied with power and distance relationships using the same situation, but different interactants. Then the Chinese and English data sets were compared with each other and against the results found by the CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 47). In addition, the results were analyzed in detail from the viewpoint of syntactic patterns, strategies, power and distance, and cultural factors.

The theoretical frameworks I have adopted for data analysis are various: different models being required for different data. For example, with the data from the DCTs, except for the fake refusals, Brown & Levinson's framework of strategies (1987), CCSARP's framework of directness, and Lee-Wong's method of classification are used. For the data analysis of the fake refusals, I have adopted, as an explanation, *lǐràng/qiānràng/círàng*, a traditional Chinese sociocultural concept, in combination with Spencer-Oatey's (2005) approach of conformity and tradition (7.3). For the analysis of data from the role-play, Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of strategies and Spencer-Oatey's (2005) framework of goals are used. I have adopted Beebe et al.'s (1990) model of classification for grouping the data of refusals.

Data analysis shows that in the role-play both Chinese and English prefer to adopt the 'direct' strategy, which is significantly different from the DCT results that show that both Chinese and English groups favour the 'conventionally indirect' strategy. It is suggested that this difference occurs because in the joint/communal task-oriented interactions, participants have a common goal and benefits that outweigh the individual's goal and benefits. Thus, they are able to use higher percentages of direct strategies with each other. However, in the questionnaires, where there are no common interests or goals, things are different. Here social factors and cultural influences do play an obvious role in situations where there is a difference in power or distance. Most of the subjects, Chinese and English, choose formal strategies for the boss and people they don't know well and direct strategies for relatives and friends. The big cultural differences between Chinese and English invitation-acceptance strategies are clearly displayed.

It is found that the speech acts of requests and refusals are not always face-threatening; they are sometimes face-supportive, depending on the situation. In other words, they play different functions in different contexts or situations. In the role-play, for example, where members of each group cooperate with each other to accomplish a common task, these two speech acts play a face-constructive and face-supportive role. There does not seem to be much face work, in contrast to the claims of Brown & Levinson (1987: 65). In the Chinese context of fake refusals in the questionnaires, the speech act of refusals is used mainly to show good manners, rather than cause imposition (as suggested by Brown & Levinson) (*ibid.*: 65), though it could be face-threatening in English in this case.

The speech acts of requests and refusals are studied not only from the viewpoint of head acts but also in terms of modification. Data analysis shows that when participants make a request for information or ideas, they tend to use internal or simply no

modification for efficiency or economy. However, when it comes to requesting others for action (e.g. booking tickets, etc.) or arguing more and more intensely, they resort to the more complicated external modification (to give reasons, for example).

Modal particles in Chinese are a very important category of modifiers. In this research, they have been studied in depth in terms of pragmatics. Take 吗 *ma* as an example. As a particle, it is found to be multifunctional rather than only used as a question-forming particle – at the end of a general yes-no question (Xu Shizhen 1985: 109). Through research, it is discovered to have several functions: mitigating the force of utterances, upgrading it, as well as forming questions.

The notion of face is also investigated and it is found that Chinese face should not be divided into two types: *liǎn* and *miànzi* in Modern Chinese, as Hu (1944: 45, 457), Gu (1990: 13, 241) and Mao (1994: 454) claim. Their classification seems to be misleading. *Miànzi* being one of the many synonyms of *liǎn* just as dignity, self-respect, etc. are synonyms of face in English.

In addition, I have traced one of the root causes that often make the Chinese sound impolite when they speak English to native speakers of English. There is no change of form in the Chinese verb system while in English, there is a whole set of past forms *would, might, could, were*. It is this verb difference that is one of the most important elements that make the difference between Chinese and English politeness. The differences between Chinese and English verb systems have long been noticed by other scholars (Xu Shizhen 1985: 59), but I have discovered the connection between this verb difference and Chinese students' so-called 'impoliteness' phenomenon, in this research.

This thesis consists of eight chapters and an Introduction, which reports the background, the purpose, theoretical frameworks used and results of the research.

Chapter I is a review of past theories, called 'An Overview of Theories of Politeness' dealing with literature or previous research on politeness.

Chapter II centres on a few theoretical frameworks and attempts to find proper theoretical frameworks for this research. Relative advantages and disadvantages of important theories are examined and compared.

Chapter III discusses the research procedure including research approach, rationales for the design of the DCTs and the role-play and the selection of subjects. It includes definitions and criteria for classification of requests and refusals, interviews and a rationale of relative power and social distance.

Chapter IV focuses on data analysis of requests, including syntactic analysis of data, pragmatic analysis of strategy types, analysis of power and distance influences, similarities and differences, and conclusion.

Chapter V deals with refusals including data analysis in strategy types, power and distance, similarities, differences and conclusion.

Chapter VI concentrates on internal and external modifications of speech acts.

Chapter VII deals with cultural analysis. It is here that I highlight the analysis of a few of the most prominent problems, such as Gu and Mao's notion of face: *liǎn* and *miànzi*. Here I also challenge Brown & Levinson's notions of positive face and negative face. The 'direct' strategy in both languages in the role-play, and the fake refusal phenomenon in Chinese and English in the DCTs data are analyzed in detail.

Chapter VIII deals with findings, evaluation, and proposals for future research.

Finally, it is important to note that this thesis focuses on politeness in personal interactions in requests and refusals only. The Chinese politeness phenomena under research in this thesis, unless otherwise stated, refer to the present-day/current politeness phenomena (commonly practised in China since the 1980s). Also the language used refers to the standard Chinese, also known as *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 or *pīnyīn* 拼音.

To sum up, this chapter has provided a general introduction to my thesis. (1) It outlines the reasons behind the research of pragmatics (the speech acts of requests and refusals). (2) It introduces some general information about the methods and subjects used. (3) The theoretical frameworks to be used are outlined and the results reported. (4) A general plan of the contents is given.

CHAPTER I: AN OVERVIEW OF THEORIES OF POLITENESS

The main purpose of this chapter is to briefly review previous relevant research on linguistic politeness with the aim of building up a broad context, against which the current research can be viewed. Pragmatic approaches to linguistic politeness have been developing rapidly since the 1970s. Western linguists Lakoff (1973), Grice (1975), Fraser and Nolen (1981), Leech (1980, 1983), Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987), Eelen (2001) and Watts (2003) have all produced important studies on perspectives of pragmatics, especially linguistic politeness. Additionally, Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), Kasper (1990), Altman (1990) and Blum-Kulka (1993) have considered the particular issues involved in interlanguage pragmatics or cross-cultural pragmatics. A few Chinese researchers He (1984), Shen (1987), Gu (1990, 1993), Wang, Z. (1993), Mao (1994) and Zhang (1995), Du (1995), Chen (1996), Pan (2000) and Lee-Wong (2000) have discussed some pragmatic aspects of Chinese.

In this chapter, some of the most relevant and influential Western views with regard to politeness theory in general and a few of the most influential Chinese models studying differences in politeness between Chinese and Westerners are reviewed with reference to the current research. The Western views prior to the 1990s are summarized by Fraser (1990: 220): the social-norm, the conversational-contract, the conversational-maxim and the face-saving view. Since the 1990s, politeness theory has developed significantly. There have been rapid developments in research. Watts (2003) has summarized the most important developments in this period: the appearance of (im)politeness1, (im)politeness2 and politic behaviour, criticism of traditional politeness theories such as Brown & Levinson's face model, especially by some Asian researchers such as Ide (1993) and Matsumoto (1993). Some influential models of Chinese politeness have appeared since the early 1990s such as Gu's maxims (1990), Mao's construct (1994), Zhang's strategies in Chinese politeness (1995) and Lee-Wong's framework (2000).

1.1 The Social-norm View

The social-norm view assumes that "each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behaviour, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context" (Fraser 1990: 220). That is to say, there are standards of behaviour, including linguistic behaviour, in every society according to which the participants of a social event or activity, such as a conversation, are deemed to have behaved or spoken politely or impolitely. People are regarded as being polite if

they comply with the standards or norms. Otherwise, they will be considered to be impolite or rude. Fraser (1990: 221) argues that this normative view considers politeness to be associated with a particular speech style in which “a higher degree of formality implies greater politeness”. Fraser thinks that there are few, if any, adherents of this approach to be found among current researchers. However, there are some linguists such as Hill et al. (1985), Ide (1990) and Gu (1990), who claim to have proved its value in studying non-western politeness.

The idea of social norms constituting the rules of politeness is not new in Chinese. Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher, summarized the principles of good conduct and rules of politeness, etiquette and ceremonies. A few of his nine considerations for good conduct are *sè sī wēn* 色思温²; *maò sī gōng* 貌思恭³; *yán sī zhōng* 言思忠⁴; *shì sī jìng* 事思敬⁵. When he discussed the importance of politeness (etiquette / ceremony), Confucius pointed out: *gōng ér wú lǐ zé láo*. 恭而无礼则劳⁶. *shèn ér wú lǐ zé sè*. 慎而无礼则啬⁷. And *zhí ér wú lǐ zé jiǎo*. 直而无礼则狡⁸. All his advice about politeness and its development through Chinese history formed the basis of politeness in the society from old to modern China. However, in October 1949, the Chinese Communist Party came to power and radical changes took place to the political, economic and social systems. Relationships between people also changed. The Chinese language, both written and spoken, went through significant and rapid changes. The written form was simplified again and again. The oral form changed rapidly, too. People began to call each other ‘comrade’ on most occasions instead of the formerly used equivalents of Mr, Mrs, and Sir. Also, other linguistic forms of politeness such as *nín* 您⁹, *qǐng* 请¹⁰, *láo jià* 劳驾¹¹, etc. were used less and less until they were considered outdated.

From the middle of the 1960s until the end of the 1970s was the period known as the Great Cultural Revolution. During this revolution, huge social changes occurred: almost all of the people at the top of the social hierarchy were criticized and removed from their positions, and young radicals replaced them. Teachers were ‘struck down’ by their students. These civil commotions overturned traditional notions of politeness but

² The face should be gentle-looking.

³ The manner should be polite.

⁴ What is said should be truthful.

⁵ What you do should be respectful.

⁶ Too much respect without obeying the rules of politeness (etiquette/ceremonies) is tiring.

⁷ Being too careful while disregarding the rules of politeness will make one timid.

⁸ Being too straightforward without following the rules of politeness will make one sharp-tongued.

⁹ Equivalent to the French respectful form Vous

¹⁰ Please

¹¹ Excuse me.

did not provide a clear alternative to them.

After the Cultural Revolution, books about 'civilized behaviour' began to be published. For example, in 1982, *A Manual of Polite Expressions* «礼貌语言手册», a set of norms of polite linguistic behaviour for the Chinese citizens, was written by the government and published by the Beijing Publishing Company, in response to the drive launched by the Chinese government in an attempt to 'beautify or purify' the speech of the people. Since then, there has been progress in an effort to modify people's social behaviour, including their linguistic behaviour in interactions. People resumed using some polite forms of greetings, for instance.

However, the government thought that there was still a lot to be done in the work of civilizing people's behaviour. Therefore, in September 2001, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China circulated a notification entitled *A Programme for Implementing the Construction of the Morals of the Citizens* «公民道德建设实施纲要» for the purpose of educating the people to be 'better citizens'. Early in 2004, the Chinese leadership decided to improve education work in the area of ideology throughout the country, and in the second half of the year, advice in the form of circulars began to be printed and issued to various organizations and groups of people, such as students of schools and universities, workers, peasants, Party and Youth League members across the country. One of the examples is the documents from the central government entitled *Advice of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Council of China About Further Improving and Strengthening the Ideological and Political Work of Education Among University Students* «中共中央国务院关于进一步加强和改进大学生思想政治教育的意见», August 2004. Since then, a clear majority of Chinese students have studied this and tried to apply its advice both linguistically and non-linguistically. Most Chinese are paying more attention to their behaviour and trying to obey the social norms of politeness in communication more than they did in the few years immediately after the Cultural Revolution.

It is not only China that has had social norms. In other societies, such as England and America, there have also been norms, spoken or written, with regard to polite linguistic behaviour. Examples include school rules and regulations, in which there are social norms for students to follow. Also the *Ladies' Book of Etiquette and Manual of Politeness* cited in Fraser (1990: 220), *A Study Dictionary of Social English* by W.R. Lee (1983), and *The Customs and Language of Social Interaction in English* by Spencer-Oatey (1987). However, there are relatively few scholars interested in studying politeness phenomena from the social norm view, especially among Western researchers (Fraser 1990: 219).

1.2 The Conversational-maxim View

A maxim is a “widely accepted rule of conduct or general truth briefly expressed” (OALD 4th edition). Here polite linguistic behaviour is briefly expressed. The conversational-maxim perspective is principally based on Grice’s (1975: 41) Cooperative Principle (CP). Lakoff (1973: 292) was the first to consider politeness from the conversational-maxim point of view. She gives two rules of Pragmatic Competence.

1. Be clear.
2. Be polite.

Lakoff (1973: 297) claims that Grice’s maxims fall under her first pragmatic rule: Be clear. In addition, she proposes three sub-rules for the second maxim or rule: Be polite.

- a. Do not impose.
- b. Give options.
- c. Make A feel good – be friendly

However, Lakoff does not explain how these three levels of politeness are to be understood.

Grice (1975: 41) has put forward the Cooperative Principle (CP):

1. Maxims of quantity

- i) Make your contribution as informative as required for the current purposes of the exchange.
- ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

2. Maxims of quality – Try to make your contribution true.

- i) Do not say what you believe to be false.
- ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Maxim of relation – Be relevant.

4. Maxim of manner – Be clear.

- i) Avoid obscurity.
- ii) Avoid ambiguity.
- iii) Be brief.
- iv) Be orderly.

This CP of Grice’s is regarded as the most important theory having a set of maxims and sub-maxims for participants to follow.

Leech (1983: 83) adopts and expands on Grice’s view and presents a comparatively thorough and detailed analysis in terms of maxims in a more general

pragmatic framework. In his *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983: 80), he points out that Grice's CP in itself cannot explain:

a) *why* people are so indirect in conveying what they mean; and

b) *what* is the relation between sense and force when non-declarative types of sentences are being considered.

He proposes two sets of conversational principles: 'interpersonal rhetoric' and 'textual rhetoric'. The former consists of Grice's CP, his own Politeness Principle (PP) and his Irony Principle (IP). The PP is used to explain why people in conversation may flout or violate the CP and its associated maxims.

Leech argues that the CP and the PP often create a tension between participants of a conversation, who must determine which one to sacrifice. To sacrifice the PP, one risks the equilibrium of a peaceful interpersonal relationship, which is a necessary precondition for cooperation in conversation. Therefore, Leech regards the PP as a necessary complement to the CP. Leech (1983: 119, 131) provides a set of maxims associated with the PP in regard to absolute politeness. These maxims or rules tend to go in pairs as follows:

I. Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives)

a. Minimize cost to other

[b. maximize benefit to other]

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]

VI. Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)

a. Minimize antipathy between self and other

[b. Maximize sympathy between self and other]

Leech (1983: 107) divides linguistic politeness into two kinds: relative and absolute. By relative politeness, he means politeness to the hearer in a specific circumstance. Consider the following example.

A: Geoff has just borrowed your car.

B: Well, I like THAT.

(Leech 1983: 83)

According to Leech, B has told a lie. What he said is not true but it is polite to Geoff. The speaker in B implies that he does not like that, and this implied meaning of his is true. By absolute politeness, Leech means the degree of politeness with regard to certain linguistic forms. Some of these forms are regarded as more polite than others.

C: I wouldn't mind a cup of coffee.

D: Could you spare me a cup of coffee?

(Leech 1983: 134)

Leech argues that the linguistic form C is marginally more polite than the linguistic form D. This is because the illocutionary goal of D overtly competes with the Generosity Maxim, but not with the Tact Maxim. In other words, D's goal openly challenges the former maxim but not the latter one. This is because, according to the Generosity Maxim, one should minimize benefit to oneself or maximize cost to oneself. However, D is doing the opposite by asking for a cup of coffee though politely. Alternatively, one should minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other according to the Tact Maxim. C is doing so by avoiding openly asking for a cup of coffee with the expression "I wouldn't mind" instead of the relatively and slightly more direct "Could you spare me".

Leech's theory meets with both praise and criticism. Locher (2004: 66) says that Leech's Maxims can be used to explain a wide range of motivations for polite manifestations in a British (and to a certain extent an American) background. Some other scholars regard Leech's framework as a great contribution to the study of politeness. It emphasizes the normative aspect of politeness and the attainment of social goals (Watts et al. 1992: 7). Leech's view is often considered to be more appropriate to explain many aspects of the Chinese politeness since "the Chinese conception of politeness is to some extent moralized" (Gu 1990: 243 and Chen 1993: 49).

There are also researchers who criticize Leech's theory. Cameron (1987: 92) and Watts et al. (1992: 7) think that it is too theoretical to apply to real language. Held (1992: 139) believes that Leech's view is limited because he equates indirectness with politeness. A few scholars such as Held (1992: 142), Fraser (1990: 226) and Locher (2004: 65) also claim that a direct utterance can be the appropriate polite form in a specific context whereas an indirect utterance could even be impolite. Blum-Kulka (1987: 131) has even tested the concepts 'indirectness' and 'politeness' in an experiment in which "indirectness does not necessarily imply politeness".

Leech's grand strategy of politeness (GSP):

Leech (2005: 12) states that he "will now reformulate the maxims of politeness in POP, the six maxims of the PP". He decides to avoid using the term maxim because it is so easily misunderstood. Instead, he adopts a single constraint that includes all the above maxims, which he calls the Grand Strategy of Politeness or GSP for short.

By employing the GSP, *S* attempts to ensure that offence is avoided, because both participants are, as it were, 'leaning over backwards' to avoid the discord that would arise if they each pursued their own agenda selfishly through language. They are also 'leaning forward', in an opposite direction, to propitiate *O* through pos-politeness (ibid.: 12).

Leech stresses that pragmatics is interested only in communicative behaviour, and politeness in a pragmatic sense is a matter of conveying meanings in accordance with the GSP (ibid.: 12).

With regard to the offer-refusal sequences, where an offer is made by *a* and *b* declines it, Leech used to call them 'pragmatic paradoxes' (1983: 110). Now he calls them 'battles for politeness' (2005: 9) and specifically refers to the Chinese invitation/offer-refusal sequences. The newer phrase he uses seems to be a more appropriate term because it reflects more directly the fact that such sequences in Chinese sometimes do appear to be battles between the interactants for the sake of politeness.

Leech's conclusion regarding 'eastern group-orientation' vs. 'western individual orientation' is that "despite differences, there is no East-West divide in politeness". I will explain what difference there is between his maxims and his GSP and what use they will be for my study in 2.5.

1.3 The Conversational-contract View

The conversational-contract view was put forward by Fraser and Nolen (1981: 93). They assert that on entering a given conversational contract, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, the limits of the interaction. In other words, conversation has been regarded as a contract and the participants as its parties. They divide the terms of the conversational contract into two kinds: (1) general terms and (2) specific terms. The former refer to the terms that dominate all ordinary conversations. For example, both participants must speak the same language (otherwise an interpreter has to be employed, which is not discussed here); both parties must speak clearly, seriously and loudly enough to be heard; and the hearer must wait for his turn when one party is speaking. These general terms are usually not negotiated because they consist of the pretexts or preconditions for a conversation without which there would be no successful conversation to talk about. The latter terms refer to those that are determined by the specific factors of the conversation. They are subject to negotiation and conditions both on what kind of speech acts may be used and what the content of a permitted speech act may consist of.

What is most important and relevant about the contract theory of Fraser and Nolen's to this research is its emphasis on the role of the relationship of the interlocutors in communication. The choice of speech acts is constrained by this relationship and the content of the chosen speech act is even more strictly influenced by it. If the speech act employed suits the relationship between the interlocutors involved, then this speech act would be considered to be appropriate. Otherwise, it would be thought of as impolite.

For instance, it is perfectly acceptable for a lawyer to ask his client how much money he or she has in the bank but it is not for a casual neighbour to do so (either in English or in Chinese). Similarly, it would not be impolite for a superior to order a subordinate to go on an errand, but usually the latter does not give orders to the former. This is an issue related to power and distance. (See Chapters IV and V)

1.4 The Face-saving View

Brown & Levinson (1987: 60) set up a basic theoretical framework of politeness. They posit that some acts intrinsically threaten face and call such face-threatening acts FTAs for short. Then they classify face into two types:

1. Positive face: "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (ibid.: 62); "the positive self-image that he claims for himself" (ibid.: 70).

This refers to a person's desire that what s/he does or says should be liked or approved of. For example, a person is wearing a hat bought recently which they are very proud of. S/he expects to receive compliments from you since they regard you as a very good friend. However, you do not do so. Thus your failure to give compliments may threaten your friend's positive face because his or her desire to be complimented has not been satisfied.

2. Negative face: "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (ibid.: 62); "basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination (ibid.: 70). It refers to the desire not to be imposed on. For example, borrowing a lot of money, or something very expensive, tends to threaten the negative face of its owner. The desire of the addressee not to be imposed on has not been considered.

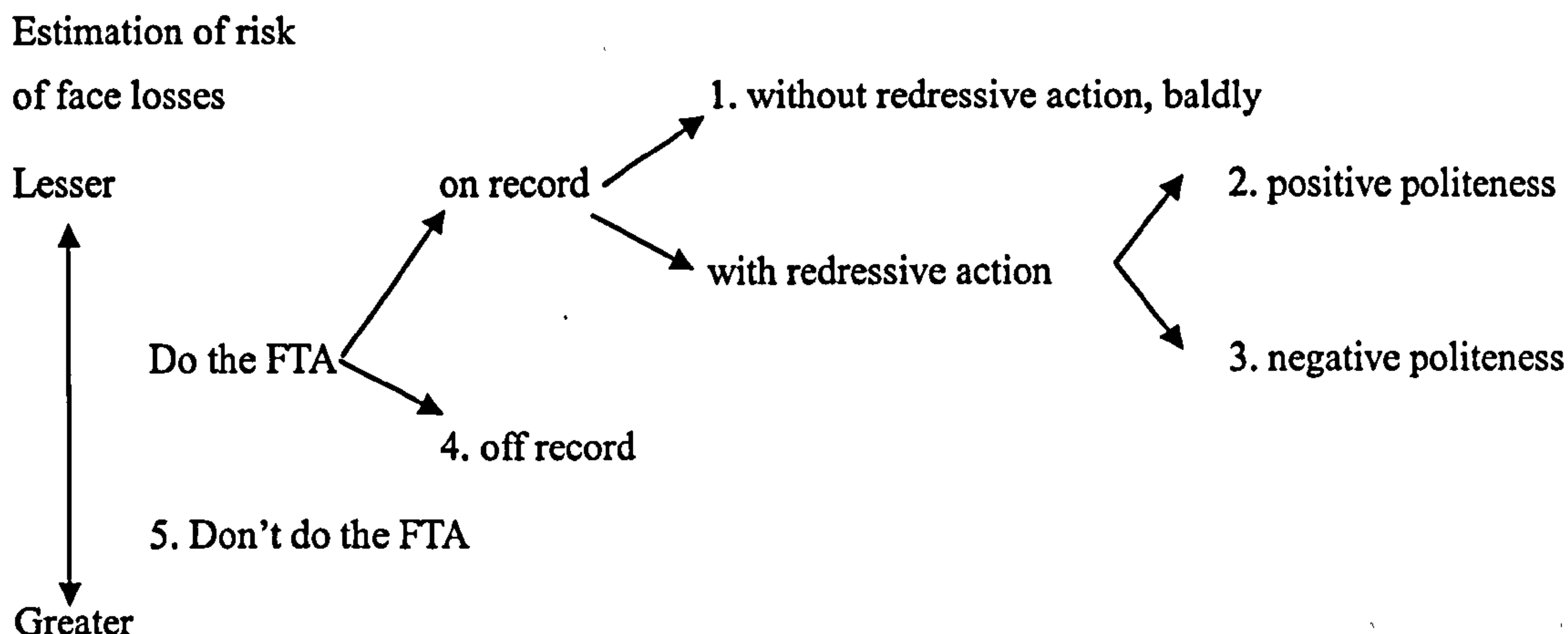
Based on the notion of face, people are linguistically polite to one another out of respect for the addressee's face want and even more so when the speaker has to perform FTAs, for example, when they request somebody to do something for them.

In accordance with the above differentiation of face wants, Brown & Levinson (1987: 2, 70) put forward the following strategies of polite behaviour:

- Positive politeness: oriented to the positive image that the hearer claims; the speaker recognizes the hearer's desire to have his/her positive face wants respected.
- Negative politeness: oriented to the hearer's desire not to be imposed upon; the speaker recognizes the hearer's rights to autonomy.
- Off-record politeness: indirect strategies that avoid making any explicit or unequivocal imposition on the hearer.

These politeness strategies, according to Brown & Levinson (1987: 70), are developed to deal with FTAs, which are "acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker". The following figure represents Brown & Levinson's classification of possible strategies and risks.

Circumstances determining choices of strategy



(Brown & Levinson 1987: 60)

As the figure suggests, the risk of loss of face increases as one moves up on the scale of strategies from 1 to 5. The greater the risk, the more polite the strategy is. The more threatening an act is, the more polite and indirect is the strategy used to accomplish it.

Brown & Levinson focus mainly on reducing threats to the hearer's face. They also argue that the degree of an FTA can be determined in terms of the following three social factors:

1. Social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer;
2. Power (P) between the speaker and the hearer;
3. Ranking (R) of the degree of imposition in the particular culture.

In their model, the weightiness of an FTA can be calculated in the formula:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

where W stands for the seriousness of risk of face-loss of X, and computed by adding three values on a scale from 1 to n. W_x is the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA_x. D and P represent the social distance and power between S and H, respectively, and R is the ranking/level of imposition in that culture. It is the value of weightiness that will determine the degree to which the speaker will need to consider redressive action when choosing a politeness strategy.

However, none of these variables can be regarded as a constant between individuals. For example, the change of utterance context or the change of roles and responsibilities between participants, can influence the assessment of the three variables. Cultural norms can also affect the interpretation of them. For instance, the

degree of social distance should take the notion of familiarity or formality of different cultures into consideration (See 3.5.1).

Although they recognize the possibility of cultural differences, Brown & Levinson are more interested in the study of universality. Quite a few recent studies, especially those on politeness of non-Western societies, have begun to show the discrepancies in their claims of universality. Additionally, some researchers such as O'Driscoll (1996, cited in Watts 2003: 109) do not agree that certain acts are 'intrinsically' face-threatening. Nevertheless, to others, Brown & Levinson's approach remains as one of the most significant and influential theories in explaining politeness phenomena. For a more detailed discussion of Brown & Levinson's notion of face with regard to Chinese notion of face, see 2.3 and 7.3.

1.5 The Social-practice View

Since the early 1990s, there have been criticisms leveled against the traditional views contained in Grice, Lakoff, Leech, Brown & Levinson's theories. Kasper (1990), Bourdieu (1990), Watts (1992), Werkhafer (1992), O'Driscoll (1996), de Kadt (1998), Eelen (2001), Ide et al. (1992) and Gu (1990), etc. who have put forward various views that are contrary to those of the traditional scholars mentioned before.

Watts (2003: 255) sums up the new trend in his book *Politeness* and develops "a radically new way of looking at linguistic politeness". He calls this new interpretation "a theory of social practice" (ibid.: 261). In this theory, he distinguishes between first order politeness (politeness1) and second order politeness (politeness2). Politeness1 should deal with "the ways in which (im)polite behaviour is evaluated and commented on by lay members" (ibid.: 9). Politeness2 deals with "the ways in which social scientists lift the term '(im)politeness' out of the realm of everyday discourse and elevate it to the status of a theoretical concept in what is frequently called Politeness Theory" (ibid.: 9). Additionally, he introduces the notion of 'politic behaviour' which is equivalent to appropriate behaviour and which does not equal 'polite behaviour'. Watts thinks that polite behaviour refers to behaviour in excess of appropriate behaviour (See 2.6).

1.6 The Conception of Politeness in Chinese and Gu's Politeness Principle

It must be pointed out that research into politeness in Chinese from the viewpoint of pragmatics is relatively new, comparatively speaking, though politeness phenomena with many rules have existed since ancient times in China (See 1.1). As previously mentioned, there are only a few scholars who have studied Chinese politeness

phenomena in terms of pragmatics. Some of these researchers will be discussed in 1.8 below, where I will review a few previous studies of requests and refusals. Here in this section, I will concentrate on Gu's studies of Chinese politeness.

Gu (1990: 237-257) discusses the modern conception of politeness in Chinese and its historical origins, and compares Western notions of face and politeness with their counterparts in Chinese. Gu maintains that there are four essential notions underlying the Chinese conception of politeness: respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement. Politeness, according to Gu, is characterized by the tendency to denigrate self whilst respecting others.

Based on Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle, Gu (1990: 245) develops a Politeness Principle of Chinese culture. Gu's PP is defined as "a sanctioned belief that an individual's social behaviour ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement", which contains four maxims: Self-denigration Maxim, Address Maxim, Tact Maxim and Generosity Maxim.

The self-denigration maxim (which Leech's maxims do not include) includes 2 submaxims: denigrate self and elevate other. An example from Gu (*ibid.*: 246) will illustrate this clearly (M represents a Mainland Chinese and S, a Singaporean Chinese).

M: <i>Nín guìxìng?</i>	您贵姓?	Your precious surname?
S: <i>Xiǎodì xìng Lǐ.</i>	小弟姓李。	Little brother's surname is Li.
S: <i>Nín zūnxìng?</i>	您尊姓?	Your respectable surname?
M: <i>Jiànxìng Zhāng</i>	贱姓章。	My worthless surname is Zhang.

Obviously, when M refers to S, M uses *nín* (the respectable form of 'you'), *guì* (precious), in contrast, when referring to him/herself, M adopts *jiàn* (worthless). In the same way, S calls him/herself *xiǎodì* (little brother) but addresses M as *nín* and *zūn* (respectable).

The address maxim used by Gu (1990: 249) – which is not used in Leech's maxims either – deals with a large scope of address terms in Chinese such as governmental titles, proper names, kinship terms, address politeness markers, and solidarity boosters such as *tóngzhì* (comrade). Gu finds three differences between Chinese and English address systems.

1) The composition is different. The Chinese surname is placed before the given name. It is not a non-kin public address term. In English, it is the other way round.

2) Some Chinese kinship terms have extended and generalized usage. For example, *yéye* (grandfather), *nǎinai* (grandmother), *shūshu* (uncle), etc can be used to address

people who have no familial relation. Quite often Chinese children use these words for strangers. There is not an equivalent in English.

3) Most Chinese occupational titles can be used as address terms, e.g. Teacher Liu.

As for the tact and generosity maxims, Gu (1990: 245) claims that he has improved Leech's two maxims by ignoring the distinction of the respectively 'other-centred' (referring to Leech's Tact Maxim including both other's: a. minimize cost to other; b. maximize benefit to other) and 'self-centred' (referring to both self's in Leech's Generosity Maxim: a. minimize benefit to self; b. maximize cost to self). In so doing, Gu again claims that his own maxims "save Leech's Tact and Generosity Maxims from some embarrassment" and make them "internally more coherent":

The Tact Maxim (in impositives)

(i) At the motivational level

(a) Minimize cost to other (including content- and manner-regulating senses)

(ii) At the conversational level

(a) Maximize benefit received

The Generosity Maxim (in commissives)

(i) At the motivational level

(a) Maximize benefit to other (including content- and manner-regulating senses)

(ii) At the conversational level

(a) Minimize cost to self

(Gu 1990: 245)

Gu developed the tact and generosity maxims, starting from the following example:

A: I can drop you in town if you like.

B: It's very kind of you, but it will cause you some inconvenience, won't it?

A: No, not at all. I'm going in that direction.

B: Thank you very much.

Gu (1990: 244) argues here that "clearly A is minimizing cost to himself" when A replies, "No, not at all ...", which goes against the Generosity Maxim that requires A to maximize cost to himself. However, Gu claims that this minimization (or maximization) operates at the conversational level. It does not alter the nature of the cost at the motivational level.

Also, Gu (1990: 252) makes use of a combination of his tact and generosity maxims to explain politeness in invitations in Chinese. He regards the two maxims as

complementary. “S’s impositives will be H’s commissives, and S’s commissives H’s impositives.” Accordingly, he arrives at a formula for Chinese invitations as follows:

(i) A: inviting

B: declining (giving reasons for doing so)

(ii) A: inviting again (refusing his/her reasons, minimizing linguistically cost to self, etc.)

B: declining again (defending his/her reasons, etc.)

(iii) A: insisting on B’s presence (refuting, persuading, minimizing linguistically cost to self)

B: accepting (conditionally or unconditionally)

Gu (1990: 241-242) claims that Brown & Levinson’s model is not suitable for explaining politeness phenomena in Chinese. He emphasizes the normative nature of politeness in Chinese culture, noting that Brown & Levinson’s failure to go beyond the instrumental function and to recognize the normative function of politeness in interaction is probably due to the construction of their theory round the notion of two rational and face-caring model persons. This, Gu argues, may well work in individualistic societies like those in the West, but not in a non-Western society like China, where the group is stressed above the individual. He bases this observation on the fact that such speech acts as inviting, offering, and promising in Chinese are not generally regarded as threatening to the hearer’s negative face. For example, to insist on inviting someone to dinner is considered to be polite in Chinese even if the invitee declines the invitation. Such an act might, according to Brown & Levinson, pose a threat to the invitee’s negative face in an English-speaking context, while it is not regarded as such in a Chinese context (*ibid.*: 241-242).

Gu further notes that the notion of face in Brown & Levinson’s theory is different from the Chinese notion of face (*liǎn* and *miànzi*). The distinction between *liǎn* and *miànzi* lies in the fact that the positive social value in the former is lower than the latter (Gu 1990: 13). Mao (1994: 459) also criticizes Brown & Levinson for their conception of face concept and points out that English face is different from Chinese *liǎn* and *miànzi* (For analysis of the notion of face, see 7.1).

We have seen that Gu has developed a unique theoretical system, which is generally applicable to Chinese politeness phenomena only, whereas Leech’s framework is comparatively more universally suitable. Chen (1993: 49), for example, finds that Gu’s (1990) model is very helpful in explaining his Chinese data, but

inadequate when explaining his American English strategies. Conversely, he discovers that Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle can be used to analyze both sets of data in his study (ibid.: 64).

1.7 The Social Norm and Conversational Maxim Views on Normative Politeness

According to Fraser (1990: 220), the social-norm view of politeness reflects the historical understanding of politeness and each society has a particular set of norms consisting of rules that prescribe certain behaviour in a context (See 1.1). Manuals of etiquette in Chinese and English contain such norms and rules. Fraser (ibid.: 221) thinks that there are few adherents of the social-norm approach among current researchers. If this is true of English research, it is certainly not of Chinese. Gu (1990: 237) has been a representative of the social-norm researchers of Chinese politeness and "most are not as openly accommodating as Gu to the normative aspect of politeness" (Eelen 2001: 122). In describing the Chinese *lǐmào* (politeness), Gu stresses that it is basically morally prescriptive in nature, and that the rules or maxims which it subsumes are moral, socially sanctionable precepts (Eelen 2001: 10).

Gu (1990: 245) admits that the PP from the social-norm approach is a sanctioned belief that an individual ought to behave according to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement. The conversational-maxim perspective relies principally on the work of Grice's CP, developed later into PP by Leech (For details, see 1.2 and Fraser 1990: 222). Eelen (2001: 122) comments:

Leech's PP conceptualization of politeness as maxims can be easily reinterpreted in moral terms. Leech himself, however, opposes such an interpretation. Just like Grice's CP, Leech's PP is claimed to be a "principle of language use" or a "conversational principle".

In order not to be misinterpreted, Leech (2005: 12) has given his six maxims a covering name – the Grand Strategy of Politeness or GSP for short. He "avoids using the term 'maxim' because it is so easily misconstrued" (ibid.: 12).

What then is the difference between the social norm view and the conversational principle view? Essentially, principles are value-based, but norms are just conventions (i.e. they are descriptive). If you label something as a principle, then you are saying that is how people behave. Eelen (2001: 123) says that norms are prescriptive and principles are descriptive. However, he adds that the scientific maxims merely describe values operative in society, and a description of a prescription is not itself a prescription.

However, Lakoff (1977: 86) claims that "We are not setting up prescriptive rules for the way people are supposed to behave. We are describing what we see." Eelen's

(ibid.: 178) comment on this is: “Unfortunately, this claim is – again – not as innocent as it looks.” He points out that in social and ethical matters, the dividing line between description and prescription is not only blurred, but disappears altogether. Eelen (ibid.: 179) argues that,

If someone says ‘saying “thank you” to the shop assistant who helps you is polite’, he or she is not only describing his or her norms of politeness, he or she is also taking an ethical stance, outlining norms against which people are judged. He or she is in effect saying: here is what I prescribe as ‘proper behaviour’.

He concludes that the problem of moral involvement in descriptions of politeness simply cannot be avoided (ibid.: 183). However, Cameron (1995: 11) thinks that prescriptivism can be avoided by not trying to arbitrate between different prescriptive positions but to “pose searching questions about who prescribes for whom, what they prescribe, how, and for what purposes”.

Based on both Eelen and Cameron, it seems that whatever differences there may be, between the social norm view represented by Gu and the conversational maxim view represented by Grice and Leech, we are free, as researchers, to decide which of the two to use for analysis (especially certain Chinese politeness phenomena such as invitation/acceptance exchanges) so long as we try not to be judges of right or wrong and therefore avoid prescriptivism by asking searching questions such as Cameron suggests above. In analyzing the Chinese invitations / offers / compliments, etc., we can use, for example, Gu’s attitudinal warmth, as Chen did (1996: 143), or Leech’s battles for politeness (2005: 12), or Spencer-Oatey’s Chinese conventions of conformity and tradition (2005: 110), or the approach of *lǐràng/qiānràng/círàng* which I have proposed for data analysis in this thesis (See 2.7 and 7.3).

1.8 A Brief Account of Previous Studies about Chinese and English Requests and Refusals

Many researchers have been interested in the study of requests (Brown & Levinson 1978, 1987, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, Lee-Wong 2000, Zhang et al. 1995, Yeung 1997, Pan 2000, to mention a few) and refusals (Beebe et al. 1990, Chen et al. 1995, Du 1995, Chen 1996 and Locher 2004). Both of these speech acts are classified as directives which are regarded as face-threatening (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65) and therefore interlocutors try to find ways/strategies to redress them while pursuing the requestive or refusal goals (Zhang 1995: 25).

CCSARP (the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) is a research project which “was set up to investigate cross-cultural and intralingual variation in two speech acts: requests and apologies” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 11). The main aim of the project was to establish patterns of request and apology realizations under different social constraints across a number of languages and cultures, including native and non-native varieties. The languages it investigated were American English, Australian English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew and Argentinian Spanish. (This last language was added to the project later on.)¹² All subjects were university students. The method of data collection was to use DCTs. The coding categories for request strategies were:

- (1) Mood derivable
- (2) Explicit performative
- (3) Hedged performative
- (4) Locution derivable
- (5) Want statement
- (6) Suggestory formula
- (7) Preparatory
- (8) Strong hint
- (9) Weak hint

(Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 18)

There were two important findings in the project. (1) the modes of realizing pragmalinguistic conventions were different between languages. (2) the fundamental uses of conventional indirectness seemed to be universal (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 46). Specifically, conventional indirectness was the most frequently used main strategy type. In spite of the latter discovery by CCSARP, it is not clear “whether these forms have more in common than just membership in the same category of indirectness” (Blum-Kulka 1989: 47). This means that the researchers are not sure whether these speech acts have been placed in the same group because they are all conventionally indirect in form or share other similarities.

Lee-Wong (2000) studied politeness in requests in Chinese with data collected from subjects in Melbourne, Singapore and the People’s Republic of China. There were several specific objectives in Lee-Wong’s investigation, three of which were:

¹² The subjects of native speakers of the first seven languages above consisted of 227, 94, 100, 131, 163, 200 and 173 respectively. (There were non-native subjects too.)

1. To identify the social and contextual variables that influence the choice of language strategies.
2. To obtain data that lends themselves to a description and explanation of linguistic realizations of requests in *Pǔtōnghuà*.
3. To obtain comparable data to those conducted by the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns Project group in order to draw some conclusions on a cross-cultural basis.

(Lee-Wong 2000: 38)

The methods she used were to collect data from DCTs and Interview/Role-play. Lee-Wong (ibid.: 76-77) adapted the above CCSARP coding categories for request strategies in her study. The adapted version covers a wider scope to include those Chinese possibilities that cannot be found in the original version of CCSARP. For example, in the original version, under mood derivable in the first level, there is only one item ‘imperatives’ but in Lee-Wong’s adapted version under the corresponding category, there are three items, two of which cannot be found in the original, in particular the *bǎ* construction (‘把’字结构). This is a sentence structure in which the word *bǎ* in Chinese shifts the object to the position before the verb. For example, ‘*bǎ* your car lend me’. Another example is the bold presumption in Chinese 我骑你的车 (I ride your bike). This cannot be found in CCSARP either, and is classified by Lee-Wong as an impositive strategy. The following is Lee-Wong’s adapted classification of strategies of requests (2000: 76-77):

I. M1 (Main strategy type 1) – Impositive includes:

Mood Derivable: IMP

1. *bǎ* construction, e.g. *Bǎ chē jiègěi wǒ* (Lend me your car).
2. Action verbs, e.g. lend, give, get, change, etc.
3. Reduplicated verbs, e.g. *shìshi* (try try), *chángyìcháng* (taste a taste)

Direct Questions

1. Interrogatives (wh-question), e.g. *Xiànzài jǐdiǎnle?* (What’s the time now?)
2. Particle question, i.e. question ended with an interrogative particle, e.g. *Piào ne?* (Ticket?)
3. Do you know ...?
4. Have you got ...?

Want / Need Statement

1. Bold want, e.g. *yào / dǎsuàn* (want/plan)
2. Mild want, e.g. *xiǎng / xīwàng* (think/was wondering/hope)

Presumptive Statement

1. Bold presumption, e.g. *Wǒ qí nǐde chē.* (I ride your bike.)
2. Hedged presumption, e.g. *bǎ* particle. *Wǒ chōuyān nǐ bù fǎnduì bǎ.* ([I presume], you wouldn't object to my smoking?)

II. M2 (Main strategy type 2) – Conventionally indirect includes:

Query-Preparatory

1. Reference to H's ability, e.g. *néngma / néngbùnénɡ* (can/can or can not)
2. Reference to H's willingness, e.g. *kěyǐ ma / kěyǐ bù kěyǐ* (will you/would you?)
3. Non-obviousness of compliance, e.g. *shìbúshì néng* (be or not be able to)

Suggestory Formula, e.g.

Jīnwǎn wǒmén yīqǐ qù kàn diànyǐng, hǎoma? (Shall we go to the movie tonight?)

III. M3 (Main strategy type 3) – Unconventionally indirect (Hints)

1. Strong Hints: raising topic, being informative – state the problem but make no reference to a loan. e.g. *Wǒ érzi yào qù ..., dànshì qián hái quēshǎo yīdiǎn.* (My son is going to ..., but we haven't got enough money for him yet.)
2. Weak Hints: not mentioning the problem but vaguely referring to the subject related to it. e.g. *Àozhōu de dàxué yǐjīng láixìn jiēshòu wǒmén de háizi le.* (An Australian university has informed us that they have admitted our child as a student.) (hinting at borrowing some money)

IV. M4 (Main strategy type 4) – Mixed Strategies

Any combination of M1 and M2.

Lee-Wong (2000: 96, 314) finds in her investigation that native speakers of Chinese prefer a direct style when using requests and impositives in direct bald on-record requests. Also, she finds an extremely high percentage of usage in Chinese, when compared with all of the other language groups in CCSARP, including English, which favours the use of conventional indirectness. She goes on to say that speech acts need to be read in cultural contexts. In Chinese culture, clarity, explicitness and upfront sincerity are valued and therefore a direct request has to be interpreted as polite but not rude. Similarly, in English culture, conventionally indirect requests have to be interpreted as polite, too. They are not to be regarded as “sheer verbosity” or “distance-building” (ibid.: 317). Lee-Wong concludes that politeness should not be equated with indirectness, but rather with appropriateness (ibid.: 316).

Zhang (1995: 23) mainly studies strategies in Chinese requesting. The method of collecting data is by questionnaire, following the CCSARP coding manual. The subjects were thirty Chinese students studying at US universities. Zhang worked out a catalog of Chinese requestive strategies and found that speakers of English did not use imperatives and want statements as much but Chinese learners of English would often transfer the Chinese structure by using Imperative/Want Statement plus 'OK/all right' (ibid.: 66). Besides, Zhang (1995: 26) finds that

Requests are not always viewed as posing risk to H's face. When the requested activity provides for H an occasion for displaying socially valued abilities or attributes, its function is face-enhancing rather than face-threatening (Fraser 1990). The same could be said about Chinese culture, where requests are often regarded as signs of a good relationship and even respect.

In another article, Zhang (1995: 69) studies indirectness in Chinese requesting, the purpose of which is to benefit teaching and learning of Chinese as a second or foreign language. The article presents an account of indirect behaviour of Chinese in requestive situations and then analyzes the realization, use and cultural motivations behind it. The method of investigation was by role-play. The subjects were two female native speakers of Chinese, both of whom were graduate students at a US university. In role-play one, one student asked the other to help an upcoming exam; in role-play two, one student asked the other to save a seat for her at a seminar.

Zhang (1995: 99) finds that Chinese encode the information of directness not so much in the grammatical features of the language as in the sequencing of information in on-going discourse, and that the sequence of indirect requests in Chinese appears to be structured in the following pattern:

- *Supportive moves* (expressing worries and problems, seeking advice, offering sympathy, stating wishes, self-criticism)
- *Request*
- *Supportive moves* (self-criticism, promising, thanking)

(ibid.: 97)

Zhang also finds that the elaborate use of supportive moves is determined by the nature of the request act, the relation between the interlocuters and the obvious goal conflict.

Yeung (1997: 505) analyzes polite requests in English and Chinese business correspondence in Hong Kong, with Brown & Levinson's three factors of imposition, power, distance and finds that only "imposition has a statistically significant impact on the choice of strategies in English and when all the factors are combined, there is also an effect. However, none of the factors show any statistically significant effect in the Chinese corpus".

Pan (2000: 21) investigates Chinese politeness among people in Guangdong Province, south China, who speak either Cantonese Chinese or are bilingual with Mandarin Chinese, *pǔtōnghuà*. She describes Chinese politeness behaviour across three social settings: business encounters, official meetings and family gatherings. She finds that some features are present in all three settings:

- Directives are mostly issued in a direct way, using a flat statement or imperative. Formulaic polite expressions or politeness hedges are not often used.
- There are very limited verbal expressions in responses to directives (either orders or requests).
- The management of conflict talk is similar in the official and the family setting in that the one highest in the hierarchy has the final say. Conversation topics are largely controlled by the person highest in rank in the official setting and by male speakers in intergender conversation in the family setting.

Pan's data analyses show "that Chinese seem to have a very flexible way of being polite. Chinese will act according to the situation they are in, and use different politeness strategies depending on the social relationship" (ibid.: 144). She stresses the importance of the situation that determines what strategies the interactants should use in communication.

Spencer-Oatey (2005: 95) studies (im)politeness in terms of rapport. She argues that despite differences between linguists in debating the nature of politeness, "everyone seems to agree that it is associated in some way with harmonious/conflictual interpersonal relations", which Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002) labels rapport management.

Spencer-Oatey (2005: 107) has put forward four different types of goals of investigation of rapport orientations towards each other: rapport-enhancement, rapport maintenance, rapport-neglect or rapport challenge. She studies the bases of three key elements of rapport – interactional wants, behavioural expectations and face sensitivities and unpacks the basis of the latter two.

Spencer-Oatey (2005: 107) identifies two different types of interactional goals: (1) transactional and aiming to achieve a concrete task; (2) relational and aiming to manage relationships effectively. The two goals are often interconnected. She states that when the transactional goal is regarded as urgent and important, “then people may make allowances for any behaviour that would typically be judged inappropriate in different circumstances” and that the relational goal is strategic. Distinguishing between the different goals is important in analyzing speech acts because it helps to judge whether particular utterances are appropriate or not.

Spencer-Oatey (2005: 110) explains Chinese invitation/offer exchanges from the viewpoint of conventions of conformity and tradition. She argues the fact that there are both people who adhere to the tradition and those who do not. In this way, she explains the Chinese politeness phenomenon very effectively (See 2.2 and 7.3).

With regard to refusals, Beebe et al. (1990: 56) studied pragmatic transfer regarding the speech act, using Japanese students of English and compare them with native speakers of English and Japanese. What they report is part of a more ambitious study about native and non-native refusal acts (*ibid.*: 56). The method of investigation used was DCTs and they found evidence of negative transfer in refusals by Japanese students of English in three aspects: the order, the frequency and the content of semantic formulas.

The larger project compared the speech behaviour of native speakers of Japanese, Hebrew, and English with that of Japanese and Hebrew ESL students (*ibid.*: 68). This was a study of spoken refusals in natural situations and elicited spoken refusals.

They found important similarities and differences between written and spoken refusals to the same request. For example, written and telephone questionnaire refusals were similar in terms of what speakers perceived as essential formulas, but significantly different in that spoken telephone refusals were much longer and more elaborate. Spoken refusals involved more negotiation than written role-played ones (*ibid.*: 68). Importantly, Beebe et al. (1990: 72-73) provided a detailed method of classification of refusals as follows:

I. Direct

A. Performative, e.g. I refuse.

B. Nonperformative statement

1. ‘No.’

2. Negative willingness/ability, e.g. I can’t. / I won’t. / I don’t think so.

II. Indirect

A. Statement of regret, e.g. I'm sorry ... / I feel terrible ...

B. Wish, e.g. I wish I could help you ...

C. Excuse, reason, explanation, e.g. My children will be home that night. / I have a headache.

D. Statement of alternative

1. I can do X instead of Y, e.g. I'd rather ... / I'd prefer ...

2. Why don't you do X instead of Y, e.g. Why don't you ask someone else?

E. Set condition for future or past acceptance, e.g. If you had asked me earlier, I would have ...

F. Promise of future acceptance, e.g. I'll do it next time. / I promise I'll ... / Next time I'll ... (using 'will' of promise or 'promise')

G. Statement of principle, e.g. I never do business with friends.

H. Statement of philosophy, e.g. One can't be too careful.

I. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester, e.g. 'I won't be any fun tonight.' to refuse an invitation.

2. Guilt trip, e.g. waitress to customers who want to sit a while: 'I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.'

3. Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion); insult/attack, e.g. Who do you think you are? / That's a terrible idea!

4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request.

5. Let interlocutor off the hook, e.g. Don't worry about it. / That's okay. / You don't have to.

6. Self-defence, e.g. I'm trying my best. / I'm doing all I can do. / I do nothing wrong.

J. Acceptance that functions as a refusal

1. Unspecific or indefinite reply

2. Lack of enthusiasm

K. Avoidance

1. Nonverbal

a. Silence

b. Hesitation

c. Do nothing

d. Physical departure

2. Verbal

- a. Topic switch
- b. Joke
- c. Repetition of part of request, etc., e.g. Monday?
- d. Postponement, e.g. I'll think about it.
- e. Hedging, e.g. Gee, I don't know. I'm not sure.

Adjuncts to refusals

1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement, e.g. That's a good idea ... / I'd love to ...
2. Statement of empathy (e.g. I realize you are in a difficult situation.)
3. Pause fillers (e.g. uhh / well / oh /uhm)
4. Gratitude / appreciation

Chen et al. (1990, cited in Kasper (ed.) 1995: 121) studied refusals in Chinese and gave the definition of the speech act as: "The Speech Act of Refusing is a responding act in which the speaker denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor". They divide refusal acts into two kinds: substantive and ritual.

The speaker says "no" (albeit politely) and means "no". This type of negative response will be referred to as "substantive refusal". However, in Chinese interaction, speakers may say "no" to initiations such as offers and invitations when in fact they are willing to accept. This type of denial will be called "ritual refusal" (ibid.: 122).

When they analyzed the data for substantive refusal, Chen et al. (1995: 123) adopted Beebe et al.'s model of classification. They found that Chinese favour 'reason' the most, especially in ritual refusals, the invitee tending to refuse by focusing on the trouble and cost the inviter will have to bear (ibid.: 160).

They also report similarities between substantive and ritual refusals: if an invitee wishes to decline an invitation, it is imperative for the invitee to give reasons, excuses, etc., in order to mitigate threat to both parties' *miànzi*. However, the perspectives in which these reasons are supplied are different in ritual and substantive refusal. In ritual refusal, the invitee constantly gives reasons derived from consideration of costs to the inviter, as is mentioned above. She declines the invitation, as she would say, for fear of causing trouble to the inviter (ibid.: 152).

Du (1995: 165) examines the realization in Chinese of three face-threatening acts including 'disagreeing' in Chinese, with the aim of providing hints for students of Chinese to acquire pragmatic abilities in it as a foreign language. The theoretical

framework used is Brown & Levinson's face-threatening model and data collection is done by questionnaire.

Disagreeing or contradiction expresses a negative evaluation by S of some aspect of H's positive face. By disagreeing, S indicates that she thinks H is wrong, misguided, or unreasonable about some issue, such wrongness being associated with disapproval.

(Du 1995: 169)

The main finding of Du's study is that FTAs in Chinese tend to be performed in a cooperative rather than confrontational manner though the choice of strategy varies in accordance with the referential goal and interlocutor relationship.

Locher (2004: 1) studies power and politeness in disagreement in face-to-face interactions. She analyzes linguistic data from naturally occurring disagreements. Her general aims in the research are to reveal the ways that disagreement is realized and its connection to power and politeness, also to contribute to insights into the exercise of power by investigating data obtained from different speech situations, etc. (ibid.: 7). These situations include: a family dinner, a business meeting, a political radio interview and extracts from a presidential debate and a US Supreme Court hearing (ibid.: 151). The dinner argument in a setting among family and friends is the least formal of all, involving a verbal argument over the quality of private universities between family members and friends.

In the argument at a family dinner, Locher (ibid.: 146) finds both non-mitigating and mitigating disagreement. In the former cases, she finds that standing up for one's point of view becomes more important than protecting the addressee's face (ibid.: 146). She calls such argument a sociable argument, where "no serious face-threatening acts were committed" (ibid.: 168). With the mitigating disagreements, she observes several ways in which the participants soften their disagreeing acts. For example, she finds that using hedges is the most frequent strategy followed by giving personal reasons for disagreement.

As regards the exercise of power in the argument at dinner, Locher (2004: 209) finds that freedom of action is needed to exercise power, the restriction of an interactant's action-environment often leads to the exercise of power and the exercise of power involves a latent conflict and clash of interests, which can be obscured.

Chen (1996: 143) investigates "the structure of food-plying as a speech event at the end of formal dinners" by using data from actual conversations in the city of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China. He adopts Gu's 'attitudinal warmth' to explain the repeated action of the host offering food to the guest and the guest refusing it till finally

accepting it and concludes that “the speech event of food-plying is a ritualized event in which the host and the guest cooperate with one another to construct their self-image” (ibid.: 151). Therefore, he argues that his food-plying example “provides evidence against Brown & Levinson’s concept of imposition”. Since imposition is an important assumption in Brown & Levinson’s theory, the findings of his study may cause doubts about the universal applicability of their theory (ibid.: 153) (See 7.3).

1.9 A Brief Discussion of Speech Act Theory and the Interconnection between Face and the Speech Acts of Requests and Refusals

As Searle et al. (1980: vii) point out “The theory of speech acts starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts.”

The core of this theory lies in the concepts of illocutionary acts, illocutionary force, propositional content, and direct and indirect speech acts. According to Austin, (cited in Searle et al. 1980: 59), illocutionary acts include making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing, explaining, apologizing, thanking, congratulating, etc. Illocutionary acts are contrasted with propositional acts.

- (1) Please leave the room.
- (2) You will leave the room.
- (3) Will you leave the room?

All three utterances contain the same proposition ‘leave the room’ but they are performing three different illocutionary acts. Utterance (1) is a request; (2) a prediction and (3) a question. These illocutionary acts are different from each other not just for their different functions but also for differences in their illocutionary force. The illocutionary force in (1) is the strongest and in (3) the weakest, with (2) probably in between the two. In this connection, the notion of directness is also related to the force of illocution. All the above notions are related to the phenomena of politeness in speech.

This shows that different forms of locutions can be used to express the same speaker’s meaning: S wants H to do something through different verbal means, depending on situations.

The same utterance can be used to convey different meanings in different situations. Take the much quoted example of salt-passing from Searle (1975: 73). Out of the proper context, the question form ‘Can you pass the salt?’ hardly means anything. Or a potential hearer may struggle to understand the meaning of the utterance. However,

“At the dinner table, X says to Y, ‘Can you pass the salt?’ By way of asking Y to pass the salt” (ibid.: 73), it is a request. In a different situation, where an adult wants to know whether a young child can reach far enough across the table to pass the salt, the same interrogative would become a question for the listeners to answer.

What has been said above shows that speech acts are multifunctional. The same speech act may play different functions in different situations. This is one type of multifunctionality of speech acts.

However, there is another type: one utterance could be performing more than one function in a particular discourse. Thomas (1995: 195) calls this phenomenon ambivalence and says that “Ambivalence, then, occurs when the speaker does not make clear precisely which of a range of related illocutionary values is intended.” She gives the following examples to illustrate this point (ibid.: 195):

1: A: Next door’s dog’s in our garden.

B: I must have left the gate open.

2: Restaurant customer to waiter: We ordered some beer.

According to Thomas, what B says in Example 1 above could mean a statement of fact, a reluctant admission, or an apology. The customer’s utterance in Example 2 could be anything on the continuum of meaning from reminder to complaint.

There are similar cases of such multifunctional meaning in my research. For example, in the group discussion about where to go for a visit, one member says ‘I like to go to Strasbourg’ and another member follows immediately with “I prefer Basel”. The second speaker’s utterance could be regarded as a suggestion to the group ‘I suggest we go to Basel’ or a refusal to the first speaker, meaning ‘I don’t want to go to Strasbourg; I like to go to Basel’.

Generally, the hearer has no difficulty in understanding the pragmatic meaning of such multifunctionality of speech acts because “the illocutionary goal is perfectly clear” and the hearer knows how to interpret the force and also how to react” (Thomas, 1995: 196).

However, it is exactly this multifunctionality of speech acts that sometimes brings about difficulties to us in classifying them. For instance, in the case of group discussion above, one tends to waver between a refusal and a suggestion. Then the researcher chooses to classify it as neither (See 3.4.2 and 3.4.4).

Now I will discuss the interconnection between face and requests and refusals. According to Spencer-Oatey (2000: 12), face “is concerned with people’s sense of

worth, dignity and identity, and is associated with issues such as respect, honour, status, reputation and competence.” She believes “face to be a universal phenomenon: everyone has the same fundamental face concerns”. Additionally, she asserts that the term ‘face’ focuses on concerns for self, however, ‘rapport management’, a term of Spencer-Oatey’s, “suggests more of a balance between self and other” (ibid.: 12).

Brown & Levinson (1987: 65) claim that speech acts such as requests and refusals belong to directives which are intrinsic face-threatening acts. Since they regard them as threatening face, they have worked out strategies for speakers to redress or soften the speech acts to avoid their face-threatening effect. However, more and more researchers have discovered that these speech acts are not necessarily face-threatening in certain situations. Spencer-Oatey (2000: 13) points out:

Brown & Levinson’s (1987) conceptualization of positive face has been underspecified, and that the concerns they identify as negative face issues are not necessarily face-concerns at all.

Moreover, Du (1995: 165) argues that “FTAs in Chinese tend to be performed in a cooperative rather than confrontational manner”. Zhang (1995: 23) also points out: “requests are not always viewed as posing risk to H’s face” (See 1.8 and 7.3). Gu (1990: 253) even finds that in Chinese, “it is intrinsically polite” to issue an invitation to dinner or refuse it.

My own investigation also indicates that the speech acts of requests and refusals are not necessarily face-threatening in specific situations. On the contrary, participants depend on these speech acts to accomplish their work of collaboration. Just as Thomas (1995: 196) points out, “almost all speech acts are collaborative, at least to a degree”. In my investigation, they play a role of promoting work together for a common purpose. In the DCTs, though borrowing money (request) may be face-threatening, the Chinese fake refusals of invitation to dinner are definitely not.

From what is said above, we find that the interconnection between face and these speech acts is complicated. It is not as simple as Brown & Levinson have claimed. Requests and refusals sometimes threaten the face and sometimes they do not. Sometimes, they support and even produce a polite effect on face. Here context is the decisive factor. Put simply, it depends on the situation in which they are used.

1.10 Summary

The aim of Chapter I is to review the relevant previous research on linguistic politeness in English and Chinese. In English, the history of politeness study can be

divided into two stages, the first of which lasts up to the 1990s and the second is since about the 1990s. Fraser (1990: 220) has summed up the Western studies of politeness as consisting of four different views. They are:

1. The social-norm view, (there are few adherents of this view among current researchers, according to Fraser.)
2. The conversational-maxim view, (including studies by Grice, Lakoff, Leech, etc.)
3. The conversational-contract view, (including Fraser and Nolen's research)
4. The face-saving view which consists of Brown & Levinson's theory of FTAs.

The stage of new development in this field of research since the 1990s has been summarized by Watts (2003). In this stage, some traditional views have been challenged, especially Brown & Levinson's face theory. A few new concepts have been put forward. Here first order and second order politeness are identified and distinguished. 'Polite' is no longer appropriate but beyond politeness. Instead, 'politic' refers to appropriate politeness.

In Chinese, politeness as a social phenomenon appeared thousands of years ago. Confucius (551BC-479BC) summarized the principles and rules of good conduct and politeness (See 1.1). His ideas and advice about politeness formed the basis of politeness in society from ancient to modern China. It was not until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) that the basis of Chinese politeness was radically changed. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, traditional politeness forms have been gradually restored (ibid.: 8).

Despite its long history with all its rules, politeness in Chinese as a scientific study is quite young. From the beginning of the 1990s, scholars began to develop studies in this field such as Gu (1990), Mao (1994), Chen et al. (1995), Du (1995) and Zhang (1995). Gu has become one of the most important researchers of Chinese politeness. On the basis of Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle (PP), Gu (1990: 245) has developed a PP of Chinese culture (1.6). Since then more researchers have investigated this subject such as Lee Wong (2000), Pan (2000), Chen (2001), Leech (2005), and Spencer-Oatey (2005) (See 1.2 and 1.8, respectively).

In this chapter, the social norm and conversational maxim views on normative politeness (See 1.7), speech act theory and the interconnection between face and the speech acts of requests and refusals are briefly discussed (See 1.9).

In the next chapter, I will concentrate on and elaborate a few theoretical models of different researchers and try to find some frameworks that may be used to explain the data of requests and refusals that I have collected in the role-play and the DCTs.

CHAPTER II: ATTEMPTS TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will concentrate on what ideas and concepts I will be able to use in my analysis and explain how and why certain ideas/concepts are useful or not useful. My purpose is to find a framework or a combination of frameworks I can use to analyze my data in the two speech acts under study. I am particularly interested in finding models with which to explain the 'direct' phenomenon in the role-play in both acts in the two languages and those with which to account for the invitation/offer acceptance in both languages. I have also been seeking an idea that supports the view that there is no radical difference between Chinese and Western (English) face. For this purpose, I have singled out a few of the most influential theories and constructs to see to what extent each of them will suit the needs of my data analysis.

2.1 CCSARP's Directness Model and Lee-Wong's Classification

As has been mentioned in 1.8 above, CCSARP is a project that was set up to investigate cross-cultural and intralingual variation in two speech acts including requests and apologies. I was interested in it for two reasons:

1. The goal of my study was similar to its goal, i.e. both investigating the similarities and differences in the realization patterns of speech acts across different languages, etc. (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 12) so that I would be able to make comparisons between Chinese and English data from my own investigation, and between my DCT results and those of CCSARP.

2. In the project, the researchers found a distinction between 3 main levels of directness that are valid across several languages, though these languages may differ in the relative position granted to the individual strategy types (ibid.: 18). These levels of directness include, (1) direct strategies, (2) conventionally indirect strategies and (3) nonconventionally indirect strategies (ibid.: 18). One of the most important findings in the project was that the conventionally indirect strategy was the most favoured in all the languages studied. My results from both Chinese and English in the DCT investigations were similar to those of CCSARP. That is why I decided to use CCSARP as a framework for my DCT research. However, the method used by CCSARP was through written DCTs, which generally did not suit my role-play data analysis.

Lee-Wong studied the speech act of requests in Chinese in two ways of investigation: both DCTs and Interview/Role-play. The method of classification she used was an adapted version of the CCSARP DCTs. There are two modifications that she made to the original DCTs:

- Extending situations to increase the representativeness of requests at the interactional level of face-to-face encounters.
- Deleting the response.

(Lee-Wong 2000: 46)

I was particularly interested in her first modification because it also included the needs of Chinese requests, such as the inclusion of the *ba*-construction and the bold presumption (See 1.8 above). It was very helpful in the classification of my data of requests. Also, for data analysis of refusals I followed Beebe et al., who provided a detailed method of classification of refusals (See 1.8).

2.2 Spencer-Oatey's Theory of Goals and Explanations of Chinese Invitation Handling

What is most relevant to my research is Spencer-Oatey's (2005: 107) theory of interactional goals. As has been said in 1.8, she identifies two different types of goals: (1) transactional and aiming to achieve a concrete task; (2) relational and aiming to manage relationships effectively. When the transactional goal is considered to be urgent and important, people may tolerate behaviour that would be regarded as inappropriate elsewhere. This is especially useful in explaining my role-play data, in which many of the requests and refusals are so direct that they could be thought of as imposing in different situations.

Another element of Spencer-Oatey's (ibid.: 110) studies that is important to my research is the way in which she explains the handling of invitations. In Chinese, it is conventionally expected that the host insists on and repeats his invitation several times and the guest declines the invitation several times in many cases. Spencer-Oatey (2005: 111) explains that this has become a Chinese tradition. For those who think of these value constructs as very important, any breach of them may likely be particularly face-threatening. However, for those who do not attach importance to such value constructs any longer, the conventional pattern becomes less obligatory. Such explanations of this Chinese phenomenon are very helpful for my data analysis in accepting invitations (See 1.8 and 7.3).

2.3 Brown & Levinson's Face Theory

In the 1980s, Brown & Levinson's face theory played an influential role in the research world of politeness. Since the early 1990s, however, some scholars have begun to criticize it. Severe criticisms came from Asian scholars such as Ide (1989), Matsumoto (1988, 1989), Gu (1990), Mao (1994), and further criticisms also come from

Western scholars such as Werkhofer (1992), O'Driscoll (1996), de Kadt (1998) and Watts (2003), etc.

One of the most interesting criticisms of Brown & Levinson's theory is regarding their notion of face. For example, O'Driscoll and de Kadt agree to maintain the basic principles of Brown & Levinson's model but they think that the notion of face is most in need of revision. De Kadt even suggests that Brown & Levinson have wrongly interpreted Goffman's original notion of face (de Kadt 1998, cited in Watts 2003: 107).

Gu (1990: 241) and Mao (1994: 454) also criticize Brown & Levinson's theory by claiming that the notion of face in the latter's theory is different from Chinese face, which, according to them, is divided into two different types: *liǎn* and *miànzi* (See 7.1).

In spite of the above criticisms, Brown & Levinson's framework is still used, especially the set of their politeness strategies and social variables such as relative power and social distance, by several researchers. Li, Y (2000), Lee-Wong (2000) and Hatipoğlu (2007) are a few examples. Using Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) as one of her frameworks, Hatipoğlu studies whether national identity and cultural values (Turkish and English) affect the way people write 'calls for papers for international conferences' by email in English and finds that Brown & Levinson's framework useful for her analysis (ibid.: 762).

Discussing strategies for doing FTAs, Brown & Levinson (1987: 92) give four levels of them: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. With regard to the bald-on-record usage, they posit that the most important reason is that S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy H's face. They identify two different kinds of bald-on-record usage: (1) those where the face threat is not minimized, where face is ignored or is irrelevant; and (2) those where S minimizes the face threat by implication when doing FTAs baldly on record (ibid.: 1987: 95).

Brown & Levinson list various situations where speakers tend to do FTAs baldly on record. Of these situations, one of them is "Where maxim efficiency is very important, and this is mutually known to both S and H, no face redress is necessary" (ibid.: 95). Another case where bald-on-record FTAs are found is "where the focus of interaction is task-oriented" and "face redress may be felt to be irrelevant" (ibid.: 97).

What has been said above about Brown & Levinson's use of bald-on-record strategies can be best used to explain the great percentages of the 'direct' strategies employed by participants in the role-play where they have mutual benefits and tasks in common and therefore the mutual task is more important than face.

Combined with Scollon & Scollon's work, Brown & Levinson's model of strategies may be more useful in explaining my data because the former scholars have put the latter's model into two more concise and clearer classes applicable to both my role-play and DCT data so that they are very convenient to apply (See 2.4). The main problem with Brown & Levinson's theoretical model is that it does not address the multifunctionality of speech acts, with regard to my research (See 4.3.2, 5.1, 7.2 and 7.3).

2.4 Scollon & Scollon's Work

Scollon & Scollon (1983: 156) summarize Brown & Levinson's politeness strategies and reduce them to two types. One refers to the strategies of formality and respect and the other refers to solidarity strategies. The former type includes negative politeness, off-record, and do nothing. The latter type that implies camaraderie and in-group membership includes bald-on record and positive politeness.

The above summary of Brown & Levinson's strategies is helpful for my DCT data, except for the fake refusal phenomenon, and can also adequately explain my role-play data. When one interlocutor asks another one something or to do something as a service, s/he may impede the latter's freedom of action and so threaten his/her negative face. If one refuses another one's request, suggestion, etc., s/he refrains the latter from doing the act A and therefore may threaten his/her positive face (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65). In this case, in order not to threaten other people's face, the interlocutor tends to adopt deference strategies, i.e. those of formality and respect, as some of the subjects have done in both the role-play and DCT investigation (See data analysis in Chapters IV, V and VI).

However, sometimes the context, relationship, etc. require that one show camaraderie, that is, friendship and trust in cooperation, as in my role-play investigation, people tend to use strategies of solidarity, that is, direct ones. This makes Brown & Levinson's model of strategies more capable of explaining my research data.

2.5 Leech's Absolute / Relative Politeness and Maxims

Leech (1983: 83) distinguishes between absolute politeness and relative politeness. By absolute politeness, he refers to the degree of politeness, with regard to certain linguistic forms. Some of these forms are regarded as more polite than others. For example, he thinks 'Could you possibly close the door?' is more polite than 'Would you mind closing the door?' which is more polite than 'Can you close the door?' continuing till the least polite form 'Close the door' (1983: 108).

Here, Leech provides a scale of (in)directness and politeness. He offers this scale from the viewpoint of Absolute Politeness or in terms of its forms. These forms seem to be static, but when they are used in specific situations, they will become dynamic or relative. That is why Leech goes on to discuss relative politeness. He tries to include as many situations as possible in which different forms of politeness are used. Leech (1983: 84) states that he is aware that people typically use 'polite' in a relative sense: that is, relative to some norms of behaviour which, for a particular setting, they regard as typical. It is on the basis of such group norms that we judge individual people as being polite or impolite in particular speech situations.

Unfortunately, Leech's explanations of his relative politeness theory have been omitted. In other words, his stress on the importance of the situations where those absolute forms are used have been left out. As a result, Leech's scale of (in)directness has incurred some harsh criticism (Held 1992: 142, Fraser 1990: 226, Blum-Kulka 1987: 131 and Locher 2004: 65). However, both Leech's relative politeness and absolute politeness help us understand that once a particular politeness form is used, the situation and community norm determine how polite it is.

Leech states that "Indirect illocutions tend to be more polite (a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be" (1983: 108). Here Leech talks about the matter from the form only. He does not say and does not mean that these indirect illocutions will always be used to express politeness regardless of specific contexts or situations. Conversely, he stresses the decisive function of the situations in which a specific utterance is used. He gives various examples to show that a direct linguistic form on the scale can be more polite than an indirect form in a particular situation. An indirect form outside on scale can be less polite than a direct form in specific situations.

On the basis of the above explanations, Leech's notion of (in)directness is applicable to my study. Leech's Politeness Principle (PP) and maxims seem to be appropriate to my study with the data from the DCTs, but are not quite as applicable to the data from my role-play investigation. Take his tact, generosity and agreement maxims for example. Those maxims demand: minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other; minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self; minimize disagreement between self and other and maximize agreement between self and other, respectively (See 1.2). However, my data in the role-play seems to require a theory that moves in the opposite direction to explain it. It seems to need a theory that says something like 'S tries to maximize cost to other; minimize cost to self; maximize

disagreement' when S's benefit or opinion is in conflict with H's in the discussion of the role-play (See Chapters IV and V).

Although Leech (2005: 25) has used a single constraint GSP (1.2) to include all his six maxims, in essence, there is not much difference between his maxims and this GSP, which reads:

In order to be polite, *S* expresses or implies meanings which place a high value on what pertains to *O* (*O*=other person[s], [mainly the addressee]) or place a low value on what pertains to *S* (*S*=self, speaker).

So, Leech's GSP is just as unable as his maxims to explain my data from the role-play. He suggests S "place a high value on what pertains to O" in the above quotation. However, in quite some cases in my role-play data, S does not do so. Instead, s/he often places low values on what pertains to O. For example, "You go and do it" (booking tickets). "I am not going to a dodgy place like that" (to a suggestion). Where can we find the high value S places on O here? This confirms that Leech's GSP is just as incapable of explaining my role-play data as his maxims.

However, Leech's cost-benefit notion gives an important clue to the analysis of the data. His (1983: 82) statement that there are some situations where politeness can take a back seat, outside these maxims, seems to be enlightening too. In the role-play again, there are many cases where they do not use polite linguistic forms which could sound impolite or even rude in different situations.

Leech's (2005: 27) idea that "despite differences, there is no East-West divide in politeness" is supportive of the results of my study in that I have not found any great divide either, between Chinese and English face/politeness, though there are differences, in my data analysis. For example, both Chinese and English favour direct strategies in requests and refusals in the role-play discussion. In the DCT investigation, I also find that Chinese politeness and English politeness are similar to each other. Both choose more indirect strategies than direct for the boss but more direct than indirect for the friend (See Chapter IV and V). I have also found no great divide between Chinese face and English face though other scholars such as Gu (1990) and Mao (1994) claim there to be (See Chapter VII).

2.6 Watts' View of Politeness

As explained in 1.5, Watts distinguishes first order politeness (politeness1) from second order politeness (politeness2), and makes a distinction between politic and polite behaviour. According to Watts (2003: 161), on the scale of politeness behaviour, the

appropriateness part is called politic. Any behaviour beyond this part is called polite or impolite, depending on which end this behaviour may be. If it is at the positive end, it is polite, and it is impolite if it is at the negative end. Therefore, Watts (2003: 160) says that the theory “must allow us to account for why individuals agree or disagree on what is and what is not (im)polite language”. Here Watts has introduced the notion of (im)politeness.

From what is said above, Watts’ theory covers a much wider scope than some of the traditional theories. For example, Leech mainly studies how to be polite in interaction and gives his scale of indirectness on which the more indirect it is, the more polite it will be (1983: 108). However, he does not pay much attention to the study of impoliteness.

Watts’ notions of (im)politeness will surely bring a new atmosphere and vitality to the field of study. However, there are also some criticisms about Watts’ theory of politeness. Terkourafi (2005: 99), for example, comments on Watts’ *Politeness* (2003), “The introduction of new terms is accompanied by a proliferation of distinctions taken from previous work. It is not clear why this new distinction is needed.”

In discussing his EPMs (Expressions of Procedural Meanings)¹³, Watts claims that “When they are missing, their absence is easily interpretable as impoliteness¹” (2003: 182). This claim is probably applicable to English politeness to a great extent, but it does not seem to be true in Chinese politeness (See Chapters IV and V).

2.7 The Theoretical Models Used in This Research

Based on the discussion above, I have chosen the following models for my data analysis.

1. For the DCT data (except fake refusals), Brown & Levinson’s model of strategies and CCSARP’s model of directness are adopted.

2. Brown & Levinson’s strategies, which Scollon & Scollon have grouped into those of deference and those of solidarity, are employed to explain the directness in the role-play data (See 2.3 and 2.4). Spencer-Oatey’s theory of goals is also used to explain the ‘direct’ phenomenon in the same data.

3. For explaining the fake refusal data in the DCTs, I have proposed the Chinese approach of *lǐràng/qiānràng/círàng*, along with Spencer-Oatey’s explanation (See 2.2 and 7.3).

¹³ These are utterances divided into two categories: 1. those that are largely responsible for triggering inferences in the addressee such as greetings, terms of address, leave-taking, etc.; 2. those that have become pragmaticalised such as *er, oh, mm, hmm, etc.*, discourse markers, such as *you know, like, well, etc.* and *please, thanks, etc.* (See Watts 2003: 182)

2.8 Politeness in English and Chinese – Similarities

Based on my previous experience (Li, L. 2000: 15), I find that studying similarities is just as important as studying differences. Sometimes, it is only the neglect of studying similarities that has made the differences appear so significant. Now I will compare some similarities and differences between Chinese and English with regard to politeness phenomena.

2.8.1 The basic structures

The basic linguistic forms in English and Chinese I have collected appear the same or similar to each other. Both Chinese and English have similar linguistic forms that suit the similar strategies they choose for appropriate politeness. For the more polite strategy of 'on record with redress', they use indirect strategies with each other, in order not to threaten each other's face. For instance, 'Can you bring it to me tomorrow?' in English and *Nǐ míngtiān néng gěi wǒ dàilái ma?* 你明天能给我拿来吗? in Chinese. However, if they decide on an informal strategy of 'on record without redress' politeness, they tend to use the subjectless, tenseless, and active verb phrase imperative, that is, the direct imperative form (Green 1975: 107) 'Bring it to me tomorrow.' *Míngtiān gěi wǒ dàilái.* 明天给我带来.

The indirect imperative 'Can you ...?' or *Nǐnéng ... ma?* 你能 吗? is more polite in form because the direct imperative 'Bring it ...' or *Gěiwǒ ...* 给我 has become a question which is no longer so direct in force and therefore more polite or less face-threatening. This question form, however, is sometimes vague in meaning without the specific context. It may be used to ask for information about the hearer's ability to get it here. It may also be used as a request for the hearer to do the action of bringing it. But when the conventional 'please' or *qǐng* 请 in the respective language is added to the same question, it becomes a polite request for the action: 'Can you reach the salt, please?' Searle (1979: 27), or *Qǐngnǐ bǎ yán dì guòlái, xíngma?* 请你把盐递过来, 行吗? Now look at the scale of the structure of the following pairs of sentences both in Chinese and English for comparison.

<i>Bǎ</i> ¹⁴	<i>yán</i>	<i>gěiwǒ</i>	<i>dì</i>	<i>guòlái.</i>
把	盐	给我	递	过来。
Part.	salt	to me	pass	AP
Pass me the salt.				

¹⁴ For the *ba*-structure, see 1.8.

<i>Nǐ</i>	<i>néng</i>	<i>gòudézháo</i>	<i>yán</i>	<i>ma?</i>
你	能	够得着	盐	吗?
you	can	reach	salt	QP

Can you reach the salt?

<i>Qǐng</i>	<i>nǐ</i>	<i>bǎ</i>	<i>yán</i>	<i>dì</i>	<i>guòlái,</i>	<i>xíng</i>	<i>ma?</i>
请	你	把	盐	递	过来,	行	吗?
Please	you	Part.	salt	pass	here,	can	QP

Can you pass me the salt, please?

There does not seem to be much difference in the structure and the linguistic and pragmatic meaning between English and Chinese from the direct speech imperative to the indirect speech with ‘can’ and with or without ‘please’ in the above examples apart from the *ba*-construction. To summarise, there seems to be an equivalence or near-equivalence of structure and meaning between English and Chinese in the above pairs of statements.

2.8.2 Modal verbs

English is notorious for its complicated system of (modal) auxiliaries. To mention a few, there are *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will*, *would*, etc. with all their predictive and non-predictive meanings.

Take ‘can’ and ‘could’ for instance. According to «现代英语语法» *Modern English Grammar* by Li, J. (2000: 164), the predictive use focuses on possibility, for example: ‘Even in summer it *can* be very cold here.’ and ‘What he said *can*’t be true.’

The non-predictive use is about ability, permission, offer, request, etc. depending on specific situations. For example: ‘Can you help me?’

Li, J. (2000: 164) states that “Compared with ‘can’, ‘could’ is more complicated in meaning because it can be used both in the past tense context, where it is the past equivalent of ‘can’, and in the present time context, where it is mainly distinguished for hypothetical use”.

- Past time context: They knew it *could* be very dangerous. (predictive: possibility) She *could* speak three foreign languages when she was ten. (non-predictive: ability)
- Present time context: I know it *could* be very dangerous but I just don’t want to give up. (predictive: possibility)

Li, J. goes on to say: A very important use of ‘could’ is found in expressions of polite tentative offers and requests, casual orders, etc. For example:

- *Could* you do me a favour? (non-predictive: request)
- *Could* I see your license, please? (non-predictive: request/indirect order)
- I wondered if I *could* borrow some tea. (non-predictive: indirect request)

Here in my study, I am concerned with these terms only as modal verbs related to their use in politeness. I have found that the basic forms of those auxiliary verbs (*can*, *will*, *may*, etc., but not the forms of *could*, *would* or *might*) do have their counterparts in Chinese, though nobody calls them auxiliary verbs in Chinese.¹⁵ These Chinese basic forms are: (*kě*)*néng*/*xíng* (可)能/行 (*can*), *kěyǐ*/*kěnéng* 可以/可能 (*may*), *bìxū*/*kěndìng* 必须/肯定 (*must*), *yào*/*yuànyì* 要/愿意 (*will*), etc. Such basic forms are used roughly in similar ways and mean the same in both languages, in spite of the grammatical terms.

The Chinese-English Dictionary by the English Department of the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, 1989, defines *néng* 能 as 'can', 'be able' and 'be capable'. It defines 可以 as 'can' and 'may'. There are no forms such as 'could' and 'might' listed. Alternatively, the bilingual *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD 1991) lists several different meanings and uses of 'can'. The most relevant to this research is 'indicating requests' and two examples are given: 'Can you help me with this box?' 你能帮我抬一下这个箱子吗? 'Can you feed the cat?' 你能喂一喂猫吗? and at the item 'could', the same dictionary gives the use of indicating requests *néng* 能, *kěyǐ* 可以: 'Could you baby-sit for us on Friday?' 星期五您能帮我们照看孩子吗? 'Could you type one more letter before you go?' 您走之前能再打一封信吗?

In the last four examples above, both 'can' and 'could' have been translated into the one and same word *néng*. The dictionary cannot do otherwise because there is not any equivalent verb form of 'could' in Chinese.

The fact that these Chinese basic forms do not have all these complicated past forms of English (*could*, *would*, *might*, etc.) can be explained by the fact that none of the verbs in Chinese have any inflections; they are used in the root form of the verb with all persons and at all times. That is what has made the two sets of forms, English and Chinese, look so different from each other. Teachers usually tell their students that the two languages can never be compared in this respect because there are no auxiliary verbs in Chinese. Based on observations, I argue that the base forms are all there to be seen in Chinese too, as are shown above. These base forms are what both languages

¹⁵ They used to be called can-will verbs used as adverbials in sentences. However, now, *néng* 能 (*can*) and *kěyǐ* 可以 (*may*) are classified as helping verbs but *bìxū* 必须 (*must*) is called an adverb. Both are used as adverbials. – «现代汉语词典» *Modern Chinese Dictionary* compiled by Language Research Institute of China.

have in common and such similarities are fundamental. On the basis of this fundamental aspect, I will present further similarities which are essential to both linguistic and pragmatic analysis.

<i>Nǐ</i>	<i>néng</i>	<i>gòu</i>	<i>zhe</i>	<i>yán</i>	<i>ma?</i>
你	能	够	着	盐	吗?
You	can	reach	AP	salt	QP

Can you reach the salt?

<i>Qǐng</i>	<i>nǐ</i>	<i>bǎ</i>	<i>yán</i>	<i>dì</i>	<i>guò</i>	<i>lài</i>	<i>xíngma?</i>
请	你	把	盐	递	过来		行吗?
Please	you	Part.	salt	pass	here		can?

Can you pass the salt, please?

<i>Qǐng</i>	<i>nín</i>	<i>ná</i>	<i>guò</i>	<i>yán</i>	<i>lái</i>	<i>xíngma?</i>
请	您	拿	过	盐	来	行吗?
Please	you	pass	AP	salt	Part.	can

Could you pass the salt, please?

The above examples seem to show that Chinese and English are quite different with 'can' *néng*, but a closer examination will enable us to recognize that if the English base form 'can' may be called the equivalent of the Chinese base form *néng* in meaning and in function, the English past form 'could' does not have a counterpart in Chinese, as we have seen above. Nevertheless, the *nǐ* 你 (French: *tu*) pronoun form in the Chinese sentence which can be used in a sentence that corresponds to the English can-sentence, then the polite pronoun form *nín* 您 (French: *Vous*) can be used in a Chinese statement that corresponds to the English could-sentence, functionally (Li, Z. 1985: 170 and Sun 1986: 100). This is also true of the second personal pronoun plural forms *nǐmen* 你们 and *nínmen* 您们 (respectful form). Simply put, the Chinese *nǐ(men)néng* 你(们)能 corresponds to the English 'can you' and the *nín(men)néng* 您(们)能 form in Chinese corresponds to the 'could you' form in English in function. In other words, the Chinese more polite form of *nín(men)* plus the base verb form *néng*, etc. compensates for the English more polite form 'could you' etc. in function. However, what has been said here does not apply to the first singular and third personal pronouns (singular or plural), which have no respectful forms. Therefore, there is no respectful form in Chinese for the English 'Could I/we/he/she/they' even in function. Instead, Chinese use just the base form *wo* 我/*women* 我们/*ta* 他/*ta* 她/*tamen* 他们 + *neng* 能 for both the English 'Can' and 'Could' + 'I/we/he/she/they' forms. From this analysis, I have found that the basic structure is similar in the two languages though the superficial forms such as their word

order and modal verbs (past forms in English) can be different from each other. Their meanings and uses are generally similar to each other in the scope of politeness. What has been said above also applies to the modal verbs discussed below. We can easily find more similar expressions to the English modal auxiliaries 'will/would' in Chinese.

Nǐ yào/yuànyì dìguò yán lái ma?
你 愿意 递过 盐 来吗?
You will pass salt QP
Will you pass the salt?

Qǐng nín dì guò yán lái, hǎo ma?
请 您 递 过 盐 来, 好 吗?
Please you pass Part. salt Part. will you QP
Will you pass the salt please?

Qǐng nín ná guò yán lái, hǎo ma?
请 您 拿 过 盐 来, 好 吗?
Please you (Vous-form) reach Part. salt Part., OK QP
Would you pass the salt please?

Also, in the same way, the English 'may/might' forms may find expression in the Chinese forms in the following:

Nǐ bǎ yán ná guò lái, kěyǐ ma?
你 把 盐 拿 过来, 可以 吗?
You Part. salt pass AP, may QP
May I ask you to pass the salt?

Qǐng nǐ bǎ yán ná guò lái, kěyǐ ma?
请 你 把 盐 拿 过来, 可以 吗?
Please you Part. salt pass AP, may QP (tu-form)
May I ask you to pass the salt please?

Qǐng nín bǎ yán ná guò lái, kěyǐ ma?
请 您 把 盐 拿 过来, 可以 吗?
Please you Part. Salt pass AP, might QP (Vous-form)
Might I ask you to pass the salt please?

Even the embedded imperatives in English can also have their counterparts in Chinese. For example:

I wonder if you can/could ...

= <i>Bùzhī</i>	<i>nǐ/nín</i>	<i>néng</i>	<i>bù</i>	<i>néng</i> ...
不知	你/您	能	不	能
not know	you (tu) / you (Vous)	can	not	can ...

We wonder if we may/might ...					
= <i>Wǒmén</i>	<i>bùzhī</i>	<i>wǒmén</i>	<i>kě</i>	<i>bù</i>	<i>kěyǐ</i> ...
我们	不知	我们	可	不	可以
we	not know	we	may	not	may ...

2.8.3 Hints in Chinese and English

Hints, or unconventionally indirect speech, are used as indirect requests in appropriate contexts such as “It’s cold in here. You are standing on my foot. I can’t see the movie screen while you have that hat on” (Searle 1975: 43).

These utterances can also find expression in Chinese to convey indirect requests in the same way. The counterparts of the above examples become the following in Chinese:

Zhèr zhēn lěng a! 这儿真冷啊!

It’s cold in here! – It can be used as a request for the hearer to close the door.

Nǐ cǎizhe wǒde jiǎo le! 你踩着我的脚了!

You are standing on my foot – It may be used as a request for the hearer to stay away.

Nǐ dài zhe nàdǐng màozi wǒ kàn bú jiàn píngmù. 你带着那顶帽子我看不见屏幕。

I can’t see the movie screen while you have that hat on – a request for the hearer to take off the hat.

In the case of hints (indirect speech) in both languages, the utterance meaning absolutely depends on the context.

2.8.4 Politeness in Chinese and English – differences

In this section, I will discuss some differences between English politeness and Chinese politeness with regard to the speech acts of requests and refusals.

2.8.4.1 Differences in requests

Requests are universal in languages. This speech act is a complicated phenomenon in Chinese and English. To request something from somebody or to request somebody to do something is to ask (politely) somebody for something / to do something. In Chinese, it is *qǐngqiú mǒurén gěiyǔ mǒuwù / zuò mǒushì* 请求某人给予某物/做某事.

With regard to the syntactic structures of requests, there is a scale on which degrees of politeness may be measured. Take the request of borrowing money from

somebody, for example. The following chart orders the options from the least polite downward to the most polite.

1. *Jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián.*

借给我点儿钱。

Lend me some money.

2. *Jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián, hǎoma?*

借给我点儿钱好吗?

Lend me some money, OK?

3. *Jiè gěi wǒ diǎner qián, zěn me yàng?*

借给我点儿钱怎么样?

How about lending me some money?

4. *Jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián, xíngma?*

借给我点儿钱行吗?

Lend me some money, can you?

5. *Jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián, kěyǐma?*

借给我点儿钱可以吗?

Lend me some money, all right?

6. *Qǐng jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián.*

请借给我点儿钱。

Please lend me some money.

7. *Qǐng nín jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián, kěyǐma?*

请您借给我点儿钱可以吗?

Could you please lend me some money?

8. *Bùzhīdào nín néngbùnéng jiègěi wǒ diǎner qián?*

不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱?

I wonder if you could lend me some money.

9. *Wǒ jíxū mǎi zhègè dōngxi, kěshì qián hái chà diǎner, bùzhī gāi zěnmébàn.*

我急需买这个东西,可是钱还差点儿,不知该怎么办。

I need it badly but I haven't got enough money for it. I don't know what to do.

There is not much difference in the basic sentence structures between Chinese and English here. Number 1 is an imperative and the most direct. Number 9 is the most indirect. The absence of the English past forms of modal verbs such as 'could', 'would', etc. in Chinese is made up for by *nín* (=Vous) 您 (you), *qǐng* 请 (please), *hǎoma* 好吗 (OK), *kěyǐma* 可以吗 (all right), *néngbùnéng* 能不能 (could), *zěnmeyàng* 怎么

样 (how about), *bùzhī néngbùnéng* 不知能不能 (I wonder if you could ...), etc. Apart from these, there does not seem to be any significant difference between the sentence structures of the Chinese request politeness and their equivalent in English (See Sections 2.8.1 and 2.8.2).

However, from the viewpoint of face effects, Chinese politeness with regard to requests may be quite different from English politeness. Brown & Levinson (1987: 65) regard requests as an intrinsically face-threatening speech act. In Chinese, however, it is not so simple. It all depends on the factors of relationship-benefit-context in which it is used. For example, if a nurse in a hospital wants to change the bed sheet for the patient who has no difficulty in getting up and she says to him, “*Qǐlái, huàn chuángdān!* 起来, 换床单!” (Get up, [I’ll] change the bed sheet [for you]), no Chinese patient would feel his/her face is threatened in this case. The patient knows clearly that *that* is a nurse’s duty and what she wants him/her to do is for his/her benefit. The patient would get up readily to let her finish her job. An English nurse would not be so direct as a Chinese one.

Another example to show the difference between the two languages in requests is the English polite form of the request ‘May I ask you...?’ which has its counterpart in Chinese *Wǒ kěyǐ wènnín ...* 我可以问您? As has been mentioned above, many Chinese learning English tend to use the more direct form ‘I have a question to ask you’ transferred from the Chinese request form *Wǒ yǒugè wèntí xiǎng wènnǐ*. 我有个问题想问你。 Or ‘I want to ask you a question.’ transferred from the Chinese *Wǒyào wènnǐ yīgè wèntí*. 我要问你一个问题。 This often sounds impolite to native speakers of English.

Cultures, specific contexts, relationships, benefits/interests and other related factors have made the differences between the English and the Chinese requests very complicated and confusing to an English-speaking person.

2.8.4.2 Differences in refusals

Refusing is another universal speech act. It is used to say or show that one is unwilling to give, accept, grant or do something¹⁶. One can refuse a request, a suggestion, an invitation, an offer, a gift, etc.; one can also refuse one’s consent, help, permission, application for a visa, etc. One can get a blunt, flat, or curt (impolite) refusal or a polite one. Here, I am more concerned with polite refusals as a speech act.

¹⁶ From Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 1989

Brown & Levinson classify this speech act as an intrinsically Face Threatening Act (1987: 65). In Chinese, it is also generally regarded as an FTA. Liu¹⁷ (1991: 168) states that when your idea is negated, your suggestion not taken, or your request refused, one can imagine how discouraged, disappointed or unhappy you may feel. However, when ideas are not in agreement, the suggestions impractical or the request/demand unreasonable, one of the parties has to say 'no'. This depends on the 'art' of refusing. If a refusal is improperly done, feelings will be hurt. It is no wonder that when some people facing a request or suggestion or idea which, they clearly know, is wrong, unreasonable or improper, find it difficult to say 'no' and, as a result, are caught in a situation of embarrassment.¹⁸

Liu suggests the following ways to mitigate the effect of refusals:

1. Take a firm stand in verbal refusals but the attitude should be honest.
2. Redress (compensate or make up for) the potential face-threatening effects of the refusals. For example

Hěn bàoqiàn, wǒ shízài tàimáng.

很抱歉，我实在太忙。(I'm so sorry. I'm really too busy.)

Yěxǔ mǒumǒurén bǐwǒ gèng héshì.

也许某某人比我更合适。(Perhaps Mr. So-and-So is more proper than me.)

3. Explain what H should do while refusing him/her.
4. Find proper reason or excuse when making a refusal.
5. Induce one to negate himself/herself.
6. Try to refuse in indirect or roundabout ways.

We can see clearly from the above that generally refusing is a Face Threatening Act in Chinese too. The problem, however, is not as straightforward as expected. In fact, in quite a few speech acts in Chinese such as inviting, offering, complimenting, suggesting, requesting, etc., refusing can be a very important means to show politeness. This is quite different from English. I will further discuss the problem in Chapters V and VII.

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined a few important theories or frameworks that are related to my research and found a few models that can be used to analyze my data: a

¹⁷ Huanhui Liu 刘换辉, *Speech Arts in Political and Ideological Work* «思想政治工作语言艺术», Language College of Beijing Publishers 北京语言学院出版社

¹⁸ The translation from Chinese is by the author of this thesis.

combination of Brown & Levinson's model of strategies (especially with Scollon & Scollon's summarization) and Spencer-Oatey's theory of goals for the role-play data; Brown & Levinson's model and CCSARP's framework of directness for the DCT data; and Spencer-Oatey's explanation together with the Chinese traditional approach of *lǐràng/qiānràng/ciràng* that I have proposed for the handling of invitation-acceptance. Finally, I have also described a few basic features of Chinese and English that have brought about some fundamental similarities and differences between Chinese and English, related to this research.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH PROCEDURES

3.1 Research Approach

In collecting data, this research uses a combination of methodologies: Role-play and Discourse Completion Test/Task (DCT).

The meaning of social action or statements depends on the context in which it appears, according to Newman (1994: 319). It may be distorted without a correct context. So, it is very important that qualitative approaches guide researchers to study human subjects in their own context (Chadwick et al. 1984: 211) and to study events in a natural setting (Miles et al. 1994: 10). In other words, the best way to study people and events is to investigate them in real contexts. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 13) also say, "Ideally, all data should come from 'natural' conditions".

Yi Yuan (2001: 289) suggests that natural speech, if recorded properly, can provide the most accurate picture of everyday conversations. Golato (2003: 111) also supports this idea that a preferred method of data collection would involve the audio- and video-taping of spontaneous, naturally occurring data.

However, it is not always feasible for researchers to have access to real/natural situations where the actual speech acts are taking place, especially a constrained project, such as a Ph.D thesis.

Therefore, I have chosen an approach to data collection, which combines two ways of eliciting data, role-play and DCTs. Each of these has strengths and weaknesses which complement each other. These methods will be considered in turn.

The major merits of the DCT method are the speed of data produced. Beebe (1985: 11) thinks that the DCT method can get a large amount of data quickly. Hill et al. (1986: 353) agree that within a comparatively short time, a lot of information such as the name, age, sex, nationality, education, occupation, relationship with other members, as well as answers to the questions predesigned can be collected. Beebe (ibid.: 11) also thinks that the DCT is a method with which one can produce a preliminary categorization of semantic formulas and strategies which will appear in natural speech, and study the stereotypical perceived requirements for an appropriate response. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 13), argue that "using written elicitation techniques enables us to obtain more stereotyped responses" and "it is precisely this more stereotyped aspect of speech behavior that we need for cross-cultural comparability". By stereotype, they refer to a fixed pattern that all the investigated languages share so that it facilitates comparisons.

Beebe (ibid.: 11) also argues that this method provides insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and ascertains the

canonical shape of refusals, apologies, partings, etc., in the minds of the speakers of that language.

Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 250) argue that “[the DCT method] seems to effectively control the contextual variables important to the study” and it is “especially effective for the comparison of strategies from different languages”.

However, the DCT has its disadvantages as well. The most important problem is its authenticity. Beebe (1985: 11) warns that DCTs “are *not* natural speech and they do *not* accurately reflect natural speech”. She discovers differences between what participants write and what they really say: “The written role-plays bias the response toward less negotiation, less hedging, less repetition, less elaboration, less variety and ultimately less talk” (Beebe 1985: 3).

When Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 250) discuss the drawbacks, they point out that “it is hard to tell how representative what subjects write on such a discourse completion test is of what they actually say in spontaneous conversation”. They go on to say that “subjects may perceive writing as a more formal activity than speaking, and thus choose to write more formal language on the questionnaire”. They conclude that “the question how ‘realistic’ the data are, or indeed need to be, remains open”.

According to Golato (2003: 110), “although DCTs provide researchers with data rather quickly, that data can be very different from naturalistically collected data and that they do not provide reliable examples of what speakers are actually doing. However, they also say that if one is interested in how speakers are using language to create meaning or in how certain speech acts are organized in their natural settings, then DCTs can be used”.

Wolfson et al. (in Blum-kulka et al. 1989: 182) have raised two questions about this data collection method. One, how much can we assume that written responses are representative of spoken ones? Two, can we hope that short, decontextualized written segments are comparable to the longer routines typical of actual interaction?

However, there are researchers who classify DCTs into Open Questionnaires and Dialogue Completion Tasks (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1993: 159) or written DCTs and oral DCTs (Yi Yuan 2001: 271). Open Questionnaires refer to those that provide situations only and the participants are asked to create their own responses. Dialogue Completion Tasks not only provide the necessary situations but also the specific question that requires the participant to provide the answer, or they provide the answer that requires the participant to give the question form (the request form for example). Generally, researchers think that the Dialogue Completion Task is preferable to the Open Questionnaire because the latter is more unreliable.

Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1993: 143) argue that different forms of DCTs (open questionnaires and dialogue completion tasks) elicit different responses. They conclude that for the elicitation of reactive speech acts such as rejections, inclusion of conversational turns is the preferred format.

Now, I will briefly examine the merits and demerits of the role-play method. The most prominent advantage is that the participants are talking (role-playing) so fluently, so vividly and so naturally as if they were doing so in real life. Therefore it seems to be the closest to real-life realization of the speech acts the researcher needs. Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 251) point out that the subjects have the opportunity to say what and as much as they would like to say, and their spoken language is thought to be a good indication of their 'natural' way of speaking.

In role-play, a situation(s) is(are) described or given to the participants. In my investigation, for example, members of each group are supposed to talk about a trip they may make to possible places during a holiday. The places they could go to are Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou for the subjects in China and Paris, Strasbourg, Basel, etc. for those in England. The holiday lasts four days from the 16th to the 19th of the month. Then the participants begin to role-play as to what cities to visit, where to stay in each city, what transportation means to take, when to start out, who will book the tickets, and so on. One of the members in each group is the coordinator, responsible for the discussion of the task. Once the discussion is started, it moves freely from one topic to another as if they were engaged in a real discussion. For example:

Chinese:

C2AM: 咱们具体到哪个城市? Specifically which city do you want to go?

C2BM: 上海。 Shanghai.

C2AM: 想去浦东? Want to go to the Pudong District (there)?

C2BM: 当然去浦东了。 Of course, to Pudong.

C2CM: 杭州应该还是比较不错的城市吧? Hangzhou should be a nice city.

C2BM/C2CM: (Laugh).

C2AM: 咱们去划划船, 这方面咱们, 再一个还想上哪去?

We'll go boating (on the West Lake). In this respect, we ... Where else do you want to go to?

C2BM: 假期很有限。 We have too little time for more places.

C2AM: 很有限啊, 还有时间啊。 We still have some time though not much.

C2BM: 累死人。 Tiring to death.

English:

E4BF: Paris sounds like a good idea.

E4AM: Paris in the late Spring, early Summer.

E4CM: But, Strasbourg?

E4BF: No, no, no. Terrible place.

...

E4CM: Best of both worlds. A bit of Germany; a bit of France.

E4AM: Very nice chocolate and beer there.

E4CM: The markets are supposed to be really interesting.

E4BF: I hope I'm going to be doing more than chocolate and beer.

Just as the above examples show in the role-play, "the subjects are not asked to respond as they would in a given situation, but as they believe the character supplied in the situation would" (Rintell and Mitchell 1989: 252). There are no longer any responses prepared beforehand to the questions and to be chosen by the subjects or any limited underlined space provided for them to fill in, as in the questionnaires or DCTs. Here in the role-play, it seems as if there were no time or space limit. The participants are just talking the way they like and for whatever length of time they think fit. They sound closer to natural communication in real situations.

However, like other data collection methods, the role-play approach also has its demerits. The most important problem is again its authenticity or reliability, compared with the real life investigation. Rintell and Mitchell (*ibid.*: 251) point out that the subjects are not naturalistically engaged in the interactions and therefore it is not certain whether what each subject says is really representative of what s/he would say in the real life situation.

3.2 Rationales

3.2.1 Rationale for the DCT research method and the role-play

Now I will discuss why I have decided to use both the role-play and DCTs in my investigation.

Despite its advantages, the method of collecting data ethnographically has limitations that make it impractical for a research project like mine. It would probably not be suitable for the objectives of my investigation. For example, one would have to obtain permission from companies and individuals to record long stretches of conversation, only to find that the data is not suitable, or does not contain suitable data in sufficient quantities. Just as Rintell and Mitchell (1989: 250) point out:

Another drawback to the ethnographic method of data collection is that the researcher must either rely on memory to accurately record the data, or on the taping of long stretches of talk in the hope that the particular speech act in question emerges in the course of the exchange.

Additionally, the ethnographic method cannot produce many instances of the same speech act in the same situation and the researcher can never control the contextual variables to ensure that the same context will be repeated even once (ibid.: 250). Therefore, this method of collecting naturally occurring data does not suit the purpose of my investigation.

The role-play was found to be the most appropriate method for my investigation. It does have limitations but all of these are shared with other methods except the ethnographic method (See 3.1). Also, it would avoid the limitations of the ethnographic method mentioned above. A role-play like mine (Appendix II), provides long stretches of communication with all the necessary speech acts (requests and refusals) and the full context of discourse, rather than separate sentences as questions and answers. At the same time, there would be little time for participants to think about responses in the discussion and therefore their interactions would be more spontaneous and closer to those that occur naturally. It would be most suitable for my purposes.

The reason that both the role-play and the DCTs were used in this research is that the latter were expected to complement the former in the following ways: (1) it would satisfy the needs of the study in collecting data on fake refusals, for example, in both languages, though this speech act might not necessarily occur in the role-play (See 8.3); (2) it would provide not only data to be compared with those of the role-play but also personal backgrounds of the participants (Appendix I). I wanted to compare the data produced by the same subjects with the two different methods in the two languages. I also wanted to compare the results with those from other researchers such as Lee-Wong and Blum-Kulka et al.

Additionally, the above two methods have been used for a long time by many researchers, such as Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Chen et al. (1995), Du (1995), Zhang (1995), Lee-Wong (2000), Yi Yuan (2001), Golato (2003) and Bardovi et al. (1993). They have generated useful data for analysis. I believed that a combination of both methods would produce useful data in my research.

In the beginning, I decided to investigate three speech acts (suggestions, requests and refusals) and designed the role-play in order to elicit these types of speech act. Accordingly, I designed questions for suggestions, requests and refusals (and choices to choose from as responses to them) in the DCTs and asked the subjects to finish them immediately after they accomplished the role-play. Later, however, I found I had been too ambitious to plan to do three speech acts in one thesis. Therefore, I decided to omit the speech act of suggestions from the analysis of the role-play data but they remained in the DCT forms because they were designed to elicit refusals.

There are two sections in the DCT form. Section A includes personal details such as name, age, gender, education, occupation, etc, Section B consists of ten questions (See Appendix I), the first three of which investigate relationships between the subjects. Question 4 is borrowing money from four kinds of people – boss, close relative, best friend or acquaintance – the purpose being to investigate how subjects would behave verbally in the most sensitive topic and to see the degree to which such requestive acts are different from those that would occur in the role-play. Question 5 aims to get the subjects to imagine somebody is feeling ill. What would you say if this person is one of the above four categories of people. Question 6 asks one to imagine that somebody in need wants to borrow some money (e.g. 1500 yuan or 100 pounds) from you but you don't want to lend it. What would you say to him/her if the person is a member of the above categories. In Questions 7 and 8, you have repaired a computer for someone, who then invites you to dinner. What would you say to him/her if the person is one of the above four people? The only difference between 7 and 8 is that in the former case, you really do want to accept the invitation and in the latter, you cannot stay for dinner for some reason. Questions 9 and 10 investigate the feelings of the speaker after s/he makes a refusal to a request and suggestion beneficial for him/her, respectively.

Under each question from numbers 4 to 10, there are five possible choices, *a* to *e* which are arranged in the order of directness, *a* being the most direct and *e* the most indirect. Choice *f* requires the participant who does not choose any of the options *a* through *e* to specify what s/he would say in this particular situation. Respondents were asked to choose one option (and no more than one) out of the five for each scenario.

In the DCT investigation, the English speakers were given a monolingual English questionnaire (See Appendix I). The Chinese subjects in Groups 2, 3 and 5 in China were given a bilingual questionnaire. This is because after the DCT questionnaire in English was used with the English subjects, it was translated into Chinese and sent to China to be used, without deleting the English. The subjects in Groups 1 and 4 in England were given a monolingual Chinese questionnaire, the English having been deleted. Therefore it was only the 3 Chinese groups in Tianjin (in the DCTs but not in the role-play) that were given a bilingual questionnaire.

However, this does not seem to have affected the overall results. The Chinese participants in those three groups were asked to read the questionnaire and respond in Chinese only. First they were asked to do the most important job of role-playing and then the supplementary work of filling in the questionnaire. So their focus was on interacting in Chinese. Moreover, they were asked to complete the questionnaires fairly quickly (as I wanted the subjects' intuitive responses), which applies to all the groups,

both Chinese and English. Since most Chinese subjects in China only knew only a little or some basic English, this was probably not a major issue.

All this would have discouraged those with a bilingual version from spending extra time on the parts of the questionnaire in the other language. The results seem to show that there is not any obvious influence. Take 'borrowing money from others', the three groups in China made choices similar to those made by the two groups in England. All the groups chose more indirect strategies for the boss and the acquaintance and more direct for the friend and the relative. This is also true of the case of 'refusing to lend money to others', except that the two groups in England chose more indirect strategies while the three in China chose mostly direct strategies.

The case of fake refusals in accepting invitation to dinner is also illustrative. Most of all the Chinese subjects (71.7%) chose the superficial refusal act but then waited for further invitation. The percentage of choices by the two groups in England is 100% and 41.7%, while that of the 3 groups in China is 75%, 66.7% and 75%, respectively. The distribution of choices for the latter groups is quite even with regard to relationships (boss, relative, friend, or acquaintance). However, only 38.3% of the English groups chose the same speech act and the distribution is not even at all. The percentage is 66.7% and 60% for the boss and the acquaintance, while it is only 13.3% for the relative and the friend, respectively.

All this strongly suggests that there has not been any negative effect on the research results generated by the bilingual Chinese questionnaire. There was no issue with the English groups in the DCT investigation because they were given a monolingual questionnaire, i.e. in English only.

The number of the subjects was small for the DCTs because I restricted the data set to those people who had undertaken the role-play. The study was designed so that the subjects would undertake both the role-play and the DCTs. The reason I did this was that I wanted to be able to directly compare their behaviour in the role-play and the DCTs. Due to the time constraints of this project, only a limited number of role-plays could be transcribed and analyzed in the time available. Therefore, the number of the subjects that undertook the DCTs was also constrained. So, a word of warning to the reader is necessary: because of the small sample size, any inferences drawn from the DCTs should be treated or interpreted cautiously.

The role-play study was designed to elicit data about requests and refusals, which would be the main materials for analysis in this thesis, and it was conducted completely monolingually, that is, in the respective native language of the subjects only.

There were principles I had to consider. First, there should be an equal number of groups of subjects between Chinese and English. Second, these groups in each language had to be representative of a few factors: familiarity between members of each group, age, gender, occupation, etc. Third, the subjects were supposed not to have any idea about what was elicited in terms of speech acts (requests and refusals). However, the investigator had to design the discussion in such a way that the required speech acts might be obtained naturally. Accordingly, each member was given an outline to guide what topics to center on (See Appendix II).

Even so, one could not guarantee that one would be sure to obtain the required data all the time. For instance, I had planned for the groups (at least the Chinese ones) to produce fake refusal acts in the role-play so that I could compare them with those to be produced in the DCTs. However, there was only one group who adopted such strategies. Therefore, I had to omit this comparison.

3.2.2 Rationale for the selection of subjects

Described in the previous section, I organized thirty subjects altogether divided into ten groups of three, five English and five Chinese, to role-play and then to complete the DCT questions in the experiment. For the task given to each subject, see Appendices I and II. Based on the principles in 3.2.1, I planned to have, in each language, a group of male and female university students respectively, a group of students of mixed gender, lecturers of mixed gender, and a family.

Some of the linguistic criteria in selecting subjects in Chinese and English were as follows:

1. They must be natives of China or the UK, respectively, or born and brought up there.
2. Their first language must be Chinese or English.
3. They were asked to speak their native language only. If students were learning the other language, then they were either beginners (within their first year of study), or their length of time in the other country is stated (See Table 3-1).

The result was that the composition of the Chinese groups was similar to that of the English. It proved to be impossible for both to be entirely equivalent. Both included a group of university female students who did not know each other before, a group of university male students, two of the English men being classmates for six months but none of the Chinese knew each other. Both had a family with grandparents and a grandchild of eleven (Chinese) and thirteen (English). There was a group of lecturers of mixed gender in both Chinese and English, who had been colleagues for ten weeks to

six years and a group of Chinese research students of mixed gender, two of whom did not know each other before and the corresponding group of mixed gender in English were all undergraduate students who had been classmates for ten weeks.

In the beginning, I attempted to sample speakers from comparatively diverse socio-economic backgrounds in terms of occupation, etc., but very soon, I realized that was not possible. The difficulty did not lie in the choice of Chinese subjects but in finding enough equivalent English participants.

The investigation took me about two years to accomplish due to the difficulty in finding appropriate subjects, especially in England. In 2002, I was only able to collect three groups, one English and two Chinese in Britain. In summer 2003, I returned to China, where it was considerably easier to find appropriate subjects. I collected three more Chinese groups. I did not finish collecting the other four English groups until the autumn of 2004. Details of the ten groups for comparison are in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Details of subjects chosen and locations where recordings were done

Group Numbers	English Groups	Location	Chinese Groups	Location
1	<i>2 male and 1 female students from Leeds University</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>1 male and 2 female students from Leeds University, having stayed in the UK for six months</i>	<i>UK</i>
2	<i>3 male students from Leeds University</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>3 male students from Nankai University</i>	<i>China</i>
3	<i>3 female students from Leeds University</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>3 female students from Nankai University</i>	<i>China</i>
4	<i>2 male and 1 female Lecturers from Leeds University</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>1 male and 2 female lecturers from Leeds University, having lived in the UK for about 10 years</i>	<i>UK</i>
5	<i>An old couple, retired, with their 13-year-old granddaughter</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>An old couple, retired from Nankai University, with their 11-year-old granddaughter</i>	<i>China</i>

3.3 Data Collection

Data is most important in that it provides the needed materials for analysis. It is just as important as providing necessary materials such as bricks and tiles and cement for building a house. In the following, I will describe how I carried out the role-play and the DCTs.

3.3.1 Role-playing

In each group, speaker A, according to the plan (Appendix II), was the member authorized to be responsible for conducting the role-play. Each member's task was clearly explained. They were asked to discuss whether, when (three or four days out of their holidays), where (Paris/Basel/Strasbourg or Shanghai/Hangzhou/Nanjing) and how (by plane, train or coach) to make a trip together. Each of them played a role and aired his/her opinion according to his/her own interest, wishes, and possibilities. They were asked to role-play naturally as if they were really going to make such a trip. I did the necessary preparatory work including setting up the video equipment. The recordings are between eleven and eighteen minutes for each group.

3.3.2 Tape-recording

I bought a video recorder and did the recording for the groups by myself. The quality of the recordings was very good. When the tape recordings were done, I listened to them all from the beginning to the end in order to have a general impression whether they would serve the purpose of the experiment. I found that they were suitable. Then I began to do the transcribing by myself. Later on, my friend James joined me in preparing the English transcriptions. In so doing, the accuracy and quality of the transcriptions would be guaranteed.

After I did the transcription of the tapes, I translated the Chinese transcriptions into English. Finally, I asked my English friend to read the translation, the purpose of which was to ensure that there were no mistakes in the translated English.

3.3.3 Discourse completion tests

Two sections have been designed for the DCTs. One is concerned with the background information about the subjects such as name, age, gender, education, occupation, relationship with other members, etc. The other is a DCT investigation in which, the subject is asked to provide brief answers he/she might offer in real situations with regard to a certain request and refusal, or make a choice by writing a tick (✓) out of five or six choices *a, b, c, d, e* or *f*. For example:¹⁹

¹⁹ The full DCT can be found in Appendix I.

You go shopping with somebody and you spot a bargain so good that you must buy it. Unfortunately, you have not enough money on you. You need to borrow 100 pounds. What would you say if this person is:

你和一个人一起买东西，发现一件非常便宜的商品，你就是想买下来。可惜你没带足够的钱。你需要借 1500 元。你对他/她说什么，如果这个人：

Your boss 你的老板?

- a. Lend me some money, (please). (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. Can you lend me some money? 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. Could/would you lend me some money? 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me. 我倒是很想买这个东西，可是我带的钱不够。
- f. Other, please specify 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

A close relative 你的亲属?

- a. Lend me some money, (please). (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. Can you lend me some money? 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. Could/would you lend me some money? 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me. 我倒是很想买这个东西，可是我带的钱不够。
- f. Other, please specify 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

Your best friend 你最好的朋友?

- a. Lend me some money, (please). (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. Can you lend me some money? 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. Could/would you lend me some money? 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me. 我倒是很想买这个东西，可是我带的钱不够。

f. Other, please specify 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

Someone you don't know very well 你不熟悉的人?

a. Lend me some money, (please). (请)借给我点儿钱。

b. Can you lend me some money? 借给我点儿钱行吗?

c. Could/would you lend me some money? 您借给我点儿钱好吗?

d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。

e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me. 我倒是很想买这个东西, 可是我带的钱不够。

f. Other, please specify 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

3.3.4 Codes and symbols used for the data collection

The codes and symbols for each subject are:

C/E = Chinese group or English group

1/2/3/4/5 = Group number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5

A/B/C = Subject A, B or C in a group

M/F = Male or Female

For example:

E1AM represents English Group One Subject A Male.

C5BF represents Chinese Group Five Subject B Female.

3.4 Data Analysis

For the readers' convenience, a list of the strategy types in requests/refusals with a cross-reference to the discussion is given in the table below:

Table 3-2 Strategy types in requests/refusals

Requests

		Contents	Section number of findings/discussion
Role-play	Strategy types	<i>M1 (Impositives) –Direct</i>	4.3.2.1- 2
		<i>M2 (Conventional Indirect)</i>	4.3.2.3
		<i>M3 (Hints)</i>	4.3.2.4
	Strategy types in Modification	<i>Internal modification</i>	6.2.3
		<i>External modification</i>	6.2.5
DCTs	<i>Strategy types</i>	4.3.3	
	<i>Relative power and social distance</i>	4.4	

Refusals

		Contents	Section number of findings/discussion
Role-play	Strategy types	<i>Strategy type 1 (Direct)</i>	5.1
		<i>Strategy type 2 (Indirect)</i>	5.1
	Strategy types in Modification	<i>Descriptive categories of modification</i>	6.3.1
		<i>Findings</i>	6.3.2
		<i>Analysis of findings</i>	6.3.3
DCTs	<i>Refusals (lending money, invitations, etc.)</i>	5.2	
	<i>Relative power and social distance</i>	5.3	

According to Miles et al. (1994: 10-11), the analysis of data usually consists of three steps. These three steps are: data reduction, data display and conclusion. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appears in written-up field notes or transcriptions. Data display refers to the organized and compressed assembly of information that permits drawing the conclusion. After the first two steps, the conclusion will be reached.

After I listened to the recording, I found that my data was very complex because the discussion involved all the speech acts of suggestions, requests and refusals. Sometimes, it was difficult to tell which statement belonged to which speech acts. For example, when they were talking about which places to visit, A said, "I like to go to Paris." and B said, "I like to visit Strasbourg." and C said, "I hear Switzerland is a most beautiful place." Did B and C make a suggestion or a refusal? Another example is that, when the group coordinator said to the members, "The problem of time is settled. Now consider the cities to visit". Was s/he making a suggestion or a request? However, I had to distinguish a request from a suggestion, and a refusal from a suggestion. My thesis centres on requests and refusals. Therefore, I had to provide a set of criteria for categorizing the utterances, putting them into different types of speech acts.

3.4.1 Definitions of requests

Requests, based on Green (1975: 121), are used to get someone to do something. The maker of a request expects the hearer to satisfy his/her request, s/he is not insistent, and will not be angered by refusal. In grammar, requests can occur with 'please' in final position.

According to Green (ibid.: 123), suggestions of an action are “meant and understood in the interest of the hearer rather than in the interest of the speaker” and suggestions cannot be followed by the ‘modal + you tags’ such as ‘can/could/will/would you, etc.?’ However, they can be followed by ‘Why don’t you’ tags or the ‘Why don’t’ form reduced to ‘why not’, which is impossible for requests, orders, pleas, and so on.

Green also states that “The maker of a suggestion assumes no special authority over or subservience to the addressee and does not care as much whether the action he suggests is carried out as does the giver of an order, demand, plea, or even request” (1975: 123).

The OALD (4th edition) defines a request as an “act of asking for something in speech or writing, especially politely”. Therefore, any act or utterance that is intended to ask the hearer to do something for the benefit of the group (or of the speaker), whether for information or for him/her to do something and whether it is done explicitly or implicitly, is classified as a request in my investigation.

3.4.2 Criteria for classification of data into categories of the speech act of requests

With the above definitions in mind, I first recognized the request acts in the role-play data in accordance with the following criteria and then put them into categories, strictly following Lee-Wong’s model of classification (See 1.8).

1. All utterances that ask somebody to supply something as information/ideas are regarded as requests. For example:

- A: 想住什么样的宾馆?
What kind of hotel do you want to stay in?
B. 你什么时候合适?
What date is good for you?

2. All utterances that ask somebody to do something (asking him/her for action in terms of time or energy) in the interest of the speaker or for the benefit of the group, are considered to be requests. For example:

- A. 我们现在讨论要去的城市这个问题。
We are discussing the problem of cities to be visited now.
(The speaker means “I ask you to talk about the problem ...” or “Please talk about the problem ...”)
B. 你能不能在网上帮助订票?
Can you help book the tickets on the Internet?
(The speaker asks a member to do the action of ticket-booking.)

C. 你负责订票。

You be responsible for booking the tickets.
(The same as B.)

D. So back to the bogey question of Basel or Strasbourg”.

(The speaker asks the members to discuss which city they should visit.)

E. Book the tickets. Or: Would you mind booking the tickets ...?

(The same as B and C.)

F. I hear your brother lives in Paris.

(The speaker intends to convey the idea ‘Can we go and live with him?’)

All the above kinds of requests were comparatively easy to identify. However, it was not so easy to classify some of the data. One difficulty, for example, came from translation. Take the Chinese expressions 麻烦你 (trouble you) and 打扰了 (disturb you). Such utterances in Chinese are usually used as requests either independently, (the pragmatic meaning being ‘Please help’, ‘Do me a favour’, or ‘Can/Could you help’, as the case may be) or in combination with another request. A word-for-word translation is not very helpful because they may not be used as requests in English. Sometimes, therefore, it was very difficult to achieve pragmatic equivalence without changing the syntactic structure in my translation. In these cases, I decided to use idiomatic translation in order to reach pragmatic equivalence. Nevertheless, improper renderings cannot be completely avoided. Other examples of difficulty in identifying requests are:

(1) 听说你计算机方面比较特长是啊? (I hear you are very good at the computer skills?) The question standing alone cannot be regarded as a request. If the members are talking about ticket reservations and trying to find one who is able to do this on the computer, it could be a request. However, I decided to exclude this as a request in case it caused confusion.

(2) C1AF: 因为我们时间不多了, 不能浪费在这一个小问题上, 还有许多其它问题要讨论了。(Since we haven’t got so much time now, we cannot waste any on such a small problem. We have so many other problems to talk about.) C1CF: 嗯, 我们应该一起去, 反正是这样。(Hm. We should go together. We should, anyway.)

This last one is more difficult. One could say that C1AF asks the other members to stop talking about this unimportant problem and start to discuss other (more important) problems. Other scholars might query this by asking what specific problem A asks the members to talk about now. So they might not regard it as a request. In cases of potential doubt or controversy, like those above, the problematic utterances were

omitted from the data set. For the full descriptive categories of requests in the role-play data, see 4.3.1.1.

3.4.3 Definitions of refusals

According to Chen et al. (1995: 121), “The speech act of refusing is a responding act in which the speaker denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor”. Du (1995: 185) posits that “Disagreeing is another category of FTAs that expresses S’s negative evaluation of some aspect of H’s positive face”.

Based on the definitions I want to add that refusals as a speech act are used to reject suggestions or requests, decline offers or invitations, etc. Although, according to usage, one declines or rejects (not refuses) a suggestion; rejects (not refuses or declines) a plan or proposal; refuses, rejects, or declines an offer (opposite accepts); refuses or declines (not rejects) an invitation (opposite accepts), I use ‘refuse’ (the noun form is ‘refusal’) as a general or covering term for all the above different cases for the sake of clarity. Only occasionally do I use ‘reject’ or ‘decline’.

3.4.4 Criteria for the classification of the speech act of refusals

To classify the strategies of refusals collected in the role-play, I have fully adopted Beebe et al.’s classification method (1990: 72). For the DCT data, I have applied the same classification method with a few slight adaptations²⁰.

Criteria for Classification of Refusals in the role-play:

Following Beebe et al., I classified all the responding utterances, as direct refusals, that directly contradict suggestions, requests, offers uttered by another interactant.

Examples are as follows:

1. A: 杭州怎么样?
Shall we go to Hangzhou?
B: 我不想去杭州。
I don't want to go to Hangzhou.

2. A: 坐火车吧。
Let's go there by train.
B: 我不能。我头晕。

²⁰ In direct refusals, Beebe et al. (1990: 72) include Performative (e.g. I refuse) and Non-performative statements: 1. ‘No.’ and 2. Negative willingness/ability (e.g. I can’t. / I won’t. / I don’t think so.) I have added 3. Contrast of idea by using the direct ‘But’ with a direct refusal (e.g. Example 3), in contrast to the small-b ‘but with an adjunct of positive opinion’, which is classified as ‘indirect’. I have also added fake refusals as a subtype of indirect refusals here.

I can't. I feel dizzy on the train.

3. A: 我想住好一点的宾馆。

I would like to stay in a comparatively good hotel.

B: 可是我不想住太贵的宾馆。

But I don't want to live in a hotel that is too expensive.

It did not seem to be difficult to identify the above responses as direct refusals. However, to recognize and classify indirect refusals, I had to follow Beebe et al.'s classification more closely. For example:

4. (A, B, and C are talking about the places to visit. A suggests going to Switzerland).

B:, 那你怎么样?

... What do you think?

C: 下次去, 下次去。

Go next time. Go next time.

5. A: 坐飞机比较快啊。

The plane is faster.

B: 那飞机机票多贵啊!

How expensive the plane tickets!

6. A: 我想坐飞机呀, 又快又省时间,

I'd like to take the plane, fast and saving time ...

B: 可是我没有那么多钱啊。

But I haven't got so much money.

7. A: 下一个假期我们可以去瑞士啊。

We can go to Switzerland next holiday.

B: 又要花钱? 你单去一趟那多花多少钱啊!

Spending money again? How much more money you will spend if you go on a separate trip!

Initially, Examples 4–7 looked like direct refusals, but they should be classified as promise of future acceptance, dissuasion, reason and dissuasion, respectively, according to Beebe et al.

Examples 8–10 below have modifiers. I classified 'I think' in 8 as hedging, 'what you said is quite right' in 9 as an adjunct of positive opinion, and 'If you had something urgent to do' in 10 as condition.

8. A: 一夜 100 元。

100 yuan a night.

B: 我觉得对我来说太贵了。

I think that's too expensive to me.

9. A:, 你可以一石三鸟。
 ... You can kill 3 birds with one stone.
 B: 你说得挺对, 可是.....
What you said is quite right, but ...

10. A: 飞机快啊。
 The plane is fast.
 B: 如果有急事, 可以坐飞机,
If you had something urgent to do, you could take the plane.

Joking, irony/sarcasm and hedging such as I don't know/I'm not sure/etc. belong to 'avoidance', according Beebe et al., which presented no difficulty to identify. For example:

11. A: 我们最好多转几个地方。
 We'd better go to a few more places on this trip.
 B: 最好把南方全转过来 - 开玩笑。
Better go to all the places in the south of China - This is joking.

12. A: 有的宾馆 20 镑住三个人。
 Some hotels charge 20 pounds for three people.
 B: (笑) 好便宜啊!
(Laughing) How cheap!

13. A: 这个城市非常具有德国法国特色的 我很喜欢。
 This city is very characteristic of Germany and France. ... I like it very much.
 B: 我就是没听说过这个城市, 所以,
I have never heard of this city. So, ...

Fake refusal in Chinese refers to the refusal of offers, invitations, or presents for politeness. You refuse first and then wait for the other person to insist. There is only one occurrence in Chinese Group 3, which is easy to recognize. C3AF and C3BF suggest that they should buy something as a gift for C3CF's brother because they plan to stay in his home. Even C3CF refuses their offer for her brother three times. For the full categories of strategies of refusals in the role-play, see 5.1.

Criteria for Classification of Refusals in the DCTs:

To classify the strategies of refusals collected in the DCTs, I have adapted Beebe et al.'s classification (1990: 72) of direct, indirect and adjuncts to refusals into direct and fake refusals for the acceptance of dinner invitation in the DCT (Question No. 7), where the invitees are expected to accept the invitation, but many of them choose the fake

Perhaps, it would help us to understand better how the participants perceived what was going on if we look at some of the most important reasons they provided for not thinking of the speech acts as face-threatening. Some of them said, 为了别人, 也为了自己。(It's for others, but also for myself.) Others said, 同学朋友间不应该这样容易伤面子。(Face among friends or classmates shouldn't be so easily threatened). Similarly, the family group commented, 一家人没有伤面子的问题。(Family members haven't got a problem like face-threats). There were also people who observed, 这是大家一起讨论, 你说你的意见, 别人说别人的意见, 有分歧很自然。(This is a group discussion. You give your idea and other people give their ideas. It's natural to have disagreements in discussion). Some of the subjects who were supposed to be good at computer skills said, 我会计算机技术, 要我订票不应该有问题。(If I know computer skills, there shouldn't be any problem in asking me to book tickets). There were a few of them who just said 不伤面子 (no face-threats) and nothing more. Clearly, relationships, common goals and mutual benefits play an important part in their decisions.

Similarly, 30 English subjects were asked to comment on 6 speech acts from the five original English transcriptions in the role-play. These subjects were all from an educational or institutional background, some being teachers or lecturers and others being students. Among them there were 15 males and 15 females, 10 of them being over 40 years old; 4 of them in their 30's and 16 of them under 30 years old. Again, questions 1 to 3 were requests and questions 4 to 6 were refusals. There was no fake refusal in the original English transcriptions. Hence there were no questions about it in the questionnaire. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 3-4 Face effects of requests and refusals in English

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Face-threatening	0	0	5	0	0	3
Not face-threatening	30	30	25	30	30	27
Percentage (not face-threatening)	100%	100%	83.33%	100%	100%	90%

As the results in Table 3-4 demonstrate, an average 95.56% (172/180) of the responses by the subjects in the English groups did not regard the speech acts of requests and refusals in the questionnaire as face-threatening. Only a few of them did not feel comfortable with just Questions 3 and 6. The reasons those few gave for regarding them as face-threatening are listed below:

Question 3:

1. Don't like asking.
2. May not want to ask brother to help out.
3. Might own a favour to my brother.
4. This could be embarrassing because I feel like I don't have a choice – I am being pressured into agreeing.
5. I would feel pressured to ask my brother who may feel pressured to say 'yes'.

Question 6:

1. Only a little. You are asking a favour, and speaker C to go out on a limb.
2. Yes, I would feel I am imposing without understanding the situation.
3. I might feel a little cheeky/awkward asking to stay with somebody. Don't know.

The results in both the Chinese and the English investigations reveal great similarities between the two languages – Seldom did the subjects (none of the Chinese and few of the English) feel any face-threatening effects in the role-plays. This research also demonstrates differences between the two languages – English subjects, though comparatively few, were sensitive to imposition (face effects) while Chinese subjects did not seem to experience this problem in the role-plays.

3.5 Relative Power and Social Distance

3.5.1 Relative power

Many linguists have been interested in and investigated relative power. Researchers who have influenced our understanding in research into power are French, Jr. and Raven (1959), Lukes (1974), Brown & Levinson (1987), Clegg (1989, 1993), Wartenberg (1990), Watts (1991), Lee-Wong (2000) and Locher (2004), to mention a few.

According to French, Jr. and Raven (1959: 152), "The strength of power of O/P in some system *a* is defined as the maximum potential ability of O (Social agent – another person, a role, a norm, or a group etc.) to influence P (Person) in *a*". By this definition, "power is potential influence".

They have not only given the above definition of power but also identified five bases of O's power over P as:

- 1) Reward power: O is perceived to have the ability to mediate rewards for P.
- 2) Coercive power: O is perceived to have the ability to mediate punishments for P.

- 3) Legitimate power: O is considered to have a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for P.
- 4) Referent power: based on P's identification with O.
- 5) Expert power: O is seen to have some special knowledge or expertness.

(ibid.: 155)

Watts (2003: 213) defines his 1991 concepts of power as follows:

An individual A possesses power if s/he has the freedom of action to achieve the goals s/he has set her/himself, regardless of whether or not this involves the potential to impose A's will on others to carry out actions that are in A's interests (1991: 60).

A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's initially perceived interests, regardless of whether B later comes to accept the desirability of A's actions (1991: 62).

In both definitions above, Watts uses the notion of interests as an important element. If A has the freedom of action to realize his/her goals, A has power over B. A exercises power over B whether B agrees or accepts whether the action is beneficial to B or not.

Brown & Levinson (1987: 77) state that power "is an asymmetric social dimension of relative power." It is "the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation". They continue by saying that "As S's power over H increases, the weightiness of the FTA diminishes" (1987: 78). Apart from the definition of power, Brown & Levinson have also worked out their well-known equation with which to calculate the seriousness of their FTAs:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

This weightiness (W_x) will determine the appropriate type of strategy to be used (1987: 76) (See 1.4). When they examine the variable power (P), Brown & Levinson assume that distance (D) and ranking (R) are constant and have small values. They give the following examples:

- A. Excuse me sir, would it be all right if I smoke?
- B. Mind if I smoke?

(Brown & Levinson 1987: 80)

In these examples, P is the only variable and changes from A to B. This change lessens W_x . Brown & Levinson believe that S regards the FTA in A above as much more serious than that in B. Here the only variable is R. Just because R_x is considered to be higher in A and lower in B, the speech act appropriate to a high W_x and a low one is

used in A and B, respectively. Similarly, with P and R held constant, D can also be supposed to be the only variable that changes in the following requests.

C. Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?

D. Got the time, mate?

(Brown & Levinson 1987: 80)

Brown & Levinson think that C would be used where S and H were distant (for example, strangers) and D where S and H were close. Suppose, according to Brown & Levinson, D is great, P is small and P and D are constant. Let us examine the following utterances:

E: Look, I'm terribly sorry to bother you but would there be any chance of your lending me just enough money to get a railway ticket to get home? I must have dropped my purse and I just don't know what to do.

F: Hey, got change for a quarter?

(Brown & Levinson 1987: 81)

Brown & Levinson believe that S regards the FTA in E above as much more serious than that in F. Here the only variable is R. Just because R_x is considered to be higher in E and lower in F, the speech act appropriate to a high W_x and a low one is used in E and F, respectively.

Brown & Levinson claim that when S's power over H increases, the weightiness of the FTA decreases, and one will choose off-record strategies when the FTA is not so serious but the relative distance between S and H and H's power over S are great, and also when H is S's intimate equal but the FTA is serious (ibid.: 78).

What has been said above is about P, D, and R as independent variables. However, these social factors are usually context-dependent. That is why there have been a few criticisms about Brown & Levinson's theory of the social variables. One of these is that the distance variable is not a dependable way of characterizing the relationship between S and H (Watts 2003: 96). Brown & Levinson themselves give the example of distance in which two American strangers treating each other with great indirectness and formality in New York streets are likely to embrace each other with all the excesses of positive politeness in the Hindu Kush (ibid: 78). That is to say, high D values would be given to these American strangers in the U.S., while low D values assigned to the same American strangers elsewhere.

Another criticism for Brown and Levinson's social variables is that their $W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$ is too simplistic (Fraser 1990: 235). For factors influencing

the weightiness of the FTA are more complicated. Situational factors can constitute part of the values of P, D, and R, and thus the values calculated apply to S and H merely in a particular context and for a particular FTA (Brown & Levinson 1987: 79). The power of a shop owner, for instance, is usually regarded as high but when s/he goes bankrupt and owes several months of salaries to his/her former employees and is now surrounded by the latter who demand the immediate payment of their salaries, then one can only say that the power of the employees is high.

Despite the criticisms, Brown & Levinson's social factors P and D can be used for analysis because they are not "intended as sociologists' ratings of actual power, distance" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 74), but as indications of "the reasons for choosing one strategy rather than another" (Watts 2003: 96).

Based on past research, Locher (2004: 206) sums up by making a checklist of the nature and the exercise of power as a guideline for her analysis of *The Argument*, such as:

- Power is (often) expressed through language;
- Power cannot be explained without contextualization;
- Freedom of action is needed to exercise power;
- The exercise of power involves a latent conflict and clash of interests, etc.

There are several more researchers who have paid attention to the importance of power in their study of speech acts. For example, Lee-Wong (2000: 66) finds that in Chinese, power is mainly expressed through "seniority, i.e. status (social ranking) and age." The other criterion of power in Chinese politeness, she finds, is "authority, i.e. those empowered by authority to act versus those compelled by authority to comply" (ibid.: 66). Skewis (2003: 161) studies mitigated directness in 18th century Chinese through the dialogues from the novel *Hong Lou Meng* and finds that the "choice of strategy is arrived at after assessment of the social distance between the interlocutors, the relative power of the addressee and the social or interpersonal cost of the intended act".

In accordance with the above definitions and descriptions from different scholars, if A has power over B, the relationship between them is unequal. Then A can influence B's action or impose his/her will on B to carry out A's plan of actions. This is generally true of both Chinese and English. However, the indicators of power in Chinese and English may not be always the same. For example, the Chinese stress two things in the

relative relationship between participants. One is seniority: status and age; the other is authority. The English may not necessarily emphasize those two elements. I decided not to analyze power explicitly in the role-play data for three reasons:

Firstly, most of the groups consist of classmates, friends or friends' friends, and they can be considered to be roughly equal. There is a family in the Chinese and English groups.

Secondly, I studied power relations between interlocutors in the role-play in the initial stages of analysis, but found no obvious effects on the choice of strategies from power or distance.

Thirdly, there were project constraints: it was beyond the scope of this thesis to study power in requests and refusals in the two languages in addition to other elements studied here.

I divided the power relationship in my DCT data in both Chinese and English into the following three categories:

- Low P: H has power over S, represented with the sign -. For example, S is an employee and H is her/his boss.
- Equal P: S and H are social equals. Neither has power over the other. It is represented with =. For example, S and H are classmates or colleagues.
- High P: S has power over H, represented with +. For example, S is a boss and H is his/her employee.

3.5.2 Social distance

What is social distance? Brown & Levinson list the social distance (D) of S and H (a symmetric relation) (1987: 74) as one of the most important factors involved in the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA. They state that distance "is a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act" (1987: 76). (For more details, see 3.5.1).

In studying participant relations, Spencer-Oatey (2000: 34) lists six important components (from other researchers) that influence the distance between interlocutors.

- (1) Social similarity/difference
- (2) Frequency of contact
- (3) Length of acquaintance
- (4) Familiarity, or how well people know each other
- (5) Sense of like-mindedness
- (6) Positive/negative affect

These findings are significant in that they are a warning against the stereotyped or intuitive idea of what a close or distant relationship is. We may classify a stranger as distant from us and a friend from childhood as close. However, we may work with a person for many years but dislike him/her and so regard them as distant from us (ibid.: 32). Therefore, in classifying relations, one should exercise caution.

With regard to the relationship between distance and power, Spencer-Oatey (2000: 33) points out that some scholars such as Thomas (1995) think that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between power and distance because in many cultures the two variables co-occur, but “this is not necessarily the case in all cultures”. Spencer-Oatey (ibid.: 33) finds in her study of tutor-postgraduate student relations that:

For the British respondents, the greater the degree of power difference perceived between tutors and postgraduate students, the greater the degree of distance perceived, and vice versa. For the Chinese respondents, on the other hand, there was no link between the two.

Based on the above research, I have divided social distance in my DCTs into the following three types:

- Distant: which is used to describe the social relationship between two strangers. It is represented with the sign +.
- Casual: which is used to talk about the social relationship between acquaintances. It is represented with \pm .
- Close: which is used to discuss the social relationship between intimate friends and relatives or family members. It is represented with -.

3.5.3 Description of the effects of power and distance

This is problematic because there are many other variables that influence people’s interactions in situations such as occupation, ethnic identity, personal style or personality and, of course, culture. Even when we talk about the effects of power and distance only, we are rather unlikely to determine which factor plays a bigger role in influencing the on-going communication between participants. Therefore, we are arbitrary or subjective, to a greater or lesser extent, when we have to describe the effects of the factors of power and distance that are usually regarded as most important in research. However, such a description sometimes does give us an understanding of the choices of strategies, for example, why one strategy is used instead of another.

Table 3–5 A description of the settings along with the dimensions of power and distance in the DCTs

Relation	Situation	Distance	Power
Boss	<i>Request/Refusal</i>	+	+
Relative	<i>ibid.</i>	-	=
Friend	<i>ibid.</i>	-	=
Acquaintance	<i>ibid.</i>	±	=

S is supposed to make requests or refusals to H – boss, close relative, best friend or acquaintance. (Request – borrowing money in a shop; refusal – invitation in a home)

Summary

In this chapter, I have described the research procedures, including the research approach where the merits and demerits of different methods are explained. Rationales for the DCTs and the role-play are also given in which the purposes and designs of the investigation are accounted for. Then the selection of the subjects and the data collection are discussed. Definitions and criteria for classification of requests and refusals have been outlined and face effects with regard to requests and refusals in the role-play investigated. Finally relative power and social distance are discussed.

CHAPTER IV: REQUESTS

In this chapter, I will look at the role-play data in terms of the syntactical categorization of requests (4.1) and analyze the data syntactically (4.2). Then the pragmatic analysis of the data (4.3). Next, the DCT data will be investigated and analyzed (4.4). Finally I will investigate the power relations in requests in the DCTs (4.5).

Introduction

Although syntactic analysis is not part of pragmatic analysis, my purpose is to examine the speech act of requests in my investigation in a larger scope. In so doing, the pragmatic analysis will have a broader view, or a wider foundation. We may see similarities and differences between Chinese and English requests on a larger scale and therefore more clearly.

For example, sentences may be divided into four major syntactic clauses in English: the imperative (commands), the interrogative (questions), the declarative (statements) and the exclamatory (exclamations) (Quirk et al. 1972: 385-386). Similarly, these four major syntactic types are found in Chinese too. There are differences in the sub-types though. For instance, the *ba*-sentence type cannot find its counterpart in English (See 1.8). Functionally, the four syntactic structures are different. For instance, the imperatives are mainly used to instruct somebody to do something. The interrogatives are mainly used to express lack of information about something and request the listener to supply this information verbally. The declaratives are primarily used to convey information. The exclamatories are usually used to express the speaker's own feelings.

However, the functions of these four types of syntactic structures often overlap (Quirk et al. 1972: 387). Put simply, the four major syntactical types may all be used to express requests or refusals in proper situations. For this reason, I have decided to begin with the syntactical analysis to provide a broader view for the pragmatic analysis of my data in this Chapter.

4.1 Syntactical Categorization of Requests

The English categorization of the four main syntactic types in Table 4-1 is based on Quirk et al. (1972: 385-386) and the sub-types are based on my summary of Quirk et al. and my data. The Chinese categorization of the four main syntactic types in Table 4-2 is based on Quirk et al. and Xu's «英汉语比较语法» *Comparison between English*

and *Chinese Grammar* (1985: 151-171). Xu (1985: 153) says that the simple sentence types are basically the same in English and Chinese. I have also referred to Liu, Y. H. et al. (1983), Sun (1987, 1989), and Liu, Y. L. et al. (1987). Where similar types have different names in Chinese, I have adapted them according to Quirk et al. so that there will be a common basis for comparison. Take the imperative (commands) as example. In Chinese, it is called the subjectless sentence, but here I term it 'imperative' to facilitate comparison. Where there is a difference in subtypes between the two languages, I put the different subtype in the table concerned. For example, I have listed the *ba*-sentence (‘把’字句) which has no corresponding subtype in English in the Chinese categorization in Table 4-2 to show the difference between them (See 1.8).

Table 4-1 Categories of requests in English

I. The imperative type

1. V + Object (please)
2. Excuse me, but ...

II. The interrogative type

Mod + S (you) + V ... (please)

1. Will/Would/Can/Could you do something, (please)?
2. Would you mind doing something (please)?
3. You will do something, won't you?
4. May I do something?

III. The declarative type

1. I/We + V + you + to do something

I / We hope (that) you will do something

I wonder/don't know whether/if

- 1) I want you to close the door.
- 2) I hope you will close the door.
- 3) I wonder if you could/would pass me the salt.
- 4) I don't know whether you could/would close the door.

2. S + V + Object / Predicative

- 1) Your task is to book the tickets.
- 2) This task I have assigned to you.

IV. The exclamatory type.

1. How cold it is in here! (A request: Close the door, please.)
2. What a long time we have been waiting! (A request: Let me in, quick.)

Table 4-2 Categories of requests in Chinese

I. The imperative type

1. (主)+ 动+ 宾 - (S) + V + Object
2. ‘把’字结构 - *ba* + Object + V
3. 劳驾 - *Láojià* (Excuse me) +

II. The interrogative type

1. 你 / 您 (you) + 能 (不能) (can or cannot) / 愿意(will) / 可以 (may) / + V?
2. 请 (please) + (你 / 您) + V + 行吗 (will you)?
3. 你 / 您 + V + (question tag) 好吗 (will / can you)?
4. (我)可以 + V + 吗 / 我 + V + 可以吗? (May I+ V)

III. The declarative type (The modal verb and the verb have no past forms.)

1. 我 + V1 + 你 / 您 + V2
(我)不知道+你/您 + 是否+ V

(1) 我要你关门。 I want you to close the door.

(2) (我)希望你关上门。 I hope you will close the door.

(3) (我)不知道你能不能把盐拿过来。

I wonder if you could/would pass me the salt.

2. S + V + Object

(1) 你订票。 You book the tickets.

(2) 这个任务我就交给你啦。 This task I have assigned to you.

(3) 我骑你的车。 I am riding your bike.

(Infrequently used as a request in English)

IV. The exclamatory type

1. 这里多冷! (A request: 请关门。)

How cold it is in here! (Close the door, please.)

2. 我们等了多长时间啦! (A request: 快让我们进来吧。)

What a long time we have been waiting! (Let me in, quick.)

4.2 Syntactical Analysis of Data for Requests

After examining the syntactical data about requests, I found that all of the above syntactical structures, except the exclamatory type (main type) and the Chinese *ba*-sentence (subtype of the imperative), have been used in both the Chinese groups and the English ones.

In the role-play data, of 52 Chinese requests, there are 19 imperatives, accounting for 36.5% of the total, compared with the English 6 out of 61, accounting for only 9.8%. There are 21 occurrences of interrogatives out of the 52 Chinese request acts, accounting for 40.4% of the total, as compared with 46 out of 61, accounting for 75.4% in the English groups. Then there are 12 declaratives as requests that have been found out of a total 52 Chinese request acts, accounting for 23.1%, as compared with the English 9 out of 61, accounting for 14.8% of the total. The occurrence frequency of exclamatories is 0 in both Chinese and English. This is the general distribution of the four major syntactical structures used as requests.

I have made some comparisons and found some similarities – that in both languages, interrogatives are used the most; declaratives, the least; and imperatives, in between.

Quirk et al. (1972: 402) state that imperatives “are apt to sound abrupt” unless toned down by markers of politeness such as ‘please’. ‘Please eat up your dinner. / Shut the door, please.’ “Even this only achieves a minimum degree of ceremony; a more tactful form of request can only be arrived at if one changes the command into a question or a statement.” ‘Will you shut the door, please? / I wonder if you would kindly shut the door / whether you would mind shutting the door.’ etc.

Through the quotes from Quirk et al., we understand that imperatives without a politeness marker are usually regarded as abrupt in English. Interrogatives are generally more polite than imperatives. Such a view would explain why there is such a small percentage (9.8%) of the imperative structures found in the English groups.

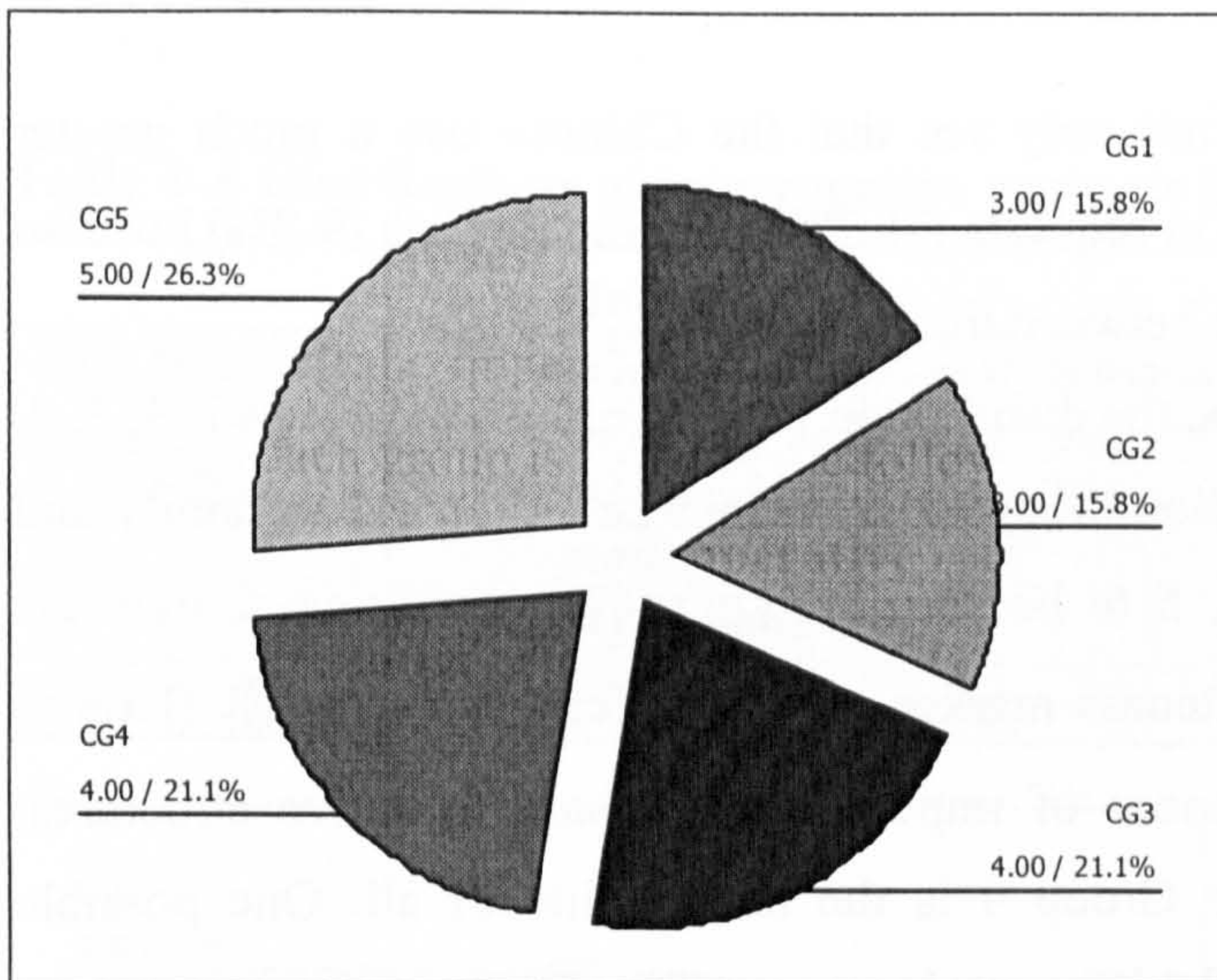
I have also found some differences between the two languages – the English adopt many more interrogatives than the Chinese. The Chinese make use of more imperatives and declaratives than the English. From this comparison, it seems that the Chinese are more direct than the English, syntactically speaking. However, this needs a more detailed analysis. Now, I will examine the distribution of the syntactical structures as requests in greater detail in the following.

4.2.1 The imperatives

Of the 19 the imperative sentences as requests in the five Chinese groups, the raw number of each group is listed in the following table.

Table 4–3 Distributions of imperative requests in Chinese groups 1 to 5

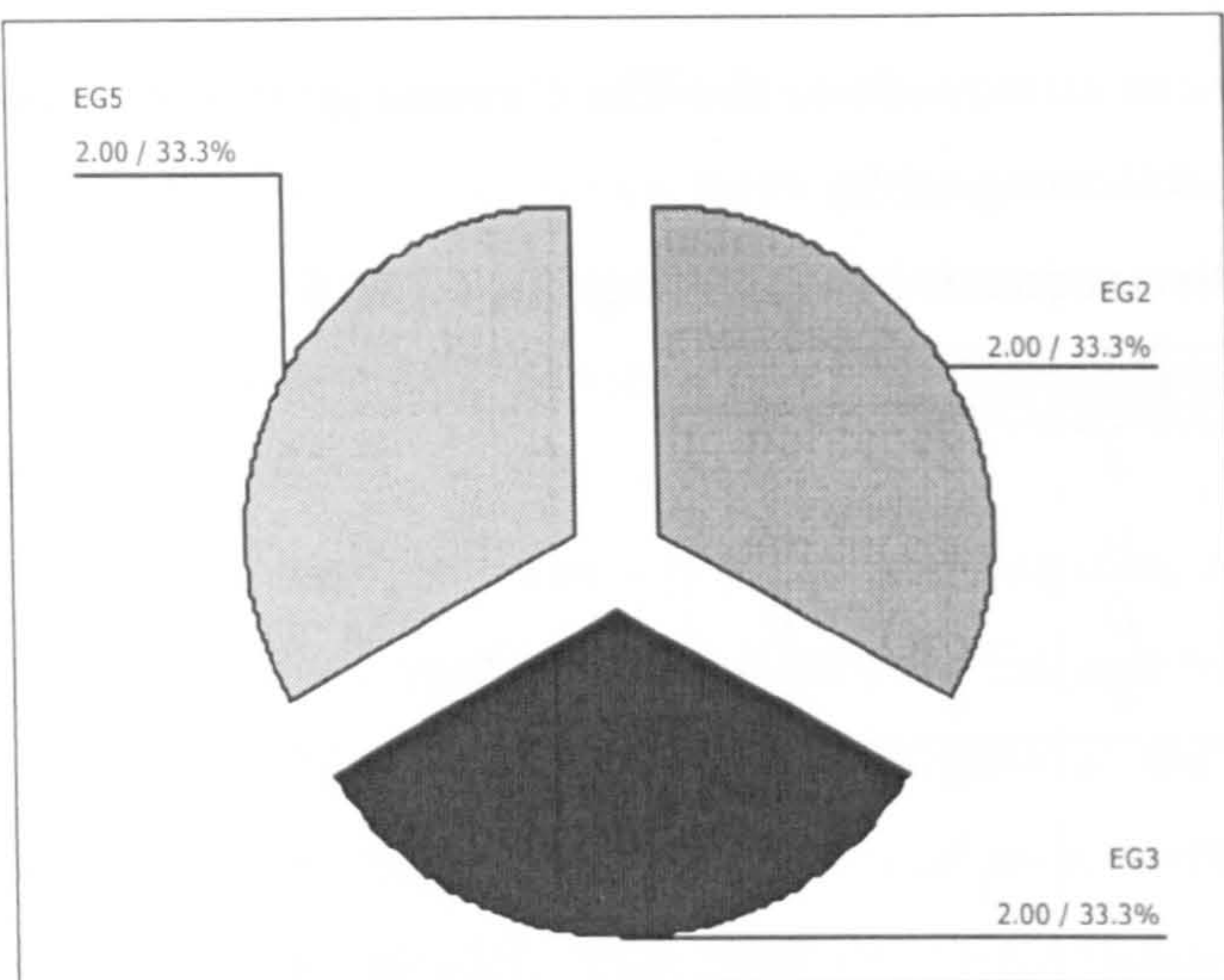
Chinese Imperatives	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5
V + Object	3	3	4	2	5
请 Please (S) + V	0	0	0	1	0
麻烦你/劳驾 Excuse	0	0	0	1	0
Total	3	3	4	4	5



In the five English groups, however, I find only 6 occurrences of the imperatives altogether, compared with 19 in Chinese. Compare the following table with Table 4–3 above.

Table 4–4 Distributions of imperative requests in English groups 1 to 5

English Imperatives	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5
V + Object	0	2	2	0	2
Please (S) + V	0	0	0	0	0
Excuse me	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	2	0	2



From the above figures, we not only see that the Chinese use a much greater percentage of imperative structures in requests (35.2%) than the English (9.8%) but also find that the distribution is different between the two.

For the 19 Chinese imperatives, the distribution pattern in the five groups is 3, 3, 4, 4 and 5, respectively. The distribution is quite even. Chinese Group 5 is a family and they use a little more imperatives, 5 to be specific. Only Chinese Group 2 uses the imperative structures with the politeness marker *qǐng* 请 (please) or 麻烦你 (Excuse me ...). All the other 17 occurrences of imperatives are bare infinitive structures. Therefore, it appears that Chinese Group 4 is the most polite of all. One possible explanation is that the members of this group have stayed in England for many years and have probably been influenced by British culture. This will be discussed further in 4.3 (strategy analysis).

In comparison, there are only 6 occurrences of the imperatives out of 61 requests in English. The distribution pattern for the five English groups is 0, 2, 2, 0, and 2. So no imperative requests are found in English Group 1 (classmates for ten weeks) and English Group 4 (known each other: A and B for six months; A and C for six months; B and C, not known before), compared with 3 occurrences for Chinese Group 1 (AB for ten years; AC, three months; BC, not known before) and 4 occurrences for Chinese Group 4 (AB for six years; BC for ten years; AC for ten years, known each other before). Only 2 are used in English Group 5, which is a family.

For English Groups 2 and 3, there are 2 occurrences of imperative requests each (the subjects not having known each other before, except A and C in English Group 3 for six months), but 4 and 4 occurrences for Chinese Groups 3 and 4 (again subjects not known to each other).

There are 2 occurrences of imperative requests in the English family and 5 in the Chinese family.

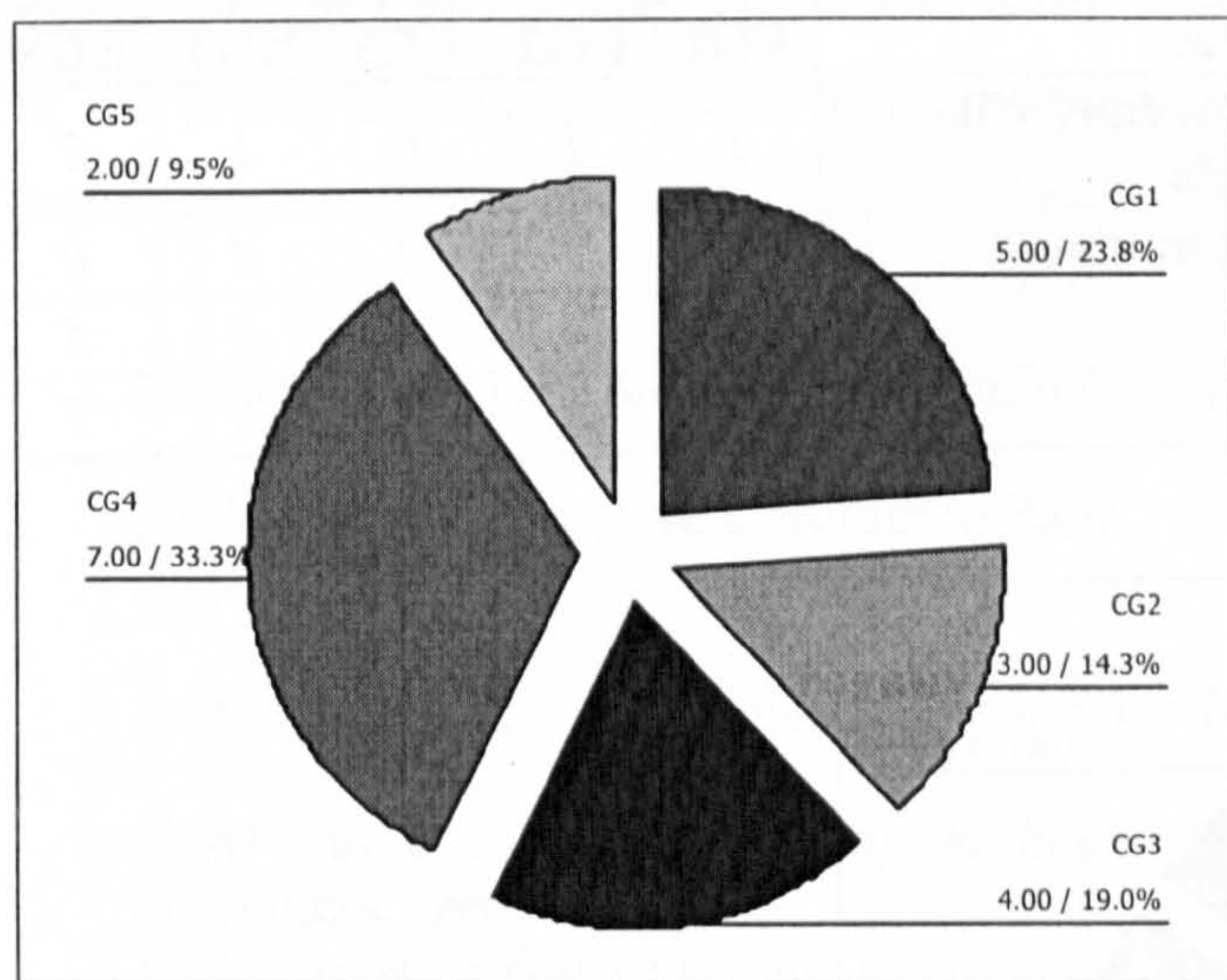
The above comparisons show that the Chinese tend to use more imperatives in requests than the English. Does this indicate that the former are more direct than the latter? This will be discussed further in 4.3.2.1.

4.2.2 The interrogatives

According to the above quotation from Quirk et al. (4.2), the interrogative sentence structure may also be used to express requests in English. This is generally true in Chinese too. There are 21 interrogatives in the Chinese role-play, and the distribution is in the following table.

Table 4-5 Distributions of interrogative requests in Chinese groups 1 to 5

Chinese Interrogatives	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5
能不能 / 行吗 / 可以 (General question with modals of can / will / may / etc.)	2	2	2	2	0
一般问句无情态词 (General questions without modals)	1	0	0	1	0
Wh-Questions	2	1	2	4	2
Total	5	3	4	7	2



As the table above shows, there are interrogatives (questions) with *néngbùnéng/xíng ma/kěyǐ ma* 能不能/行吗/可以吗 (can/will/may), and those which do not use these words.

In Chinese, the words *néngbùnéng / xíngma / kěyǐ ma*, though they have no past forms as in English, are often used to express requests. For example, when one needs

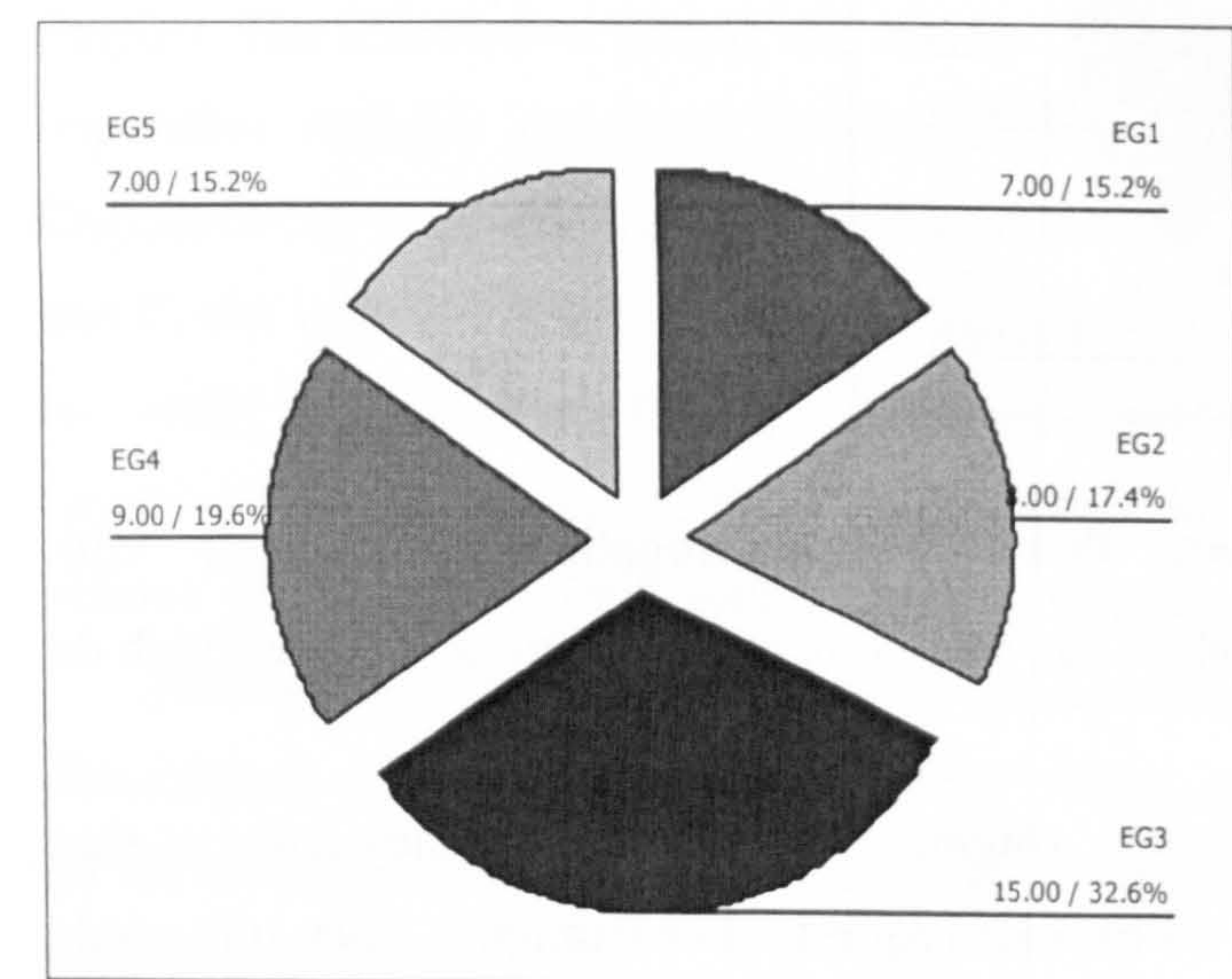
one of the members of the group to help reserve a room in a hotel, s/he usually says, 你能不能帮助订旅馆? 'Can you help to reserve the hotel?' The Chinese *néng/bùnéng* 能/不能 corresponds to the two English expressions: 'can (not)' and 'be (un)able to' in function, meaning and use (See 2.8.2). This will be discussed further in 4.3.

However, if you want the other members of the group to provide information only, which does not cost any of his/her energy or time, you do not have to use these forms. Or when the situation in which you are talking with other people is not formal, you can use question forms without such modal verbs. You can even use imperatives.

The questions without such words as *néngbùnéng/ xíngma/ kěyǐ ma* etc. and the Wh-questions are found to be direct ones in my data. They want more information rather than action from the hearer. For instance, 你想去哪个城市? 'Which city do you want to go to?' is more like a request for information. The speaker wants to ask the hearer which city s/he would like to suggest. Usually there is not very much danger of sounding impolite even if the speaker uses very direct forms of speech. This is also true with the data in English, where they use quite some direct interrogatives asking for information.

Table 4-6 Distributions of interrogative requests in English groups 1 to 5

English Interrogatives	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5
General question with modals of can / will / could / would you / etc	1	1	0	1	2
General questions without modals	1	3	4	4	0
Wh-Questions	5	4	11	4	5
Total	7	8	15	9	7



The English data in Table 4–6 shows a very high frequency of interrogatives: 46 cases are found in the total of 61 requests in the five English groups, accounting for 75.4% of the total.

We see that the Chinese have used interrogatives much less than the English. Therefore, at this stage, it seems that the Chinese may be more direct than the English in making requests, from the point of view of syntactical analysis. However, most of the sentence structures in which the Chinese use interrogatives are asking the hearers to do something as a service for the group, such as asking them to book the hotel rooms or train tickets, and are more indirect. The act that is requested will take some energy and time for the hearers to finish the tasks. Therefore, the polite verb forms of *néngbùnéng* 能不能 (can you or not) and *kěbùkě* 可不可以 (may I or not) are used in quite a number of questions (See Table 4–5).

The English question forms for requesting H to do something in the role-play are a little more varied. They depend on whether S wants to be more indirect or not. In the following list of interrogatives, for example, E3AF and E4AM have used direct questions for requests – without employing modal auxiliaries such as ‘would’, ‘could’, etc. First, they probably think they have the right to make the request that way as the group coordinator. Second, E4AM is sharing work between himself and his addressee. E3AF speaks to E3BF also as the coordinator and at first directs her request to the group as a whole (line 6) and later on she asks E3BF directly whether the latter wants to look at the prices but she has prepared the addressee with “You’ve got the Internet and everything”.

E1AM (to B): *OK, Sonia, would you mind, sort of, booking tickets and hotels for us?*

E1CM (to A & B): *(I’ve a brother in Paris.) How would you feel about staying with him?*

E4AM (to B): *Are you going to look into hotels when I’m going to look into trains?*

E3AF (to B): *So who’s going to book this? (I mean you’re pretty good at computers, aren’t you?)*

E3AF (to B): *(You’ve got the Internet and everything.) Do you want to look at the prices between the trains and the ferry?*

When Chinese and English ask for information, both tend to use the direct forms of interrogatives. For example, some of them are asking how they would like to travel, by train or by air. Or what kind of hotels they would like to stay in. Or which cities they prefer to visit. The purpose of such requests is to ask the hearer(s) to contribute some idea to a final decision for a trip together. All the hearers have to do is to offer their idea

as an answer. It does not take much effort on the part of the hearers. In this case, interrogative forms without those modal verbs have been used and the result is that fewer interrogative forms with the words *néngbùnéng* and *kěbùkě* in Chinese and *would*, *could*, or *may*, etc. in English are found in the data. For example:

Chinese groups:

C2AM (to B & C): 在哪个时间段比较好呢?

When is the best time for the trip?

C2AM (to B & C): 咱们具体规划到哪个城市? *Which city shall we visit?*

C5AF (to B & C): 那你宾馆怎么住? *What kind of hotel do you want to stay in?*

C3AF (to C): 你哥喜欢什么? 咱们带点东西去。

What does your brother like? Let's take something to him.

English groups:

E1CM (to A & B): *How many days does that leave us with?*

E4AM (to B & C): *What other cities grab your fancy?*

E3AF (to B & C): *What kind of hotels do you want to look at?*

E3AF (to C): *What does he [your brother] like?*

What I want to demonstrate in this section is that:

(1) when S asks H to do something, the interrogative forms are more involved, either with modal auxiliary verbs or with additional explanations. However, when S asks H for information only, the interrogatives usually appear in comparatively simple forms.

(2) The English groups seem to use more interrogatives than the Chinese groups. This does not necessarily mean that the English are more indirect than the Chinese. One must look at the contents of the specific interrogatives to decide the matter: Are they asking for information or action? Further discussion is available in 4.3.

4.2.3 The declaratives

Declarative sentences can also be used for requests. In my Chinese data, there are 12 declaratives as requests that have been found out of a total 52 request acts, accounting for 23.1%.

In the Chinese language, declaratives are one of the main categories used for requests. For example, one can say 我骑你的车。(I'll ride your bike.) (Lee-Wong, 2000: 76). As a request, there would not be any problem in this choice if they are used

between friends or relatives. I found uses of declaratives in all the Chinese groups. For example, in Chinese Group 4, there is 我觉得你有两个任务。一是..... 二是 (I think you have two tasks: One is ..., and the other is ...). The speaker wants the hearer to do two things. Here S didn't ask H to do them. Instead, he used a declarative to express his request. Alternatively, the declarative type of structure can also be used to give hints, thus enabling the speaker to sound less abrupt or more indirect. For example, when Chinese Group 4 are talking about where to stay when they get to Paris, a member says, 听说你哥哥住在巴黎。 (I hear your brother lives in Paris.) Here the speaker implies his request for the hearer to help by asking whether they could go and stay with his brother, instead of expressing the request directly. Therefore, we can see that the declarative sentences are capable of several functions in Chinese: as direct requests, hints of requests; and as statements reporting facts, and so on. They are used quite frequently in requests in my data.

Table 4-7 Frequencies of declaratives as requests in Chinese groups 1 to 5

Chinese Declaratives	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5
S + V (+ Object)	4	3	1	1	3
Total	4	3	1	1	3

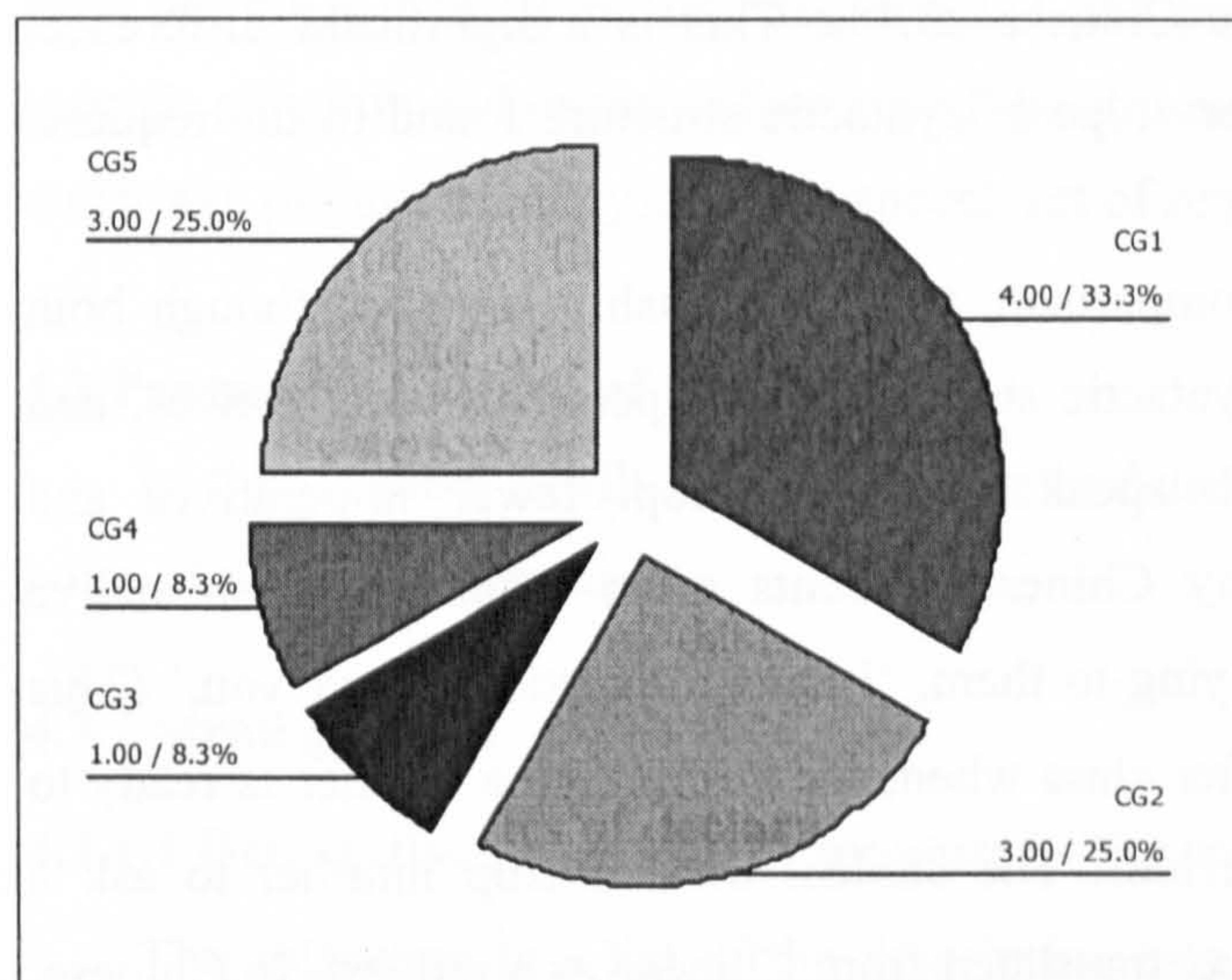
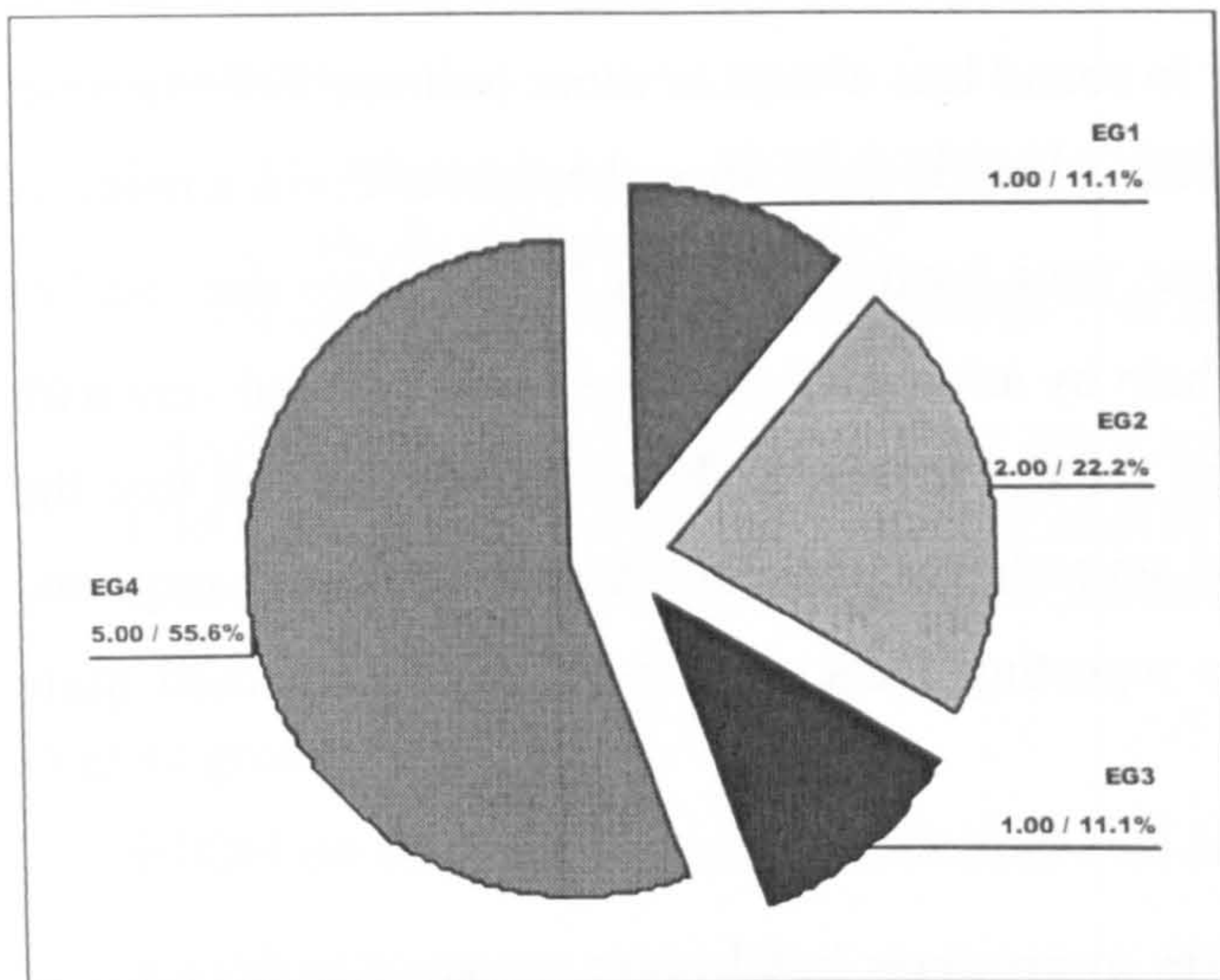


Table 4-8 Frequencies of declaratives as requests in English groups 1 to 5

English Declaratives	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5
S + V (+ Object)	1	2	1	5	0



From Table 4-8, we see that in English there are significantly fewer occurrences of declaratives as requests than in Chinese. Altogether, there are only 9 occurrences of this syntactic pattern out of the total 61 request acts in the five English groups, accounting for just 14.8%, compared with the Chinese 23.1%. This is a significant difference. Additionally, there is no exclamatory type of syntactic structure found in the requests either in Chinese or in English.

From the above syntactical comparison, we can probably say that, though both Chinese and English use all the syntactic structures of imperatives, declaratives, and interrogatives in requests, English speakers clearly adopt fewer imperatives and declaratives. That is probably why Chinese students often embarrass their native speaking teachers of English by saying to them, 'I have a question to ask you.' (This usually happens not in class but after class when, for example, the teacher is ready to leave the classroom or on the corridor. The student tries to stop him/her to ask a question.) It is a declarative sentence, translated from Chinese as a request. In Chinese, it is perfectly correct, but in English it can sound impolite, especially when an inappropriate intonation is used. The question forms like 'May/Can I ask you a question?' might be more appropriate in English.

However, that does not mean that declaratives as used to express requests are always problematic in English. My data only points to the fact that the English use fewer declaratives as requests than the Chinese do. However, when they do use this

syntactical structure as a request in proper situations, there is not much difference between Chinese and English. Look at the pairs for comparison in the following:

1. E1AM (to B and C): We'll discuss something else. We have to think about ... – (Requesting them to talk about it.)

C1AF (to B and C): 下一个问题是我们住什么宾馆。(The next problem is what kind of hotels we are going to stay in.) – (Requesting them to discuss it.)

2. E2BM: (to C): You'll look into that. – (A request for C to investigate the matter.)

C5AF (to B): 你的任务就是联系舅爷爷。 *Your task is to contact my Grandpa.* (Requesting B to do it.)

In this section, I have analyzed my data of requests in terms of syntactic forms. As we have just seen, all the types of sentence structures (imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives) are used to express requests both in the Chinese and English data sets. My data seems to show that Chinese tend to use more imperatives as requests than English. Also, the declaratives as direct requests are used more often in Chinese than in English. The English tend to use more interrogatives.

However, the use of sentence structures can not be separated from the context in which they occur. Words, phrases and sentences are highly contextualized. Without the proper context, one cannot decide whether a sentence structure is appropriate or not, or even tell what it really means. So, in 4.3, I will put the data I have collected into the specific situation and examine the uses of the structures in interactions. Therefore, I will undertake pragmatic analysis of the speech act of requests in the next section.

4.3 Pragmatic Analysis of Requests

In this section, I will examine the same data collected in the role-play from the point of view of pragmatics.

4.3.1 Strategy types

4.3.1.1 Descriptive categories of requests in the role-play data

The following is a list of the descriptive categories of the main request strategy types.

M1 (Impositives) in Chinese

1. Imperatives, e.g. 快点儿决定吧。(Hurry up and decide.)

请你跟你哥哥联系一下。(Contact your brother, please.)

你去干。(You go and do it.)

2. **Direct questions**, e.g. 你想上哪儿去? (Where do you want to go?)

你想坐什么? (What do you want to take to go there?)

3. **Want/need statement**, e.g. 我是要问你要不要去巴黎啊. (I want to know whether you want to go to Paris.)

我想知道哪个城市更有意思. (I want to know which city is more interesting.)

4. **Presumptive statements**, e.g.:

这个任务就交给你啦. (I'll give this task to you.)

你的任务是联系舅爷爷. (Your task is to contact Grandpa.)

M1 in English:

1. **Imperatives**, e.g. And then just book really. Definitely confirm that one, yeah.

2. **Direct questions**, e.g. So when do you want to go on holiday? Whereabouts does he live?

3. **Need/want statements**, e.g. We have to think about that.

4. **Presumptive statements**, e.g. We've got 4 things to think about. First, we've got to decide where we are going really.

M2 (Conventionally Indirect) in Chinese

1. **Query preparatory (ability)**, e.g. 你能不能帮助订旅馆? (Can you help to book the hotel?)

能不能在计算机上给咱们订票? (Can you book tickets for us on the computer?)

2. **Query preparatory (willingness)**, e.g. 你有哥哥在那儿, 咱们可以到他那儿住吗? (You have a brother there. Will he let us stay with him?)

M2 (Conventionally Indirect) in English

1. **Query-Preparatory**, e.g. Would you mind, sort of, booking tickets and hotels for us? Where would you like to go then? How would you feel about staying with him?

2. **Suggestory formula**, e.g. Would we take the ferry ...?

M3 (Hints) in Chinese

Strong hints, e.g. 听说你哥哥是住在巴黎吧. (I hear your brother lives in Paris.)

谁在巴黎有亲戚我们可以住? (Who has got a relative in Paris where we can live?)

M3 (Hints) in English

Strong hints, e.g. Any connections, any kind of links you have?

M4 (Combinations of M1 and M2) – no occurrences in either Chinese or English.

4.3.1.2 Descriptive categories of requests in the DCTs

Also following Lee-Wong's classification (See 1.8), I have adopted the following categorization of strategies of requests in the DCTs, which is about borrowing money from different people (boss, close relative, best friend and acquaintance):

I. Direct (Impositive), for example:

Lend me some money, (please). (请)借给我点儿钱。 (Choice *a*)

II. Conventionally indirect, for example:

1. Referring to H's ability:

Can you lend me some money? 借给我点儿钱行吗? (Choice *b*)

2. Referring to H's willingness:

Could/would you lend me some money? 您借给我点儿钱好吗? (Choice *c*)

3. Referring to H's ability with the polite hedge: 'I wonder whether ...'

I wonder whether you could lend me some money. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。 (Choice *d*)

III. Non-conventionally indirect (Hints), for example:

I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me.

我倒是很想买这个东西，可是我带的钱不够。 (Choice *e*)

Choice *f*, which is the participant's free option, is counted as any of *a* through *e*, to which it is close. For example, under the category of *f*, if there is a letter in brackets (*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, or *e*), this *f* will be included in the number under that letter. For example,

f: 1 (*e*) = 1*e*. This choice of *f* is counted as a choice of *e* in number.

4.3.1.3 Findings

The following table shows the frequency distribution of the data of requests in the role-play.

Table 4–9 Frequency distribution of types of strategies in the Chinese and English groups – role-play data

M1 Impositives

	Mood Derivable: IMP	Direct Questions	Want/Need Statement	Presumptive Statement	Percentage
Chinese	20	9	6	1	36/52 = 69.2%
English	10	29	1	4	44/61 = 72.1%

M2: Conventionally indirect

	Query-Preparatory	Suggestory Formula	Percentage
Chinese	8	0	8/52 = 15.4%
English	5	5	10/61 = 16.4%

M3: Hints

	Strong	Weak	Percentage
Chinese	8	0	8/52 = 15.4%
English	7	0	7/61 = 11.5%

Here, we find that the Chinese participants mainly make use of impositives (M1) in requests in the role-play. In the five Chinese groups, there are 36 occurrences of the impositive strategies, accounting for 69.2% of the total 52 of the request acts in the data. However, I have found a greater percentage of strategies of M1 (Impositives) in the English groups in my role-play: 72.1%. The key issue here is the joint/communal task that they are negotiating, and their shared responsibility for carrying it out (See 4.3.2.1). With regard to M2 (Conventionally indirect), I find significantly lower percentages, 15.4% (Chinese) and 16.4% (English) in my data.

Lee-Wong (2000: 96) finds a much higher role-play percentage of 73.4% and for the DCTs the percentage is 75.8% of M1 (Impositives) in studies of Chinese politeness. She explains this sharp contrast between the low percentages of CCSARP and her high percentage as follows:

The overwhelming preference for a direct bald on-record strategy M1 shown by respondents in this study points to the Chinese dislike of 'circumlocution'. Anything that can be expressed directly is preferred.

(Lee-Wong 2000: 96)

Lee-Wong goes on to say that the Chinese preference for explicitness and directness reflects a need for clarity and that English speakers use the Cooperative Principle in order to be indirect and polite.

However, my English result for M1 (Impositives) is higher (72.1%) than my Chinese result and almost as high as Lee-Wong's 73.4%. Therefore, neither Blum-Kulka nor Lee-Wong's explanations provide the analytical tools I need at this point.

In this regard, Brown & Levinson's bald-on-record view (1987: 94) seems to be able to explain this 'directness' but when combined with Scollon & Scollon's summarization of their model, it successfully explains the directness phenomenon (See 2.3 and 2.4). Spencer-Oatey's 'goal' theory can also explain this phenomenon well (See 2.2). In Chapter VII, I will try to provide additional explanations for this phenomenon in terms of culture.

4.3.2 Discussion of findings

According to Brown & Levinson (1987: 65-66), the speech act of requests belongs to the directive that represents an effort by the speaker to get the hearer to do something generally for the good of the speaker and which is intrinsically face-threatening. They categorically list the speech act of requests under their '3.2 Intrinsic FTAs': "(a) orders and requests (S indicates that he wants H to do, or refrain from doing, some act A)." However, in my role-play, I find that requests are not necessarily always regarded as face-threatening. Now, I will analyze the most important strategies that the participants, both the Chinese and English, have used in the data collected in the role-play: the imperatives and the direct questions.

4.3.2.1 The impositives

Impositives mainly include imperatives in my data. They belong to the speech act of directives. Here, I find two different kinds of impositives:

1. Those that appear in the form of direct imperatives; and
2. Those in the form of less direct imperatives.

The first kind covers all those that are uttered for the sake of discussion, that is, those in favour of an agreement for the trip together as a group. This goal is beneficial to every member of the group. Additionally, such imperatives do not cost much to the hearer in terms of time or energy. All the hearer needs to do is to respond orally to the speaker. For example, the members of Chinese Group 1 have been talking about the time when they can start out and make a trip together. Now CIAF is asking them (in a

direct imperative) to talk about the cities they want to visit. Then they already begin to discuss the matter as follows.

C1AF: 时间定了, 现在看城市吧。我们看看去那些地方呢?

Since the time is settled, consider the cities now. Let us consider what places to visit.

C1BF: 那肯定欧洲啊, 法国啊! Definitely Europe. France!

C1CF: 我想去巴黎。 I want to go to Paris.

C1AF: 我也喜欢巴黎。 I like Paris, too.

For comparison, we will look at the following English example of impositives. This example is from English Group 2, where they are talking about where to stay when they get to Paris. E2AM uses a direct imperative here.

E2CM: That's what I was thinking. It'll be like a campsite just out of town, ...

E2AM: Right. Good, good.

E2BM (to C): *Can you look into that?*

E2CM: Yeah, yeah, yeah I can definitely look at that, ...

E2AM (to C): *Put in campsites downright.*

E2CM: I am not so sure about hotels, though.

The second kind of impositives are also closely related to the trip the subjects are going to make together but what the speaker wants the hearer to do is an action that requires energy and time. In this case, the speaker usually has two choices:

(1) S/he can go on adopting the first kind of strategy: direct and bald on-record strategy.

(2) S/he can also use hedges or polite markers to make the request sound less abrupt and therefore reduce its imposing force on the hearer. In that case, s/he won't sound so direct as s/he is in the first kind of imperatives.

C4AF: 噢, 真的? 那太好了。那你哥能有地方装下咱们三个吗?

Oh, really? That's wonderful. *Does your brother have a room possibly for us three?*

C4CF: 没问题, 只要在巴黎住就应该没有问题。

No problem. There shouldn't be any problem so long as we stay in Paris.

C4AF: 噢, 真的? 那好, 那好, 那我们就可以省两个晚上的钱。

Oh, really? Good. Good. Then we can save the money of the hotel room for two nights. If we go to another city, we will pay for the hotel out of it ...

B/C: 嗯。 Hm.

C4AF: 然后, 请你跟你哥联系一下, 看看他

Please contact your brother then and see if he ...

C4CF: 我跟他联系一下, 看看他那儿有

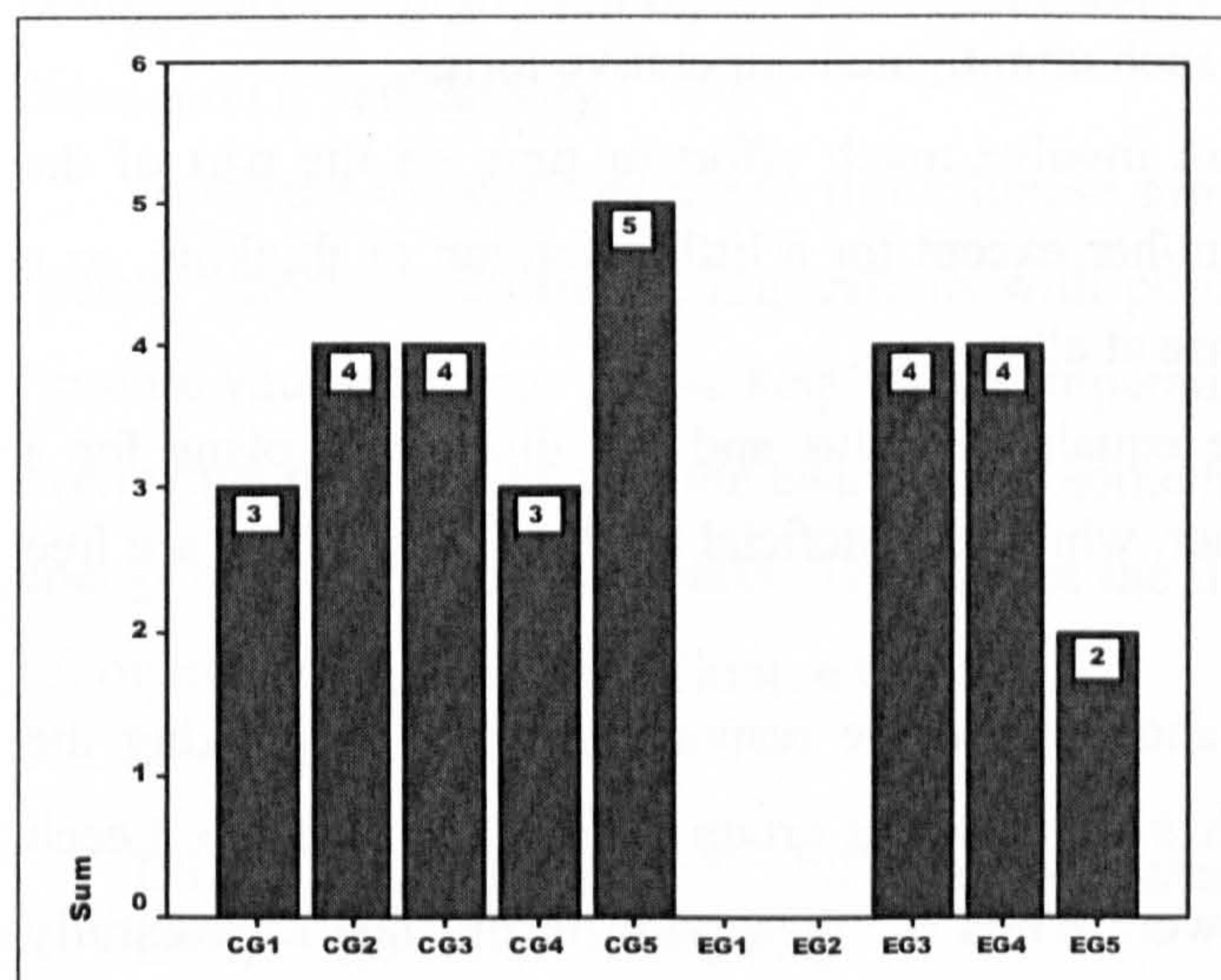
I will contact him to see whether he has ...

Here, C4AF wants C4CF to contact her brother to see whether he could let them stay with him so that they would be able to save some money on accommodations. Clearly, this request will cost much more effort and time to C4CF if the latter is willing to satisfy this request. She will have to find some time to do it and to spend some money on the telephone. She will have to ask her brother whether he can arrange it. That could threaten her brother's face if he answers he cannot let them come and stay with him. That is why C4AF chooses the politeness marker 请 *qǐng* (please) in her request for C4CF to contact her brother, thus making it more polite or less face-threatening.

In order to highlight this, I have classified all the imperatives, both in Chinese and in English, into mitigated (with polite markers) and unmitigated (without polite markers) forms on the basis of the above categorization.

Table 4–10 Mitigated and unmitigated imperatives in Chinese and English

	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5
Mitigated Imperatives	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unmitigated Imperatives	3	2	4	3	5	0	0	4	4	2
Total	3	4	4	3	5	0	0	4	4	2



From Table 4–10 above, we see that few mitigated imperatives are used in the two languages. There are only 2 occurrences of the mitigated forms in Chinese Group 4 and there are no occurrences in English at all. However, imperatives are intrinsically face-threatening according to Brown & Levinson, especially the direct and bald on-record ones!

Before we can answer this issue, we need to look at some more examples of imperatives from other groups. First, let us consider the discussion of the trip in Chinese Group 1. (C1AF and C1BM are old friends; C1AF and C1CF are classmates; C1BM and C1CF are new acquaintances).

C1AF says 那你时间看看大家合适不合适啊。(Look at your time, everybody, to see whether it is OK with you.) Later, when they have settled the problem of time, C1AF says to the other members: 时间定了, 现在看城市吧。(Have a look at the cities since the time is settled.) While they are talking about whether to go to Switzerland on this trip and C1CF is in the middle of saying, 你注意没注意啊? C1AF interrupts her and says impatiently, 我们耽误时间太多了, 这个问题不能再耽搁了, 快做决定吧 (We have spent too much time on this problem. Hurry up and decide ...)

Here C1AF has been making requests but these requests sound more like orders rather than (polite) requests. Nevertheless, they don't seem to be face-threatening to the hearer. Even when C1CF is interrupted without any warning, this interruption should not be regarded as face-threatening. She goes on talking with C1BM. They seem to pay no attention to what C1AF says.

This request of C1AF's belongs to the first kind described above and therefore it is not difficult to understand the use of such unmitigated imperative forms.

First of all, the request does not involve much effort or time on the part of the hearer. It costs almost nothing to him/her except for a little attention or thinking, or a few words as a response or no response at all.

Secondly, all the members are equals in status and are discussing plans for a common goal – to make a trip together, which is beneficial to all of them. They are free to air their ideas.

Thirdly, C1AF feels that she should take the responsibility for organizing the discussion. She also thinks that she has the power as group coordinator to do so. Leech (1983: 126) calls this temporary power. When the discussion is finished successfully and an agreement is reached about the trip, everyone will benefit from it. In such cases, there is almost no face work in the imperatives. That is why there are several uses of these imperatives as requests.

Now, I will examine the use of some more 'serious' requests using Chinese Group 3 as an example. When they have reached an agreement about the time and the cities for their trip, they are talking about who should go and book the train tickets. Look at the interaction among them in the following.

C3AF: 那就完了, 就是周六周日周一周二去上海和杭州。

Settled then. That's Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday for Shanghai and Hangzhou.

C3AF: 订周五晚上。 Book the tickets for Friday evening.

C3BF: 你去干。 *You go and do it.*

C3CF: 你就负责, 就是行和住是我包了。

You be just responsible for that and I'll be responsible for the things on the trip and accommodations. (Sharing of workload)

...

C3CF: 订票, 订票就得这样。 *Book the tickets. You must do it this way.*

After examining this interaction we cannot say that they are trying to be polite to each other. (They didn't know each other before.) The language they are using is informal and the strategy they adopt is the most direct on-record strategy and therefore should normally sound the most direct. It is almost an order. C3AF wants C3BF to book the tickets but C3BF turns the table on C3AF by saying "You go and do it". C3CF then tries to persuade her to do it by making a half-request and half-suggestion of load-sharing: "You be responsible just for that and I'll be responsible for the things on the trip and accommodations." The purpose is for her request to be more persuasive.

In this part of the interaction, there is almost no hedging or mitigation. It is as if one tries to force the task of booking the tickets on another. No one intends to be deliberately polite to each other. The interaction is going smoothly and the result of the discussion is satisfactory.

In all the imperatives in the five Chinese groups, there are only 2 occurrences of 'polite' imperatives, that is, imperatives with politeness markers such as 'please' and 'trouble you' meaning 'please help'. Such imperatives with hedges are not widely used even when the speaker asks the hearer to do something for the group that costs time and energy on the part of the hearer. They adopt the direct imperatives in most cases. The following example is from Chinese Group 5.

C5AF: 嗯, 回头你问问。 *Well, ask him then.*

C5BF: 嗯, 好。 *Hmm, OK.*

...

C5AF: 哎, 你电脑不是挺不错的吗? 嗯, 你呀, 上网查一下, 看看有没有这个又便宜又还可以的宾馆。

Well, aren't you very good at computer skills? Hmm, you, check on the Internet to see whether there are hotels both cheap and reasonably good.

C5CM: 对。 *Right.*

...

C5AF: 这个任务就交给你了。 *I will assign this task to you.*

Chinese Group 5 is a family where C5AF, the granddaughter, is 'telling' rather than asking or requesting the grandmother to ask her brother whether he could let them stay with him when they are in Shanghai. She uses the bald on-record imperative 回头你问问 (Well, ask him then) with the grandmother and the imperative. 上网查一下, 看看有没有这个又便宜又还可以的宾馆。 (Check on the internet to see whether there are hotels that are both cheap and reasonably good) with the grandfather.

All the above examples of uses of imperatives in Chinese lead us to the impression that Chinese – regardless of age, social status, social relationship, etc. – are inclined to adopt the direct bald on-record requests. So are the English, to some extent, as one will see later on.

The English do not use so many imperatives as requests as the Chinese do, as was found in the syntactic analysis above. However, some of native English speakers do use them. Like the Chinese, the English participants are having a discussion for a common purpose to travel together. Such requests are not for the speaker's own benefit but for the good of the whole group, including both the hearer and the speaker's. The following example is from English Group 3.

E3AF: Right, alternatively we'll get the train, like mid-week, and then, you just need to confirm it with your brother and that's it really, isn't it?

E3CF: Yeah, I can sort that out.

E3AF: *And then just book, really.*

E3BF: Yeah, what kind of hotel, I mean I know we're going to Paris, but do we want one close to the centre or further out?

Here, the members of English Group 3 are talking about making the trip by train and how to get train tickets. E3AF wants E3CF to book the tickets. She uses the direct request form: "And then just book, really". Although the use of 'just' may redress the force of the imperative to some degree, it is still an imposition, telling E3CF to book the tickets. In such cases, consideration of face matters seems to be out of the question for most people (3.4.5) and the collaboration is more important (Leech 1983: 82).

Pan (2000: 152) states that "Directives are mostly issued in a direct way, using a flat statement or imperative." Lee-Wong (2000: 75) also finds that "The dominance of IMPs as a substrategy of request realization suggests that imperatives, unlike English and most other European languages, are not regarded as impolite." There are several reasons for this directness phenomenon in Chinese. The most important ones are found to be as follows:

Firstly, as is said in 1.1 above, after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and especially after the Cultural Revolution in the mid-sixties and early

seventies of the last century, polite speech forms such as 请 *qǐng* (please), 劳驾 *láojià* (excuse me) in Chinese were infrequently used in daily communication. However, since the 1980's, and the efforts of the Chinese government to improve people's behaviour in social relations, people's speech behaviour or manners have been much improved and a few of those polite terms have come back. Nevertheless, many Chinese still try to avoid those polite forms on ordinary communicative occasions, such as 麻烦你 *máfan nǐ* (something like 'May I trouble you' or 'please help'), 劳驾 *láojià* (Excuse me), 请问 *qǐngwèn* (functionally equivalent to 'Could I ask ...') etc.

Secondly, the situation or context in which my investigation was carried out has had an effect. It was performed in a casual situation where either friends or classmates or family members were consulting each other about going on a trip. In this case, the language they used with each other was not very formal or respectful. It had to be quite direct and explicit.

Thirdly, the role-play was a joint/communal task-oriented interaction. What subjects talked about was exclusively related to the trip they were planning. There was no chance for vagueness in expressions or ideas. The sooner they reached an agreement on the planned trip, the better it was for all of the participants. This was also a very important factor for them to be as direct with each other as possible. Just as Leech (1983: 82) says:

There are some situations where politeness can take a back seat. This is so, for example, where S and H are engaged in collaborative activity in which exchange of information is equally important to both of them.

Finally, the directness phenomenon is also related to the relationship between the participants. Many are friends, classmates, colleagues, or friends of friends; Chinese Group 5 is a family. In such intimate relationships, the participants, particularly Chinese, tend to be direct with each other and seldom feel any obvious face-threatening effects of the speech acts (See 3.4.5), thus showing speech acts are not always face-threatening.

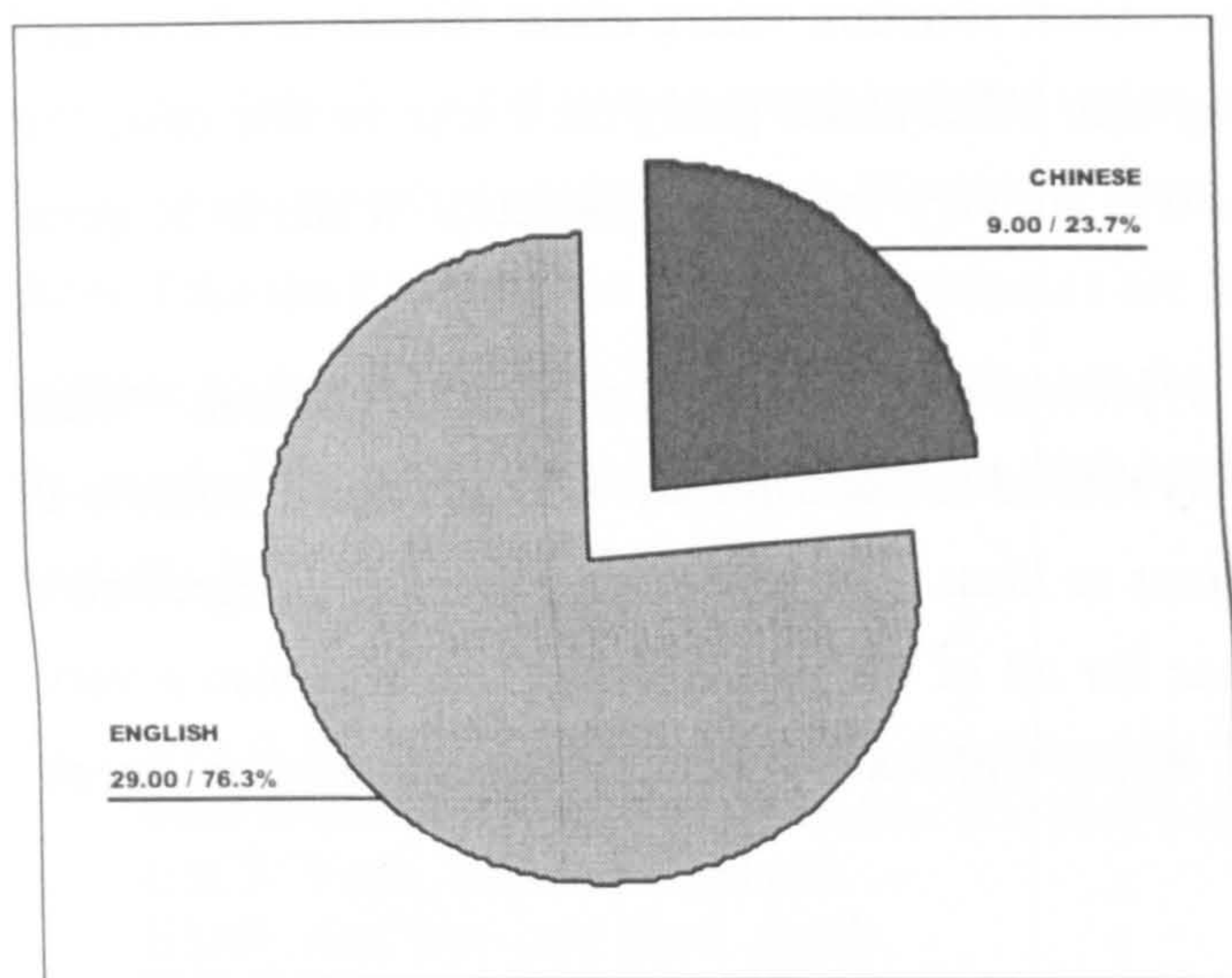
4.3.2.2 The direct questions

The direct questions belong to the M1 (Impositives) strategy, too. They form an important category of requests that is found in my data in Chinese and especially in English.

Table 4-11 Frequency of direct questions in Chinese and English

Chinese Groups	Frequency	English Groups	Frequency
CG1	3	EG1	3
CG2	0	EG2	6
CG3	0	EG3	10
CG4	4	EG4	5
CG5	2	EG5	5
Total	9	Total	29
Percentage out of 52	17.3%	Percentage out of 61	47.5%

Note: The total number of requests for Chinese is 52, and that for English is 61.



From Table 4-11 above, we know that there are 9 direct questions out of 52 requests, accounting for 17.3% for the Chinese, compared with 29 out of 61 for English speakers, accounting for 47.5%. We need to consider why is there such a significant difference between the two.

Grammatically, questions “are primarily used to express lack of information on a specific point, and (usually) to request the listener to supply this information verbally” (Quirk et al. 1972: 386). Semantically, they can be understood to mean the same as the ‘tell me’ request (Green 1975: 121) and accordingly, ‘Can you pass me the salt?’ can be understood to mean ‘I request that you tell me whether you can pass the salt’ (ibid.: 121). Pragmatically, questions can be used to reduce the imposing force of such requests.

Therefore, the requests in the form of direct questions found in my data can be divided into two main types: questions for information and questions for action on the part of the hearer. For example, 你 22 号何时行? (What time will be good for you on

the 22nd?) is a direct question for information while 谁去买票? (Who is going to book the tickets?) is a request which requires somebody to go and book them. With the second type of question, there could be the problem of threatening the face of the hearer if the request is not handled properly. However, with the question in the form of a request, the speaker has given the hearer a freedom or choice with regard to the response or reaction. The hearer of the above question could respond with 'I won't / I can't' followed by a reason or with 'I'd like to/Let me do it'. S/he does not have to do it if s/he can't or does not want to. S/he has an out or option. Now let us look at a few examples both from the Chinese and the English data.

Chinese Group 1

C1AF: 我们耽误时间太多了, 这个问题就不能再耽搁了, 快点做决定吧, 到底是去哪个城市呢?

It has taken too much of our time to talk about this problem. *Be quick to make a decision. Where on earth to go?*

C1BM: 这个先、先、先那个什么吧 Well, first, let's ...

C1CF: 我想 Basel 的那个、那个消费水准会更高一些。

I think the cost of living in Basel is higher.

Chinese Group 2

C2BM: 我觉得我们都是学生吧, 所以不用花费太多了。

I think we are all students. We needn't spend too much on hotels.

C2AM: 想住那个条件? *What kind (of hotels) do you want?*

C2CM: 我们住那种中等旅馆, 60, 70 块一晚上的这种。

The medium-level ones, such as those 60 or 70 yuan a night.

C2AM: 60, 70 块, 你呢? 60 or 70 yuan. And you?

C2BM: 差不多也得一百多块钱的吧。 It has to be about 100 yuan.

English Group 3

E3AF: OK well we'll look at that, then right, so now seeing as you're like got the Internet and everything. *Do you want to look at the prices between the trains and the ferry?*

E3BF: Yes, that's a good idea yeah but I've heard that if we should end up catching the ferry I heard that its actually better if you go down there.

E3AF: Oh really what and ...

English Group 4

E4CM: We've got to get all these things booked before summer.

E4AM: That's true

E4CM: Get going. I'll contact my brother.

E4AM: Yes

E4AM: *Are you (to E4BM) going to look into hotels then if I'm going to look into trains?*

E4BF: Right. OK.

From the data collected I found that the Chinese either use the first kind of direct questions to ask for information, as the examples in Chinese Groups 1 and 4 show above (Where on earth to go? and What kind (of hotels) do you want?). Or a few of them (if they want to sound a little polite) will use the M2 (Conventionally indirect) strategy (能不能/可以吗? 'can or not' etc.) for action from the hearer. (See the next section for the M2 strategy).

The Chinese use quite a lot of imperatives (See the previous section) and use some quite direct questions for information, and hints too. However, they do not use very many of M2 (Conventionally indirect questions). That is why all the 9 direct questions used by the Chinese subjects are for information.

As for direct questions in English, there are 29 instances in my data (See Table 4-11). Most of them belong to the first type of questions (i.e. for information) in form but 8 of them are used to elicit action from the hearer. Take English Group 4 for example, E4AM asks E4BF the question: "Are you going to look into hotels then if I'm going to look into trains?" She doesn't want the answer to the question per se but she does want him to do it. Similarly, when E3AF asks E3BF: "Do you want to look at the prices between the trains and the ferry?" She wants her to do some investigation into the prices on the Internet.

The data seems to show that in this situation questions seem to be hedged or mitigated more heavily, when expressing requests in interactions than imperatives because they are not so direct. Additionally, they are negotiable. The hearer has a chance to say 'no' with reasons, without having to threaten the speaker's face. That is why CCSARP include them in the impositive category of strategies; they are direct but not impolite. That is also why in my data the English impositives (the M1 strategy type) account for such a significant percentage (72.1%) as compared with the Chinese percentage of 69.2% (See Table 4-1).

4.3.2.3 The M2 (Conventionally indirect) strategies

Generally, the M2 (Conventionally indirect) strategy is the main type of strategy and includes a couple of subtypes such as:

Query preparatory:

reference to H's ability 你能不能/能吗 (can or cannot);

to H's willingness 可以不可以/可以吗/愿意不愿意 (will/would you);

and to non-obviousness of compliance 是不是能 (be not be able to)

Suggestory formula:

我们一起去看电影好吗? (Shall we go to the movie?)

咱把窗户打开怎么样? (Shall we open the window?)

(See 4.3 M2)

Statistically, as we have seen in 4.3.1 above, there are not many occurrences of M2 (8 of 52 – 15.4% for Chinese and 10 of 61 – 16.4% for English) in the data for the role-play. This is because the interlocutors mainly use the strategy of impositives.

Now, I will examine the few conventionally indirect request acts collected in the role-play in some detail. I will look at some subtypes in the strategy of Query Preparatory.

Table 4–12 Frequency of M2 (Conventionally indirect) strategies

	Query Preparatory			Suggestory Formula
	H's Ability	H's Willingness	Non-obviousness of Compliance	
Chinese	6	2	0	0
English	1	4	0	5

Note: The total number of M2 strategies for Chinese is 8 and that for English is 5.

From Table 4–12, we can see that the Chinese are inclined to use the strategy of Query Preparatory, referring to H's ability (能不能/能吗?) rather than the other subtypes. For example, in each of Chinese Groups 1, 2 and 4, there are 2 occurrences of H's ability, 2 occurrences of H's willingness and no occurrence of non-obviousness of compliance (是不是能?). That indicates that to the Chinese mind, it is better to inquire about the hearer's ability because it sounds more neutral than to inquire about the hearer's willingness.

The results of my research are similar to Lee-Wong's (2000: 92), who claims that "Data indicate speakers' preference for the query preparatory which refers to H's ability rather than willingness. To ask H whether s/he can or cannot do A is probably a more neutral and less threatening approach than to ask if s/he is willing to do A". She goes on to say that to ask about H's ability is to give him/her an escape route in case s/he wants to refuse the request. H's willingness is more related to H's refusal. Therefore once S's request is refused, his/her face is threatened all the more.

In a previous section when I discussed direct questions, I also found that when there is a situation in which the speaker has to ask the hearer to do something at the cost of the latter's labour and/time, S tends to use the Query Preparatory with regard to H's

ability, that is, the strategy of *néngbùnéng/néngma* 能不能/能吗 (can/cannot). For example:

Chinese Group 1

C1AF: 你住在市中心, 你能不能帮我们定, 你用计算机用得很熟练, 你能不能帮我们定旅馆呀?

You live in the centre of the city. Can you help to reserve ... Since you're very good at using the computer, can you help to reserve the hotels?

C1BM: 没问题。这些东西, 我可以买票。

No problem. These things. I can buy the tickets.

C1BM: 嗯, 另外一个问题, 能不能让你表哥帮着我们介绍一下, 到哪儿玩啊?

Hm. Another problem. Can you ask your cousin to give us an introduction to, where to go for enjoyment?

C1CF: 我想他应该知道, 去了7, 8年了。

I think he should know. He's been there for 7 or 8 years.

In the situation of Chinese Group 1 above, when C1AF asks C1BM to book the hotel and when C1BM asks C1CF to ask for help from her brother, both use the *néngbùnéng* 能不能 (can or cannot) query preparatory strategy.

When a request focuses on whether the hearer is willing to do something, the speaker tends to adopt the 'willingness request' strategy, that is, the *kěyǐ ma/yuànyì ma* 可以吗/愿意吗 will/would strategy.

Chinese Group 3

C3AF: 你有哥哥, 咱们可以到他那儿, 还是再找一下?

You have a brother there. We may go and stay with him there or live in a hotel?

C3CF: 我和我哥哥联系一下。

I'll contact my brother.

.....

C3AF: 你哥哥喜欢什么呀? 咱们带点东西去。

What does your brother like? Let's take something for him.

C3CF: 咱们都那么熟了, 无所谓的事。

Now we're so familiar with each other, it's nothing.

In the above dialogue, C3AF is asking C3CF about her willingness – whether she would like them to stay with her brother or to live in a hotel? To summarise, I find that the Chinese use the ability request most frequently, more than the willingness request, in the investigation of M2 (Conventionally indirect).

However, the result of conventionally indirect (M2) in my English role-play is different from my Chinese result. It has only 1 occurrence of 'ability request' (10% compared with 75% in the Chinese data), 4 of 'willingness request' (40% compared

with 25% for the Chinese), and 5 of the ‘suggestory formula’ (50% compared with 0% for the Chinese).

Two big differences are obvious between the results. (1) The ability request is rarely used in the English role-play while it is very frequently used in the Chinese role-play. (2) The suggestory formula is frequently used in the English role-play while it is not found in Chinese.

This discovery indicates that it may have something to do with the content of the requests. For example, E1AF says to the other members, “I have got a brother in Paris. How would you feel about staying with him?” She is asking them to tell her whether they are willing to do so. Therefore it is a ‘willingness’ rather than ‘ability’ request. Another example is: E3AF says to the others, “So what shall we do on Wednesday? Are we going to do the four nights?” Here she is making a suggestion and asks them whether they agree or not. However, when the content of a request does require that S should request H to do something for S or for the group, S will often use the ‘ability’ request. For instance, when English Group 4 are talking about the possibility of staying in campsites, E4BF says to E4CM, “Can you look into that?”

4.3.2.4 The hints

Hints are classified into strong and weak. They belong to the unconventionally indirect strategies (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 18). Strong hints are utterances containing partial reference to the object or element needed for the implementation of the act. For example, ‘You have left the kitchen in a right mess,’ may be a strong hint for the hearer to clean the kitchen. Weak hints are utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context. ‘I am a nun’ in response to a persistent hassler (ibid.: 18). Although, numerically, hints do not seem to be abundant in my role-play data, yet they form a very important category of strategies, which prove very useful when a suitable situation appears.

Table 4–13 Frequency of hints in the Chinese and English role-plays

	Chinese Groups	English Groups
Strong Hints	8	7
Weak Hints	0	0
Total	8	7
Percentage	8/52=15.4%	7/61=11.5%

Note: The total number of requests in Chinese is 52 and the total number in English is 61.

If we compare the results Chinese (15.4%) and English (11.5%) with those of Lee-Wong's (2000: 75), we find that Lee-Wong's hints are only 1.4% (interview/role-play). The percentages in my data are significantly higher than hers.

When the speaker finds whether s/he requires somebody to help with labour, technique and/or time, even if the result of the help will be beneficial to the collective of which the hearer is a member, both Chinese and English often choose a less face-threatening form, either the query preparatory or the hint.

C1AF: 下面一个问题是我们，这个，住什么样的宾馆。我们在巴黎 哎？听说，你的哥哥是不是住在巴黎啊？

The next problem is what kind of hotels we will stay in. In Paris, we ... well? *I hear your brother lives in Paris, doesn't he?*

C1CF: 嗯，我哥 Hm, my brother ...

C1AF: 我们可以暂住在他那儿，如果他的房子够大的话，如果他愿意的话。We can stay with him if his house is big enough and if he agrees.

C1CF: 我想巴黎 I think Paris ...

C1BM: 他，我觉得打扰他恐怕 我都不愿打扰他，最好也别找他，自己、自己出点钱吧。

He ..., I think that to disturb him is probably ... I am not willing to disturb him.

We had better not disturb him. Let's spend some money on a hotel.

C1AF: 那就算了。 Then let's drop the subject.

C1CF: 我想巴黎呢，我想巴黎呢，我想在巴黎住会很贵，我就想象在伦敦一样。

I think in Paris, I think in Paris, I think in Paris the accommodation fees are very high. I imagine them the same as in London.

The above is a very good example. We can see the problem very clearly through it. Here, C1AF seems to know that C1CF has a brother in Paris and wants to know whether it is possible for them to stay with him when they get there in order to save some money. Obviously, it would be beneficial to C1CF too, if they were successful in the proposed plan. However, being afraid that the proposal may be face-threatening, C1AF doesn't want to be direct with her and chooses a hint or a non-explicit strategy by saying, 听说，你的哥哥是不是住在巴黎啊？ (It is said that your brother lives in Paris?) Even so, C1CF is so embarrassed by the hinted request that she stumbles in her answer for quite some time. It seems that she does not know what to say next. This request is face-threatening to her. It suggests that C1AF is right to have chosen the strategy of hints.

C1BM notices C1CF's embarrassment and tries to help her out by saying, "If we all live there, it will definitely be inconvenient. We had better not disturb him. Let's spend some money on a hotel."

Then C1AF is aware of the seriousness of the problem (C1CF's face being threatened), and says in a hurry, 那就算了。(Then let's drop the subject or forget about it then.) She is trying to do her best to save the situation.

C1CF has been trying to save the situation too. What she tries to do is to pretend that her face is not threatened or at least she is not as seriously embarrassed as other members may think. However, she is not successful. After C1AF withdraws her proposal and says "Forget about it.", C1CF is at a loss for words. She does not know how to respond properly. She falters on the phrase "I think in Paris" several times and then ends in a statement "The accommodation fees are very high. I imagine them the same as in London." which obviously has nothing much to do with a proper response or reaction to C1AF or C1BM's words. The following example gives us some helpful clues.

English Group 4

E4CM: We could have a Bed and Breakfast for £20 a night I think.

E4BF: Up to £20 would be OK with me.

E4AM: *David, don't you have a brother who lives in Paris?*

E4CM: Yeah, I do. Could ask him I suppose – I don't know it's ...

E4BF: Three of us.

E4CM: The apartment's not very big he ...

E4AM: Isn't it?

E4CM: He might not be able to fit us all in.

E4AM: But if you wanted to travel cheaply, that would help reduce the cost wouldn't it, for you.

...

E4BF: So we, you know, we'll have to get together to do it anyway.

E4CM: I'll ask my brother, you can check out cheap hotels.

The above English example helps to explain how important hints are in English interactions. Members of English Group 4 are talking about where to stay when in Paris. E4AM knows that E4CM has a brother there and he wants to know whether it is likely for them to stay with him in order to save some money. However, instead of asking directly about the likelihood of living in the brother's home, E4AM uses hints and asks whether E4CM does have a brother there or not. The latter immediately understands and responds with an affirmative "Yeah, I do" and goes on to suggest "Could ask him, I suppose". When E4BF inserts with "three of us", E4CM says her brother's apartment is not big, hinting that he might not be able to entertain so many of them. When she does say "might not be able to", E4AM reminds him "If you wanted to travel cheaply, that would help reduce the cost, wouldn't it, for you". Added to this, E4BF tries to persuade him to make his contribution by saying "... we'll have to get together to do it anyway". In the end, E4CM has to agree to "ask his brother".

Here in this interaction, E4AM and E4BF have all along been using hints and other indirect strategies such as 'Don't you have', 'Isn't it', 'If you wanted, that would, wouldn't and 'for you'.

All the strategies of hints in Chinese and English, used properly, enable the speaker to achieve his/her purpose in interaction or communication, helping to minimize the face-threatening effect of the request on H.

Through the above data analysis, I find that (strong) hints are an important strategy to use in requests in both Chinese and English, especially to the former. My data seem to indicate that Chinese use hints more frequently than English. This result is similar to Gao Hong's (1999: 83) conclusion that "illocutionary hints do tend to occur in Chinese frequently but more often on the basis of close relationship, good knowledge of the background situation and familiar knowledge between speaker and hearer" (See 7.4). In the following section, I will begin to discuss the strategies of requests used in the questionnaire investigation.

4.3.3 Comparisons with the questionnaire data

The question is about borrowing money from people who have differing relationships with 'you'. It reads: You go shopping with somebody and you spot a bargain so good that you must buy it. Unfortunately, you don't have enough money on you. You need to borrow 1500 yuan / 100 pounds. What would you say if the person were your boss, your close relative, your best friend or acquaintance.

For each of the four people, the subjects were asked to make one choice out of six:

- a. (请)借给我点钱。 Lend me some money (please).
- b. 借给我点钱行吗? Can you lend me some money?
- c. 您借给我点钱好吗? Could/Would you lend me some money?
- d. 不知道您能不能借给我点钱。 I wonder whether you could lend me some money.
- e. 我倒是很想买这个东西,可是我带的钱不够。
I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me.
- f. Your own idea.

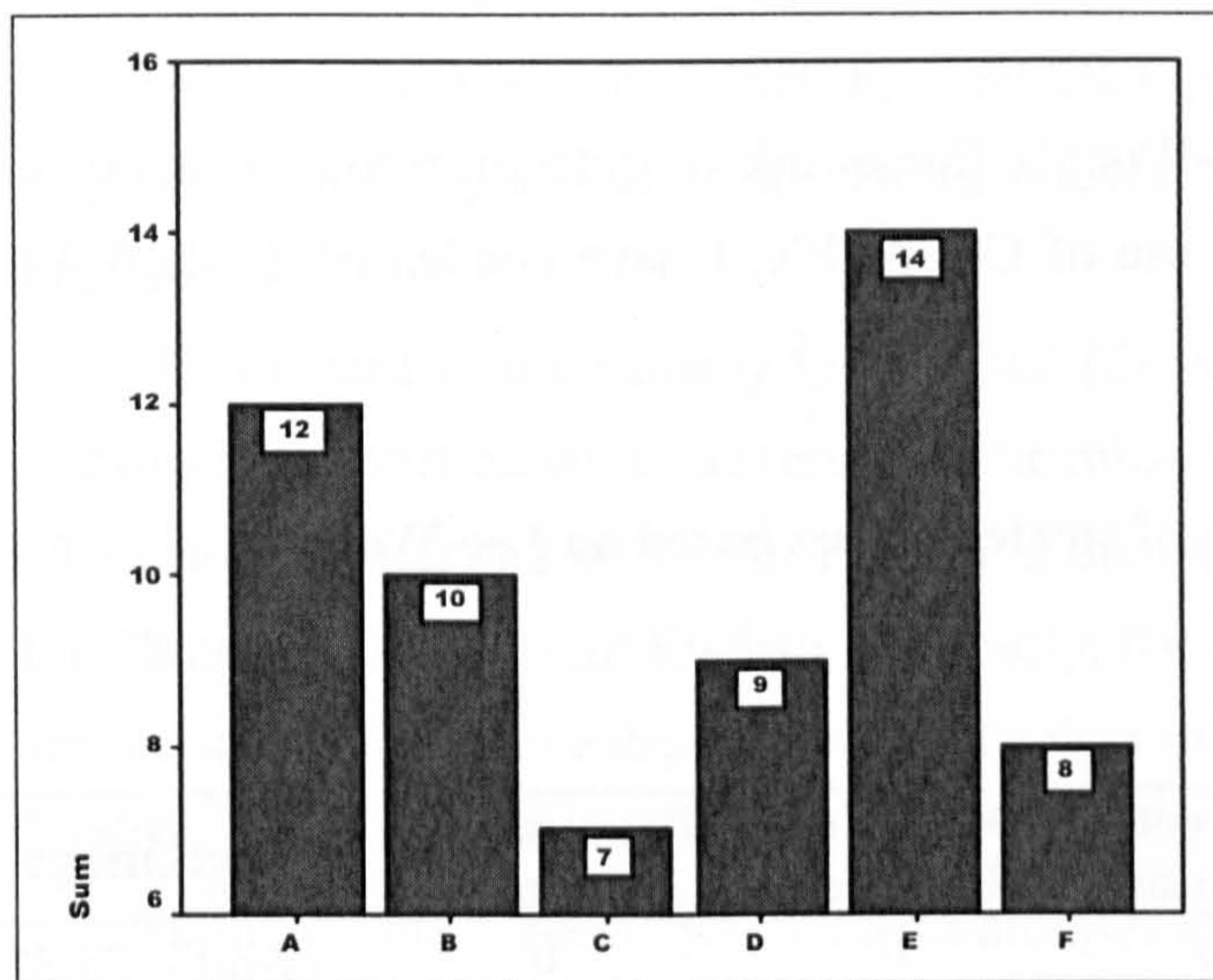
The results of the choices by the subjects about borrowing money from others in both languages are listed in the table below.

Table 4–14 Frequency of choices of strategy types with regard to money borrowing in Chinese and English

Chinese

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	0	1	3	1	8	2
Relative	4	4	3	0	1	3
Friend	7	5	1	1	1	0
Acquaintance	1	0	0	7	4	3
Total	12	10	7	9	14	8
Percentage	20%	16.7%	11.7%	15%	23.3%	13.3%

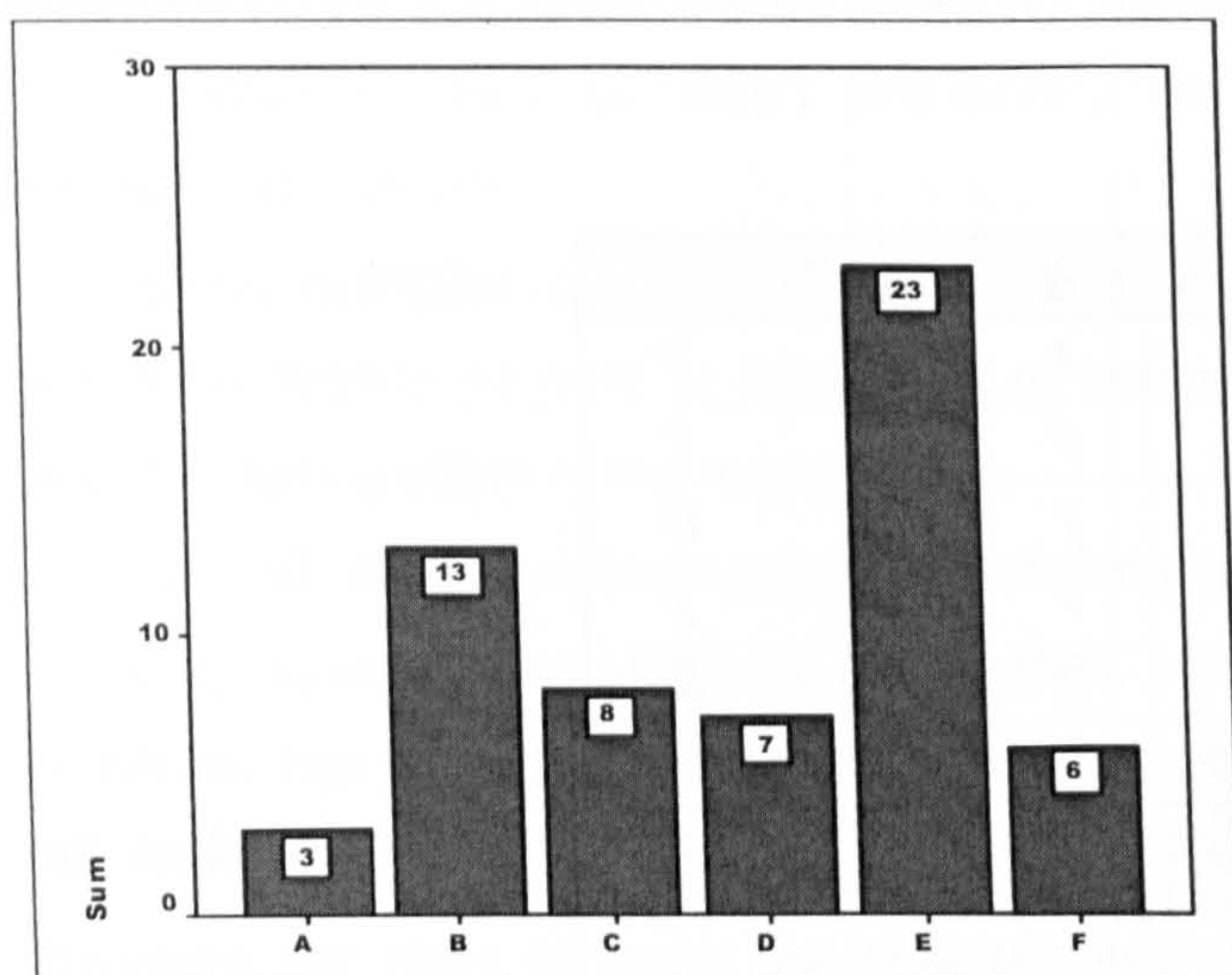
Note: The total number of requests for all the five Chinese groups is 60, of which the total number for each type of people is 15.



English

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	0	1	2	0	11	1
Relative	1	4	6	2	2	0
Friend	2	8	0	3	2	0
Acquaintance	0	0	0	2	8	5
Total	3	13	8	7	23	6
Percentage	5%	21.7%	13.3%	11.7%	38.3%	10%

Note: The total number of requests for all the five English groups is 60, of which the total number for each type of people is 15.



In order to make use of Lee-Wong's framework of categorization to facilitate comparison with her results and those of CCSARP's, I have condensed Table 4-14 above into Table 4-15 below.

Table 4-15 Frequency distribution of strategy types based on Lee-Wong's framework in DCTs

M1 (Impositives)

	Mood Derivable: IMP	Direct Questions	Want/Need Statement	Presumptive Statement	Percentage
Chinese	14	0	0	0	14/60 = 23.3%
English	3	0	0	0	3/60 = 5%

M2 (Conventionally indirect)

Query Preparatory	Reference to H's Ability Hedge(-) Hedge(+)	Reference to H's Willingness	Reference to H's compliance	Non- obviousness of Compliance	Percentage
Chinese	19	10	0	0	29/60 = 48.3%
English	20	8	0	0	28/60 = 46.7%

	Suggestory Formula	Percentage
Chinese	0	0/60 = 0%
English	0	0/60 = 0%

M3 Unconventionally indirect (Hints)

	Strong	Weak	Percentage
Chinese	16	0	16/60 = 26.7%
English	23	0	23/60 = 38.3%

	No reply or Not to ask	Percentage
Chinese	<i>1</i>	$1/60 = 1.7\%$
English	<i>6</i>	$6/60 = 10.0\%$

In Table 4–15 above, there are 14 occurrences of the mood derivable (imperatives) out of a total of 60 requests for borrowing money from the four categories of people. The percentage is 23.3% as compared to the English data which had 3 out of 60, or 5%. However, in my studies for role-play, the results for the same strategy are 69.2% (Chinese) and 72.1% (English) (See 4.3.1.3). In the DCTs, the Chinese percentage for using the strategy of impositives is significantly lower not only than my own results for the role-play, but also lower than Lee-Wong's 74.4%. However, it is close to the CCSARP's average of 9.8% (English) to 39.6% (Spanish) (Blum-Kulka 1989: 46). The English result (5%) of M1 in the DCTs is even lower than Blum-Kulka's result of English (9.8%).

With regard to the strategy type of M2 (Conventionally indirect), there is also a significant contrast between the results of the role-play and the DCTs. The percentage is 48.3% for Chinese and 46.7% for English in the DCTs, but in the role-play it is 14.8% for Chinese and 16.4% for English. Obviously, the occurrences of the M2 strategy type are a much higher percentage in the DCTs than in the role-play both for Chinese and English.

Similarly, the percentages of occurrences of the M3 (Hints) strategy type are also significantly greater in the questionnaires than in the role-play in both languages. The occurrence frequency for Chinese and English for the questionnaires is 26.7% and 38.3% respectively, while in the role-play it is 15.4% and 11.48%. The percentages for the questionnaires are much higher. Also, the occurrence percentages found for the DCTs (Chinese: 26.7% and English: 38.3%) are significantly greater compared with the 1.4 % of Lee-Wong's (2000: 96) interview/role-play.

Why do such significant differences occur in these results between my study and Lee-Wong's and within my own studies? The sharp contrast and difference in the results between my role-play and my DCT data enables me to have the opportunity to investigate the reasons for this.

My data analysis shows three decisive factors: (1) the context, (2) the content of the request (what is the request about, what does it require the hearer to do, and in what way and to what degree does the request influence the benefit or interest of the hearer), and (3) the relationship between S and H. These are the most important factors that

determine what strategies are chosen by the speaker. The reason why the participants in the role-play are so direct with each other has been addressed in 4.3.2.1.

However, when the situation (the content of the request) changes into the borrowing of money in the DCTs, the same subjects change their strategy dramatically. The percentages of the use of the (M2) strategy type increase to as high as 48.3% for Chinese and 46.7% for English.

In the role-play, the M3 (Hints) strategy type plays a small part compared with the M1 strategy, but in the DCTs, M3 seems to be more important. Many of the participants are indirect so as not to sound sudden or abrupt because of the sensitive topic they are dealing with (borrowing money). That is why the percentages of the occurrences of the strategy type (M3) switch sharply from 15.4% (Chinese) and 11.5% (English) in the trip discussion to 26.7% for Chinese and 38.3% for English in the DCTs (extremely high compared with any similar known research so far).

Moreover, if we look at the way in which the subjects make their choices according to their relationships with the people they are supposed to borrow money from, it is clear that the difference between Chinese and English politeness strategies in making requests is not significant.

Table 4-16 Distribution of choices of strategy types with the boss and the acquaintance in Chinese and English

	Boss		Acquaintance	
	Chinese	English	Chinese	English
a	0	0	1	0
b	1	1	0	0
c	4	2	0	0
d	1	0	7	2
e	8	11	4	8
f	1 (<i>e</i>)	1 (<i>no</i>)	2 (<i>c</i>), 1 (<i>no</i>)	5

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for the boss and the acquaintance is 15, respectively, in both languages
2. *a* is an imperative (M1), the most direct of all. *b* is a question which is less direct than *a*, *c* is less direct than *b* but *d* is the most indirect of all the explicit request acts from *a* to *d* (Conventionally indirect or M2). *e* is a hint and off the record (Unconventionally indirect or M3). *f* goes to whichever it is close to. For example, *f*: 1 (*e*) means that this 1 *f* is counted as 1 *e*. (*no*) = no answer.

Table 4-16 shows the frequency distribution of the strategies in both Chinese and English in the questionnaire investigation. The total number of choices in each language is 15 for each hearer. For the boss category, the Chinese subjects choose no *a* (M1). 6 *b*,

c, *d* (M2), consisting of 40% and 9 *e* (M3), 60%. To summarize, they choose the most direct form *a* the least, and the hints *e*, the most.

What about the English choices? They do not choose *a* either, but choose *b* once and *c* twice (M2) (20% of the total), *e* 11 times (M3) (73.3%), and 1 choice of 'not to ask' (6.7%). The English choose more strategies of 'hints' than the Chinese do for the boss.

Now, I will examine the acquaintance category. For the Chinese, the number of instances for the most direct strategy *a* (M1) is 1 out of 15 choices, or 6.7%, as compared to the English 0 (0%). The Chinese chose the conventionally indirect forms *b*, *c* and *d* for 9 out of 15 (60%), compared to the English 2 (13.3%). The hints for the Chinese consisted of 26.7%, compared to the English 53.3%. There are 4 cases of 'not to ask' and 1 of 'no reply' with the English groups for acquaintances. There is no such instance with the Chinese. The Chinese differ from the English in the strategies of making requests for borrowing money from acquaintances. I will discuss this towards the end of this section. The following is for close relatives and the best friends from whom the subjects are supposed to borrow some money.

Table 4–17 Distribution of choices of strategy types with the close relative and the best friend in Chinese and English

	Relative		Friend	
	Chinese	English	Chinese	English
a	4	1	7	2
b	4	4	5	8
c	3	6	1	0
d	0	2	1	3
e	1	2	1	2
f	2 (<i>a</i>), 1 (<i>e</i>)	0	0	0

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for relative and friend is 15, respectively, in both languages.
2. There are two choices of *f*'s which are very close to *a* and calculated as 2 *a*'s.
3. There is one choice of *f* which is very close to *e* and counted as 1 *e*.

Table 4–17 shows a picture that is entirely different from that of Table 4–16. First, let us look at the choices for the relative category. The total number of choices is 15 for each of the 5 Chinese groups. The Chinese chose *a* 6 times, consisting of 40%, for *b*, *c* and *d*, it is 7, i.e. 46.7%, and the times *e* is chosen is only 2, or 13.3%. For the English, the corresponding percentages for the relative are 6.7% (M1), 80% (M2) and 13.3%

(M3). These results seem to show that both English and Chinese tend to be more direct with the close relative in choosing request strategies.

However, if we have a closer look, we find that there are differences between Chinese and English in strategies for the relative category. In the Chinese groups, 40% chose *a*, compared with 6.7% for the English ones. 46.7% of the Chinese chose the M2 strategies, compared with 80% for the English. From these figures, we see that the Chinese tend to be more direct than the English with relatives.

For the friend category, the percentage of Chinese who chose the most direct strategies *a* is 46.7% compared to the English score of 13.3%, and the Chinese percentages for the *b*, *c* and *d* is 46.7% compared to the English 73.3%.

In order to see the differences more clearly for the friend category, a detailed comparison is necessary. There are 7 occurrences of *a* (46.7%) for the Chinese, compared with only 2 (13.3%) for the English. However, when it comes to *b*, *c* and *d* (M2), it becomes 46.7% versus 73.3%. With the hints *e*, it is 6.67% for the Chinese versus 13.3% for the English.

From the comparison of the figures in the two tables (4-16 and 4-17) above, it is clear that, in similar situations (money-borrowing), both Chinese and English seem to prefer fewer direct (M1) strategies and favour indirect strategies (hints) with the person who is higher in position or power or with a person they do not know very well. Both Chinese and English tend to adopt direct strategies (M1) and the conventionally indirect strategies (M2) when they deal with the person they know very well or have a very close relationship, such as their relatives or their best friends. Few seem to choose the hints with them.

Now I want to discuss the cases of 'no reply' and 'not to ask'. In Table 4-15, there is 1 occurrence of 'no reply' (1.7%) in Chinese and 6 occurrences of 'no reply' and 'not to ask' (10%) in English. One might conclude that these are different, and therefore doubt about the results and analysis.

However, if we look at Table 4-16, we see that in English there is only 1 choice (E2BF) of 'not to ask' for the boss category. There does not seem to be much influence on the results as a whole. Then there is 1 occurrence (E5CM and C4CM) of 'no reply' for the English and the Chinese acquaintance, respectively. So there is not any significant influence on the results. Finally, there are 4 occurrences (E1BF, E2AM, E2BF and E5AF) of 'not to ask' in English for the 'acquaintance' category only. Therefore, even if there were an influence, this influence would only be on the comparison between Chinese and English regarding the acquaintance only, but not any other category.

Even without the 5 choices of 'no reply' and 'not to ask' in English, the English make 10 indirect strategies of *d* (2) and *e* (8), accounting for 66.7%, compared with the Chinese 11 indirect strategies of *d* (7) and *e* (4), consisting of 73.3%. These statistics clearly show that both Chinese and English use the indirect strategies the most with the acquaintance.

We could also include the cases of 'no reply' and 'not to ask' in the indirect strategies, from the viewpoint of minimizing the face-threatening effect. In that case, adopting the indirect strategy for the acquaintance in English would be 100%, compared with 73.3% in Chinese. This is logical for the following possible reasons:

1. The English are said to be famous for their reserved nature or the characteristic sense of independence of the English nation, which is beyond the scope of my present research.

2. The task is borrowing money. It is a very sensitive topic, as I have mentioned previously. People, especially the English are reluctant to borrow money from others, above all from someone they are not very familiar with, in case they should lose or threaten face. If they have to borrow, most of the English subjects choose the most indirect speech act of request the most, including 10% of them who do not borrow at all. There are none who choose any direct strategies. There are also quite a few cases that show the reluctance of the English to borrow money from a relative but comparatively the choices they make are not the most indirect. However, the Chinese are different. Only 33.3% (5 out of 15) adopt the most indirect strategy and there is only one who does not borrow. Also 20% of them use direct strategies. They do ask to borrow money from acquaintances in a direct manner. This does not occur with the English at all. So we find that there are great differences between the two languages with regard to borrowing money from acquaintances (See Table 4-16). As for borrowing from other relationships, I have mainly dealt with that towards the beginning of this section.

4.4 Influence of Relative Power and Social Distance

Now I will examine how social factors such as relative power (P) and social distance (D) influence the choice of strategies in requests in Chinese and English interactions, making use of the data divided into the main types and subtypes of strategies displayed in 4.3.3.

Power in requests in the questionnaires:

First, let us look at the distribution of the strategy types by power in the following tables.

Table 4–18 Distribution of strategy types by power (%) (N = raw score) in requests in the questionnaires for borrowing money from the boss and an acquaintance

		Chinese Speakers		English Speakers		
		Boss	Acquaintance	Boss	Acquaintance	
		S<H	S=H	S<H	S=H	
		[+power +distance]	[=power ±distance]	[+power +distance]	[=power ±distance]	
M1 (Imperative)	Mood Der	0	6.67 (1)	0	0	
	Direct Question					
	Want St	0	0	0	0	
	Presumptive St					
M2 (Conventionally Indirect)	Ability (-hedge)	6.7 (1)	0	6.7 (1)	0	
	Ability (+hedge)	6.7 (1)	46.7 (7)	0	13.3 (2)	
	Willingness	(-hedge)	26.7 (4)	13.3 (2)	13.3 (2)	0
		(+hedge)	0	0	0	0
	Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	
M3 (Hints)	Strong	60 (9)	26.7 (4)	73.3 (11)	53.3 (8)	
	Weak/Not to ask	0	6.67 (1)	6.67 (1)	33.3 (5)	
	Total	15	15	15	15	

Table 4–18 shows the distribution of strategy types by power in requests in the questionnaires for borrowing money from the boss and an acquaintance. Here it is obvious that distance and power, especially the latter, are influencing the choice of strategy types. The distance between the speaker and the boss is big [+distance] and the boss has power over the speaker [+power] but the acquaintance is supposed to have power equal to the speaker's.

The data appears to show that the speaker in both languages is trying to choose formal strategies rather than informal ones. For example, there are 15 options for the speaker to choose from, in each case (with the boss and the acquaintance), nobody chooses Strategy type 1 for the boss in Chinese and English and only one instance in Chinese for the acquaintance and no instances of this strategy type at all in English. However, there are 9 (60%) and 4 (27%) hints for the Chinese boss and acquaintance, and 11 (73%) and 8 (53%) instances for the English boss and acquaintance, respectively. There is 1 (6.7%) instance of 'not to borrow' 不借钱 from the Chinese acquaintance and 6 (40%) instances of 'not to borrow' from the English acquaintance.

With the M2 strategy type, the Chinese use 26.7% and 60% of the conventionally indirect strategy for the boss and the acquaintance, but 60% and 26.7% of strong hints for the same type of relations, compared to 13.3% and 13.3% of the conventionally indirect and 73.3% and 53.3% of hints for the English boss and the acquaintance. However, there are 6 (33.3%) choices of 'not to borrow' in English and only 1 (6.7%) in Chinese.

What I have found is that when H has power over S (as in the case of the boss) or when the distance is big (as in the case of the acquaintance), the speaker tends to adopt the more formal strategy type such as M3 (Hints) or M2 (Conventionally indirect) but not the M1 (Imperative). This forms a contrast, to some extent, with the strategies chosen for the close relative and for the best friend in the questionnaires.

Table 4–19 Distribution of strategy types by power (%) (N = raw score) in requests in the questionnaires for borrowing money from a close relative and the best friend

		Chinese Speakers		English Speakers		
		Relative	Friend	Relative	Friend	
		S=H	S=H	S=H	S=H	
		[=power -distance]	[=power -distance]	[=power -distance]	[=power -distance]	
M1(Imperative)	Mood Der	40 (6)	46.7 (7)	6.67 (1)	13.3 (2)	
	Direct Question					
	Want St	0	0	0	0	
	Presumptive St					
M2 (Conventionally Indirect)	Query prep	0	0	0	0	
	Ability	(-hedge)	26.7 (4)	33.3 (5)	26.7(4)	53.3 (8)
		(+hedge)	0	6.7 (1)	13.3 (2)	20 (3)
	Willingness	(-hedge)	20 (3)	6.7 (1)	40 (6)	0
		(+hedge)	0	0	0	0
	Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	0	
M3 (Hints)	Strong	13.3 (2)	6.7 (1)	13.3 (2)	13.3 (2)	
	Weak	0	0	0	0	
Total		15	15	15	15	

Table 4–19 shows the distribution of strategy types by power in requests in the questionnaires for borrowing money from a close relative and a best friend. Unlike in Table 4–18 above, here in Table 4–19 the speaker and the hearer are either close relatives or best friends. So, the social distance between them is regarded as small [-distance] and they have equal relative power. Accordingly, they choose strategies different from those for the boss and the acquaintance. There, both Chinese and English choose the M3 (Hints) strategy type and the M2 (Conventionally indirect with hedges) the most and they choose almost none of the M1 (Imperative) strategy (only 1 instance in Chinese and in English).

In Table 4–19, however, the use of the strategy M1 by the Chinese has significantly changed. Of all the 15 options, 6 (40%) for the Chinese relative category and 7 (46.7%) for the Chinese friend category are chosen, as compared with 1 (6.7%)

and 2 (13.3%) for the English relative and friend categories. Also, both Chinese and English tend to prefer the ability and willingness option without hedges in M2 (Conventionally indirect). There are fewer M2 (+hedge) strategies and fewer hints than for the boss and acquaintance. Additionally, there are no 'not to borrow' strategies at all. Thus, we can clearly see that power and distance do influence the choice of strategies in requests.

The data seems to indicate that the Chinese use more M1 strategies than the English. With regard to M2 strategies, the Chinese do not choose the hedged ones for relatives but the English do. With best friends, the English clearly favour the unhedged ones much more than the Chinese, but with relatives, the English use much more unhedged willingness strategies than the Chinese.

Through the analysis of data, the general impression seems to be that the Chinese prefer to be more direct than the English (Also see Yuling Pan 2000: 152 and Lee-Wong 2000: 75). However, in very serious matters such as borrowing money from somebody who has power over the speaker and where the social distance is not great, Chinese and English tend to adopt more indirect strategies. When in informal and equal situations such as between close relatives and good friends, both Chinese and English tend to be slightly more direct. However, the Chinese seem to be more direct with their relatives and less direct with their friends than the English although to a lesser extent.

4.5 Discussion of Results and Conclusions

First of all, I will draw the reader's attention to a couple of preliminary findings.

1. In a task for a common goal and interest, which is beneficial to all, participants tend to adopt more direct than indirect strategies in requests.

2. In situations such as borrowing money, strategies are very much influenced by relative social position and relationship. Participants tend to use less direct strategies with their superiors and acquaintances but more direct strategies with relatives and friends.

Requests, as a speech act of directives, are used to ask H for information or to do something. So, there are two main categories of requests: one for information and the other for H's action. The former category is less likely to give the hearer the impression of being impolite. However, classical studies (several researchers, especially Brown & Levinson) claim that requests are intrinsically face-threatening. In order to make requests in certain situations less face-threatening, they make attempts to find ways to reduce their force of imposition and therefore to sound polite instead of impolite.

However, I have found a sub-category of requests that are usually not regarded as face-threatening in the joint/communal task-oriented dialogues (especially in Chinese) because the request will not just benefit S but does benefit all including H (See 3.4.5). The success of the discussion is beneficial to each of the members who try their best to contribute their wisdom to it. Usually in this case, participants care more about the common task than their face.

In the DCTs, both Chinese and English vary in their strategy choices. For example, most of the subjects in both languages adopt the impositive strategies most frequently with the relative and friend, but they tend to use a lot of more indirect strategies with the boss and the acquaintance. This demonstrates that on more formal occasions or with people having more power or distant relations, both Chinese and English prefer comparatively more formal or indirect strategies (See 5.3). Power and distance do influence the choice of strategies.

Also, there are differences between them. In some cases, the English seem to use more indirect forms than the Chinese do. For example, they use more of the Strategy type 2 whereas the Chinese adopt more of Strategy type 1, as we have seen in the above discussion.

In syntactical structures that can be used for politeness, Chinese and English are similar to each other in the following ways. Both use the basic structures of imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives. In both languages, the interrogatives are used the most, though the English use them more frequently than the Chinese. The declaratives are used the least in both languages, though the Chinese adopt them more frequently than the English do. The Chinese favour the imperatives more than the English.

Additionally, the differences in the two systems of verbs are significant between the two languages. Chinese verbs never change in form, with time, person, number, mood, etc. So one can not find a counterpart to auxiliaries as *could*, *would*, *might*, etc. used for politeness. However, the Chinese have their own way(s) to achieve the same purpose in requests. They have such terms as 您 *nín* (French *Vous*) and other expressions to save the situation, such as the politeness marker 请 *qǐng* (please).

These are the preliminary findings and discussion of requests from the viewpoint of head acts, but the same data can also be analyzed in terms of modification, which will be done in Chapter VI. There are also the cultural factors that play a significant part in Chinese and English politeness. This is discussed in Chapter VII. Next in Chapter V, I will study politeness phenomena in refusals in Chinese and English.

CHAPTER V: REFUSALS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will look at how participants use their refusal strategies in the investigation. First, the descriptive categories (main strategy types and subtypes) of refusals are illustrated and data from the role-play is analyzed (5.1). Then the data from the DCT questionnaires are considered (5.2). Such factors as power and distance are also investigated (5.3). Findings, results and summary are discussed at the end of this chapter (5.4).

5.1 Descriptive Categories of Strategies of Refusals in the Role-play

According to the criteria in 3.4.4 based on Beebe et al.'s classification method (1990: 72), I have grouped the refusal acts found in the role-play into two major types with their respective subtypes as follows.

I. Strategy type 1 – Direct

A. Performative.

1. Bare performative, e.g.

C1BF: 我觉得这个地方还是挺热闹的, 我觉得还是不错的。
I think it [Basel] is a busy place, ... I think it is not a bad place.

C1CM: 我不喜欢。
I don't like it.

2. Performative headed by 'But'

C3BF: 南京, 南京。
Nanjing, Nanjing.
C3AF: 但是我不太喜欢南京。
But I don't like it very much.

B. Non-performative statements

1. 'No', e.g.

C3BF: 机票大约多少钱?
How much is the plane ticket, roughly speaking?
C3CF: 都安排好的机票大约是 600 多吧。
The packaged ticket will be about over 600 yuan.
C3BF: 哎哟, 不行, 不行。
Gosh! No, no.

2. Negative willingness/ability, e.g.

C1AF: 坐大巴啊?
By coach?
C1CF: 我不能坐, 客车我不能坐。
I can't. I can't take the coach.

C5AF: 坐飞机, 火车太慢。
 By plane. The train is too slow.
 C5CM: 我告诉你, 我不想坐飞机。
 Let me tell you, *I won't take the plane.*

II. Strategy type 2 – Indirect

A. Statement with hedges of 'I think/feel/ etc.' For example:

C3CF: 花这么多钱到这里来了, 还不多玩几个地方?
 Why don't we go and see as many places as we can spending so much money on the trip?
 C3AF: 这么多好玩的地方站一站就走, 我觉得好像玩不痛快。
I feel that staying for a little while in each of so many interesting places won't be much fun.

B. Acceptance functioning as a refusal: use of the small-b 'but'. For example:

C1BM: 它 [Basel] 在德法瑞三国交界处, 能看到三种不同风格
 Basel is on the border of Germany, France and Switzerland. You can see three different styles here.
 C1CF: 交界城市也许你有这个好处就说你能看三个国家, 但是呢, 可能你这三个国家都看不全。我更喜欢看一个有纯法国的、有法国特色风味的地方。
 Perhaps this border city *has the advantages*: You can see a bit of each of the three countries of Germany, France and Switzerland, *but probably you will not have a good look at each of the three styles*. So I prefer we see a place that is purely French and specially characteristic of France.

C. Condition. For example:

C2AM: 我觉得呀,, 我是比较喜欢坐飞机去,
 I think, ..., I prefer to go by plane ...
 C2BM:, 如果说有事或者有其它需要很着急, 那就乘飞机, 但是, 旅游坐飞机没多大必要。
 ..., *if you have something important or something very urgent*, you just take the plane, *but for traveling, there's not much need to do so.*

D. Excuse, reason, or explanation. For example:

C5AF: 我想坐飞机呀, 又快又要省时间。
 I want to take the plane. It's both fast and time-saving.
 C5BF: 可是我没那么多钱啊。
But I haven't got so much money.

E. Dissuasion (Effort to persuade H not to do A). For example:

C2AM: 反正那条线咱们去那两个城市, 对吧?
 Anyway we will visit those two cities on that line, all right?
 C2BM: 累死人!
Tiring to death!

F. Avoidance:

1. Joking. For example:

C3AF: 夜里坐飞机, 是吗?

Going by plane at night?

C3CF: 你坐飞机, 是吗? 那你帮我们订票吧。

You want to take the plane, don't you? Then you help us to pay our plane fares.

2. Irony/Sarcasm. For example:

C4BM: 我觉得人家有一种旅馆, 20 镑、20 镑甚至可以三个人。

I think there are hotel rooms that charge 20 pounds, 20 even for three people.

C4AF: 20 镑三个人, 那怎么住啊?

20 pounds for three people. How do people live in then?

C4CF: (笑) 好便宜啊!

(Laughs.) So cheap!

3. Hedging. For example:

E2AM: Are you quite close to the city center? You could like you know go into the like tourist agencies etcetera.

E2CM: *I don't know.*

E2BM: *I don't know. I'm pretty busy at the minute.*

4. Fake refusal. For example:

C3AF: 咱们买点东西去。买点特产。

Let's buy something for him, buy some specialties.

C3BF: 行, 买点土特产吗的。

All right. Buy some local specialties and the like.

C3CF: 哎呀, 不用, 真的不用客气。就像到我们家一样。

Oh, no. No need. Don't be polite, really. It's the same as coming to my home.

G. Promise of future acceptance. For example:

C1BM: (Basel 的问题)你怎么样?

(About Basel) What do you think?

C1CF: 下次去, 下次去。

Next time. Next time.

Findings:

Based on the strategy types that are set up above, I will look at the distribution patterns of the refusal acts found in the role-play first. Table 5-1 shows the total number of refusal acts in Chinese and English and the distribution pattern in each group of the two languages.

Table 5–1 Distribution of refusals in Chinese and English in the role-play discussion**Chinese**

	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5	Total
Frequency	<i>18</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>99</i>
Percentage	<i>18.2%</i>	<i>16.2%</i>	<i>27.3%</i>	<i>15.2%</i>	<i>23.2%</i>	<i>100%</i>

English

	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5	Total
Frequency	<i>14</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>73</i>
Percentage	<i>19.2%</i>	<i>31.5%</i>	<i>26%</i>	<i>17.8%</i>	<i>5.5%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Table 5–1 shows that the speech act of refusals is a commonly used act in both Chinese and English, especially in a discussion like this one, where the participants try to reach agreements. The distribution in terms of percentages with Groups 1, 3, and 4 in Chinese and English is quite similar, the difference between Chinese Group 2 and English Group 2, and Chinese Group 5 and English Group 5 being more distinct. This gives us the idea that there will be similarities and differences in research between the two languages – and also comparisons to be made. Table 5–2 gives us the distribution patterns of the three strategy types with regard to refusals.

Table 5–2 Distribution of two strategy types in Chinese and English

	Strategy1	Percent	Strategy2	Percent	Total
Chinese	<i>59</i>	<i>59.6%</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>40.4%</i>	<i>99</i>
English	<i>43</i>	<i>58.9%</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>41.1%</i>	<i>73</i>

From the above table, we see that most of the Chinese and the English prefer to use Strategy type 1, which is supposed to be the more direct strategy of the two. It is also clear that the Chinese groups adopt only a little more of Strategy type 1 than the English. The English adopt slightly more of Strategy type 2 than the Chinese. These figures show that both Chinese and English seem to be more fond of direct strategies than indirect ones in these discussions. This is different from the DCT results (See 5.2). The distribution of the subtypes is uneven as the following table shows.

Table 5-3 Frequency of strategy type 1 for Chinese groups 1 to 5

	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5	Total	Percentage
Performative	7	2	12	8	13	42	71.2%
But-Performative	0	1	1	2	6	10	16.9%
Non-performative: No	2	1	2	0	0	5	8.5%
Non-performative: Negative willingness/ability	1	0	0	0	1	2	3.4%
Total out of 99	10	4	15	10	20	59	100%
Percentage	16.9%	6.8%	25.4%	16.9%	33.9%	100%	

Note: The total number of refusals for all the five Chinese groups is 99, of which the total number for Strategy type 1 is 59. Both the percentages in the last line and those on the right are made out of the total number 59.

Table 5-4 Frequency of strategy type 1 for English groups 1 to 5

	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5	Total	Percentage
Performative	7	6	6	5	0	24	55.8%
But-Performative	3	2	4	2	2	13	30.2%
Non-performative: No	0	2	0	2	0	4	9.3%
Non-performative: Negative willingness/ability	0	0	1	1	0	2	4.7%
Total out of 73	10	10	11	10	2	43	100%
Percentage	23.2%	23.2%	25.6%	23.2%	4.7%	100%	

Note: The total number of refusals for all the five English groups is 73, of which the total number of Strategy type 1 is 43.

In Table 5-3 and Table 5-4, we see that some subtypes are used more frequently than the others. The performatives (performative and But-performative) account for 88.1% (71.2% and 16.9%) while the non-performatives ('No' and negative willingness / ability) consist of only 11.9% (8.5% and 3.4%), compared with the English 86% and only 14%, respectively.

The purpose of dividing bare performative and But-performative is in contrast to the latter which is classified as direct with the acceptance of the small-b 'but' which is classified as indirect (See Strategy type 2 below). There is not much difference between the two performatives except that the word 'But' may be used to "show disagreement, surprise or astonishment" (OALD 4th edition). Look at the following two extracts of discussion.

Extract 1

C3AF: 那去, 杭州吧。

Then, to Hangzhou.

C3BF: 杭州我不喜欢。

I don't like Hangzhou.

Extract 2

C5BF: 南京, 南京。

Nanjing, Nanjing.

C5AF: 那可是我不太喜欢南京啊。

But I don't like Nanjing very much.

Both C3BF and C5AF express the idea of not accepting the other speaker's suggestion, one using 'But' and the other without it. Perhaps the one with 'But' stresses the contrast of ideas. However, both belong to the 'direct' strategy.

It is logical that participants make use of more performatives than non-performatives. The role-play is a group discussion but not a dialogue between two people only. Whenever a topic is raised or a suggestion made, each member contributes his/her own idea. In most cases, they have to clearly express what they want to do and what not to do rather than give such simple responses as 'No' or 'I won't'.

Chinese Group 1

C1BM: 它比较大些, 我觉得那个地方还是比较热闹的。.....

It is bigger. I feel it's quite busy ...

C1CF: 我不喜欢。

I don't like it.

C1BM: 你那个地方只能说我去过一个边界小镇,

That place. You can only say you have been to a small town on the border ...

C1CF: 我就是我不太喜欢 Basel 那个地方。

I simply don't like that place, Basel.

English Group 4

E4AM: What other cities grab your fancy?

E4BF: Basel would be OK.

E4CM: *Not too hot on Basel.*

E4BF: No? It's lovely.

E4CM: Exactly I rest my case.

E4AM: I don't like border towns actually apart from Strasburg.

In the Chinese group, C1BM prefers to go to Basel and gives reasons. C1CF contradicts him by saying she doesn't like it. Then C1BM says that he does not favour C1BF's suggestion either. It is a heated discussion which goes on and on, with every member airing their comments and suggestions. Similarly in the English group, E4AM starts up the discussion with a question. Then, E4BF offers an idea and E4CM immediately expresses his disagreement. The discussion moves on. In most cases, they are not asked questions to be answered with 'Yes/No' or 'I can't/won't'. The result is that most of the subtypes used are performatives rather than non-performatives in both languages.

Another thing that is worth noting with Strategy type 1 is that the distribution with each group is uneven. In Table 5-3, for example, the percentage of this strategy type for Chinese Group 5 is 33.9%, the highest of all of the 5 Chinese groups, as compared with only 6.8% for Chinese Group 2, the lowest of the Chinese groups. Why is there such a discrepancy between them?

Chinese Group 5 is a Chinese family consisting of grandparents and their granddaughter. As we have discussed in 4.3.2.1, the Chinese family members tend to be informal and direct with each other in interaction, including the child, who like most children tends to be pampered in present-day China due to the one-child policy. This explains why Chinese Group 5 has used such a high percentage of performative and But-performative refusals in the role-play discussion (See Table 5-3).

Chinese Group 4 has used the same strategy type the least frequently probably because they are the only group of the five who have stayed in England for many years and therefore may have been influenced by the English, as is explained in 4.2.1.

The distribution of subtypes of Strategy type 1 is relatively even except English Group 5, which is also a family. The percentage for them is 2%. Usually they do not use the direct strategy. This constitutes a sharp contrast with the Chinese family.

Different groups have different percentages for these strategy types. For example, in Chinese the subtype of negative willingness/ability is 46 out of a total of 59 or 78%. The English figures are 23 out of 41 (56.1%).

Why is this sub-strategy used so much both in Chinese and English in the role-play? It is direct, straightforwardly conveying the speaker's need or desire to refuse or to express the speaker's disagreement. In this situation, the more straightforward everybody is, the more efficient the discussion is. For example:

Chinese:

C5AF: 我们要住好一点的宾馆。 We'll stay in slightly better hotels.

C5CM: 我不同意住太贵的宾馆。 *I don't agree to stay in expensive hotels.*

.....

C5AF: 我们坐飞机去吧。 Let's take the plane.

C5CM: 我不想坐, 我不同意坐。

I don't want to take the plane. I don't agree to it.

C5AF: 我想坐飞机呀, 又快又省时间。

I want to take the plane. It's both fast and time-saving.

C5BM: 可是我不想坐。 *But I don't want to.*

English:

E1AM: There's no problem about Paris. I'm not going to Basel.

E1BF: *I'm not going to Strasbourg.*

E4AM: What other cities grab your fancy?

E4BF: Basel would be OK.

E4CM: *Not too hot on Basel.*

E4BF: No? It's lovely.

E4CM: Exactly I rest my case.

E4AM: I don't like border towns actually apart from Strasbourg.

If we compare Table 5–3 and Table 5–4, we will find that one of the most obvious differences is between Chinese Group 5 and English Group 5 at the subtype of negative willingness/ability. Chinese Group 5 uses this strategy 14 times, more than any other Chinese group, compared with 1 for English Group 5, the lowest occurrence in the English groups. These are two families. The Chinese family tends to be direct to each other, whereas the English family does not (See 4.3.2.1).

In the above discussion, we find that C5CM, E1BF and E4AM are so direct in expressing their disagreements that they could sound abrupt in a different situation. Here, however, they are not abrupt or impolite. They sound natural. They communicate fluently and efficiently.

The fact that participants in both Chinese and English adopt more direct strategies in refusals in the role-play than indirect can be explained in the same way as the requests in the role-play in Chapter IV – joint/communal task-oriented communication. Now I will look at Strategy type 2 (Indirect) in the following.

Table 5–5 Frequency of strategy type 2 for Chinese groups 1 to 5

	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5	Total	Percentage
Hedging / I think etc	3	3	3	2	1	12	30%
Dissuasion	1	3	2	2	0	8	20%
Acceptance with / ... but ...	1	3	0	0	2	6	15%
Reason	2	1	3	0	0	6	15%
Condition / If ...	0	0	1	1	0	2	5%
Irony	0	2	0	0	0	2	5%
Joking	0	0	2	0	0	2	5%
Promise of future acceptance	1	0	0	0	0	1	2.5%
Fake refusal	0	0	1	0	0	1	2.5%
Total	8	12	12	5	3	40	100%
Percentage	20%	30%	30%	12.5%	7.5%	100%	

Note: The total number of refusals for all the five Chinese groups is 99, of which the total number for Strategy type 2 is 40.

Table 5-6 Frequency of strategy type 2 for English groups 1 to 5

	EG1	EG2	EG3	EG4	EG5	Total	Percentage
Acceptance with / ... but ...	2	1	6	9	1	19	63.3%
Reason	0	1	1	3	0	5	16.7%
Dissuasion	1	1	0	0	0	2	6.7%
Condition / If ...	0	0	0	1	1	2	6.7%
Joking	1	0	0	0	0	1	3.3%
Hedging / I think, etc.	0	0	1	0	0	1	3.3%
Irony							
Promise	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fake refusal							
Total	4	3	8	13	2	30	100%
Percentage	13.3%	10%	26.7%	43.3%	6.7%	100%	

Note: The total number of refusals for all the five English groups is 73, of which the total number for Strategy type 2 is 30.

There are a few aspects in the above tables that draw our attention. First, the Chinese use Strategy type 2 slightly less frequently (40.4%) than the English (41.1%). At first glance, there does not seem to be much difference between Chinese and English in using this strategy type.

However, if we look carefully, we will find that there are quite some differences between the two languages. Take the first subtype, the performative 'I think, etc.' in Tables 5-5 and 5-6 for example. Obviously Chinese participants favour this subtype the most in Strategy type 2 with a frequency of 30%, compared with the English 3.3%, the same as 'joking'.

Chinese often use this subtype to soften the tone of a refusal. It can be understood that it is only from the speaker's point of view that something shouldn't be done. Other members can give their own ideas. In this way, the hearer is given an out or an option. That is why it is used the most frequently compared with other subtypes.

C4AF: 我觉得看怎么玩。比方说如果光去巴黎啊, 巴黎大概有那么一天多点, 两天, 咱们可以再往前探一个国家, 或者两个国家, 这样子。

I think it depends on how we will make the trip. For example, the trip to Paris will take us one day and a little more, at most two days. Then we may move on to another country or still another. This is my idea.

C4CF: 我自己个人觉得, 因为我上次去过巴黎, 我就觉得巴黎一天太紧了。
Personally I think, I have been to Paris. I think one day for Paris is too short.

C4AF: 一天太紧了? One day is too short?

C4BM: 我也觉得巴黎一天太紧了。 I also think one day for Paris is too short.

In the short interaction of only 4 utterances above, the same 我觉得 (I feel/think) is used 4 times. From this, it is clear how much the Chinese use it as a hedge, but there is only one occurrence of this subtype in English.

The subtype that English participants favour most is 'acceptance with but ...'. To them this is a very helpful device with which to avoid threatening face in refusals. They show acceptance or agreement with you with a 'yeah' or an adjunct such as "That is a good idea" and then they refuse your idea with the 'but' part of the utterance. The first part you hear is 'agreement' or 'acceptance' which serves as a cushion to reduce the threatening force of the refusal. More than half of the English (63.3%) use it, compared with the Chinese percentage of 15%, which comes third in the Chinese list. For example:

E4AM: OK, yeah so we've done time there; we've done cities. What does everyone think about transport? Basically, I think we should go by train.

E4CM: *Yeah, but it would be uncomfortable though, that's the only thing.*

E4CM: I think trains are more expensive in England but they're cheaper in France.

E4AM: Well if we've all got, if we've all got student rail cards.

E4BM: Yeah, yeah

E4CM: *I suppose so, but it would be a bit of a broken up journey then, wouldn't it?*

C4AM: [Strasbourg] 有三国风格, 所以呢, 一箭三鸟

It has styles of the three countries ..., so you kill three birds with one stone ...

C4CM: *我觉得你说的也挺对的, 但是我觉得吧, 你说的一箭三鸟变成四不像。*

I feel what you said is quite right, but I think your three birds will become something that resembles nothing in the end.

Now I will look at 'dissuasion' and 'reason'. In the role-play, every member tries to offer their own ideas or suggestions. Each of them thinks that his/her own idea is better than others', at least from their own point of view or in their own interest. It is necessary for participants to put forward ideas for approval and try to persuade others to give up their suggestions because they are not good for them. In such cases, 'dissuasion' and 'reason' are also strategies commonly used in both languages. The difference between them is that Chinese participants seem to favour 'dissuasion' more than the English do (20% and 6.7%, respectively), but the English are slightly more interested in 'reason' (16.7%), compared with the Chinese (15%). This shows that the Chinese prefer to "stop others by advice or persuasion" (OALD 4th edition) while the English tend more to stop others by explaining reasons. For example:

C1BM: Basel 是三国交界的城市

Basel is a city on the border of three countries, ...

C1AF: 你说的这个 Basel 啊, 不伦不类的, 什么交界城市啊, 没有什么特色

.....

This Basel you said is neither fish nor fowl. What border city is it?! It has no specialties of its own, ...

(Dissuasion: criticism of the thing)

E2AM: It's like on the border of three countries.

E2CM: *Yeah, yeah I don't think we should have any problems but maybe it's a bit isolated because it's not that renowned for being that much of a lively place as far as I can ...*

(Justification)

The following examples are to show that the subtype of 'reason' is also important for Chinese participants, and 'dissuasion' is important for the English too.

C5AF: 我想坐飞机呀, 又快又省时间,

I want to take the plane.

C5BF: 可是我没有这么多钱。

But I haven't got so much money.

(Reason)

E4CM: But, Strasbourg.

E4BM: *No, no, no, terrible place.*

(Dissuasion: criticism)

Both Chinese and English refuse by means of condition and joking though not frequently. However, Chinese participants adopt other subtypes such as irony, promise and fake refusals but none of these are found with the English. The fake refusal is especially worth mentioning as a strategy in Chinese to refuse offers, invitations, etc. It represents a very important category of refusals in the language, but there is only one occurrence with Chinese Group 3. Therefore, the shortage of data makes it impractical to discuss here. However, I will deal with it in the DCT questionnaires in the next section, where there are many examples (See 5.2).

Data analysis shows that the speech act of refusals does have the risk of threatening face, just as Brown & Levinson claim (1987: 65). That is probably why participants in the role-play adopt various indirect strategies to avoid such potential face threats.

However, data analysis also shows that both Chinese and English participants favour direct strategies more than the indirect ones. The reasons probably are:

Firstly, in the joint/communal task-oriented communication, the risk of face-threats is reduced to a large degree. Individual face is less important than the common task in many cases (See 3.4.5).

Secondly, the relationships between participants are also important factors that determine whether such speech acts as refusals are face-threatening or not. Participants in the role-plays play the parts of either classmates, or friends or friends' friends, or family members. In this case, people tend to be frank and direct with each other.

Thirdly, the contents of the refusals are also important in determining whether they are face-threatening. In the role-play, it is a group discussion. Any contribution, whether it is agreement or disagreement, whether it is acceptance or refusal, will be mutually beneficial to the speaker and the hearer, and to the collective as a whole in the end, including the benefit of the refused person. Compare it with the case of lending money to others in the DCT investigation (See 5.2).

Through the above data analysis, a general impression can be drawn that the speech act of refusals is multifunctional and it is not necessarily face-threatening in certain situations (Du 1995: 65, Zhang 1995: 23 and Spencer-Oatey 2000: 13) (See 1.9). It is even used as a device to show politeness in refusing offers, invitations, etc. in Chinese. In the next section, I will analyze the data of refusals in the DCT questionnaires.

5.2 Strategy Analysis of Refusals in the Questionnaires

In the questionnaires, five different situations have been provided, in each of which the subjects are asked to choose one out of six strategies of refusals. The purpose is to examine how they do the refusing in those various situations and compare the similarities and differences between the two languages with regard to strategies.

Situation 1 (Question 6 in the DCTs)

Imagine that somebody who is in need wants to borrow some money, say, 1500 yuan / 100 pounds from you but you don't want to lend it. What would you say to refuse if the person is: your boss, a close relative of yours, your best friend, or someone you do not know very well.

The six choices given in the DCTs are:

- a. I won't. 不借。
- b. I can't. 不行。
- c. I haven't got so much money. 我没有这么多钱。

d. I'm sorry I can't because I haven't got so much. 对不起, 我没有这么多钱借给你。

e. I wish I could but I haven't got so much. 我要是能借给你就好了, 可是我没有这么多钱。

f. Other, please specify. 其它说法, 具体说明。

Table 5-7 The results of the choices of the Chinese and the English to refuse to lend money to others

	Chinese	Percentage	English	Percentage
Direct	23	38.3%	25	41.7%
Indirect	37	61.7%	35	58.3%
Total	60	100%	60	100%

In Table 5-7, we see that even in Chinese politeness, which generally favours direct strategies, there are more choices of indirect than direct strategies when it comes to money matters. This is also true of English politeness as shown in the same table. The percentages are generally not significantly different between Chinese and English. There are no occurrences of hints in either language. However, a more detailed study of the matter is required.

Table 5-8 Choices of types of refusal strategy to lend money in the Chinese groups

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	0	0	3	3	8	1*
Relative	0	0	8	6	1	0
Friend	0	1	5	6	3	0
Acquaintance	2	2	1	7	2	1**
Total	2	3	17	22	14	2
Percentage	3.3%	5%	28.3%	36.7%	23.3%	3.3%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups is 60, of which the total number for each type of people is 15.

2. * f31: 实在对不起, 我真的没有这么多钱。 I am very sorry I really haven't got so much with me. (close to *d*)

3. **f15: 我哪有那么多钱! 我手头还紧呢! How can I have so much money! I'm short of money, too! (close to *c*)

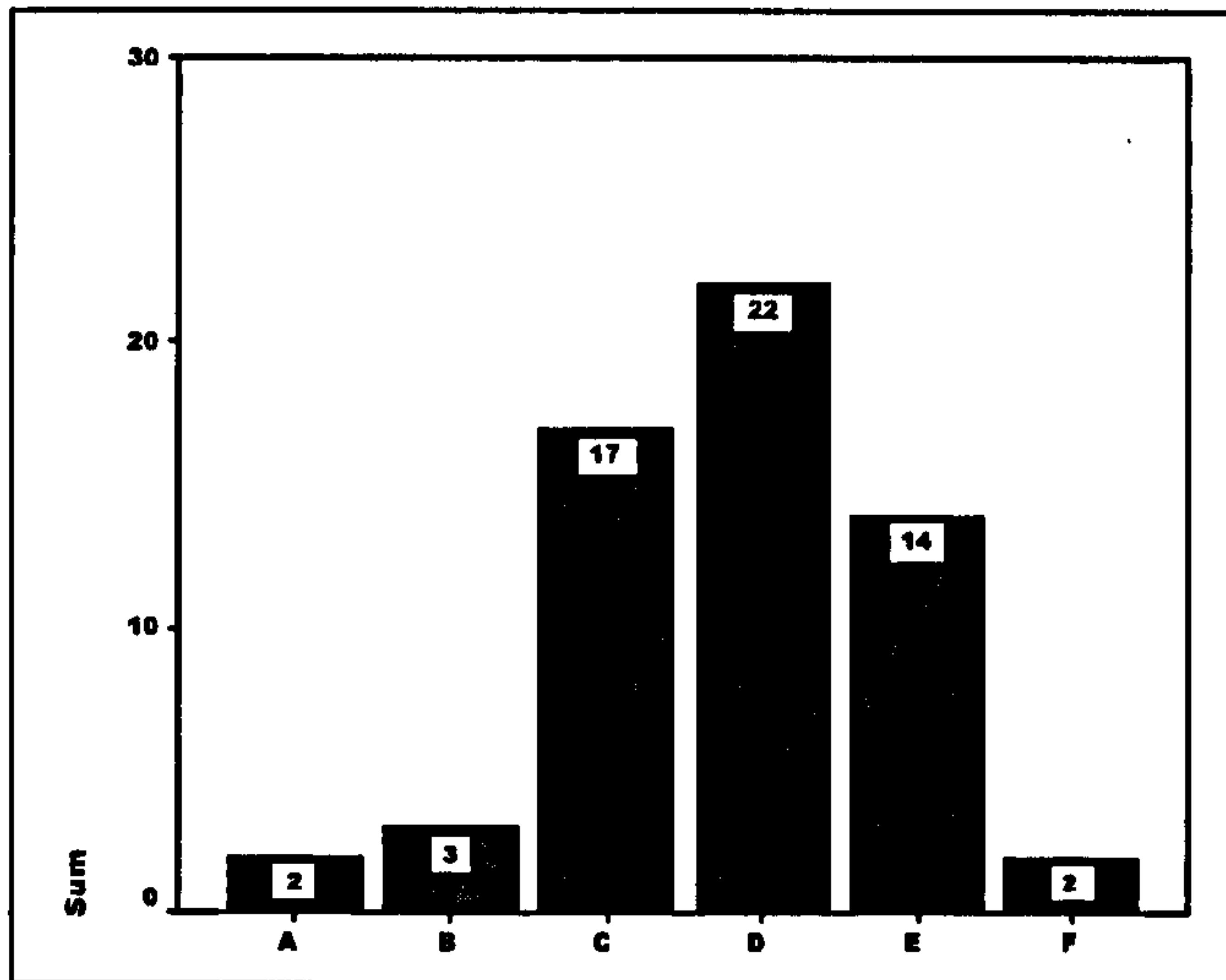
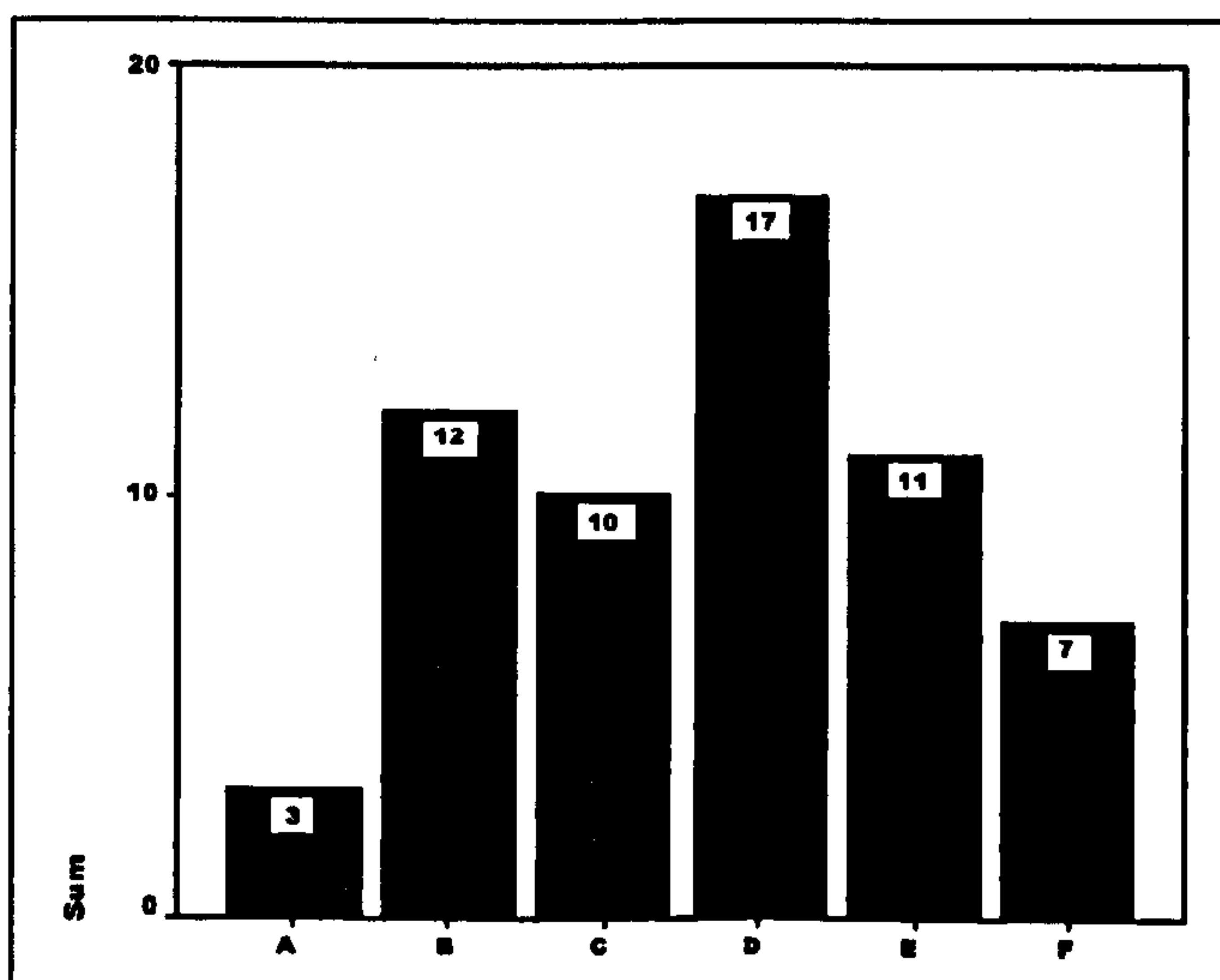


Table 5-9 Choices of types of refusal strategy to lend money in the English groups

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	0	1	1	5	5	3*
Relative	0	5	5	3	1	1**
Friend	1	5	1	3	4	1***
Acquaintance	2	1	3	6	1	2****
Total	3	12	10	17	11	7
Percentage	5%	20%	16.7%	28.3%	18.3%	11.7%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five English groups is 60, of which the total number for each type of people is 15.
2. * f22: I would but I haven't got enough. (close to *d*)
f10: I'm afraid I can't. (close to *d*)
f28: Sorry, I'm not in a position to do so. (close to *d*)
3. ** f11: No, I am sorry I can't. (close to *d*)
4. *** f12: I am sorry I haven't enough on me. (close to *d*)
5. **** f13: I am afraid not. (close to *b*)
f29: I am sorry I am not in a position to do so. (close to *d*)



Here, in Table 5-8, it is not difficult for us to see that there are no choices of *a* or *b* for the boss. The reason is that Choices *a* and *b* are too direct, too abrupt and therefore too impolite for the boss. There are 3 choices of *c*, which is a grounder or a reason not to lend the money, without any modification. It is also direct though not so abrupt as choice *a* or *b*. There are 3 choices of *d*, 8 choices of *e* and 1 choice of *f*, all being indirect. Choice *d* has an apologizing phrase or polite marker 'Very sorry' 对不起 to lead the head act 'I haven't got so much money to lend you.' Immediately the head act is mitigated. In other words, it is not so face-threatening. Similarly, in choice *e*, 'I haven't got so much' 我没有这么多钱 is preceded by 'I wish I could but ...' 我要是能借给你就好了, 可是", which reduces the force of face-threatening to a great degree. That is why there are 8 out of 15 subjects who choose this strategy for the boss. The direct choices for the boss *a*, *b*, and *c* account for 20% and the indirect *d*, *e*, and *f* consist of 80%.

Comparatively, one will find in Table 5-9 that, there are 3 choices of direct strategies and 12 indirect ones for the English boss, also accounting for 20% and 80% respectively. So, it seems that the Chinese and the English adopt very similar strategies towards their bosses.

For the close relative, the strategies that the Chinese choose are mainly choices *c* and *d*. As we have seen above, *c* is a grounder or reason not to lend the money. Although it is direct, it suits the needs of the relationship between many relatives in my data. There are 8 choices of *c* out of 15, more than half. There are 6 choices of *d* and 1 *e*, less than half. Similarly, for the best friend, it is 6 direct and 9 indirect, accounting for 40% and 60%, respectively. The Chinese here try to be less face-threatening with the friend than with the relative. With regard to the acquaintance, though there are 7 choices of *d*, which is indirect, there are also 6 choices of *a*, *b*, *c* and *f* (which is close to *c*). Choice *a* is very direct and therefore there are no choices of it for the boss, the relative or the best friend at all. For it may be face-threatening in the situation. However, there are 2 choices of it for the acquaintance, and *b* is equally face-threatening here as *a* and that is why it is not chosen for the boss or the relative, (there is only one choice of it for the best friend.) However, there are 2 choices of *b* with one choice of *c* for the acquaintance. What is unexpected is the fact that there is the choice of *f* by C3AF, (How can I have so much money! I am short of money, too!), which can be very impolite with the particular intonation. To an acquaintance that one does not know very well, one is not supposed to be so abrupt and therefore impolite, generally speaking.

The same subject, C3AF, chose *e* which is indirect for the boss. She chose *c*, which is direct but not impolite for the close relative. She chose *d*, which is normally not face-

threatening through the use of the phrase of apology 'Very sorry' followed by the reason 'having not so much money to lend'. However, for the acquaintance, she chose *f*, which is at least as direct as *a* or *b* and which can be face-threatening in certain situations. The question is that this choice of *f* does not seem to be accidental. There are 2 choices of *a* and 2 choices of *b* (both being the most direct) and 1 choice of *c* (direct), and *f* is close to *c*. To a stranger, all these direct choices of refusing strategy can be face-threatening here to H. Nevertheless, nearly half of the subjects (6 out of 15) have chosen these direct strategies. This is both unusual and unexpected. I asked some of the subjects who made this choice about this. They gave the reason that they would not care much about the face of a person whom they did not know very well.

The choices for the close relative in English are different from those in Chinese. Though they do not choose *a* either, they have 5 choices of *b* and 5 choices of *c*, compared with zero *b* and 8 choices of *c* for the Chinese. So, the English seem to be more direct to the close relative than the Chinese.

For the best friend, the English and the Chinese are similar in the sense that most of each group prefer indirect to direct strategies on the whole, but if we look a little more carefully, we will find that the English choose 5 *b*'s, 2 *f*'s (counted as *b*), and 1 *a*, and 1 *c*. They seem to be much more direct than the Chinese (1 *b* and 5 *c*'s). So, most of the Chinese here are not so direct towards the friend as the English.

From the above analysis, we can see that English and Chinese choose similar strategies for the boss and for the acquaintance. For the best friend, there are some differences but not much between the Chinese and English in terms of the percentages of direct and indirect strategies chosen. The speakers of English tend to be a little more direct in refusing to lend money to the best friend than the Chinese speakers, as the data showed. However, with regard to the close relative, there seem to be greater differences between English and Chinese refusal strategies. The proportion is reversed. The percentages of 66.7% versus 33.3% for the English have changed to 40% and 60% for the Chinese. The English seem to be more direct with the relative while the Chinese tend to be less direct to him/her. I will further discuss the matter in Chapter VII.

Situation 2 (Question 7 in the DCTs):

Imagine that somebody whose computer you have spent several hours repairing wants to invite you to dinner. What would you say if you want to accept the invitation and if the person is: your boss, your relative, your best friend, or your acquaintance. The six choices given in the DCTs are:

- a. All right. I will come. 好吧，我就来。
- b. You shouldn't do that (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
你不应该这么做。(等对方再进一步邀请。)
- c. There is no need for you to do so. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
你这样做没有必要。(等对方再进一步邀请。)
- d. What do you want to do? (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
你这是干什么?(等对方再进一步邀请。)
- e. I would like very much to, thank you.
谢谢，十分荣幸，生意难却。
- f. Other, please specify.
其它说法，具体说明。

Table 5-10 The general results of the choices made by the Chinese and the English

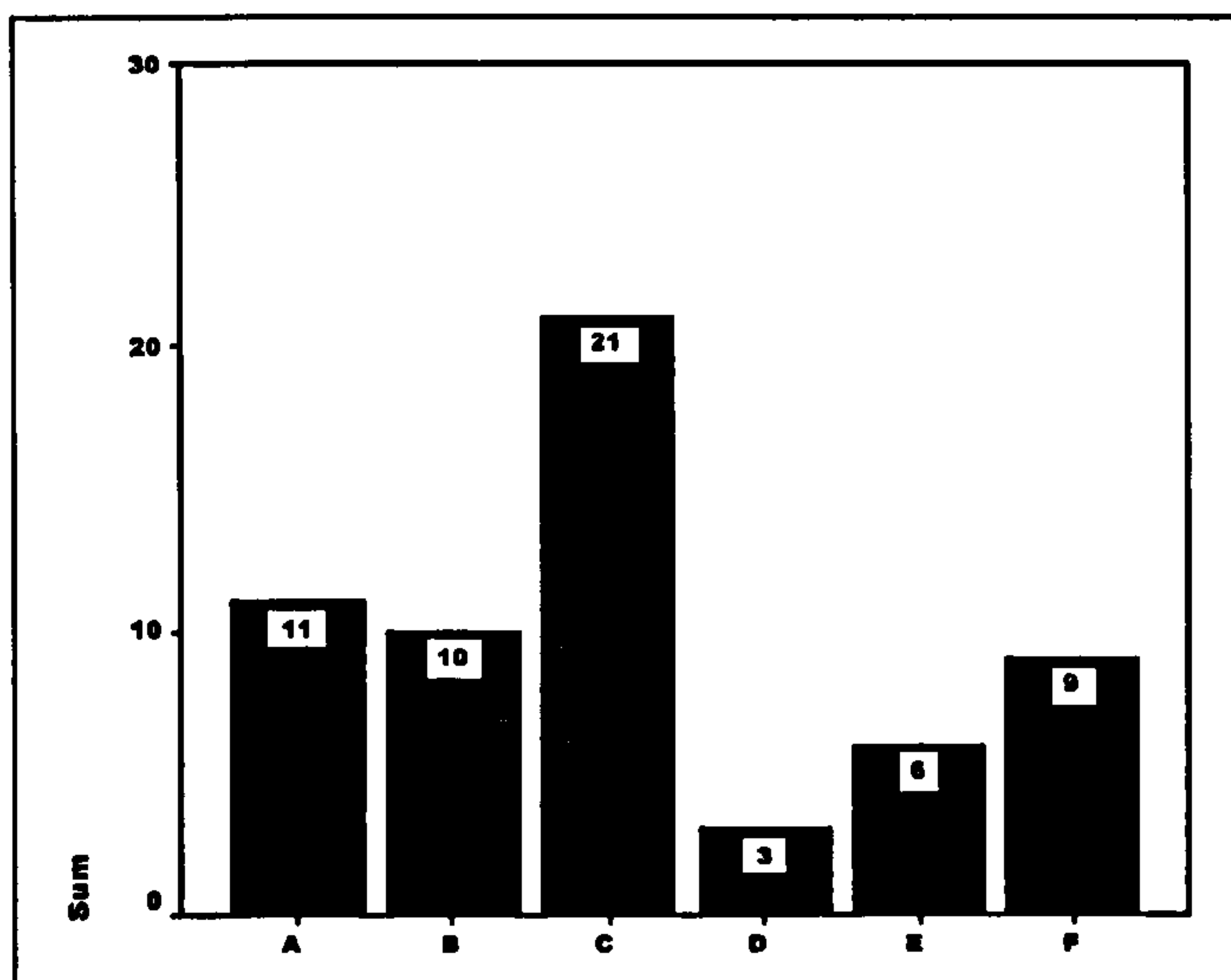
	Chinese	Percentage	English	Percentage
Direct	17	28.3%	38	63.3%
Fake Refusals	43	71.7%	22	36.7%
Total	60	100%	60	100%

We find, from Table 5-10, that there are significant differences between Chinese and English strategies in accepting invitations. Most of the Chinese prefer the fake refusal strategy whereas most of the English favour the direct accepting strategy. However, the Chinese fake refusal phenomenon is complicated so that one has to go deeper into some details of it in order to understand it better. I will discuss it in detail in Chapter VII.

Table 5-11 Choices of types of strategy: accepting invitation in the Chinese groups

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	3	0	8	0	1	3
Relative	3	3	5	1	1	2
Friend	5	2	4	2	1	1
Acquaintance	0	5	4	0	3	3
Total	11	10	21	3	6	9
Percentage	18.3%	16.7%	35%	5%	10%	15%

Note: The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups is 60, of which the total number of each type of people is 15.



Notes:

1. The choices of *a* and *e* are direct strategies. All the choices of *b*, *c*, and *d* include the strategy of 'waiting for insistence on inviting' and therefore are fake refusal acts.

2. 7 out of 9 of the choices of *f* give the answer with 'Waiting for insistence on inviting' and are counted as fake refusal acts too. f26 and f27 are also counted as fake refusal acts though there is no waiting because they are supposed to accept the invitation but she tells a lie.

3. *f16: 您太客气了。(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

You're standing on ceremony. (Waiting to be further invited.)

f26: 没有关系的, 不用这样客气。(close to *c*)

It's nothing. There's no need to be so polite.

f32: 太感谢您了, 不用了, 这是我应该做的。(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

Thank you so much. No need. This is what I should do. (Waiting to be further invited.)

4. **f17: 都是一家人, 不用这样。(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

We are relatives. There's no need to do so. (Waiting to be further invited.)

f18: 不用了。(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

No need. (Waiting to be further invited.)

5. ***f33: 谢谢, 不用了。(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

Thank you. No need. (Waiting to be further invited.)

6. ****f34: 非常感谢, 不用了, 咱们是朋友嘛!(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

Thank you very much. No need. We're friends. (Waiting to be further invited.)

f27: 不用这样客气, 不麻烦了。(close to *c*)

Don't be so polite. No need.

f35: 你这是干什么?(等对方再进一步邀请。)(close to *c*)

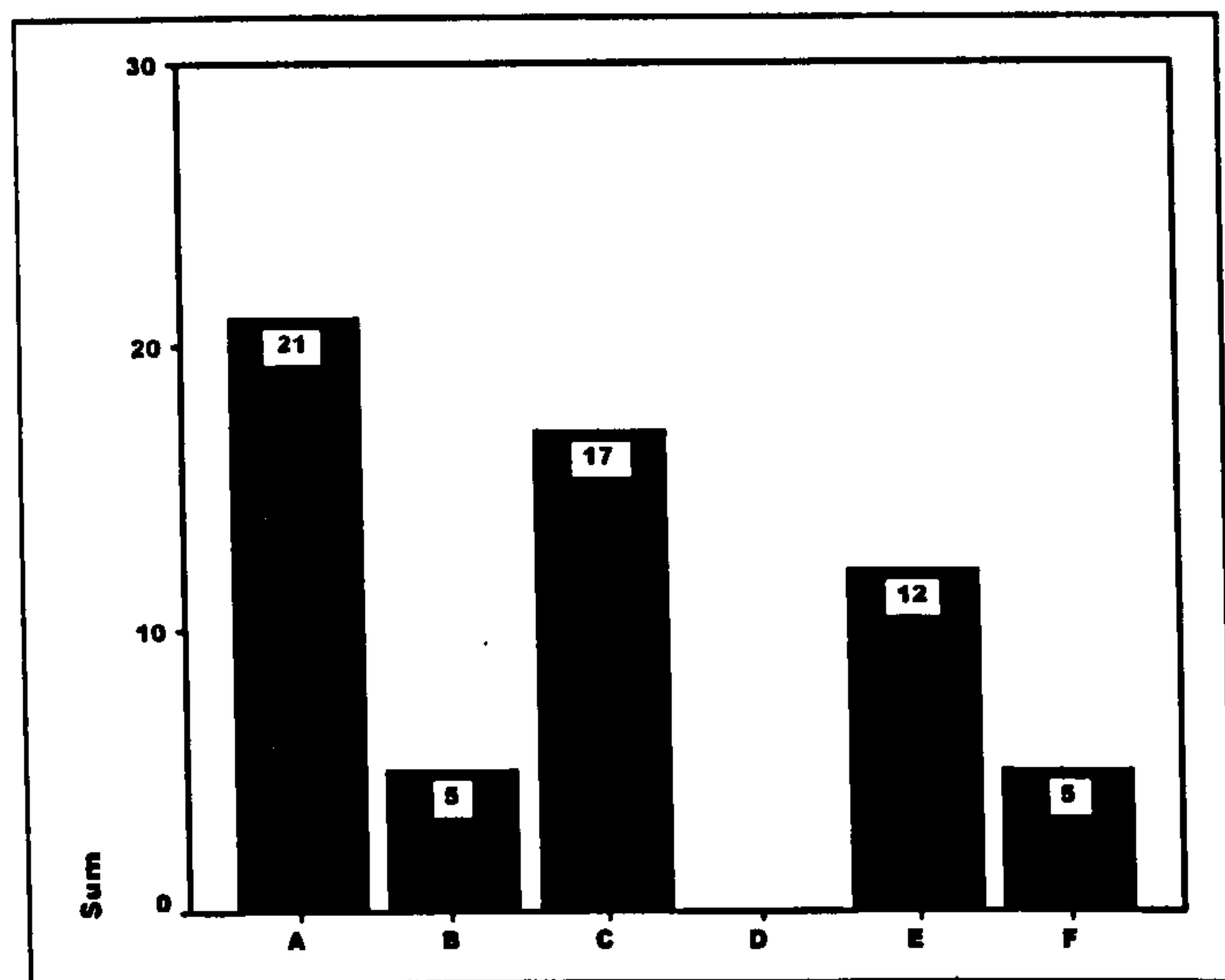
What is it you're doing? (Waiting to be further invited.)

Table 5-12 Choices of types of strategy: accepting invitation in the English groups

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	1	1	8	0	4	1*
Relative	8	1	1	0	4	1**
Friend	11	2	0	0	1	1***
Acquaintance	1	1	8	0	3	2****
Total	21	5	17	0	12	5
Percentage	35%	8.3%	28.4%	0%	20%	8.3%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five English groups is 60, of which the total number of each type of people is 15.
 2. *f14: Thank you very much, I'd love to. (close to e)
 3. **f15: Yes, all right. Thanks very much. (close to e)
 4. ***f16: Lovely. I look forward to it. (close to a)
 5. ****f17: Well, thank you very much. I'd like to. (close to e)
- f26: All right, I'll come. Thank you. (close to e)



From Table 5-11 we can see that all the Chinese invitees want to accept the invitation to dinner but only a very small proportion of them directly express their willingness to accept. The specific number of those expressing their willingness to accept is 27, but as many as 33 of the total do not obviously express their willingness to accept. On the contrary, they superficially refuse the invitation in various ways and then are actually waiting for further invitation. This is the Chinese politeness phenomenon of superficial/fake refusals.

Why do they want to superficially refuse the invitation when they do want to accept it actually? Isn't it against Grice's maxim of quality? The answer must be 'yes' and 'no'. 'Yes' because the invitees do tell lies against their will. 'No' because it is a very complicated matter which needs detailed analysis.

Historically, the tradition of this Chinese politeness phenomenon goes back to at least 1800 years ago, according to *The Cihai Dictionary* «辞海», which records the term *círàng* meaning politely decline, often implying verbally decline for politeness only. *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (1978) compiled by Wu et al. from the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, after giving the above definition to *círàng*, supplies the following example:

他辞让了一番，才在前排就座。

After first politely declining for a while, he eventually took a seat in the front row.

It has become an important social practice in Chinese since ancient times. Most Chinese act on it in daily life and on formal occasions. The essence of this politeness phenomenon is that, when faced with such matters as invitation, fame, compliment, gift, benefit, profit, etc., one should refrain oneself from it first or at the beginning. One should not accept it at the first opportunity or at once. Instead, one should keep refusing it until one finds that the speaker insists again (and again). This has become an essential part of Chinese society and culture in interactions. It is called '*lǐràng/círàng/qīanràng*' (礼让/辞让/谦让) in Chinese (See 7.3).

For comparison, let us have a look at how the English groups make their choices for the invitation. Most of the participants (63.3%) choose the direct strategy (See Table 5–10). This is quite different from the Chinese (28.3%). If we stop here and draw the impression that more of the English prefer the direct strategy and more of the Chinese like to use the indirect strategy in accepting an invitation, we may fall into the trap of simplicity. The problem is more complicated than at first sight.

If we look at Table 5–11 and Table 5–12 horizontally, we find that the numbers of choices for *a* and *e* (both being direct) are 11 and 6 for the Chinese, compared with the English 21 and 14 (including 1 *f* close to *a*), much smaller than the latter. Therefore we can say that the Chinese are more indirect than the English here. However, if we look at the tables vertically, column by column, we will find that there are similarities as well as differences. Most of the English choose the indirect strategies for the boss (10 including 1 *f* out of 15) – 66.7% – and the acquaintance (11 including 2 *f*'s out of 15) – 73.3%. These numbers are quite close to the Chinese ones, 11 (73.3%) and 12 (80%) for the boss and the acquaintance, respectively. If we count *b*, *c* and *d* only, all of which obviously have 'waiting for further inviting', we find the English and the Chinese are surprisingly similar to each other in choosing this strategy. The former have both 9 choices for the boss and the acquaintance and the latter have 8 and 9 for each. On the

contrary, the English and the Chinese are further apart from each other for the close relative and the best friend. The number of choices for the direct strategy for the former is as small as 3 and also 3 for the relative and the friend, respectively, while those for the latter remain as high as 10 and 9.

Data analysis shows that there is not much change in strategy for the Chinese with the different inviters. The English, however, mostly choose the waiting strategy for the boss and the acquaintance but fewer for the relative and the friend. What is most surprising is the fact that the English choose the 'waiting' strategy at all. This is most unexpected.

Several scholars such as Gu (1990: 252), Leech (2005: 9), Chen et al. (1995: 121) and Chen (1996: 143) have tried to explain the fake refusal phenomenon in Chinese, but Spencer-Oatey (2005: 110) comes closest to explaining the phenomenon. She has also compared the Chinese invitation/offer exchanges with the English ones. A combination of her explanation and my recommendation of *lǐràng/círàng/qiānràng* will best interpret the Chinese fake refusal phenomenon, which I will deal with in greater detail in 7.3.

Situation 3 (Question 8 in the DCTs)

Imagine that somebody wants to invite you to dinner as in the above case (See Question 7). What would you say if you want to refuse the invitation and if the person is your boss, your relative, the best friend of yours or an acquaintance. The six choices given in the questionnaire are:

- a. I can't come because I have another appointment. 不行，我还有事。
- b. I am so sorry I won't be able to come. 对不起，我来不了。
- c. Unluckily, I have no time. 可惜我没有时间。
- d. I'd love to, but I haven't got the time. 我很愿意来，可是我没有时间。
- e. I would like very much to, but I really haven't got the time. Thank you all the same. 我倒是很愿意来，可是我确实没有时间，谢谢。
- f. Other, please specify. 其它说法，具体说明。

The above choices are grouped into indirect1, which includes excuse, regret, apology, and promise of future (*a*, *b* and *c*) and indirect2, which includes willingness, agreement, gratitude, and appreciation (*d* and *e*). The choice of *f* will be counted as the choice it is closest to. The results of the choices made by the subjects of the Chinese and the English groups are listed in the following table.

Table 5–13 General frequency of strategies of seriously refusing an invitation in Chinese and English

	Chinese	Percentage	English	Percentage
Indirect1 (excuse, regret / apology, promise of future)	25	41.7%	23	38.3%
Indirect2 (willingness, agreement, gratitude / appreciation)	35	58.3%	37	61.7%
Total	60	100%	60	100%

Here in Situation 3, the invitees both in Chinese and in English are supposed to decline the invitation seriously because they really have no time to stay for dinner. All the invitees do the refusing with hedges or polite markers such as ‘I am so sorry’, ‘Thank you but ...’ or ‘I’d like very much to, but ...’ So there is no ‘direct’ strategy. This is because refusing (or accepting) an invitation is usually a complicated matter, just as Beebe et al. point out (1990: 60), especially in Chinese, where it is much more complicated than in English.

Although issuing an invitation places the inviter’s face (positive face according to Brown & Levinson’s distinction) at risk, it is intrinsically polite.

(Gu 1990: 253)

For an inviter to issue an invitation is to prevent his positive face to the invitee for his approval. The inviter requests the invitee to *shǎngliǎn* or *gěi miànzi* both meaning ‘give face’, but the invitee can in theory refuse to accept the inviter’s invitation, thus making the latter *dīuliǎn* (lose face).

(Gu 1990: 255)

In my investigation, the inviter issues the invitation to dinner in order to show his/her gratitude for the help in repairing the computer. S/he wants the invitee to understand this positive desire and approve of it (give face) by accepting the invitation. However, the invitee has to refuse it. As a result, the inviter’s face could be threatened if improper strategies were adopted, for example, if the invitee were too direct in refusing with a simple ‘no’.

Similarly, the same is true of the English. Brown & Levinson (1987: 66) state that by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not care about the addressee’s feelings, wants, etc, and that in some important aspect he doesn’t want H’s wants, S threatens H’s positive face. Therefore, the invitee has to be careful in choosing strategies to refuse the invitation.

That explains why, either in English or in Chinese, there is no choice of the direct strategy such as the nonperformative ‘no’, or the negative willingness/ability such as ‘I won’t/I can’t’ (without any modification), even though the participants are given the freedom of “Other strategy, please specify.”

Although the choices of *a*, *b*, and *c* all have hedges such as ‘I’m sorry.’, ‘unluckily’ or a grounder/reason, they are more direct than *d* and *e*. This is because *d* and *e* express the idea of willingness and appreciation for the invitation. They convey the idea to the inviter that it is not that they are unwilling to accept it. They ‘would like very much to’ but they cannot because they are too busy. Therefore they are less likely to threaten the face of the host(ess). On the contrary, they tend to give more face – satisfy more of the inviter’s positive face. In this sense, they seem to be less face-threatening than the other 3 choices *a*, *b* and *c*, which are classified as indirect1 and choices *d* and *e* are grouped as indirect2 strategies.

From Table 5–13, I find that there is not much difference between Chinese and English in the strategies of seriously refusing in terms of statistics, in terms of the descending degrees of directness of the strategies (from *a* to *e*). In both languages, there are no choices of direct, as has been pointed out above, and there are fewer choices of indirect1 than indirect2 strategies.

Though the English seem to choose a little less of the Indirect1 strategies and the Chinese choose a little more of the Indirect2 ones, generally there is not much difference between the two. They have made very similar choices in the strategies of refusals. Table 5–14 and Table 5–15 provide some more detailed information.

Table 5–14 Choices of types of strategy seriously refusing invitation in Chinese

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	1	1	0	0	10	3*
Relative	6	0	1	5	2	1**
Friend	4	2	0	5	2	2***
Acquaintance	1	6	0	3	4	1****
Total	12	9	1	13	18	7
Percentage	20%	15%	1.6%	21.7%	30%	11.7%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups is 60, of which the total number of each type of people is 15.

2. *f12: 很愿意来, 可是有别的事。谢谢。I’d like to, but I have another appointment. Thank you. (Indirect2)

f19: 一点小事, 不客气, 不敢当。Don’t be so polite for such a trifle thing. I daren’t accept such kindness of yours. (Indirect2)

f36: 谢谢, 我实在没有时间。Thanks, but I really have no time. (Indirect2)

3. **f20: 一家人, 用不着这样。We’re relatives. There is no need. (Indirect1)

4. ***f21: 我先记着, 以后再说。 I'll remember it until we have a chance again. (Indirect1)

f37: 谢谢, 可是我没有时间。 Thanks but I haven't got the time. (Indirect2)

5. ****f38: 对不起, 我还有事, 先走一步了。 Sorry but I have another appointment and must go now. (Indirect1)

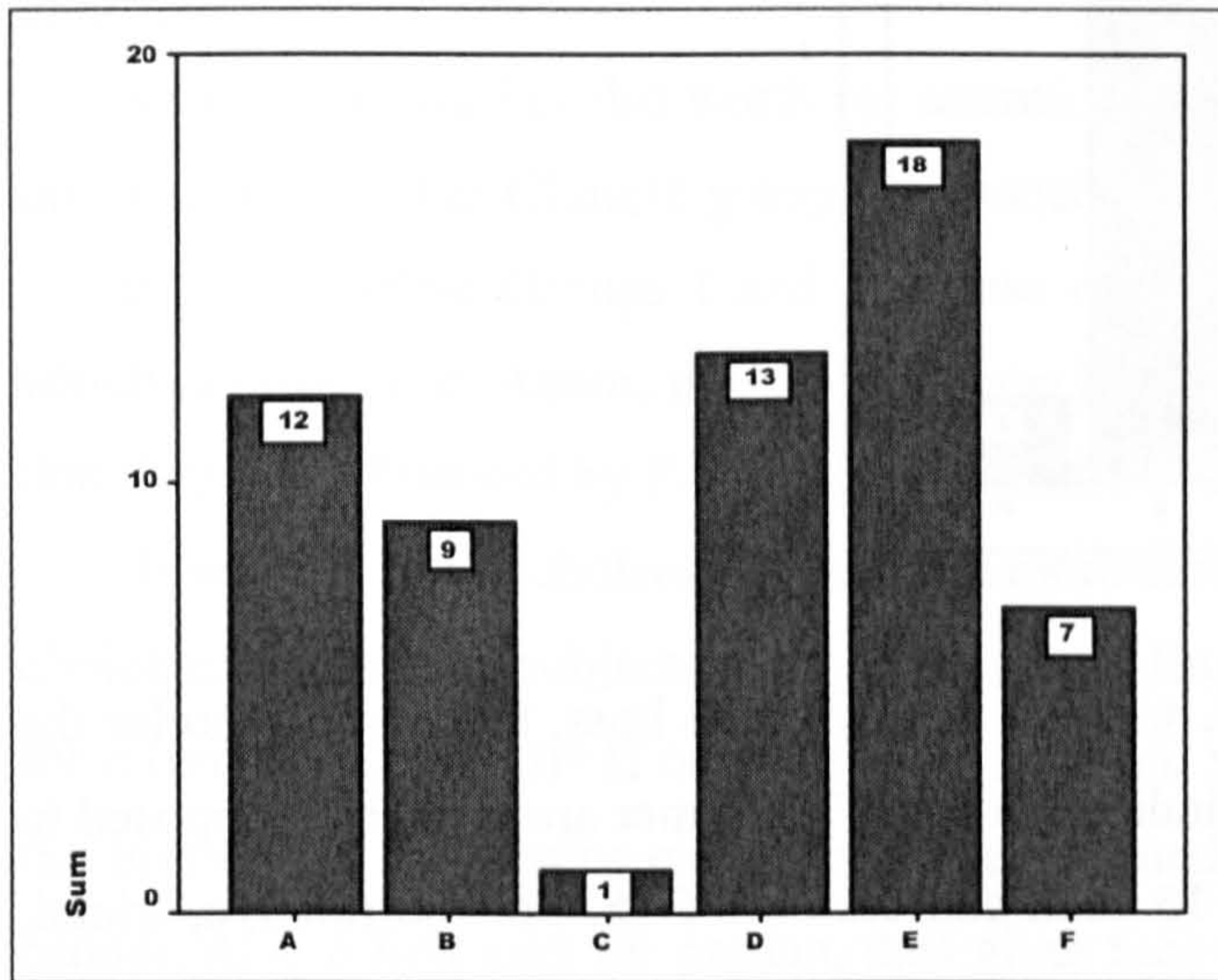


Table 5-15 Choices of types of strategy seriously refusing invitation in English

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	3	1	0	1	10	0
Relative	0	3	0	8	3	1*
Friend	0	10	0	2	3	0
Acquaintance	2	2	0	1	8	2**
Total	5	16	0	12	24	3
Percentage	8.3%	26.7%	0%	20%	40%	5%

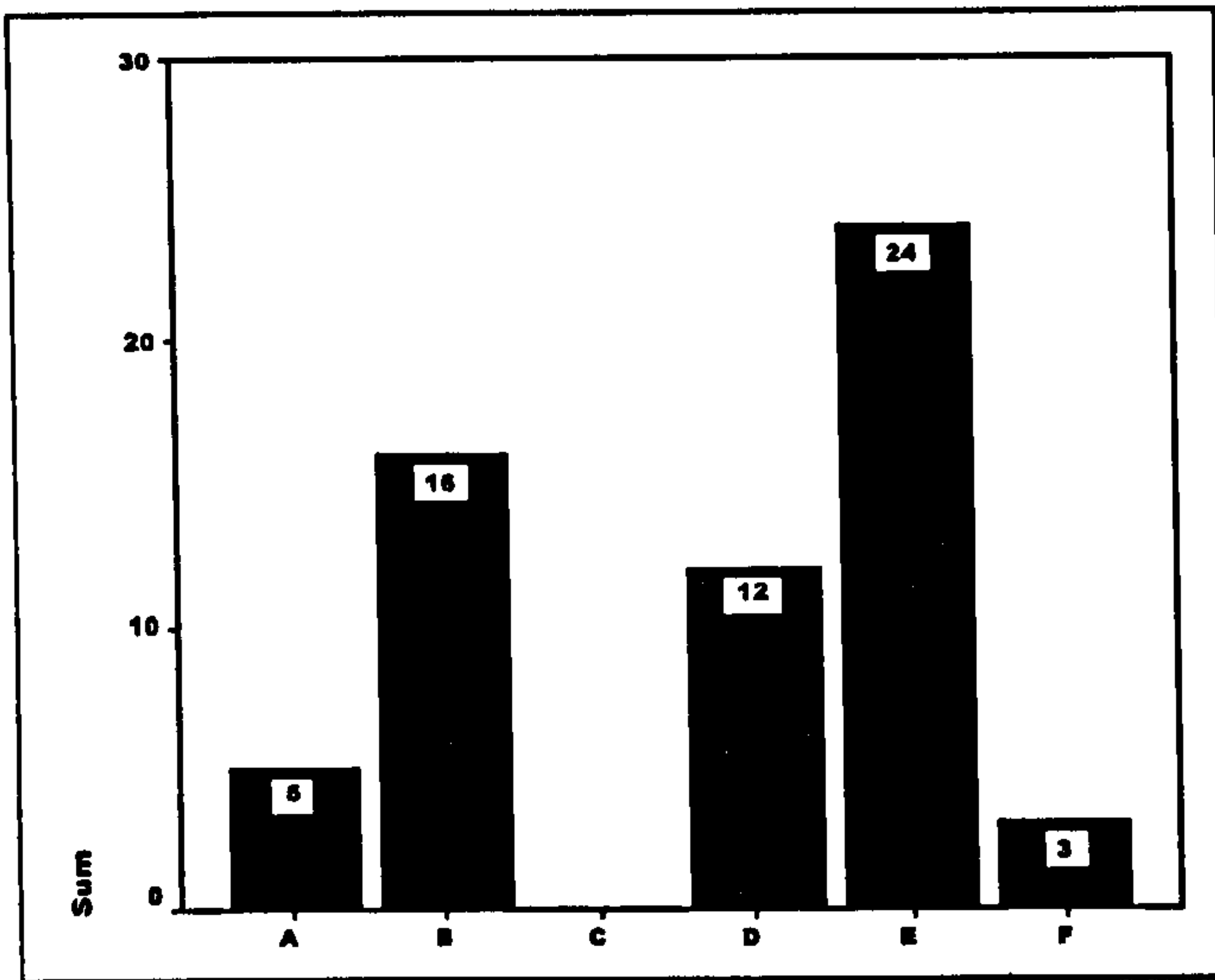
Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five English groups is 60, of which the total number of each type of people is 15.

2. *f18: Sorry, but I really can't manage it at the moment. (Indirect1)

3. **f19: I'm really sorry, but I won't be able to. (Indirect1)

f27: (No answer.)



In Table 5-14 and Table 5-15, we find that, with the boss, the Chinese prefer the indirect2 strategies (*d* and *e*) to the indirect1 ones. The former are probably supposed to be less face-threatening. There are 13 such choices out of 15. For the relative, friend, and acquaintance, the proportions of choices become quite different (8, 7, and 8, out of 15). This shows that the Chinese have the most respect for the boss and most of them try as much as possible not to threaten his/her face. Of course, they do not want to threaten any one of the other inviters either. However, the numbers of choices demonstrate that most of the invitees care about the boss' face the most. Here we see the importance of relationship (including power and distance) between the interactants. I will deal with the matter of power and distance separately later on in this chapter.

The data analysis shows, however, that the English seem to be quite different from the Chinese with regard to relationships. They seem to care very much about the face of almost every kind of invitee, except for the friend. They choose much more of the less face-threatening indirect2 strategies than the indirect1 ones. Out of 15, the number of times indirect strategies are chosen for the boss and the relative is 11 each and 9 for the acquaintance. However, it is only 5 for the best friend.

One might wonder why the English are so equally polite to the boss and the close relative. A more careful look enables us to find that they are not equally polite to them. They choose 1 *d* and 10 *e*'s for the boss but 8 *d*'s and 3 *e*'s for relatives. Also, they choose 1 *d* and 8 *e*'s for the acquaintance, bearing in mind that *e* is supposed to be even less face-threatening than *d*. Therefore, most of the English are trying their best to be less face-threatening to the boss and the acquaintance. Next, they are also trying to save the face of their relative invitee. Only comparatively, many of them do not care so much about their best friend. Perhaps they do not think their friend's face is so easily threatened as the other three categories of people.

After the above analysis, the general impression seems to be that the English prefer to choose more indirect strategies in refusing invitations with most kinds of people while the Chinese pay more attention to the choice of more indirect strategies for the boss, though both try not to be too direct to any of their invitees in order not to threaten their face.

One small detail is also worth our attention. Chinese Groups 1 and 4 tend to be less direct than the other Chinese groups in choosing strategies. For example, almost all the subjects in Chinese Groups 1 and 4 choose *e*, the less direct form and one chooses *f* which is close to *e*. Again, these two groups have been staying in England. Is it likely that they are influenced by the English in manners? I will discuss this later on.

If we look at the choices of strategies more carefully, we find that there is only one choice of *c* in all the subjects, both Chinese and English. Why are there so few choices for *c* (only 1 of the 60)? If one compares it with *a* and *b*, s/he will find: *a* tells directly the inviter that the invitee cannot come and immediately explains the reason why s/he cannot. Also *b* first asks for pardon, thus gives face to the inviter, and then tells him/her that the invitee cannot come. However, with the choice *c*, the invitee says it is a pity that s/he has no time for the invitation. S/he only feels it regrettable that s/he cannot have dinner here. This regret can be caused by different factors. One possibility is this: the invitee likes being invited to dinner and, from his/her own point of view, this is a very good chance for him/her. However, s/he has to lose it just because s/he has no time. Another possibility is that the invitee thinks it is regrettable because this invitation would be an opportunity for both being together, depending on the relationship between them. There can be a third explanation that it is a chance for the inviter to express his/her gratitude for the repair work. Therefore the invitee feels it to be a pity not to be able to satisfy such a desire of his/hers. Thus, though in Chinese *c* is a possible refusal form in this case, it is not a very good one compared with *a* and *b*. In English, *c* is not a way to refuse an invitation either. Most often, the English refuse invitations with the help of mitigators or hedges such as gratitude (as in *e*), apology (as in *b*), or willingness (as in *d* or *e*), or combinations of these, with the explanation of the reason depending on circumstances.

One might ask what differences there are, if any, between the fake/superficial refusals and the sincere/serious refusals in Chinese politeness? This question is interesting and without discussion of which this part of the thesis would be incomplete.

First of all, all the fake refusals have a characteristic: they give comments to the inviter's effort to invite and nothing more but wait to be further invited. For example: 'You shouldn't do that.' or 'There is no need for you to do so.' After such simple

comments, they will expect further invitation from the inviter (See Situation 2 and Table 5-10 above). Secondly, the attitude and the tone of voice for the fake refusals will be less firm and more hesitant.

Sincere/serious refusals usually go with a definite reason for not accepting the invitation. The overwhelming reason for them to refuse is 'having no time' or 'having another appointment', as the choices given and their own choices of *f* show. For example: 'I'd love to, but I have got no time.'; 'I can't come because I have another appointment.' Almost all the free choices of *f* include the idea of 'have no time'.

The above differences should not be regarded as absolute or static. They are relative and often depend on personalities or personal styles. Some people invent excuses not to be able to accept an invitation at first as if they really couldn't stay for dinner but after the host(ess) insists firmly again and again, they may accept it finally. In that case, it is really hard to tell the fake from the genuine refusals.

In English, however, there does not seem to be the same fake refusal phenomenon. They do have the 'tentative response' to 'definite invitation' (besides accept and reject response). Spencer-Oatey (1987: 82, 122) writes in her *The Customs and Language of Social Interaction English* «与英美人交往的习俗和语言»:

Tentative Response: One of the acceptance responses is used first and then followed by a comment such as the following:

- But I think I may have to work that evening. Could I let you know tomorrow?
- But I am not sure whether my husband is free then. Can I call you back?

When a host offers something to a guest, the guest is expected to answer honestly. 'No' is interpreted as a genuine 'no' rather than a polite refusal, and so the host rarely offers more than once or twice.

However, it is rather unexpected to find as many English choices of fake responses as Chinese for the boss and the acquaintance in my DCTs (Situation 2). It is exactly this phenomenon that reminds us again that, in pragmatic studies, we must be careful not to be misled by the similarities in linguistic forms and even in strategies. We must ask whether these similar forms and "strategies carry similar social meanings across different languages" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 46). This is also what has encouraged me to study some of the feelings when a person makes a refusal act both in Chinese and in English in the following couple of situations.

Situation 4 (Question 9 in the DCTs)

How do you feel when you make a refusal to a request (borrowing 1,500 yuan / 100 pounds) by someone who is: your boss, a relative of yours, your best friend or an acquaintance? The six choices given in the questionnaire are:

- a. Guilty. 有内疚感。
- b. Embarrassed. 尴尬/不好意思。
- c. Afraid. 害怕/紧张。
- d. OK, not bothered. 无所谓。
- e. Relaxed. 轻松自然。
- f. Other, please specify. 其它说法, 具体说明。

The results of the choices made by the subjects of Chinese and English groups are listed in Table 5-16 and Table 5-17.

Table 5-16 Choices of types of feelings when refusing a request for help in Chinese

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	1	7	4	1	0	2*/**
Relative	7	5	0	2	0	1**
Friend	3	8	0	0	3	1**
Acquaintance	0	1	0	11	2	1**
Total	11	21	4	14	5	5
Percentage	18.3%	35%	6.7%	23.4%	8.3%	8.3%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups is 60, of which the total number of each type of people is 15.
2. *f3: 不舒服 Uncomfortable. (close to a)
3. **f8/f9/10/11: 心安理得 Feeling at ease and justified. (close to d)

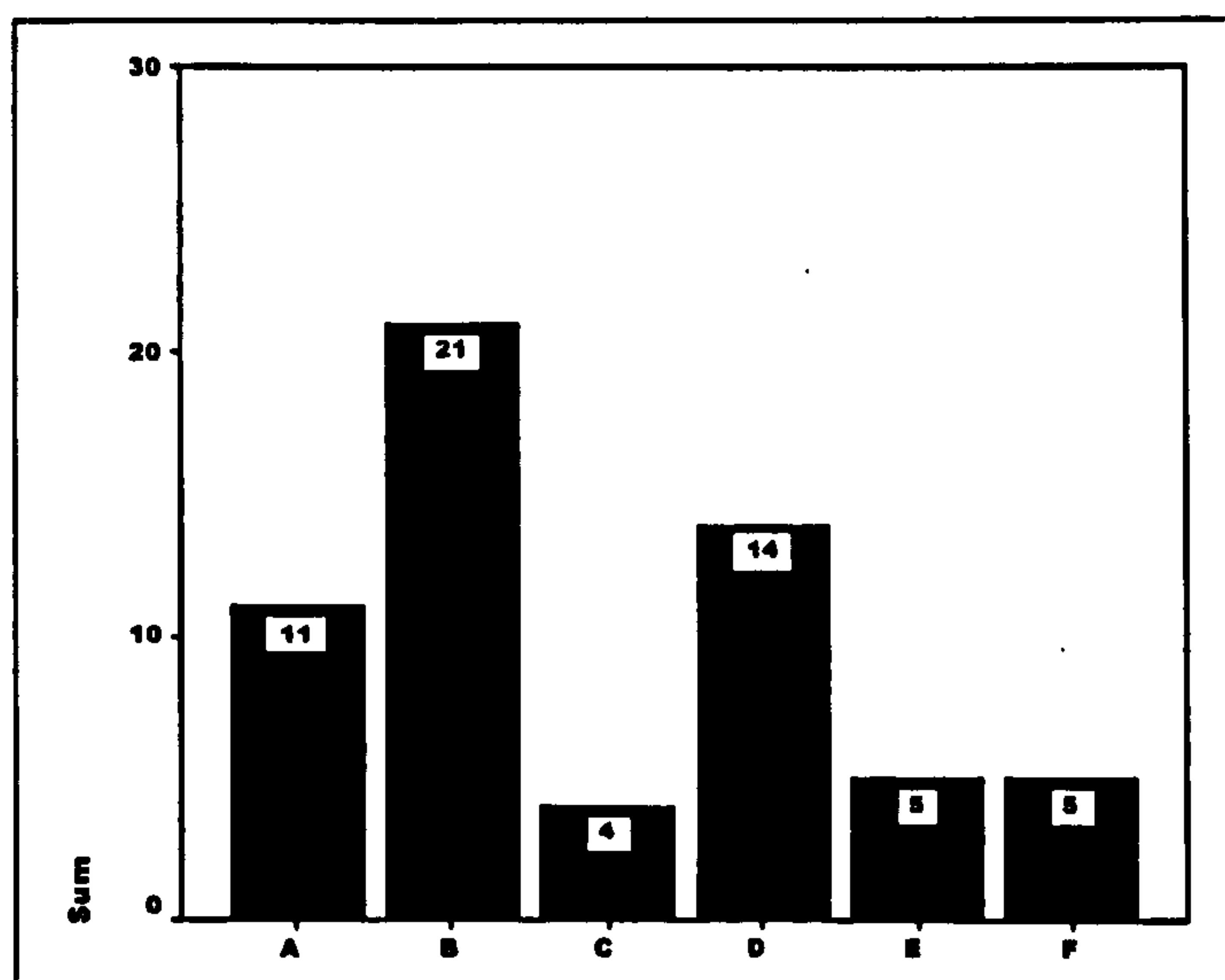


Table 5-17 Choices of types of feelings when refusing a request for help in English

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	2	2	2	7	2	0
Relative	8	3	0	2	2	0
Friend	8	2	0	2	3	0
Acquaintance	1	5	0	8	1	0
Total	19	12	2	19	8	0
Percentage	31.7%	20%	3.3%	31.7%	13.3%	0%

Notes: The total number of choices for all the five English groups is 60, of which the number of each type of people is 15.

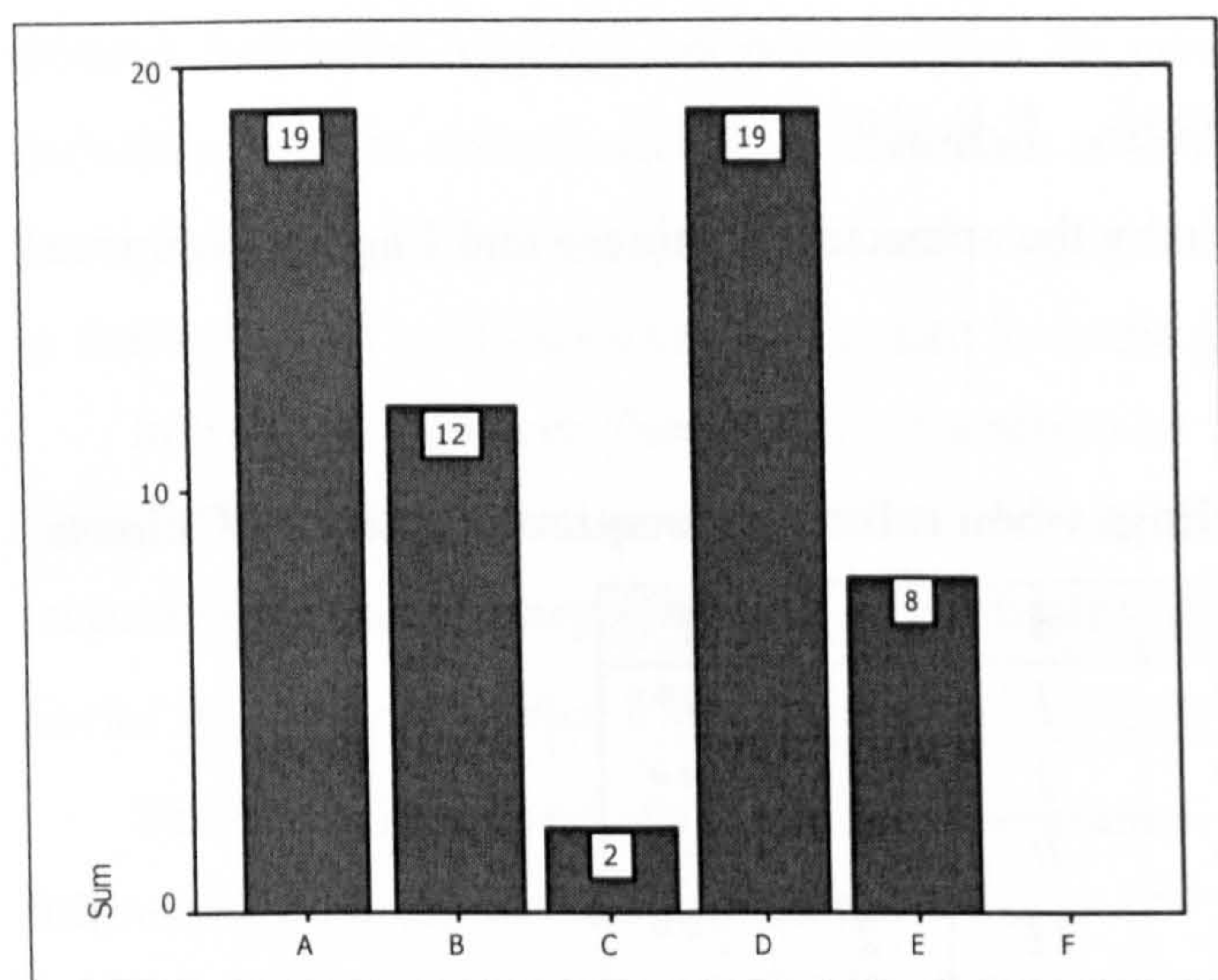


Table 5-16 gives all the choices made by the five Chinese groups about the speaker's feelings after refusing a request for help. There are altogether 60 choices. If we divide all the choices made into categories, we can put them into just two groups. One group includes *a*, *b*, *c*, and *f*^{*}, all of which mean 'not feeling at ease' to varying degrees. The other group includes *d*, *e*, *f*^{**}, all of which roughly mean 'having a calm mind or feeling justified'. In this way, we can reduce the above two tables to Table 5-18 as follows.

Table 5-18 State of mind refusing a request in Chinese and English Chinese

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	11	d	14
b	21	e	5
c	4	f ^{**}	4
f [*]	1		
Total	37	Total	23
Percentage	61.7%	Percentage	38.3%

Note:

1. The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups is 60.
2. *f – Having a troubled mind.
3. **f – Not having a troubled mind.

English

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	19	d	19
b	12	e	8
c	2		
Total	33	Total	27
Percentage	55%	Percentage	45%

Note: The total number of choices for all the five English groups is 60.

From Table 5–18, it is clear that more than half of the Chinese (61.7%) will have a troubled mind when they refuse other people's requests for help. Fewer Chinese (38.3%) will not feel this way. They feel at ease. The case is similar with the English – more (55%) of them feel a troubled mind than not. This is what one deduces on first sight of the data. However, a more careful examination will show that the distributions are not even.

Table 5–19 Distribution of feelings of refusing requests for help for the boss

Chinese

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	1	d	1
b	7	e	0
c	4	f**	1
f*	1		
Total out of 15	13	Total	2
Percentage	86.7%	Percentage	13.3%

English

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	2	d	7
b	2	e	2
c	2	f	0
Total out of 15	6	Total	9
Percentage	40%	Percentage	60%

From Table 5–19, we see that the great majority of the Chinese participants (86.7%) choose the feeling of ‘having a troubled mind’ after they refuse their boss’ request for help. There are only 2 out of 15, who do not ‘have a troubled mind’. On the contrary, the percentages are almost reversed with the English. Most of them choose the feeling of ‘not having a troubled mind’. What does this contrast between them indicate?

It shows that native Chinese speakers pay more attention to or attach great importance to the relationship between themselves and their boss. They do this probably for several reasons. For example, those who would feel afraid / nervous such as C1CF, C3AF and C5AF might think of the power of the boss over themselves. They might not benefit from their refusals to the boss in the future anyway. Those who would feel embarrassed or guilty might look at the matter from the point of view of face. They would not like to threaten their manager’s face in particular. They could also consider the matter from the angle of morals – a matter of right and wrong. They might think that they should help their boss but they could not for one reason or another. Then they would blame themselves for their inability to help and therefore feel bad after they had to refuse him or her.

Historically, the Chinese were educated for thousands of years to obey five ways or rules in dealing with the relationships between themselves and other people. According to the *Great Learning* «大学» (written by Zeng Cen in the Spring and Autumn Period of 770-476 BC and edited by Zhao Yi, China, Changchun: Jilin Photographing Publishers, 2004: 106).

天下之达道五，……。曰：君臣也；父子也；夫妇也；昆弟也；朋友之交也。五者，天下之达道也。

There are five strict and unchangable rules which govern the relationships between the supreme ruler and his subjects, father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother, and friend and friend. These five rules cannot be changed and must be followed. [The translation is mine.]

Then there were many sub-rules prescribing how the ordinary people should obey their ruler, the son should respect the father, etc. For example, in another book of the same series entitled *Mencius* «孟子» (Written by Mengzi in the Warring States Period 475-221 and edited in 2004: 76), the author says, “于此有人焉，入则孝，出则悌” (There is such a person. He is filial to the parents at home. Away from home, he is respectful to the old and loyal to the ruler) [Translation is mine]. Under long periods of education founded on these principles, most Chinese have an element of respect, sometimes even a feeling of fear in their character for their elders and especially their leader(s).

Even if this situation has changed today, that element (the respect or fear of power of the leader) often shows itself in the relationship between ruler/leader/superior/boss and the persons s/he leads. Dou, TV presenter of the programme entitled 三角地 (the Triangle Region) on the Hong Kong Chinese TV Station Phoenix, says in a panel discussion (嘉宾小组讨论会) that 中国人有一种对权力的崇敬 (Chinese cherish a feeling of respect for power) [The translation is mine] (12:00-12:30, 24th March 2005).

Evidence from my data seems to support the traditional social norm. It is little wonder therefore that we find that, out of the 15 choices, there are 7 cases of embarrassment, 2 of guilty, and even 4 of fear of the refusal. As many as 86.7% of the participants chose 'a troubled mind'. In comparison, the English do not seem to have such cultural influences. Most of them (60%) do not seem to feel bad at all about the choices for the boss. This may have something to do with role rights and obligations in the two cultures. Now let us examine the case of the relative in Chinese and English.

Table 5–20 Distribution of feelings of refusing requests for help for a relative

Chinese

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	7	d	2
b	5	e	0
c	0	f*	1
Total out of 15	<i>12</i>	Total	<i>3</i>
Percentage	<i>80%</i>	Percentage	<i>20%</i>

Notes: f* = feeling at ease and justified.

English

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	8	d	2
b	3	e	2
c	0		
Total out of 15	<i>11</i>	Total	<i>4</i>
Percentage	<i>73.3%</i>	Percentage	<i>26.7%</i>

Table 5–20 shows the choices of feelings when the Chinese and English participants refuse the relative's requests for help. The Chinese make similar choices (80% with a troubled mind) to the English (73.3%). The distribution patterns of the 'troubled mind' are roughly similar to each other too. For example, the numbers of *a*, *b*,

and *c* are 7, 5, 0 and 8, 3, 0 for Chinese and English, respectively. Obviously, in both languages, most of the participants feel an obligation to help the relative but they cannot. They have to refuse to help. Next, some of them in both feel embarrassed out of the consideration of face – the refusal threatens the face of the relative and also the face of the refuser. Clearly, there is no choice of *c* (fear). Usually in this case, there is no possibility for the feeling of fear to exist between close relatives.

If we compare Table 5–20 for the relative with Table 5–19 for the boss, we find that the Chinese statistics are similar to each other though those for the English are not. Take the Chinese for instance, the choices of ‘having a troubled mind’ is 80% for the relative and 86.7% for the boss. The percentages are roughly equal. However, that does not mean that the Chinese do not feel very different when they refuse the request of their boss and their relative. If we examine and compare their choices of *a*, *b*, and *c* for both persons, we see that the number of choices for *a* (guilty) is only 1, for *b* is 7 and for *c* is 0 for the boss, compared with 7, 5, 0 for the relative. The distribution of figures explains the differences very clearly. For the boss, the participants have more embarrassment and even fear; but for the relative, the feeling of guilt (obligation) is more obvious (See analysis at Table 5–21).

Most of the English (8 out of 15) feel guilty for the relative, which is similar to the Chinese. A few (3) are embarrassed. For the boss, there are only 2 choices for *a*, *b*, and *c*, respectively. The reason is that most of them do not seem to pay so much attention to the relationship with the boss, compared with the Chinese, as analyzed above.

Table 5–21 Distribution of feelings of refusing requests for help for a best friend

Chinese

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	3	d	0
b	8	e	3
c	0	f*	1
Total out of 15	11	Total	4
Percentage	73.3%	Percentage	26.7%

Notes: f*: feeling at ease and justified.

English

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	8	d	2
b	2	e	3
c	0		
Total out of 15	10	Total	5
Percentage	66.7%	Percentage	33.3%

At first sight, it appears that one can say that the great majority of the Chinese participants would feel as bad when they have to refuse their best friends' request for help just as they would do with their relative or their boss. However, a careful look will help us to see that they are quite different.

With the close relative, the Chinese feel more guilty of not being able to help than embarrassed. They have a sense of failure to fulfill a duty or a responsibility. With the best friend, they feel less guilty than embarrassed. They have the feeling of embarrassment mostly out of face considerations. In other words, they feel bad because they couldn't satisfy the face needs of the friend. As a result, their own face is also threatened.

Unlike the Chinese, the English have very similar choices for the relative (8 *a*'s and 3 *b*'s) and the friend (8 *a*'s and 2 *b*'s). From the figures, we can probably say that the Chinese value the relationship of the relative more than that of the friend. This is probably because they believe more in the proverb 'Blood is thicker than water.' than the English because of the influence of the education Chinese received from long ago as analyzed above for the boss. Lastly, I will examine the choices of feelings when the Chinese and the English participants refuse an acquaintance's request for help.

Table 5–22 Distribution of feelings of refusing requests for help for an acquaintance

Chinese

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	0	d	11
b	1	e	2
c	0	f*	1
Total out of 15	1	Total	14
Percentage	6.7%	Percentage	93.3%

Notes: f*: feeling at ease and justified.

English

Having a troubled mind		Not having a troubled mind	
Choice	Frequency	Choice	Frequency
a	1	d	8
b	5	e	1
c	0		
Total out of 15	6	Total	9
Percentage	40%	Percentage	60%

Table 5-22 shows the choices of the five Chinese and five English groups about their feelings when refusing an acquaintance's request for help, based on the two categories of 'having a troubled mind' and 'not having a troubled mind'. Here one finds that it is clearly different from the previous three cases (the boss, the close relative and the best friend) at Tables 5-19, 20 and 21.

With the Chinese here, there is only one participant who chooses *b* (embarrassed), and there are none that choose *a* (guilty) or *c* (fear). The result is that only 6.7% of the Chinese have 'a troubled mind' and 93.3% have 'an untroubled mind'. Compared with the other three categories of people, the percentages have more or less been reversed. The great majority of the Chinese participants have chosen 'not having a troubled mind' when refusing an acquaintance's request for help.

The choices of the English for the acquaintance are similar to those for the boss, the percentage of 'a troubled mind' being 40% for both. Most of them (60%) have 'an untroubled mind'. The difference between the two languages is that the Chinese percentage for the 'untroubled mind' is much greater than that for the English.

Why do the Chinese have such a high percentage of 'an untroubled mind', compared with the English? The reason probably is that Question 9 in my questionnaire investigates the inner feelings of the refuser. These feelings, whatever they might be, will not be expressed for H to hear, as Questions 4 through 8 are. Normally, the hearer would not know anything about these feelings. So, there is no such thing as face-threatening to him or her. The speaker's face is threatened if he or she feels that they have a troubled mind. At least they feel they have lost their face because they feel they should have done what the other person requested them to but they didn't. Now he or she may have an uneasy conscience with the boss, the relative or the best friend because they are people who are closely related to him or her. The refusal act might influence their relationship in the future or even influence their benefit including their career or future. But who cares about an acquaintance! There will not be any consequence in refusing an acquaintance's request for help, generally speaking.

Normally, the Chinese seem to value the relationship more with the first three categories of people (boss, relative and friend), especially with the boss and the relative. On the contrary, the English pay more attention to the face needs of the acquaintance and the friend. The result is the difference in the percentages of choices between the Chinese and the English (See Table 5-16).

Situation 5 (Question 10 in the DCTs):

How do you feel when you make a refusal to a suggestion beneficial to you and made by: your boss, a relative of yours, your best friend or an acquaintance? The six choices given in the questionnaire are:

- a. Guilty. 有内疚感。
- b. Embarrassed. 尴尬/不好意思。
- c. Afraid. 害怕/紧张。
- d. OK, not bothered. 无所谓。
- e. Relaxed. 轻松自然。
- f. Other, please specify. 其它说法, 具体说明。

Table 5-23 Choices of types of feelings when refusing a suggestion beneficial to the hearer in Chinese

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	2	10	0	2	0	1*
Relative	5	2	1	3	3	1**
Friend	2	3	0	3	6	1***
Acquaintance	0	1	1	12	1	0
Total	9	16	2	20	10	3
Percentage	15%	26.7%	3.3%	33.3%	16.7%	5%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups is 60, of which the number of each type of people is 15.
2. *f22: 感激, 无奈 Grateful and embarrassed. (close to *a*)
3. **f23: 痛苦, 为难 Painful and embarrassed. (close to *a* and *b*)
4. ***f24: 感谢 Thankful. (close to *a*)

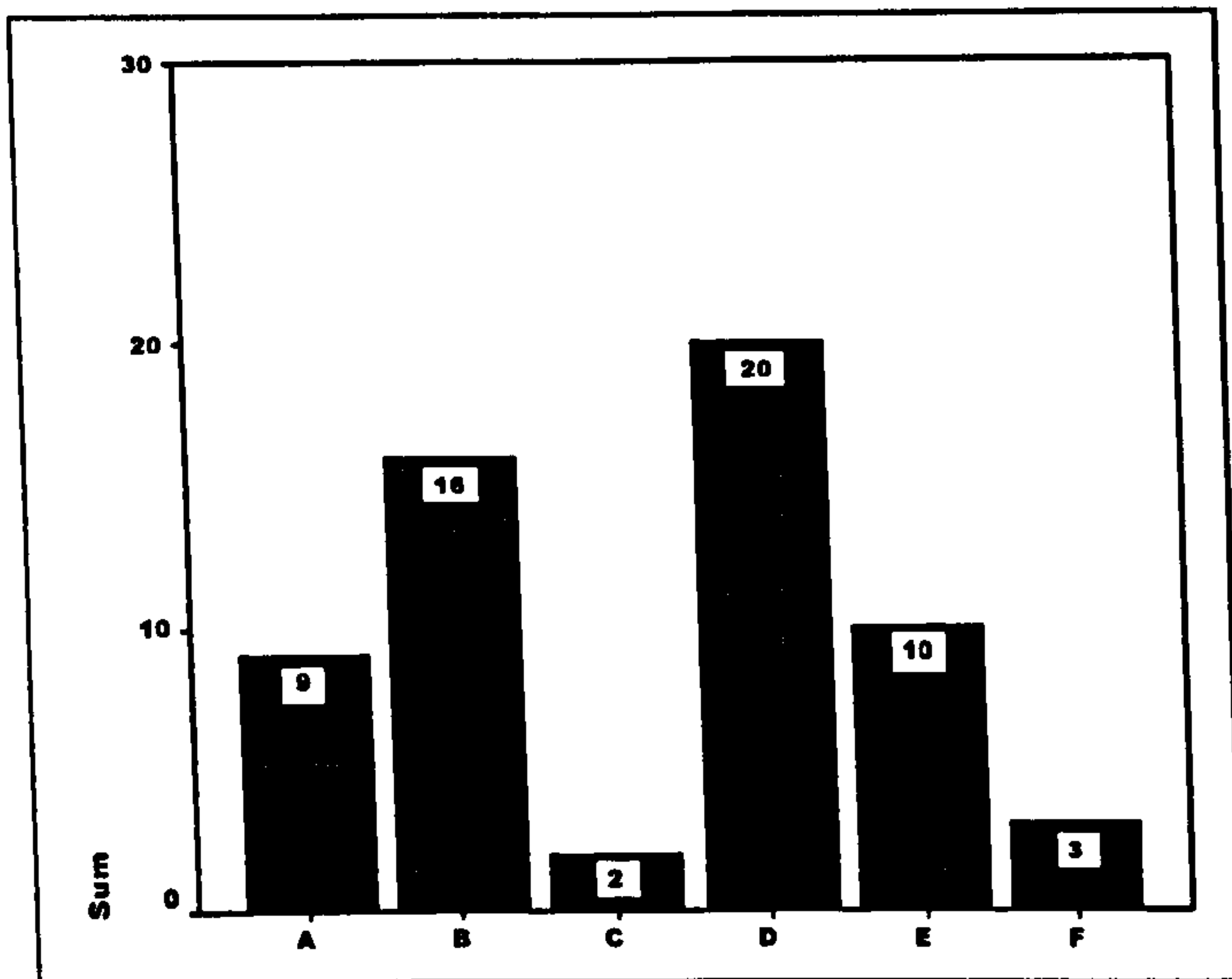
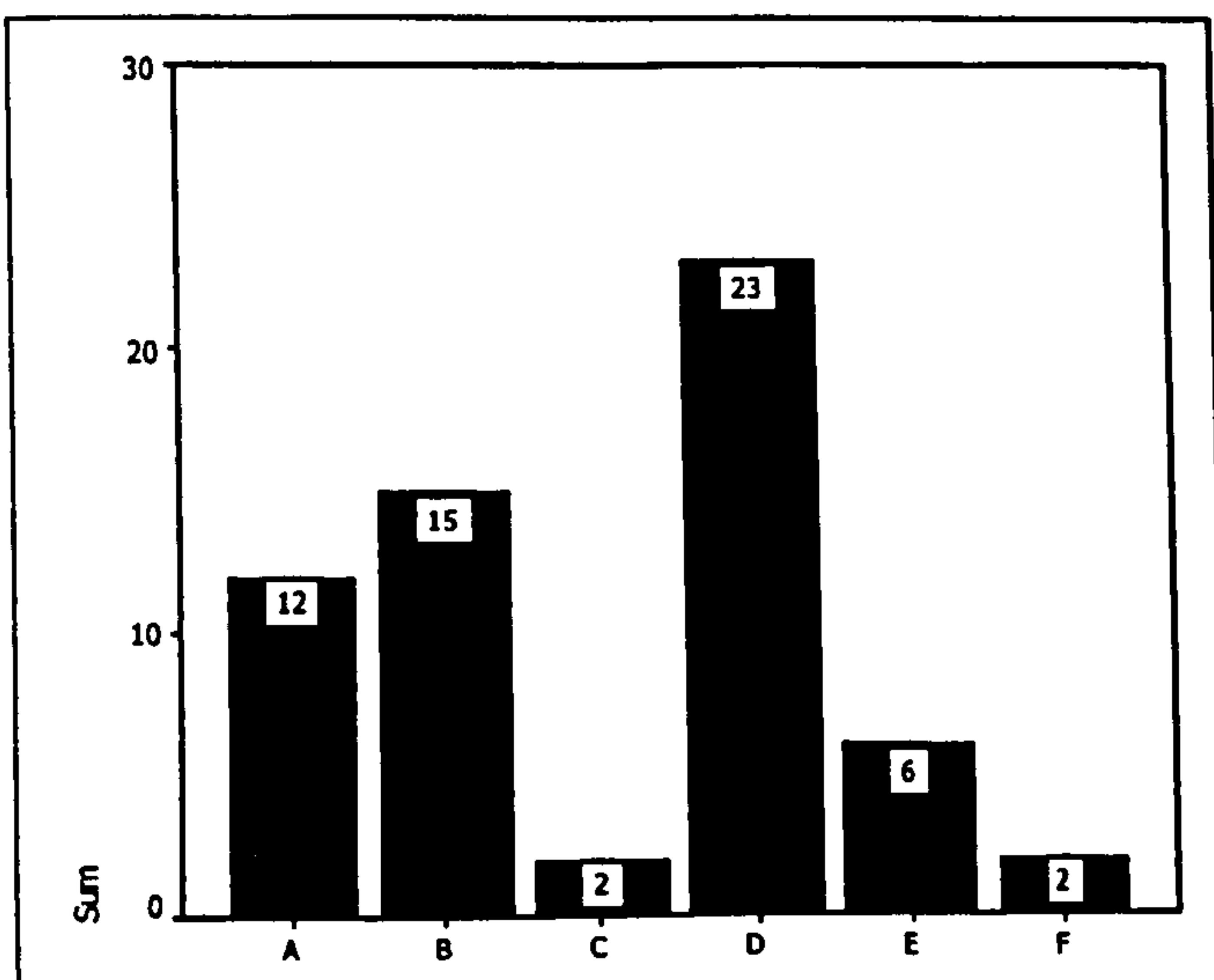


Table 5-24 Choices of types of feelings when refusing a suggestion beneficial to the hearer in English

	a	b	c	d	e	f
Boss	2	5	2	3	2	1*
Relative	4	4	0	5	2	0
Friend	4	0	0	8	2	1**
Acquaintance	2	6	0	7	0	0
Total	12	15	2	23	6	2
Percentage	20%	25%	3.3%	38.3%	10%	3.3%

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five English groups is 60, of which the number of each type of people is 15.
2. * Regretful. (close to *a*)
3. ** Sorry. (close to *a*)



Before we do any analysis, we should be clear about the difference between Situation 4 and Situation 5 (here). The former investigates the feelings of the participants refusing a request (beneficial to the requester) whereas the latter examines the feelings of the participants refusing a suggestion beneficial to the refuser.

From Table 5-23 and Table 5-24, we see that half (50% for Choices *a*, *b*, *c*, and *f*) of the Chinese feel 'a troubled mind', compared with a little more than half (51.7%) of the English. The general impression, therefore, is that the English and the Chinese feel almost equally bad about such refusals.

If, however, we examine it in more detail, we will find that the distributions of the choices for different categories of people are different.

For example, for the boss, the Chinese make many more choices (10 out of 15) of embarrassment than the English (only 5). Also, there is no choice of fear with the Chinese but there are 2 choices with the English. The Chinese do not feel fear because it is only a suggestion from the boss. It is more of a matter of embarrassment than fear.

With the relative, the Chinese and the English are also different. The Chinese chose 'guilty' more often and 'embarrassment' less often than the English. There is a choice of fear for the Chinese but none for the English. Once again, the Chinese seem to attach more importance to the relationship with the relative than the English do.

With the friend, the Chinese use strategies similar to those of the English. Most of both Chinese and English (60% vs 66.7%) favour 'an untroubled mind'. Here the difference is very small.

However, the difference between Chinese and English is much greater in the case of the acquaintance. The great majority of the Chinese (86.7%) choose *d* and *e* compared with only 46.7% of the English choice of *d* but without *e*. Obviously, the Chinese participants do not care very much about the relationship with the acquaintance whereas most of the English do. It indicates that Chinese and English generally have a different evaluation for the on-going relationship. Once again, the Chinese attach less importance to the relationship with the acquaintances whereas the English more often value satisfying the face wants of theirs (See Situation 4).

5.3 Power Analysis in the Data of Refusals

Now I will examine how such social factors as power and distance influence the choice of strategy types in the data of the questionnaires. First of all, I intend to discuss the case in which one is supposed to refuse somebody who wants to borrow some money from the speaker. I divide the choices (*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*) of each participant for each of the four categories of the relations into two main strategy types: direct and indirect.

Strategy type 1, which includes *a*, *b* and *c*, is supposed to be more direct. Strategy type 2, which includes *d* and *e*, is expected to be more indirect and therefore less potentially face-threatening, if at all, than Strategy type 1. Choice *f* has been counted as either Strategy type 1 or Strategy type 2, depending on which choice it is close to. If it is close to *a* or *c*, for example, it goes to Strategy type 1. Otherwise, it falls into Strategy type 2.

Table 5–25 Distribution of strategy types by power (%) (N = raw score) in refusals in the questionnaires (Q6)

		Chinese Speakers				English Speakers			
		S<H		S=H		S<H		S=H	
		[+P] [+D]	[=P] [±D]	[=P] [-D]	[=P] [-D]	[+P] [+D]	[=P] [±D]	[=P] [-D]	[=P] [-D]
		Boss	Acquaintance	Relative	Friend	Boss	Acquaintance	Relative	Friend
Strategy Type 1	a	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	1
	b	0	2	0	1	1	2	5	5
	c	3	2	8	5	1	3	5	1
Strategy Type 2	d	4	7	6	6	8	7	4	4
	e	8	2	1	3	5	1	1	4
Total		15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

Notes: The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups and all the five English groups is 60 each, of which the total number for each type of the people is 15.

Table 5–25 shows the distribution of choices of strategy types by power in refusals in the data by questionnaires. The data in my investigation seems to show that distance and power are working to influence the choices. Take the boss and the acquaintance columns for example. For the boss, there are only a few (3 out of 15) Chinese and (2 out of 15) English who choose Strategy type 1, which include ‘I won’t/ I can’t/ I haven’t so much’. For the acquaintance, less than half of them choose Strategy type 1. Most of the participants, both Chinese and English, favour Strategy type 2 for the boss and the acquaintance, respectively. That indicates that for most of the participants, the strategies of Strategy type 1 are too direct for the boss, who has power over the speaker, and also too direct for the acquaintance, who has distance from the speaker.

However, if we look at the cases of the relative and the friend, the results will be different. Most of the Chinese and English participants (more than half) choose Strategy type 1 for the relative. Such cases seem to show that most of the participants prefer direct strategies for the relative, who have no power over or distance from the speaker. However, a little more than half of the participants choose Strategy type 2 for the friend. This seems to show that, though there does not seem to be the power difference between the relatives, there seems to be the problem of distance. The distance between friends is

not so big as that between the speaker and the boss or acquaintance but it is bigger than that between relatives. That is probably why more participants choose Strategy type 1 for the relative than for the friend.

If we have a closer look we will see that the English are more direct towards the relative than the Chinese are. The Chinese select neither *a* nor *b* (both being the most direct) for the relative; they choose only 8 *c*'s while the English do not adopt *a* at all but they choose 5 *b*'s and 5 *c*'s, thus indicating that the English are more direct in such matters as refusing to lend money to others. Similarly, the English seem to be more direct than the Chinese for friends, who do not use *a* at all, choose *b* once and *c* 5 times but the English choose *a* once, *b* 5 times and *c* once. *c* is less direct than *a* and *b*, though they all belong to Strategy type 1.

Data analysis seems to support the conclusion that when a power differential exists, S tends to choose more formal and less direct strategies, as in the case of the boss. When distance is greater, S tends also to choose more of the indirect strategy even if the power is equal, as in the case of the acquaintance. However, when the power is equal and the distance is close, S tends to choose more of the direct strategy, as in the cases of the relative and the friend, though the English seem to be more direct towards the latter than the Chinese are.

Now I will examine the fake (superficial) refusal phenomenon in dinner invitations where we will see more similarities and differences between Chinese and English.

Table 5–26 Distribution of strategy types by power (%) (N = raw score) in refusals in the questionnaires (Q7)

		Chinese Speakers				English Speakers			
		S<H		S=H		S<H		S=H	
		[+P]	[=P]	[=P]	[=P]	[+P]	[=P]	[=P]	[=P]
		[+D]	[±D]	[-D]	[-D]	[+D]	[±D]	[-D]	[-D]
		Boss	Acquaint	Relative	Friend	Boss	Acquaint	Relative	Friend
Strategy Type 1	a	3	0	3	5	1	1	8	12
	e	1	3	1	1	5	5	5	1
Strategy Type 2	b	0	5	3	2	1	1	1	2
	c	11	6	7	5	8	8	1	0
	d	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0
Total		15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

Notes:

1. The total number of choices for all the five Chinese groups and all the five English groups is 60 each, of which the total number for each type of the people is 15.
2. *a* is direct acceptance and *e* is polite direct acceptance.
3. *b*, *c* and *d* are indirect acceptances.
4. *f* (not shown in this table) has been counted as *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, or *e*, to which it is similar or close (For details, see 5.2, Situation 2, Tables 12–14).

Table 5-26 shows how such social factors as distance and power influence the choice of strategies when one is invited to dinner and intends to accept it both in Chinese and English. (Remember that the intention of the speaker is to accept the invitation.)

The relative power and social distance do not seem to play such major role in influencing the choice of strategies in the cases of the boss and the acquaintance in Chinese fake refusals to dinner invitation. The participants seem to choose these fake refusal strategies regardless of the kind of relationship – whether it is the boss, acquaintance, relative or friend. However, the case is different in English. The social distance and relative power do influence the choice of strategies to a great extent. With the boss and the acquaintance, they choose many fake refusal strategies but very few with the relative and the friend (See 5.2 and 7.3).

5.4 Findings and Discussions in Refusals

In my investigation, the most important finding is that the situation (the social relation, the goal/interest relation, etc.) is the decisive factor in the use of strategies in the realization of the speech act of refusals (as well as requests, Chapter IV). In the role-play discussion, the setting is casual. The participants are supposed to accomplish a common task. However different their interest is between them, their common goal and therefore their general interest determine that they have to be quite direct for efficiency. In this case, there is little space for very much indirectness in their interaction. In other words, the participants do not have much chance for face considerations. Each one of them starts from their own interest or benefit and then naturally there are agreements and disagreements, suggestions and refusals/acceptances. This situation requires frankness, straightforwardness and directness from all speakers, whether they are Chinese or English. The result is that more similarities are found between the Chinese and the English in strategies.

In the questionnaires, however, the situation is more complex. The participants are asked to accomplish different tasks: refusing to lend money to different relations, making fake and genuine refusals to invitations and suggestions from different kinds of relations. In these cases, more differences in strategies of refusals are naturally found than similarities. I will come back to this point in Chapter VII. Now, I will sum up similarities and differences between the two languages with regard to the realization of refusal acts.

5.4.1 Findings in refusals – similarities

Data analysis shows that

1. In the role-play, the most frequently used strategy is Strategy type 1 (direct) for both the Chinese and the English in refusals.

Most of the Chinese (69.7%) and English (56.2%) favour this direct strategy. The least used for both is Strategy type 3. So, in the sense of descending importance for the three strategies, Chinese and English are similar to each other. The most efficient specific strategies for both languages are the willingness/preferring ones. For instance, 'I don't like it.', 'I don't want to go ...', etc. These forms are used the most frequently in the role-play refusals. This demonstrates that participants do not consider 'face' so much in joint/communal task-oriented communication.

The participants try their best to make themselves very clear about what they want and what they do not want. The consideration of politeness is secondary. "And sometimes, standing up for one's point of view becomes more important than protecting the addressee's face in discussion" (Kotthoff 1993: 146). That is why those participating in the discussion in the role-plays try their best to air their views according to their own interest and benefit without considering too many factors such as power, distance. This is true in both the Chinese and English groups.

The content of the refusal also plays an important part here. When it comes to problems such as refusing to lend money to others, distance and power both appear and begin to influence the choice of strategies. Speakers choose relatively informal and direct strategies with hearers who have equal or less power, or who are close or intimate with them (close relatives and best friends). However, they adopt formal and less direct strategies with those who have power over them or are distant in relations with them (the boss or acquaintances, for example). Chinese and English are similar to each other, in this respect.

2. In the questionnaires, there are also similarities between the Chinese and English groups.

In refusing to lend money to others (Situation 1: Question 6), most Chinese (61.7%) and English (58.3%) prefer the 'indirect' strategies. Borrowing money can be face-threatening to both S and H and refusing to lend it is equally, if not more, face-threatening to both. So participants are very careful in dealing with these matters, especially borrowing from people who have power over H or from those who have a bigger social distance from H. Along this line, I find that Chinese choose similar strategies in similar situations. For example, most of both the Chinese and English favour the indirect strategies for the boss and the acquaintance and direct ones for the relative and friend. The difference between Chinese and English is very small.

3. I found in the questionnaire investigation, most Chinese and English feel a troubled mind, guilt or embarrassment when they refuse a request to help.

They either feel uneasy because they should help but they cannot; or they feel that they lose face because of their inability to help. There are fewer participants who do not feel guilty or embarrassed.

5.4.2 Findings in refusals – differences

1. In the role-play, though both the Chinese and the English favour direct strategies in refusals (except the fake strategy), as mentioned in the similarities section above, generally the Chinese prefer to be more direct than the English.

For example, most (69.7%) of the Chinese adopt Strategy type 1 (direct or impositives) compared with 56.2% of the English.

However, in Strategy type 2, where the strategies are less direct and therefore less face-threatening because of the use of mitigators or hedges to reduce the force of the FTAs, the English choose more of Strategy type 2 devices than the Chinese groups (37% vs 19.2%). One example is that there are 19 occurrences out of 27 of all the ‘... but ...’ strategy that are found in the English groups, accounting for 70.4%, compared with only 26.3% in the Chinese groups.

2. In the questionnaire investigation, refusal strategies are situation-specific. That is, they depend on circumstances.

The choice of these strategies is influenced by the content of the refusal act and the relationship between the participants. In refusing to lend money, for example, it is often difficult for Chinese to express a refusal to the boss. After they make such refusals, most of them have a troubled mind, but many fewer English feel worried about that. On the contrary, it is very easy for Chinese to refuse to lend money to acquaintances and they rarely (0.7%) feel a troubled mind but many more English (94%) will have a troubled mind.

In the genuine refusals to dinner, though the strategies of the Chinese and the English seem to be similar to each other, there are differences between them. For example, though both the Chinese and the English equally prefer Choice *e* (the formulas of willingness + refusal + gratitude) to refuse the boss, the former choose less *e* and more *d* (the formulas of willingness + refusal) and more *a* (the formulas of refusal head + excuse) for the acquaintance than the latter. For the relative, the Chinese choose more *a* and *d* but the English do not choose *a* and favour *d* and *e*. For the best friend, the Chinese choices are varied but the English focus on *b* (apology + refusal head). So it is found in general that the English prefer (more than the Chinese) such strategies as ‘I am

so sorry but ...', 'I would like very much to, but ...' It is these choices of strategies that reveal that the English tend to be more indirect than the Chinese in this respect.

3. The fake refusal strategy is found to be widely used in Chinese politeness. Most of the invitees adopt this kind of strategy regardless of the category of inviters, whether the inviter is the boss, relative, friend or acquaintance just for politeness.

In such cases, power and distance do not seem to influence the choice of strategies very much. However, power and distance influence the English choices as expected. In the case of the boss and the acquaintance for example, most of the participants adopt the indirect strategies while, with the relative and the friend, the English mainly choose the direct strategies. To all inviters, the English say 'no' with thanks usually and probably with an excuse or reason if they refuse. Their 'tentative response', which gives a chance to S to make sure whether the invitation is genuine or not, seems to have the risk of face-threatening (See analysis at Situation 2 above and Chapter VII).

The Chinese fake and the English tentative refusals, however, seem to be different from each other. The former sounds as if the invitee really would/could not accept the invitation and the latter usually lets the inviter know that the invitee will confirm later on whether s/he will be able to accept in the end. The fake refusal acts must be related to cultural differences. So, I will further discuss this problem in detail in Chapter VII, where cultural influences are dealt with.

Summary

Through the preliminary analysis of my data in the role-play, it is found that refusals in Chinese and English are similar to each other, especially in strategies. Both Chinese and English tend to use direct strategies most frequently. The common goal determines that every participant must be frank and direct in discussion in order to achieve efficiency.

Differences are also revealed in the data analysis, especially in the DCTs. It seems that in most situations, the English tend to choose more indirect or less face-threatening strategies than the Chinese (though this is less true of most cases in the role-play discussions and it is not true of the fake refusal phenomenon either).

One unexpected result that appeared in the DCT investigation is that almost as many English participants as the Chinese chose the fake strategy for the boss and the acquaintance. This will be discussed further in Chapter VII.

CHAPTER VI: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MODIFICATION OF SPEECH ACTS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapters IV and V, I have mainly dealt with the head act of requests and refusals. A head act is the minimal unit that realizes a speech act such as a request or a refusal and which is the core of the sequence of that speech act (See Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 275, 276).

In this chapter, I will look at the modification part of sequences of the two speech acts that occur in the role-play only. The importance of studying this lies in the fact that the performance of directives (i.e. requests and refusals in my role-play) may be accompanied by loss of face. In Brown & Levinson's (1987: 65) terms, such speech acts are intrinsically 'face-threatening' and accordingly people need and try to avoid or reduce the possible unwelcome effect of their utterances through modification, which Fraser (1980: 341) calls mitigation.

With such modification, utterances or speech acts usually become longer stretches of communication. These stretches will not only ease communication itself but also form essential discourse contexts without which individual or even isolated utterances will not convey the speaker's full meaning. Misunderstanding will sometimes occur. However, with appropriate modification, communication usually moves smoothly.

Here in this chapter, I will first of all define modification and its subdivisions (6.1). Then I will discuss modification in requests in which descriptive categories of modification are listed (6.2), findings are presented (6.2.3) and analysis is made with regard to internal modification (6.2.4) including interrogatives, modal particles – 吧 *ba*, 啊 *ah*/呀 *ya*, 呢 *ne* and 吗 *ma* and polite expressions, and external modification (6.2.5). In 6.3, modification in refusals is studied where descriptive categories of modification in refusals are provided (6.3.1), findings are presented (6.3.2) and analysis of findings is made (6.3.3). Finally, there is the conclusion for this chapter (6.4).

Definition:

Modification is the part of a sequence other than the head act. Its function is to modify the force of the core of the utterance (either soften or boost it). Modification is divided into two types: internal and external modification (Faerch and Kasper 1989: 221). Internal modification in requests refers to those modifiers "within the request utterance proper (linked to the 'head act'), the presence of which is not essential for the utterance to be potentially understood as a request" (Blum-Kulka 1989: 60). If one

leaves out the non-essential elements, the pragmatic force of the utterance will still be there. For example:

1. Request in Chinese

爷爷 你 到底 想去 哪儿?
Grandfather, you on earth want to go where?
 Where on earth do you want to go, Grandfather?

2. Request in English

OK, Sonia, would you mind, sort of, booking tickets and hotels for us?

3. Refusal in Chinese

我, 我 告诉 你 吧, 我 不想 坐 飞机.
I, I tell you ba²¹, I not want sit plane.
 Let me tell you: I don't want to take the plane.

4. Refusal in English

I don't, I don't reckon Strasbourg would be that nice.

(All the elements in italics in 1, 2, 3 and 4 are of internal modification.)

There is another main type of request/refusal mitigation – external modification by means of supportive moves. According to Faerch and Kasper (1989: 237), they include “zero supportive move, a single grounder, combinations of supportive moves (e.g., two grounders, a grounder and a preparator, a preparator and a disarmer, etc.) and other single supportive moves such as preparators, disarmers, imposition-minimizers, and others”. For example:

5. Request in Chinese

哎, 你 电脑 不 是 很 不错 吗?
eh, you computer not is very not bad ma MP
Eh, aren't you very good at computer skills?
 嗯, 你 呀, 上网 查 一下,
Mm you ya MP, get on internet check Particle,
 看看 有没有 这个 又便宜 又还可以的 宾馆。
Look look have not have this also cheap also decent hotel.
 Well, you, check on the Internet to see whether there are both cheap and decent hotels.

6. Request in English

And when are we thinking of going then? (*Important 'cause I have got a few things on during the ...*)

²¹ MP: Modal Particle.

7. Refusal in Chinese

我 不想 去 了。 为了 身体 考虑。
 I not want go AP²² for health consideration.
 I don't want to go there (for the sake of health.)

8. Refusal in English

Strasbourg is *A bit out of the way. It's a mission to get down there. You've got ...*

(All the elements in the italics in 5 through 8 above are examples of external modification or supportive moves.)

6.2 Descriptive Categories of Modification in Requests

6.2.1 Internal modification

Faerch and Kasper (1989: 224) distinguish two basic types of internal modification: *downgraders* (syntactic and lexical/phrasal), and *upgraders* (emphasizers). Lee-Wong (2000: 109) discusses also two main classes: modification (internal – syntactic and lexical/phrasal – and external) and intensification. Based on the main classifications above, I have put my data in the role-play into the following categories.

1. Syntactic downgraders

- A. Conditional, 如果 (If ...)
- B. Zero marking, that is, no downgraders are used.
- C. Reduplication of verbs, 看看 *kànkàn* (look look); 看一看 *kànyikàn* (look a look)
- D. Modal particles (MP), 啊 *ah*/呀 *ya*, 吧 *ba*, 吗 *ma*, and 呢 *ne*
- E. Appealers, wishes to appeal to H's understanding or solicit H's agreement; tags of 好吗 *hǎoma*, 行吗 *xíngma* and 可以 *kěyǐma*? (all right / OK?)
- F. Combinations

Note: C and D (MPs) suit Chinese only.

2. Lexical/phrasal downgraders

- A. Zero marking.
- B. Politeness markers, e.g. 请 *qǐng* (please); 麻烦你 *máfanǐ* (excuse me); 打扰了 (Can /Could you/Please/Sorry to bother you, etc.)

²² AP: Aspect Particle

C. Consultative devices, e.g. 你看 *nǐkàn*, 你说 *nǐshuō*, 你认为 *nǐ rènwéi* (what do you think?)

D. Alerters

a. Terms of address, e.g. Sonia, 爷爷 *yéyé* (Grandfather)

b. Pronoun, e.g. 你 *nǐ* (you)

c. Attention getters, e.g. 哎 *eh*

E. Hedges:

a. Subjectivizers, e.g. 不知道 *bùzhīdào* (I wonder); 我觉得 *wǒjuéde* (I feel/I think)

b. Understaters, e.g. 一点 *yídiǎn* (a little); 一下 *yíxià* (a moment)

F. Lexical downtoners, e.g. modal adverbs such as 也许 *yěxǔ* (perhaps); 可能 *kěnéng* (possibly)

G. Combinations

3. Upgraders (emphasizers)

A. Intensifiers, Modifiers used to intensify certain elements of the proposition of the utterance, e.g. 快点做决定吧, 到底是去哪个城市呢? (Be quick to make a decision. Where *on earth* shall we go?)

B. Zero marking.

C. Alerters, e.g. 你呀, 上网查一下. (You, check on the Internet.)

David, don't you have a brother in Paris?

D. Repetition of request, e.g. 打扰了, 打扰了. (*Please help. Please help* [to book the tickets.])

6.2.2 External modification (descriptive categories)

A. Zero supportive moves.

B. A grounder (giving the reason), e.g. Can you help to make the reservations? *We don't quite know how to use the computer.*

C. A preparator, (preparing the hearer for the ensuing request by 1) announcing that s/he will make a request; 2) asking about the potential availability of the hearer for carrying out the request; or 3) asking for the hearer's permission to make the request – Blum-Kulka et al. 1989:287). e.g.

You live in the centre of the city. You are very good at computer skills. Can you help to make the reservations on the Internet?

May I ask you a question ...?

D. Promise (of cooperation), e.g. You be responsible for that. *I'll be responsible for things on the trip and accommodation.*

E. Combinations of supportive moves (two grounders, a grounder and a preparator, etc.)

6.2.3 Findings for requests

Distribution of supportive moves:

Results from the role-play both of Chinese and English show that participants favour internal supportive moves over external supportive moves.

Table 6-1 Percentage distribution of supportive moves

Types of Modification	Chinese	English
Syntactic downgraders	23.7%	4.9%
Lexical downgraders	38.4%	37.7%
External moves	21.1%	27.9%

Note: The total number of the Chinese requests is 52 and the English is 61.

Table 6-1 demonstrates that Chinese use more modification of syntactic downgraders than the English do. The English adopt a little more external modification but they employ slightly fewer lexical downgraders. In order to better understand the similarities and differences, we will look at the more specific distribution of the subcategories of modification in Tables 6-2, 6-3 and 6-4 as follows.

Table 6-2 Syntactic downgraders in requests

	Conditional	Appealer	Modal Particle	Verb reduplication	Zero marking	Combinations
Chinese (Total 52)	0	1 (1.92%)	0	9 (17.3%)	40 (76.9%)	2 (3.85%)
English (Total 61)	3 (4.9%)	0	0	0	58 (95.1%)	0

Table 6-3 Lexical/phrasal downgraders in requests

	Alerter	Politeness marker	Consultative device	Downtoner	Zero marking	Others	Combinations
Chinese (Total 52)	9 (17.3%)	5 (9.6%)	0	0	32 (61.5%)	4 (7.7%)	2 (3.8%)
English (Total 61)	15 (24.6%)	0	1 (1.6%)	4 (6.6%)	38 (62.3%)	1 (1.6%)	2 (3.3%)

Note: 'Others' in Chinese include the hedges of 就是说 (That is to say), 嗯 (Hm), 对了 (Yes) and 好 (Good) and in English it refers to 'like' as a hedge.

Table 6-4 External modification in requests

	Grounder	Preparator	Promise	Zero Marking	Combinations
Chinese (Total 52)	2 (3.8%)	4 (7.7%)	1 (1.9%)	41 (78.9%)	4 (7.7%)
English (Total 61)	5 (8.2%)	9 (14.8%)	0	44 (72.1%)	3 (4.9%)

Table 6-2 shows that most of both the Chinese (76.9%) and the English (95.1%) use 'no marking' syntactic modifications. In other words, the great majority of the participants do not mitigate the force of their head acts with syntactic modification.

Differences can be seen in conditional and verb reduplication. The English have adopted the former three times while the Chinese, none. The three occurrences in English cannot be called 'frequent', however. The verb-reduplication in Chinese, such as 看看 *kànkàn* (look look) is a syntactic characteristic that does not exist in English, but its variation 看一看 *kànyikàn* (look a look) can find expression in a similar structure in meaning in English such as 'have a look'. Although the two forms are semantically equivalent, the English one cannot be called reduplication of the verb. The data shows that Chinese are fond of this verb reduplication in verbal communication. The percentage for Chinese is 17.3%, compared with zero percent for its English semantic counterpart. Alternatively, the English show a 4.9% usage for the 'conditional' as modification compared with zero percent in Chinese.

Similar to the syntactic downgraders in Table 6-2, we find, in Table 6-3, large percentages of zero marking of lexical/phrasal modification in requests in the two languages, which consists of 61.5% Chinese and 62.3% English. Here again, it shows that both Chinese and English like to be direct in requests in the role-play. In the lexical/phrasal modification forms used, differences lie in the fact that the Chinese tend to use more politeness markers and fewer downtoners than the English.

However, there is only 21.1% in Chinese and 27.9% in English for external modification. As much as 78.9% and 72.1% of the request acts in the two languages, respectively, have no supportive moves or external modification.

The statistical evidence (more internal than external modification and zero marking) seems to show that both Chinese and English speakers are fond of 'directness' and 'economy' in the role-play investigation. Faerch and Kasper (1989: 243) posit that "*Internal syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers* are shorter and thus more economical:

They conform to the conversational maxim of quantity (be brief!)”. In most cases of the role-play discussion, participants need to be brief.

Lee-Wong (2000: 135) also says that “Internal modification is a more economical move than external modification”. She claims that “Chinese native speakers favour strategies that are direct and expressions that are economical, a manifestation of their adherence to the principle of least effort”. In my study, data show that not only the Chinese speakers but also the English speakers favour direct strategies and economical expressions for efficiency. The context and the nature of the interaction play an important part here. Such are some general impressions. I will do some specific analysis in the next section.

6.2.4 Analysis of findings for requests

6.2.4.1 Interrogatives

Allan (1986: 207) states that in a requestive S asks H to do A, i.e. perform some act; in a question, however, S asks H to tell S something. Thus the difference is only that a question solicits a verbal response, and a requestive solicits a nonverbal response. For example:

1. Chinese group 1

- C1BM: 你 22 号是什么时候呢?
What time is good for you on the 22nd?
 C1CF: 22 号?
 The 22nd?
 C1AF: 我不行。
 Not good for me.

2. English group 1

- E1BF: *How many days does that leave us with?*
 E1CM: It will be 4 days, wouldn't it?
 E1BF: That's good with me.

3. Chinese group 4

- C4AF: 你能不能给咱们在 *Strasbourg* 找一个比较便宜的 *hotel*?
Can you find for us a reasonably cheap hotel in Strasbourg?
 C4BM: 嗯, 可以。
 Oh, yes.

4. English group 4

- E4AM: *Where does everyone want to go then?*
 E4CM: Definitely Paris.
 E4BF: Yeah, I definitely want to go to Paris.

5. Chinese group 3

C3AF: 我听说你哥哥在上海工作, 是吗?

I hear that your brother works in Shanghai, doesn't he?

C3BF: 是。Yes.

C3AF: 那能不能和他联系一下, 到他家住?

Then can you contact him to see whether we can stay with him?

6. English group 3

E3AF: *Are you going to look into hotels then if I am going to look into trains?*

E3BF: OK.

In Examples 1 and 2 above, C1BM and E1BF asks a question for information. All C1AF, C1CF and E1CF have to do is to supply the information verbally. Example 3 seems to be a question for information but actually it is a request or a preparator for a coming request and Example 4 appears to solicit verbal responses from the other members but in fact it is a request for everyone to give their ideas to the planning work.

Examples 5 and 6 are definitely requests for action from H. In other words, S requests H to do A. If H agrees to do A, s/he will have to spend some time and energy to accomplish it.

For analysis in this thesis, I have classified Examples 1, 2 and 4 as requestive category one (for information and/or ideas) and Examples 3, 5 and 6 as requestive category two (for action on the part of H).

There are 31 and 49 requestives altogether in Chinese and English, respectively. There are as many as 25 and 45 Category One requestives, accounting for 81% and 92% but only 6 and 4 Category Two requestives, accounting for very small percentages of the total in the two languages.

Table 6–5 Distribution of requestives

	Category One Requestives	Category Two Requestives	Total
Chinese	25 (81%)	6 (19%)	31
English	45 (92%)	4 (8%)	49

Note: 'Total' refers to the total number of requestive strategies in each language.

Table 6–5 shows that the requestives for information/ideas (category one) comprises 81% and 92% for Chinese and English. The requestives for action from H consist of only 19% and 8%, respectively. We already know that category one requestives solicit verbal information or ideas that members contribute to the discussion. There is little illocutionary force or face-threatening effect on H. By such requestives, S conveys to H that they both share the same belief that politeness is non-

issue here and the common goal and interest of their discussion allows such directness towards each other. This partially responds positively with the high percentages of the 'direct' strategy in both languages, as discussed in Chapter IV.

7. Chinese group 5

C5AF: 你想坐什么?

What do you want to take?

C5BF: 火车。 The train.

...

C5CM: 坐飞机花的钱太多, 再说你保证不晕飞机吗?

The plane is too expensive. And are you sure you won't be airsick?

C5BF: 坐飞机吧! *Take the train.*

C5AF: 火车你得坐一天啊, 那咱就剩了3天了.....

The train will take you a whole day. Then you'll have only 3 days ...

C5B/AF: 那怎么办? *What's to be done then?*

8. Chinese group 2

C2AM: 你哥哥在上海工作, 是吧? 能不能给你哥哥打招呼, 咱们能不能住你哥家里? *Your brother works in Shanghai, doesn't he? Can you contact him and ask him whether we can live in his home?*

C2CM: 这好像不太方便。因为他家我哥哥忙,

This doesn't seem to be convenient. My brother is busy, ...

9. English group 1

E1AM: *Sonia, would you mind, sort of, booking tickets and hotels for us?*

E1BF: *Um, ... I've actually got a lot to do.*

In each of the examples, a member starts with a question which triggers off the discussion of a problem, such as the means of transportation (Chinese Group 5 in 7 above). They are putting their heads together to solve a problem that is for everyone's benefit. There doesn't seem to be much face work to deal with in such cases.

However, requestives of category two (requests for H to do A) seem to be quite different. When a member wants another member to book the train tickets, or to reserve hotel rooms, s/he tends to use category two requestives including the conventionally indirect strategies and more and longer supportive moves. For example, in Example 8, S is asking H to contact his brother to enquire about whether they could go and stay in his brother's home. So, S asks H to do something rather than contribute information or ideas. It needs some face work, that is, to try to mitigate the face-threatening effect, by using the conventionally indirect strategy: *néngbùnéng* in Chinese and 'can/could you/would you mind' in English (See Example 9). However, this kind of requestives consists of a comparatively small number and percentages of the total, both in Chinese 6

(19%) and in English 4 (8%). Most of the participants adopt other strategies such as imperatives, instead. The nature of the discussion means that more direct strategies are appropriate on the part of either party.

6.2.4.2 Modal particles – 吧 *ba*, 啊 *ah*/呀 *ya*, 呢 *ne* and 吗 *ma*

Although researchers of Chinese pragmatics agree that such modal particles are an important group of words used to play modal functions as syntactic modifiers, few of these researchers have really researched into the uses and functions of them. Zhang (1995: 53), for example, lists *ba*, *ya*, *ne*, *ah* and *le* as syntactic downgraders and claims that “The most commonly used downgraders are particles. They serve grammatical as well as pragmatic functions”. Nevertheless, little research has been done with regard to any specific functions of such particles in their research. Lee-Wong (2000: 115) classifies the modal particles – *ba*, *ya*, *ne* and *ma* as one of the five syntactic downgraders in her work, too. However, she does not do any specific study of them in her analysis, either, because they “are not used extensively as ‘weakeners’ to modify the illocutionary force of requestives” (ibid.: 127).

In my role-play data, however, there are many occurrences of modal particles. Sometimes, it is very difficult and confusing to decide what function(s) these particles play unless one is sure of the situation in which, and the intonation with which, they are employed. Therefore, they are worth studying in order to have some understanding of which plays what role and how in Chinese politeness.

In my role-play, all the above modal particles have been used. Based on the contexts and the tones of the utterances in which these particles occur, I have first looked at their uses and functions against past research results, which are quite enlightening though not made from the viewpoint of pragmatics (See Xia et al. 1980; Wu et al. 1978 and Xu 1985).

First, I will look at the modal particle 吗 *ma*. According to Xu (1985: 109):

It is usually used at the end of a general yes-no question. In English, no corresponding expression can be found. However, when an English general question is translated into Chinese, the particle 吗 *ma* is always put at the end of the translated utterance. In other words, this particle has no other function but form an indispensable part of such questions. [Translation is mine.]

That is to say, 吗 *ma* as a particle is not used to mitigate the illocutionary force of an utterance. Its function is mainly to form questions. It is an essential part of such

questions. Without it, a general question usually cannot be formed in Chinese. I call this the 'question-forming' 吗 *ma*. For example:

10. Chinese group 2²³

C2AM:

还 有 疑问 吗?
 Still have question *ma* (MP)
Have you got any questions?

C2BM:

在 我们 走 时 准备 一下, 对 吗?
 At we go time prepare a little, correct *ma* (MP)
 We must make some preparations before we go, right?

11. Chinese group 4

C4AF:

那 太好 了。
 That too good *le*(AP).
 That's wonderful.

那 你哥 能有 地方 装下 我们 三 吗?
 Then your brother can have place put up us three *ma* (MP)?
Does your brother have enough room for us three?

C4CF:

没 问题。 只要 在 巴黎 就 应该 没 问题。
 No problem. only if in Paris just should no problem.
 No problem. So long as it is in Paris, there should be no problem.

If one leaves out the particle 吗 *ma* in 10 and 11 above, the utterances will not sound so idiomatic as they do. They will sound more like statements than questions. However, I have found more uses of 吗 *ma* in my data. First, it may be used as a syntactic downgrader at the end of a requestive. In this case, it is again an element that is inseparable from the requestive. It serves as a mitigator of the force of the act. Another use of it is to form question tags with such a word as 好 good, 行 can, 可以 may, etc. Such question tags may serve as downgraders or upgraders, depending on the context and the intonation. For instance:

12. Chinese group 2

C2AM:

上海, 杭州 有 亲戚 在那儿 住 吗?
 Shanghai Hangzhou have relative in there live *ma* (MP)
Have you got any relatives we can live with?

²³ I have provided word-for-word glosses as well as translation for Chinese examples 10 to 26 in this section and 46 to 49 in 6.3.2 in order to facilitate reading by non-native readers of Chinese.

C2CM:

我 哥哥 在 上海 工作
 My brother in Shanghai work ...
 My brother works in Shanghai ...

13. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

你 来 做 这个 (订旅馆, 订票), 好 吗?
 You come do this (book hotel, ticket), good *ma* (MP)?
You do this (reserve hotel rooms and book tickets), will you?

C1BM:

那 没 问题, 这些 东西, 买 票 我 可以。
 That no problem, these things, buy ticket I can.
 No problem. These things, I can buy the tickets.

Without the particle 吗 *ma* / 好吗 *hǎoma* at the end of utterances 12 and 13, they would become something like a statement and an order. So, I have identified two different categories of the Chinese particle 吗 *ma*: question-forming and request-forming. The former does not seem to be a syntactic downgrader and does not function as such. The latter is used to mitigate the force of a request.

Now I will examine the uses of the second particle 吧 (罢) *ba*, which is often used at the end of an imperative, expressing request, advice, forbidding or urge. When English imperatives are translated into Chinese, the particle 吧 *ba* is often added to the end of the utterances (Xu 1985: 108). For example:

14. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

快 做决定 吧!
 Quick make decision *ba* (MP)
 到底 去 哪个 城市 呢?
 on earth go which city *ne* (MP)
Be quick to make a decision! Which city on earth shall we go? (Urge)

C1BM:

这个 先, 先, 先 那个 什么 吧。
 This first, first, first that what *ba* (MP)
 Well, first, let's ...

C1CF:

我 想 Basel 消费 水平 会 更高 一些。
 I think Basel consumption level will higher a little.
 I guess Basel has a higher level of consumption.

Another use of 吧 *ba* is to express 'supposition' at the end of a statement (ibid.: 108).

15. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

你 住 在 市 中心 吧。

You live in city centre *ba* (MP).

我 想起来 了。 打扰 了, 打扰 了。

I remember Part. Disturb Part., disturb Part.

You live in the centre of the city, I suppose. Now I remember. *Please help.*

C1CF: 对。 Yes.

In Example 14, the particle 吧 *ba* plays the part of an upgrader or an emphazier, to urge the group to make a quick decision. In Example 15, it has the downgrading power to help to make preparations for the coming request of asking C to do something for the group.

Wu et al. (1978: 12) list the use of 吧 *ba* at the end of a sentence to express doubt or uncertainty. They give the only example: 他会来吧? (Will he come?) Although this particle is rarely found in other works as a question ending, it occurs in a few cases in my data. I also found two kinds of questions in my data that this particle is used with: question-forming and request-forming. The former is mainly employed to ask for information or idea, which has no mitigating function, and the latter requests or helps to request somebody to do something. In the latter case, the particle may form a question tag with the verb 是 *be*, 行 *can*, 可以 *may*. For example:

16. Chinese group 2

C2AM:

那 你们 上 哪儿, 去 哪个 城市 吧?

Then you (plural) go where, go which city *ba* (MP)*Where do you want to go? Which city to go to?*

C2CM:

我 倾向 去 上海 和 那个 杭州 吧。

I prefer go Shanghai and that Hangzhou *ba* (MP)

I prefer to go to Shanghai and Hangzhou.

17. Chinese group 3

C3AF (to C3BF):

我 记得 你 是 学 计算机 的,

I remember you be study computer Part.

是 吧?

Be *ba* (MP)*I remember you are a student studying computers, aren't you?*

那 挺好, 在 网上 查 一下,

That very good, on internet check a little,

哪个 地方 便宜 或者是 订一下 票 什么 的

Which place cheap or book ticket what Part. ...

Good. *Check on the Internet to see what places are cheaper or to book the tickets.*

C3CF:

我	有	认识的	人,		
I	have	familiar	people,		
我	帮	你们	去	订票	好了。
I	help	you (plural)	go	book ticket	OK.

I have acquaintances there. I will help to book the tickets for you.

In Example 16 above, C2AM is trying to collect ideas from the other members, who have both an interest and an obligation to contribute ideas. So the particle 吧 *ba* is a question-forming one. In Example 17, however, the tag 是吧 turns the statement into a question, giving C3BF an 'out'. Moreover, the question is a preparation introducing a request for C3BF to check places and book tickets. So, it is a request-forming 是吧. While the particle 吧 *ba* is not a syntactic downgrader, the question tag with the same particle is.

The third modal particle 啊(呀) *ah (ya)*²⁴ has several different uses. However, few researchers have recognized many of these. Xu (1985: 110) claims only one function for the particle, that is: “常用在感叹句末。” (It is used at the end of exclamatory sentences.) However, Wu et al. (1978: 1) list the following four main functions of the particle, most of which have occurred in my data.

a. At the end of a statement, it expresses exclamation, confirmation, enjoining. e.g.

多	好	的	天	啊!
How	good	Attributive Part.	weather	<i>ah</i> (MP)

What fine weather!

b. It is also used at the end of an utterance to form a question. e.g.

这	消息	是	真的	啊?
This	news	is	true	<i>ah</i> (MP)

Is this news really true?

c. In the middle of a statement, this particle is rousing H's attention to what S has to say next. e.g.

你	啊!	老	这样	下去	不行。
You	<i>ah</i> (MP)	always	this way	go on	not good

Look! You can't go on like this.

²⁴ 呀 *ya* is used when it is preceded by a vowel letter (in pinyin) of *a, e, i, o* or *u*. Otherwise 啊 *ah* is the appropriate form. – Xinhua Dictionary, Commercial Press, Beijing, 2000.

d. It is used after each item in a list of things. e.g.

茄子	啊,	黄瓜	啊,
Aubergine	ah (MP)	cucumber	ah (MP)
洋白菜	啊,	西红柿	啊
Cabbage	ah (MP)	tomato	ah (MP)

Aubergine, cucumbers, cabbages, tomatoes.

However, they make no mention of the pragmatic use of this modal particle whatsoever. The following examples are from my role-play data.

18. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

那	你时间	看	大家	合适不合适	啊?
Then	your time	look	everybody	suitable not suitable	ah (MP)

Look at everyone's time. Does it coincide?

C1BM:

15号,	22号,	你	怎么样?
15 th	22 nd ,	you	how?

Are you all right on 15th and 22nd?

19. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

你	能不能	帮	我们	订	旅馆	呀?
You	can not can	help	us	book	hotel	ya (MP)

Can you help to reserve the hotel?

C1BM: 那 没 问题。

That	no	problem.
------	----	----------

No problem.

20. Chinese group 4

C4AF:

嗯,	你	呀,	上网	查	一下,
Mm	you	ya (MP),	get on internet	check	a little
看	有没有	这个	又便宜	又还可以的	宾馆?
See	have not have	this	also cheap	also decent	hotel?

Hm, you, check on the computer to see whether there are hotels both cheap and reasonably good.

C4BM:

这	方面	我	可以,	我	可以	看看。
This	aspect	I	can,	I	can	look look.

I will have a look at it.

21. Chinese group 1

C1BM:

能不能	让	你表哥	帮助	介绍	一下,
Can not can	let	your cousin	help	introduce	a little,
就	是	说,			
that	is	say,			

到 那 以后, 到 哪 玩 啊,
 Arrive there after, go where play ah,
 或者是 咱们 到 那个 Strasbourg, 怎么 走?
 Or we go that Strasbourg, how go

Can you ask your cousin to help us by introducing where to go to enjoy ourselves or how to get to Strasbourg when we get there?

C1CF:

我 想 他 应该 知道。
 I think he should know.

I think he should know.

去 了 7, 8 年 了。
 Go AP 7-8 year le (AP)

He has been there for 7 to 8 years.

22. Chinese group 2

C2AM:

那 你们 上 哪儿, 去 哪个 城市 吧,
 Then you (plural) go where, go which city ba,
 像是 上海 啊, 北京 啊, 哈尔滨 啊,
 Like Shanghai ah, Beijing ah, Harbin ah

Where do you want to go? To which cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, Harbin ...?

C2CM:

我 倾向 去 上海 和 那个 杭州。
 I prefer go Shanghai and that Hangzhou.

I prefer to go to Shanghai and Hangzhou.

C2BM:

杭州。 Hangzhou.

Obviously, C1AF in Example 18 asks for information or ideas, which is directed towards all the other members of the group and will not threaten anyone's face. The function of the particle 啊 *ah* at the end of the question is to form a question and it is optional.

However, the ending particle 呀 *ya* in Example 19 is quite different. It is used at the end of a request and therefore has the mitigating function though it is also optional. Without it, the mitigating power depends on the intonation and with it, the force of the act is reduced by it.

In Example 20, the particle 呀 *ya* is used "in the middle of a statement, this particle is rousing H's attention to what S has to say next" (Wu et al. 1978: 1). However, the example from my data is different from Wu et al.'s example in 'c' above in that their 呀 *ya* is rousing H's attention, either as a pure attention getter together with 'you' or as an uptoner, depending on the intonation. S is warning H "not to go on like this" for the benefit of the latter. In my example, however, C4AF is asking C4MB to book hotels on the computer. This is a request for the benefit of the group. C4AF wants

to reduce the force of the requestive act and employs the particle. So, the 呀 *ya* in my data is mitigating but Wu et al.'s is not.

The 啊 *ah* in Example 21 is a mitigating particle for the same reason: used in a request to redress the face-threatening force. Wu et al. (ibid.: 1) call it 'listing' 啊 *ah*. Although the 啊 *ah* in Example 22 is also a listing one, it does not have a mitigating function because it helps to collect information or ideas only in the context.

The fourth modal particle 呢 *ne* helps to form interrogatives (Wh-questions and disjunctive questions). It occurs at the end of the interrogatives and is optional (Xu 1985: 109). It also depends on the context of the utterance whether it functions as a mitigating device, or as an upgrader or just a question-forming particle. For example:

23. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

时间 定 了, 现在 看 城市 吧。
Time settle Part. Now look city *ba* (MP).
Since the time is settled, consider the cities.
我们 看看 去 哪些 地方 呢?
We look look go which place *ne* (MP)
Let us consider what places to visit.

C1BM:

那 肯定 欧洲 啊, 法国 啊!
That definitely Europe *ah* (MP), France *ah* (MP)
Definitely Europe or France!

C1CF:

我 想 去 巴黎。
I want go Paris.
I want to go to Paris.

24. Chinese group 4

C4AF:

然后 麻烦 你 呢, 跟 你哥哥 联系
Then trouble you *ne* (MP), with your brother contact
一下, (看 能不能 去 住。)
a little (see can not can go live.)
Then please contact your brother, (to see whether we can live with him).

C4CF:

打 个 电话。
Dial a telephone.
I'll phone him up.

25. Chinese group 5

C5AF:

然后 呢, 你 来 联系 宾馆。
Then *ne* (MP), you come contact hotel.
Then you contact the hotels.

C5BF: 好。 OK.

26. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

快 作 决定 吧!
Quick make decision *ba* (MP).

Be quick to make the decision!

到底 去 哪个 城市 呢?
On earth go which city *ne* (MP)
Where on earth to go?

C1BM:

这个 先

This first ...

Well, first, let's ...

In Example 23 above, the particle 呢 *ne* functions as a question-forming one, helping to collect ideas only. In Example 24, it is used together with the polite expression 麻烦你 *máfanǐ* (literally 'trouble you', pragmatically 'please' here) to redress the force of the act of requesting C4CF to contact his brother about the possibility of their going to stay with him. In Example 25, the particle is used in the middle of the utterance as a pause and with the time phrase 然后 *ránhòu* (then), and functions to modify the request, mitigating its imposing force. In Example 26, it is used as an upgrader together with another upgrader 到底 *dàodǐ* (on earth) to emphasize the urgency of a quick decision. Following are Table 6-6 and Table 6-7, which list all the most important uses of all the particles discussed above.

Table 6-6 Distribution of the non-mitigating particles in Chinese requests in the role-play

Function	吗 <i>ma</i>	呢 <i>ne</i>	吧 <i>ba</i>	啊 <i>ah</i> / 呀 <i>ya</i>	No marking	Total
Question-forming (Non-mitigating)	2 (3.84%)	4 (7.7)	1 (1.92%)	4 (7.7%)	0	11 (21.2%)
Pausing (Non- mitigating)	0	3 (5.77%)	0	3 (5.77%)	0	6 (11.5%)
Listing (Non- mitigating)	0	0	0	2 (3.84%)	0	2 (3.84%)
Upgrading	0	1 (1.92%)	1 (1.92%)	0	0	2 (3.84%)
Total	2 (3.84%)	8 (15.4%)	2 (3.84%)	9 (17.3%)	18 (34.6%)	21 (40.4%)

Table 6–7 Distribution of the mitigating particles in Chinese requests in the role-play

Function	吗 <i>ma</i>	呢 <i>ne</i>	吧 <i>ba</i>	啊 <i>ah</i> / 呀 <i>ya</i>	No marking	Total
Request-forming (Mitigating)	2 (3.84%)	1 (1.92%)	3 (5.77%)	4 (7.7%)	0	10 (19.2%)
Pausing (Mitigating)	0	1 (1.92%)	0	2 (3.84%)	0	3 (5.77%)
Total	2 (3.84%)	2 (3.84%)	3 (5.77%)	6 (11.5%)	18 (34.6%)	13 (25%)

Note: The total number of the requests in the role-play is 52, of which the number of those that contain none of the particles (mitigating and non-mitigating) is 18.

Table 6–6 shows the non-mitigating functions (question-forming, pausing, listing and upgrading) of these particles (21) plus the ‘no marking’ item (18), the combination of both accounting for 75% of the total number of requests (52). It correlates positively to the results of the M1 (Impositives) (69.2%) in Chapter IV and also to the research results of ‘Interrogatives’ in 6.2.4.1, where 81% of all the interrogatives ask for information or ideas rather than ask others to do something. To make it clearer, as many as 21 (40.4%) cases where the modal particles do not have the function of mitigations. Also there are 18 (34.6%) cases in which no downgraders are used at all. These two figures consist of as much as the great majority of all the requests in the role-play. This shows that participants tend to use more direct than indirect strategies, which agrees with the research results obtained for the M1 (Impositives) in Chapter IV and 6.2.4.1.

Table 6–7 demonstrates the distribution of the mitigating particles which are used to reduce the potential force of the utterance. Such use of the particles accounts for only 25% of all the request acts. In most cases, participants do not have to employ such devices to avoid face-threatening effects (See 3.4.5 and 4.3).

From the two tables above, one clearly sees the multifunctionality of the Chinese particles (吗 *ma*, 呢 *ne*, 吧 *ba*, and 啊 *ah*/呀 *ya*) recorded in the role-play data. They may be used as mitigators and non-mitigators including the functions of question-forming, pausing, listing, and even upgrading. The decisive factor is the context in which they are employed. When they are used to form questions for information or ideas or when they just play a pausing or listing function in the middle of a statement, they do not have any redressive force. However, when they are used in a request for somebody to do something, they usually function as mitigating elements to soften the tone of the request though they can be intensifiers, too, again depending on context.

6.2.4.3 Alerters

An alerter is an element whose function is to alert H's attention to the ensuing speech act (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 277). In Table 6-3, there are 9 (17.3%) Chinese examples and 15 (24.6%) English examples. I will examine these alerters in some detail. Out of the 9 Chinese alerters, only one term of address is used in Chinese and 3 out of 15 in English.

27. Chinese group 5

C5AF: 爷爷, 你到底想去哪儿? *Grandpa*, where on earth do you want to go?

28. English group 4

E4AM: *David*, don't you have a brother who lives in Paris?

29. English group 1

E1AF: OK, *Sonia*, would you mind, sort of, booking tickets and hotels for us?

In Example 27, A starts her question with 爷爷 *yéyé* (Grandpa). The purpose is to urge him to give his idea or decision as to where he wants to go for the trip. This term of address serves both as an alerter and an upgrader. It attracts Grandpa's attention to the following request and, with the upgrader 到底 *dàodǐ* (on earth), strengthens the urgency of the request to supply his answer.

Similarly, in Example 28, by using a negative interrogative, E4AM is quite sure that David has a brother in Paris. E4AM wants him to confirm it. So the address form 'David' is used both as an alerter and, with a negative verb, strengthens the preparation of the request (to stay with his brother).

In Example 29, the address term 'Sonia' plays the same role as 'David' does in Example 28.

All the other alerters found in the role-play requests, such as 好 *hǎo* (good), 哎 *eh*, 对 *dùi* (Oh, yes), 你呀 *nǐya* (you), are used to mitigate the force of the request act in this investigation. For instance:

30. Chinese group 1

C1AF: 好。下面一个问题是我们住什么样的宾馆。唉? 听说你哥哥是不是住在巴黎啊?

Good. The next problem is what kind of hotel we are going to stay in. *Oh*, I hear your brother lives in Paris?

C1CF: 啊, 对。 *Oh, yes.*

31. Chinese group 5

C5AF: 你呀, 上网查一下, 看看是否有这个又便宜又还可以的宾馆。
You, check on the Internet to see whether there are hotels both cheap and reasonably good.

32. English group 3

E3AF: *OK*, so when do we want to go on holiday?

33. English group 5

E5AF: *Right, OK*, so how long do you think we should go for?

The alerters 唉 *ai* (Oh) and 你呀 *nǐya* (you) in Examples 30 and 31, and 'OK' and 'Right, OK' in Examples 32 and 33, respectively, are all used to soften the tone of the requestive act. All of them are used in requests that H do A. They are FTAs according to Brown & Levinson (1987: 65), which need redressing.

Table 6–8 frequency of distribution of alerters

	Terms of Address		Pronoun	Attention Getter	Total
	Mitigation	Upgrader			
Chinese	0	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	7 (13.5%)	9 (17.3%)
English	1 (1.6%)	2 (3.3%)	0	12 (19.7%)	15 (24.6%)

Note: The total number of the Chinese requests is 52 and the English is 61.

Table 6–8 shows that both Chinese and English are interested in using attention getters as mitigators which are appropriate in such informal discussion.

Neither Chinese nor English however make use of terms of address very often. There is not even any mitigation found in Chinese though the Chinese have a very complicated system of terms of address (See Gu 1990: 245 and 1.6).

Lee-Wong (2000: 149) devotes a whole chapter to the treatment of the terms of address in Chinese requests. She maintains that "Chinese address terms, as all address forms, perform an important role as mediator of social relations in dynamic exchanges."

In this connection, it is interesting to note that He (2006: 45) doesn't find much difference between ancient Chinese request strategies and present-day strategies except for the great changes in terms of address. "The eighteenth century Chinese people always made use of honorific and self-deprecatory terms to attend to the hearer's face need" (2006: 46). She gave the examples of elevative terms such as 大人 *dàrén* (great person), 老爷 *lǎoye* (master) and self-deprecatory terms such as 奴才 *núcai* (slave)

and 足下 *zúxià* (footling). As terms of address, all these are rarely heard in contemporary Chinese.

Just as Lee-Wong (2000: 150) comments, “nowhere is the interrelationship between language change and socio-politics more strongly demonstrated than that between address forms and China’s changing ideology of recent years.” The Chinese terms of address are so widely used in interactions that without the proper use of them, communication will not be expected to be successful.

However, the data in my investigation seems to be different. There is only one term of address in all the 52 Chinese request acts. That is a kinship term the granddaughter uses to alert her grandfather, accounting for 1.9% of the total. Moreover, it is not used to mitigate the act of the request. On the contrary, it is more of an upgrader, to strengthen the force of the request.

What about the English? There are just 3 terms of address out of a total of 61 request acts, with 2 of them being upgraders, and only one mitigator, accounting for 1.64%.

There must be a reason or reasons for such a big discrepancy in the use of address terms between my research and other scholars’ studies. For example, Lee-Wong (2000: 158) recorded 33.4% (N: 1157) in questionnaires and 44.1% (N: 531) in interviews.

Firstly, in my role-play, the participants are either colleagues, former classmates, friends of friends, or family members. There is little power and small distance between them.

Secondly, they have a common task in the discussion – a plan for them to travel together.

Thirdly, subjects have to work efficiently to complete the task. So the more direct they are, the better.

Lastly, they are also a small group. It is probably fairly clear who is being addressed most of the time (although this does not account for people outside the discussion being referred to).

6.2.4.4 Polite expressions

For similar reasons to those above, other lexical/phrasal downgraders are rarely used. For example, consultative devices and downtoners are not found in Chinese and only one occurrence (1.6%) for the former and 4 occurrences (6.6%) for the latter are found in English.

What is most worth analyzing is politeness expressions. Researchers have demonstrated that politeness expressions are most frequently used as lexical/phrasal downgraders. Zhang (1995: 54) claims that “Politeness devices such as politeness markers (*qǐng*, *láojià*) and the honorific pronominal (you) and the combination of the two are used more than any other lexical downgraders.” Lee-Wong (2000: 127) lists her findings with the lexical downgraders as follows:

Questionnaire: Polite expressions (43.1%)

Interviews: terms of address (44.1%)

My investigation, however, is different again from other researchers’ findings.

Table 6–9 Frequency of distribution of polite expressions

	<i>Nín</i> (you)	<i>qǐng</i> (please)	<i>Láojià</i> (excuse me)	<i>máfan nǐ</i> (trouble you)	<i>dǎrǎo le</i> (disturb you)	Total
Chinese	0	1 (1.9%)	0	3 (5.8%)	1 (1.9%)	5 (9.6%)
English	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: The percentages are based on the total numbers of requests in Chinese (52) and English (61).

In Table 6–9, it is clear that the participants in my role-play rarely use polite expressions. The English do not make use of any such downgraders at all. The Chinese adopt only 5 of these devices in their requests. A more careful look enables us to find that there is one occurrence of *qǐng* (please), one of *dǎrǎo le* (disturb you) and 3 of *máfan nǐ* (trouble you).

Why is there so little use of those polite expressions in comparison with other research? Now I will examine the 5 polite expressions used by the Chinese participants in the following, to try to provide the potential reason(s).

34. Chinese group 1

C1AF (to C1BM): 你是住在市中心吧，我想起来了。打扰了，打扰了。

You live in the city centre, don't you? Now I remember. *Please help* (book tickets).

35. Chinese group 4

C4AF (to C4BM): 就挺便宜的。那能不能麻烦你把这两个问题

It's quite cheap. *Could you please help with these two problems ...?*

36. Chinese group 4

C4AF (to C4BM): 然后麻烦你呢，跟你哥哥联系一下

Then please help: contact your brother ...

37. Chinese group 4

C4AF (to C4BM): 麻烦你呢, 在这个计算机上查一查出发的时间, 这个票价准确。 May I trouble you: check the time to set off and ticket prices on ...

38. Chinese group 4

C4AF (to C4CF): 然后请你跟你哥哥联系一下, 看看他
Then, *please* contact your brother to see whether he ...

Looking at the 5 requestive acts above, all with polite expressions, it is not difficult to find that except Example 34, which is uttered by C1AF, who has stayed in England for a few months, all the other four, from Examples 35 through 38, are made by C4AF, who has been in England for many years.

C1AF and especially C4AF may have been influenced by the English, who generally adopt more of such polite expressions as 'please, excuse me and thank you', etc. But the English have used none of similar polite devices at all (See Table 6–9).

Why is there such a difference between Chinese and English? Again it is probably because the discussion itself needs directness and efficiency that the English have used none of these polite expressions. However, C1AF and C4AF are non-native speakers of English and native speakers of Chinese. Sometimes, there is a trend in foreign language learning that the non-native speakers favour an over-complexity in the use of downgraders, compared with native speakers. Faerch and Kasper (1989: 226) have noticed this phenomenon in Danish Learners of German in comparison with native speakers of German. They find the Danish prefer more complex mitigators than the Germans, in order to play it safe.

If this is true of my Chinese students of English, C1AF and C4AF may have been influenced in using polite expressions in English and this same factor may have influenced their verbal behaviour in Chinese in return.

Another possible explanation is that this is a person-specific phenomenon. It may be a characteristic of C4AF to employ polite expressions more often than others.

Whichever may be right, data analysis shows that quite unlike other research, both Chinese and English rarely employ lexical downgraders such as polite expressions or terms of address in my data. This may be because of the context, and the perceived need for efficiency.

6.2.5 External modification in requests

External modifications occur outside of a core request and are used as supportive moves. Researchers (Zhang 1995, Lee-Wong 2000, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989 and Faerch

and Kasper 1989) usually give a long list of various external modifiers. For example, Zhang (1995: 56) provides about 18 categories. Lee-Wong (2000: 115) identifies 4 general categories with 15 sub-categories. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 287) classify external modifiers into more than 10 groups. Also, grounder, preparator, getting a precommitment, promise, thanking, disarmer and imposition minimizer appear in most of their lists.

However, in my investigation, only a narrow range of external modification has been found: grounder, preparator, promise or combinations of the above. For a definition and examples of these terms, see 6.2.2.

39. Chinese group 1

C1AF (to C1BM): *你住在市中心。你用计算机很熟练。你能不能帮我们订旅馆呀 你来做这个，好吗？我们不太会用计算机。*

You live in the centre of the city. You are very good at computer. Can you help to make the reservations? You do this, won't you? We don't quite know how to use computers.

In Example 39, C1AF makes a request to C1BM. Even though they have been friends for 10 years, C1AF still uses two external modifiers. One is a preparator (You live in the centre of the city. You're very good at computer skills.) and the other is a grounder (We don't quite know how to use the computer).

40. Chinese group 2

C2AM (to C2CM): *因为你哥哥不在上海工作吗，是吧？你哥哥在上海工作，就说，咱们在这个去之前，能不能给你哥哥打个招呼，就说，咱们能不能住在你哥家里？*

Because your brother works in Shanghai, doesn't he? He works in Shanghai, I mean, can you contact him before we go, and ask him whether we can live with him.

In Example 40, the beginning interrogative is a preparator and the statement following it is a grounder. Again here, C2AM did not know C2CM. In English, it is found that external modification is used in ways similar to that in Chinese.

41. English group 3

E3AF (to E3BF): *Yeah and you're good at that stuff, aren't you? Well OK. We'll just go to Paris then, yeah, just for three nights. So who is going to like book this? I mean you're pretty good at computers, aren't you?*

In Example 41, E3AF and E3BF did not know each other before. E3AF wants someone to do the booking on the computer. First she wants E3BF to confirm that she knows computer skills. Then she mentions they will go and stay in Paris for 3 nights. After the two preparators, she puts forward her request for somebody to book it not directly but through a question for anybody. Finally she repeats E3BF's computer skills but now it becomes a grounder – why she implies asking E3BF to do it. In so doing, the FTA cannot be face-threatening to E3BF.

42. English group 4

E4AM (to E4BF): Yeah OK. *I guess we could look into that. I know that Judith you're quite good on the old Internet. You could have a little scan on the Internet and have a look, book, booking hotels. You could provide a little options sheet for us.*

In Example 42, E4AM wants E4BF, his colleague, to search on the Internet and find and then book the hotels. Since E4AM wants her to do something for the group, he thinks he needs to modify the force of his request by using external modifiers. He employs two preparators ('I guess ...' and 'I know ...') to modify his request. Other external modifiers such as 'promise' are less frequently used. For instance:

43. Chinese group 3

C3CF (to C3BF): 你就负责, 就是行和住我包了。然后吃
You be responsible for that. *I'll be responsible for things on the trip and accommodation.*

Here in Example 43, C3CF and C3BF did not know each other before. However C3CF requests C3BF to be responsible for a job almost as an order, assigning her the work but immediately after that C3CF adds a supportive move of 'promise of cooperation', as if she is assigning work between themselves. Thus, the impositive force of the order-like request is mitigated.

44. Chinese group 2

C2AM (to C2BM & C2CM): 订票之前的工作, 咱们都定下来了, 是吧? 看有什么, 还有什么疑问吗? 你们两个, 想什么就说
The preparations before we book the tickets have all been settled, haven't they? *Have you any questions, any doubts? Say what you want to. You two ...*

In Example 44, C2AM, C2BM and C2CM are new acquaintances. C2AM has been summing up what they have discussed so far. Then he wants to know what else C2BM and C2CM want to say. The purpose is to encourage them to fully express their ideas.

However he does not want to be overbearing. So instead of saying directly “你们两个，想什么就说” (Say what you want to, you two ...), he uses a supportive move (“Have you any questions?”) before the imperative in order to reduce the force of the utterance.

45. English group 4

E4AM (to E4BF): Are you going to look into hotels then *if I'm going to look into trains?*

Although E4AM and E4BF in Example 45 are colleagues, the former makes use of a promise of cooperation in order to redress the threatening force of the request.

Table 6–10 Frequency distribution of the external modification in requests

	No marking	Preparator	Grounder	Combination of Preparator & Grounder
Chinese	42 (80.8%)	3 (5.8%)	4 (7.6%)	3 (5.8%)
English	44 (72.1%)	7 (11.5%)	6 (9.8%)	4 (6.6%)

Note: The total number of requests in Chinese is 52 and it is 61 in English.

Table 6–10 shows the frequency distribution of the external modification in Chinese and English. Generally, there is not very much difference between the two languages statistically. Both favour and concentrate on preparator, grounder or a combination of the two, though the former employ a little less of grounder and preparator and the combination of the two, but they use a little more of ‘no marking’. However, both Chinese and English adopt a lot of no marking, which responds positively with the uses of Strategy type 1 (Direct), as analysed in 4.3.

If we examine the use of external modifiers a little more closely, we find the reason why such a small range of external supportive moves have been employed and especially in what situation(s) they are used.

As has been already made clear, the general aim of the role-play is for the groups to make a plan for a trip together. It is exactly this common goal or task that requires the members of each group to focus on a limited number of topics:

1. When to start out,
2. Where to stay,
3. What means of transportation to take,
4. Who to book the tickets, and
5. Whose relative (brother) to stay with.

Within an average of 13-14 minutes of a continuous discussion, they move from one topic to the next. Efficiency is of prime importance.

Topics 1, 2 and 3 require that the participants should contribute information and ideas or suggestions, which does not constitute a face-threatening act in this situation. In other words, it does not need much face work, generally. The result is that a few kinds of internal supportive are used. In quite a lot of cases, even internal modifiers are not needed.

However, with topics 4 and 5, things are different. Here, somebody must do the work of ticket-booking or hotel-reservation or somebody who has a brother working in a city they are going to visit, will be requested to consult with the brother as to whether it is possible for them to stay with him. Such requests involve the cost of time, energy, and willingness. In these cases, the requester is no longer so direct. S/he has to try to mitigate the imposing force of the request. The internal modification, which does not change the imposing nature of a request sufficiently, is no longer adequate and competent for the task. All the requesters invariably employ one or two external supportive moves.

One should not forget that what has been dealt with is a role-play discussion where participants tend to be direct with each other and many of them are either classmates, or friends, or colleagues. All the requests are made not only for the benefit of the speaker but also for the hearer. Nevertheless, it seems to be a pattern that speakers employ the longer and more complicated external modifiers instead of the briefer and simpler internal modification to request H to do A. So while one stresses the fact that speakers prefer the shorter forms of internal modifiers, one should not overstress it and, to a larger or lesser extent neglect the importance of proper cases of the external supportive moves, as Lee-Wong and Faerch & Kasper seem to have done.

Lee-Wong (2000: 113), for example, hypothesizes that "Strategic politeness is manifested in the discernable use of external modification and this is especially significant in situations characterized by low P and high R." This means external modification is not very much used and if it is, it is mainly employed where P is low and R is high. Then Lee-Wong claims that "Chinese native speakers favour strategies that are direct and expressions that are economical. Internal modification is a more economical device than external modification."

Faerch and Kasper (1989: 244) also claim that "there are reasons for language users to prefer internal modifiers wherever they find them sufficient to reach their communicative goals."

However, my research seems to show that both Lee-Wong and Faerch and Kasper are a little vague. They don't say when the external modifiers are required. There is no question about the fact that "language users adhere to the Principle of the Least Effort" (Lee-Wong 2000: 136) in many cases, i.e. wherever they find the Principle "sufficient to reach their communicative goals", as Faerch and Kasper (1989: 244) have pointed out.

However, in my role-play data, participants find it equally necessary to adopt external modification when they ask others to do something, even for the collective including the hearer. They almost always use external modification whether they are friends, colleagues, classmates, or new acquaintances. This does not seem only to suit the Chinese, as Lee-Wong claims (see above analysis), but also applies to English politeness phenomena, as my research demonstrates above.

6.2.6 Summary

In the first half of Chapter VI, I have considered the use of internal and external modification in Chinese and English. In internal modification, I have identified two different kinds of requestive acts:

1. Requests for information and/or ideas,
2. Requests for the hearer to do something.

The former kind of requestives do not need very much face work. The latter request needs the hearer to do something. It does require some redressive measures sometimes to mitigate the force of the act.

Modal particles such as *ah/ya*, *ba*, *ne* and *ma* in Chinese are very problematic to deal with for two main reasons:

1. Their great complexity in use,
2. Few scholars have done research work about them pragmatically, though grammarians and dictionary writers have conducted some studies at the grammatical or lexical level.

In my data analysis, I have done some preliminary research about their uses and pragmatic functions. I have found that such modal particles, when used as structural constituents to form questions, *ma*, for example, do not play the function of mitigating the force of a speech act such as requestive. Others, such as *ba*, *ne* and *ah*, play a complicated role in communication. When they are used to form questions at the end of an utterance, they do not function as mitigators, either. However, when they are employed to help to weaken the force of an act, they play a pragmatic role, depending

on situation and intonation. In general, most of the particles are multifunctional depending on the context.

Alerters include terms of address, pronoun (you) and attention getters. The first two categories are infrequently used in my investigation because of the nature of the discussion – the common target is to reach an agreement as soon as possible. Attention getters are alerters that are the most convenient available for the speaker to adopt. The Principle of Least Effort seems to work here.

Polite expressions are also studied. When asking somebody to do something, for example, booking the tickets, S tends to adopt one form or another of such polite expressions. When asking for information or ideas, s/he usually does not. This is closely related to external modification. When S feels that his/her request act will cause some cost in time or effort, more often than not, s/he not only employs polite expressions, but also resorts to external modification. Frequently, s/he even adopts two or three external modifiers apart from the polite expressions. This seems to have formed a general trend or a pattern used in discussions of a similar nature or kind.

6.3 Internal and External Modification in Refusals

In this section, I will examine internal and external modification of the data of refusals collected in the role-play. Refusing is a speech act that is intrinsically face-threatening (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65) and so needs redressing in interaction. In other words, refusals need modification.

Beebe et al. (1990: 72) have provided a whole range of categories of direct and indirect refusals, the latter of which include nine subdivisions, including a statement of regret, wish, grounder, statement of alternative, condition, promise, dissuasion, acceptance functioning as refusal, and avoidance. They also list four adjuncts to refusals: statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement, statement of empathy, pause fillers, and gratitude/appreciation (1.8). If the indirect refusal is a supportive move external to the head act, occurring either before or after it, it is regarded as an external modifier in this thesis. Availing myself of all the concepts and classifications above, I have put my role-play data of refusals into the following categories as the basis of analysis.

6.3.1 Descriptive categories of modification in refusals

6.3.1.1 Internal modification

As is explained in 6.2.1, internal modification is subdivided into syntactic downgraders / upgraders and lexical / phrasal downgraders / upgraders. Syntactic downgraders / upgraders include: modal particles, question tags, verb-reduplication, conditionals, pronominal *nín* you, etc. Lexical / phrasal downgraders / upgraders include: terms of address, hedges, gratitude / appreciation, expressions of regret, etc.

1. Syntactic downgraders and upgraders

- A. Modal particles, e.g. 啊(呀) *ah(ya)*, 呢 *ne*, 吧 *ba*, 吗 *ma*, 嘛 *ma*, 哎呀 *aiya*, etc.
- B. Question tags, e.g. 怎么样 *zěnmeyàng* (how), 对不对 *dùibúduì* (all right), 是吧 *shìba* (right), etc.
- C. Verb repetition or reduplication, e.g. 熬, 熬, 熬 put up with/suffer, 看一看 have a look
- D. Pronominal, e.g. 您 *nín* (French *Vous*) you

2. Lexical/Phrasal downgraders/upgraders

- A. Terms of address, e.g. David, etc.
- B. Hedges, e.g. to be frank, I'm afraid, I think, I don't really think, etc.
- C. Gratitude/Appreciation, e.g. Thank you very much, but ...
- D. Expressions of regret, e.g. I'm very sorry ...

6.3.1.2 External modification

External modification usually takes the form of elaboration on the core refusal by way of explaining or reasoning.

- A. No marking (or Direct refusal), i.e., no external modifiers, e.g. No, I refuse.
- B. Grounder (Giving a reason for refusing), e.g.
I don't want to go there. I went there last year.
- C. Dissuasion (Effort to persuade H not to do something), e.g.
That's impossible. You spend so much for the train fares to get there. Why don't you visit as many places as possible ...
- D. Acceptance that functions as a refusal (One admits that something is true or has the advantage but has to refuse it), e.g.

The city on the border perhaps has the merit: you can see three countries there, but I think ...

E. Fake refusal, e.g.

a: Let's buy something for your brother.

b: We know each other very well now. No need.

F. Suggestion, e.g.

a: I like to go to Hangzhou.

b: Nanjing, Nanjing.

G. Alternative, e.g. I don't like ... I prefer ...

H. Condition, e.g. If you ..., I would ...

I. 'Others' includes criticism, principle, joke, surprise, irony, consequence.

J. 'Combinations' refers to the combination of grounder, dissuasion, acceptance, or suggestion.

6.3.2 Findings for refusals

The first finding in this study is that in internal modification, the Chinese favour modal particles and hedges and the English are fond of hedges, too, but they have no such modal particles like the Chinese ones.

The second finding is that in external modification, both Chinese and English favour the 'grounder' the most in their refusals, followed by dissuasion, suggestion and combinations of them.

Another finding is that in both Chinese and English, participants favour direct refusals, as we have discussed in Chapter V. Both use internal and external modification. The greater difference between the two languages is that Chinese adopt much more combinations of internal and external modification than English.

Table 6–11 Distribution of direct refusals, internal and external modification

	Chinese	English
No Marking /Direct Refusal	37 (37.4%)	30 (41.1%)
Internal Modification	22 (22.2%)	20 (27.4%)
External Modification	9 (9.1%)	12 (16.4%)
Combinations of Internal and External Modification	31 (31.3%)	11 (15.1%)
Total	99 (100%)	73 (100%)

Table 6-11 shows the frequency distribution of direct strategies and modification in Chinese and English refusals. Clearly, the direct refusals stay at the top of the list. They are followed by internal modification. These two items together consist of 59.6% in Chinese and 68.5% in English, compared with 40.4% Chinese and 31.5% English, for both external modification and the combinations of modification.

The 'no marking' (direct refusal) has no modification and the internal modification usually has relatively short modification compared with external modification. This characteristic is a manifestation of adherence to the Principle of Least Effort (Lee-Wong, 2000: 135). It also fits in well with the data analysis in Chapter V, where both Chinese and English favour the direct strategies.

Another finding is that the direct refusal in my data consists of a much higher percentage than those found in other research such as Chen et al. These authors (1995: 139) have identified a 12.9 percent of refusals to requests and offers and a 40 percent of refusals to requests to inviting. Why is there such a big difference between their results and mine? I will try to provide a couple of important reasons as follows:

A refusal is the second part of an adjacency pair, and so the choice of refusal strategies depends on the type of initiating acts. This is one of the places where my data differs from theirs. Many of their initiating acts require the interlocutor to do something 'serious' for the speaker, such as to lend money, buy an extra ticket, work extra hours, etc. What is more important is that there is no common goal and interest between the participants as in my investigation.

The relationship between the participants also has an impact on the choice of strategies. Most of my subjects are classmates, friends or friends' friends, or colleagues while their participants have many different types of relationships, ranging from very close to distant. Clearly, all the different situations above require different strategies. That is why the refusals in their study are not so direct as those in this research.

However, the differences in statistics can only explain one aspect of this. One syntactic or lexical item can be a downgrader in a specific context but may also be an upgrader in a different context. All these differences reveal the fact that different types of cases produce different types of strategies and modifications, as the following examples illustrate.

46. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

下一个	假期	我们	可以	去	瑞士	啊。
Next	holiday	we	can	go	Switzerland	ah (MP)
We can go to Switzerland next holiday.						

C1BM:

又 要 花 钱? 你 单 去 一趟

Again want spend money you separately go a trip

那 多 花 多少 钱 啊!

That much spend how much money ah (MP)

Spending money again? *How much more money you would spend if you go separately!*

47. Chinese group 2

C2AM:

..... 咱们 能不能 住在 你哥哥 家里。

... We can not can stay in your brother home inside

... And ask him whether we can live in his home.

C2CM:

这 好像 不太 方便,

This seem not too convenient,

因为 他家 里 哥哥

because his home inside brother

忙 啊。 咱 就 别 去 打扰 他 了。

busy ah (MP). We just not go disturb him le Part.

This doesn't seem to be convenient because my brother's family are very busy.

Let's not go to disturb him.

48. Chinese group 1

C1AF:

下次 去 瑞士 很多 地方..., 先 把

Next time go Switzerland many place, first *ba*²⁵

法国德国 这 两个 国家的 城市 看一看。

France Germany the two country's cities look a look

We'll go to many places in Switzerland next time ... Now let's have a look at some cities in France and Germany first.

C1BM:

这 也 能看 啊,

Here also can see ah (MP),

法国德国 都 能看 啊。

France Germany both can see ah (MP)

Here (in Switzerland), you can see them, too. Both France and Germany can be seen here.

²⁵ This 把 *ba* is not a modal particle. It is used to form a *ba*-sentence in Chinese (See 1.8).

In Example 46, C1AF suggests going separately to Switzerland but C1BM doesn't agree. C1BM starts his disagreement with a question and then emphasizes his opposition with a powerful exclamation with an ending exclamatory particle 啊 *ah*, thus making the opposing tone very powerful.

In Example 47, however, C2CM is clearly redressing the face-threatening force of his refusal to C2AM's request. When S refuses a request for him/her to do something, S is usually expected to soften the tone of his/her refusal.

Example 48 provides an example in which C1AF mitigates the force of refusal with the verb reduplication 看一看 *kànyíkàn* as well as an external modifier.

However, in arguments about ideas such as Example 49, people tend to stress the incorrectness of their opponents, thus neglecting the face work. For example:

49. Chinese group 4

C4BM:

所以 呢 不 如 我们 坐 那个 coach 去
 So *ne* (MP) not as we sit that coach go ...
 So, we might as well take the coach.

C4CF:

在 coach 上面, 你 真 在 那儿 一坐,
 At coach on, you really in there sit
 就 熬, 熬 在 那儿, 熬 个 8 个 钟点
 Just suffer, suffer in there, suffer an eight hour ...
 On the coach, once you sit in, *you have to put up with it and suffer for 8 hours ...*

In Example 49, the verb 熬 *áo* is repeated 3 times for emphasis in order to aggravate the force of the speaker C4CF's refusal.

Table 6-12 Distribution of syntactic modifiers in Chinese refusals in the role-play

Modal particles	Upgraders	Downgraders	Question-forming
啊(呀) <i>ah(ya)</i>	9	5	0
呢 <i>ne</i>	1	2	0
吧 <i>ba</i>	1	0	0
吗 <i>ma</i>	1	0	1
嘛 <i>ma</i>	0	2	0
哎呀 <i>aiya</i>	0	1	0
Total	12 (52.2%)	10 (43.5%)	1 (4.3)

Question tags	Upgraders	Downgraders
怎么样 <i>zěnmeyàng</i> (how)	1	0
对不对 <i>dùibúduì</i> (all right)	0	1
是吧 <i>shìba</i> (right)	0	1
Total	1	2

Verb modification (repetition and reduplication)	Upgraders	Downgraders
熬, 熬, 熬 put up with/suffer	1	0
看一看 have a look	0	1
Total	1	1

Pronominal	Upgraders	Downgraders
您 <i>nín</i> (French <i>Vous</i>)	0	0

Table 6–12 shows the distribution of the Chinese syntactic modifiers of refusal acts, which are unique compared with English. The Chinese language is characterised by being rich in modal particles. There is no equivalent linguistic form in English. Nor is the verb reduplication or the pronominal *nín* (you) present. Although English has a complicated system of tag questions, there is no occurrence of this in my data.

One of the most important findings here is that these syntactic modifiers in Chinese are found again to be multifunctional as the above table shows and as we find with modal particles as modifiers in requests (See 6.2.4.2). Altogether, 23 modal particles have occurred in the data collected. Those served as downgraders (10) account for 43.5%, compared with 52.2% of those as upgraders. The neutral question-forming function consists of only 4.3% of the total.

With regard to the tag questions in Chinese, there are only three of them in all, but even so one finds two different uses of them: one as an upgrader and two as downgraders. Then we have even fewer occurrences of verb modification: one upgrader and one downgrader. When it comes to the pronominal *nín* (you), there is none at all. Therefore, the order is as follows in descending scale of occurrence:

Modal particles as upgraders > modal particles as downgraders
 > question tags as downgraders > question tags as upgraders
 = question-forming function.

Obviously modal particles play an essential part in internal modification.

Table 6–13 Distribution of lexical/phrasal modifiers in Chinese and English refusals in the role-play

	Hedges	Terms of address	Polite expressions
Chinese	16 (16.2%)	0	0
English	18 (24.6%)	0	0

Notes: Hedges, e.g. to be frank, I'm afraid, I think, I don't really think, etc.

Table 6–13 shows that hedges are the only lexical/phrasal modifiers found in both languages. No terms of address or polite expressions are used at all. This has something

to do with the nature of discussion and the stimulus types (Chen et al. 1995: 143). In discussing a plan of action among friends (and friends' friends), classmates or relatives, negotiations are usually informal when disagreements take place. In this case, the participants pay great attention to efficiency and therefore do not need the time-consuming but unnecessary polite expressions and terms of address. However, in order to bring the disagreement to an end, participants need to compromise and sometimes they do not want to be too direct to each other. In addition, they do not want to sound as if they were devaluing the hearer's opinion too much. In such cases, hedges are more appropriate than polite expressions or terms of address because what they need to urgently express is personal idea(s) rather than politeness or any other thing. That is why they employ a number of hedges to reduce the force of their refusing acts but not the other two kinds of lexical modifiers.

50. Chinese group 2

C2AM: 说白了我比较喜欢就是一个晚上每人 100 块钱左右, 你看看?
To be frank, I prefer to spend 100 yuan a night per person, what do you think?
C2BM: 这个我恐怕承担不起, 经济有限。
This is too much for me, I am afraid. I'm not that rich.

51. English group 3

E3AF: I'm not going to Basel. I don't want to go there ...
E3BF: Well, *I don't really think it really makes much difference but* I really don't want to go to Strasbourg.

52. Chinese group 2

C2AM: 我们可以住在他那儿, 如果他的房子够大的话, 如果他愿意的话。
We can stay with him if his house is big enough and if he agrees.
C2BM: 他, 我觉得打扰他恐怕.....我都不愿打扰他
He, I think that to disturb him is probably ... Even I'm not willing to disturb him ...

The phrases in italics in Examples 50, 51 and 52 are all hedges but clearly those in 50 and 51 are different from 52. The stimulus type in the former two is about personal opinion. The mitigating force of the hedges is so weak that they are even optional. Some similar cases from other groups have no hedges at all. The stimulus type in Example 52 is such that C2AM asks C2BM to arrange for the group to stay in C2BM's brother's at the inconvenience of both C2BM and his brother. The face-threatening potential is much greater and C2BM has to refuse with not only internal hedges but also an external modifier.

Now I will look at some important findings in external modification, which, as supportive moves, may appear in the form of grounder, dissuasion, acceptance,

suggestion, alternative, promise, etc. or combinations of these (See 6.3.1.2). Accordingly, all the data of refusals found in the role-play have been put into separate categories in the following table.

Table 6–14 Distribution of external modification of refusals in the role-play

	Chinese	English
No marking	<i>60 (60.6%)</i>	<i>50 (68.5%)</i>
Grounder	<i>16 (16.2%)</i>	<i>14 (19.2%)</i>
Dissuasion	<i>15 (15.2%)</i>	<i>4 (5.5%)</i>
Acceptance	<i>3 (3%)</i>	<i>3 (4.1%)</i>
Condition	<i>2 (2%)</i>	<i>2 (2.7%)</i>
Promise	<i>1 (1%)</i>	<i>0</i>
Suggestion	<i>1 (1%)</i>	<i>0</i>
Alternative	<i>1 (1%)</i>	<i>0</i>
Total	<i>99 (100%)</i>	<i>73 (100%)</i>

From Table 6–14, it is found that participants in both languages favour ‘No marking’ the most frequently, followed by grounder and dissuasion. The frequencies of the grounder and dissuasion are similar to each other in Chinese and in English the former is much greater than the latter in percentages. Once again, it shows that the English favour grounder much more than dissuasion (See 5.11). The English employ a few strategies of acceptance and condition but the Chinese adopt promise, suggestion and alternative, however the frequencies of these are very small.

Once again we notice that, while Chinese and English share major similarities in making choices of external modifiers, each language has its own minor preferences. Whatever linguistic form they employ, one common factor is the general purpose of the external modification: to soften the tone of the refusal acts they are performing because refusing in these cases is face-threatening (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65) (See analysis below).

6.3.3 Analysis of findings for refusals

Based on the above findings, I will analyze the data collected in the role-play. I will especially stress the importance of longer stretches of communication in analysis rather than individual responses. This is because:

(1) “The speaker’s redressive strategies cannot be explained in terms of individual, or some combination of individual, speech actions alone” (Hayashi 1994: 252).

(2) My role-play is a continuous whole. The discussion goes on and on without stopping until the group discussion is finished. Only by examining whole stretches of interaction can the essence of the speech acts be seen clearly.

For example, researchers (Locher 2004, Du 1995 and Chen et al. 1995), all find both direct refusal and indirect refusal (with internal and external modification and sometimes with long and complicated supportive moves) in their data and the usual explanation is that the choice of types of refusal modifiers depends on the types of the initiating act or initiating stimulus, social status, and the relationship between the participants (Chen et al. 1995: 140, 143 and Du 1995: 190). However, research into whole stretches of data enables me to find the root cause of the co-existence of 'direct' and 'indirect' refusals in the role-play data.

53. Chinese group 1

C1BM: 这个地方我觉得还是不错的。三个地方的交界处啊！你能看到三种不同风格啊！ I don't think this [Basel] is a bad place. On the border of three countries! You can see three different styles!

C1CF: 我不喜欢。 *I don't like it.*

C1BM: 你那个地方只能说我去过一个边界的小镇。你觉得哪？啊？怎么样？

The place you suggest could only show that you have been to a small town on the border. What do you think? Eh? What do you say?

C1CF: 我就是不喜欢 *Basel* 那个地方。我也不知道为什么，可能是因为 I simply don't like the place Basel. I don't know why. Probably because ...

...

C1AF: 下一个假期我们可以去瑞士啊，单去瑞士啊。

We can go to Switzerland next holiday. Go to Switzerland separately.

C1BM: 又要花钱！你单去一趟那多花多少钱啊！

Spending money again? *How much more money you would spend if you go separately?*

C1AF: 下次去瑞士很多地方，它的首都都可能看到了。我们为什么非要这个时间很紧张，为什么？先把法国巴黎转完了再来法国德国交界地看一看嘛。先把法国德国这两个国家的城市看一看。

Next time (we) go to many places in Switzerland. We can see its capital. Why do we want to do it now when time is so short? Why? Have a look at the border between France and Germany after we finish visiting Paris, France. Have a look at the cities of France and Germany first.

C1CF: 交界城市也许有这个好处，就是说你能看三个国家。但是呢，我认为可能你这三个国家都看不齐。我更比较喜欢就是，那么我们就看一个有纯法国特色的，有法国风味的地方嘛。

The city on the border perhaps has the merit: you can see three countries there. *But I think probably you will not have a good look at each of the 3 countries. What I prefer is we see a place that is purely French and specially characteristic of France.*

C1AF: 我是很喜欢这个 *Strasbourg*，因为我听我的朋友说她去过那个地方。你说的这个 *Basel* 啊，不伦不类的，什么交界城市啊，没有什么特色。我感

觉啊，而且我觉得 Strasbourg 毕竟它是德国，它那个地方跟法国交界的地方肯定是很有一些历史性的建筑。

I like this Strasbourg very much. *I've heard about it from my friend. She's been there. The Basel you suggest is something that resembles nothing. The so-called border city has no specialty of its own.* I feel, and I think Strasbourg is German after all. Located on the border between Germany and France, there are definitely some historic buildings.

In Example 53 above, the group members are discussing where to go for a visit. C1BM suggests going to Basel. C1CF does not agree and expresses his disagreement directly. C1BM begins to criticize the town suggested by C1CF, who is searching for reasons to argue against C1BM's suggestion.

Later on, C1CF continues by arguing that, the border town perhaps has the advantage of enabling them to see three countries, but C1CF thinks they will not be seen satisfactorily. Then C1CF insists on his own idea of seeing one place characteristic of French or German style.

After that, C1AF shows her disagreement with C1CF. When she says, "I like this Strasbourg very much", she adds a grounder for her suggestion (her friend has been there.), a criticism of C1CF's suggestion (Basel is something that resembles nothing and has no characteristic of its own), and a further grounder for her own suggestion. (Strasbourg is German [This is on the recording; actually, as we all know, it is in France] and must have some historic buildings.)

The discussion seems to start in a simple manner. It then moves on to a more complicated structure, from the superficial to a more in-depth use of logic, from being brief with/without internal modification to longer with more external modification of the pragmatic structure. Is this only a single case or an example of a patterned pragmatic way of performance? One has to examine more cases before reaching a definite conclusion.

54. Chinese group 3

C3CF: 那去杭州? Shall we go to Hangzhou then?

C3A/CF: 那去杭州吧。 Then to Hangzhou.

C3BF: 杭州我不喜欢。 *I don't like Hangzhou.*

C3A/CF: 杭州多好啊! How beautiful Hangzhou is!

C3BF: 南京, 南京。 Nanjing, Nanjing.

C3AF: 可是我不喜欢南京。 *But I don't like Nanjing.*

C3AF: 要不就一个地方玩痛快一点。下次再有假期

Otherwise, we'll enjoy ourselves to the full in one place. Next holiday ...

C3CF: 那不可能。你花这么多车费到这儿来了, 你还不多玩几个地方? 就玩一个地方就回来, 像你再去别的地方还花这么多钱。

That's impossible. You spend so much for the train fares and get there. Why don't you visit as many places as possible, but come back after the visit to only one place? If you go to other places on a separate trip, you will have to spend so much again.

C3AF: *那么多好玩的地方, 站一站就走, 我觉得好像玩不痛快, 而且都好像蜻蜓点水似的。*

There are so many nice places to see in a city. If you stand there and then go away, I think we won't seem to enjoy ourselves very much. And it seems as if the dragonfly were touching the water surface.

In Example 54, C3CF suggests going to Hangzhou and C3AF supports her, but C3BF refuses her suggestion, briefly and directly. Then C3BF puts forward Nanjing and C3AF refuses it in the same direct way. When C3AF gives an alternative or a future promise, C3CF refuses it firmly with "That's impossible!" By now, C3CF supports her negative answer with two grounders: 'one place is too few to visit' and 'going to another place on a separate trip would cost too much'. In turn, C3AF refuses C3CF's idea with complex grounders and dissuasion (consequences). The refusal pattern seems to be that in the beginning, participants try to be direct and brief for efficiency. With the development of the discussion, reasons and dissuasions begin to be necessary, leading to the use of combinations of complicated modifiers. The English are similar in this respect.

55. English group 4

E4BF: Paris sounds like a good idea.

E4CM: But Strasbourg?

E4BF: *No, no, no, terrible place!*

...

E4AM: Not too fond of Strasbourg?

E4BF: No, but ...

E4AM: What other cities grab your fancy?

E4BF: Basel would be OK.

E4CM: *Not too hot on Basel.*

E4BF: No? It's lovely.

E4AM: *I don't like border towns actually apart from Strasbourg of course. No, but I had a bad experience in Basel once. I am afraid I was almost got run over by a car. So I always get the shakes even if I move to within 20 kilometres of Basel.*

Example 55 shows a period of interaction among English participants. They have no objection to going to Paris. When E4CM suggests Strasbourg, E4BF refuses it firmly and forcibly. Then E4BF puts forward Basel as a suggestion. E4CM refuses it directly, in the same firm way. When E4BF insists by saying that "it's lovely", it would be inadequate to employ simple/brief and direct refusals to argue with her. That is why E4AM refuses it with an elaborated bad experience in Basel.

Through Examples 53, 54 and 55, it is not difficult to find that there is a general pattern that occurs in all interactions. That is, when they start a topic, such as which cities to visit, what hotels to stay in or how to make the trip, they usually begin with brief and direct utterances to express their acceptances and refusals. However, with the development of the discussion, especially when disagreements appear, particularly if the disagreeing parties insist on their respective ideas, then grounders, dissuasion work will be needed. In such cases, the arguments usually become more elaborated. In other words, grounders, dissuasions, etc. are not used for mitigation of the force of the act but rather for strengthening the power of arguments. In a sense, such supportive moves could even be called intensifiers. By this stage, face needs are no longer so important. The general purpose of arguing has become the most important of all. More and more in-depth discussions need more and more elaborations of reasons, explanations or persuasion and dissuasion, and even a combination of these. In such cases, intensifiers are often needed for parties both to insist on their own ideas and to try to impose them on, or persuade, the other parties.

Through the above analysis, the root cause, that sometimes the subjects use direct strategy in refusals and that sometimes they use a lot of complicated supportive moves, has been revealed. However, occasionally even if there is no argument or insistence of opinion in refusing, it is still necessary to employ quite a lot of modification. In these cases, the purpose of modification is usually to mitigate the force of the head act of a refusal. Also, there are cases in Chinese where there are repeated and insistent arguments in refusals, but the aim is neither to intensify nor to reduce the force of an utterance of refusal but purely for politeness.

56. Chinese group 2

C2AM: 你哥在上海工作, 能不能给你哥哥打个招呼, 就说, 咱们能不能住在你哥家里?

Your brother works in Shanghai. Can you contact him, I mean, can we live in his home?

C2CM: 这好像不大方便, 因为他家里哥哥忙啊。咱就别去打扰他了。咱们白天出去玩, 晚上住宾馆。

This doesn't seem to be convenient *because my brother's family are very busy. Let us not go and disturb him. We'll visit places at the daytime and stay in the hotel at night.*

57. English group 3

E3AF: What kind of hotels do you want to look at?

E3CF: The cheaper, the better.

E3AF: Actually doesn't your brother live in Paris?

E3CF: *Yes, but it's a bit tight, the three of us. It's not that big a place. You could stay one night, or something like that, but I don't think he'd be too chuffed at that.*

In Examples 56 and 57 above, the participants are discussing where they will stay during the trip. In Example 56, C2AM requests C2CM to contact his brother to see whether they can go and stay with him on the trip. C2CM does not agree and refuses this request with a negative statement with two internal modifiers (好像 *hǎoxiàng* and 不大 *búdà*), followed by two external modifiers, i.e., a grounder (His brother's family members are busy), and a suggestion (Let's visit places at the daytime and stay in the hotel at night). All these internal and external modifiers are used to reduce the force of the utterance (Faerch and Kasper 1989: 240, Lee-Wong 2000: 136 and Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 19).

Example 57 shows a case in English similar to the Chinese Example 56. E3AF asks whether E3CF's brother lives in Paris, inquiring about the possibility of their staying with him during the trip. E3CF confirms that her brother lives there but immediately denies that possibility by dissuading E3AF that it's a bit too 'tight', followed with grounders: too little space for so many of them. Then she begins to negotiate with E3AF that one night would be possible but three nights will be impossible. Thus, the face-threatening force is mitigated with the external modifiers.

58. Chinese group 3

C3AF: 你哥哥喜欢什么呀? 咱们带点儿东西去。

What does your brother like? Let's take something to him.

C3CF: *咱们都那么熟了, 无所谓的事。 We know each other very well. No need.*

C3AF: 还打搅人家。 We'll disturb him.

C3CF: 哎呀, 不用客气, 不用客气, 再说咱们到那儿

Oh. Don't be so polite. No need to be polite. And when we get there ...,

C3AF: 咱们买点儿东西去。买点儿特产。

Let's buy something for him. We'll buy some specialties.

C3BF: 行, 买点特产什么的。 All right. We'll buy some local specialties for him.

C3CF: 哎呀, 不用, 真的不用客气, 就像到我家一样。

Oh, no. No need. Don't be polite, really. It's the same as going to my home.

Example 58 is a case where the fake refusals occur. C3AF suggests that they should take some presents to C3CF's brother, for staying in his home during the trip. C3BF agrees. However, C3CF refuses C3AF and C3BF's offer for her brother. They offer three times and she refuses the offer each. Each time she refuses, she uses both internal (*aiya* and repetition of the refusal act) and external (the statements in italics in C3CF's response) modification.

However, these modifications are not used to mitigate the force of the act. Their function is to show politeness only in Chinese, as is dealt with in Chapter V. Chen et al. (1995: 151) call it ritual refusal.

6.3.4 Summary

Through data analysis, it seems that three different functions of modification have been identified. First, modification is used to mitigate or soften the interlocutionary force of a refusal act, as most other researchers have discovered (Beebe et al. 1990: 57, Chen et al. 1995: 134, Hayashi 1994: 245, Du 1995: 169 and Locher 2004: 245). This function may be found in the refusal of requests for somebody to do something for the benefit of the requester or of both the requester and the requestee, as in the case of asking a co-member to do something for the group such as booking the tickets, reserving the hotels, contacting a relative who is likely to accommodate all the group. In this function, social relationships do not seem to play any role. Whether they are classmates, friends or casual acquaintances, they almost invariably employ such supportive moves.

The second function of modification is mainly situation-driven and found in discussion for a common goal or task. Whenever an idea is given or a suggestion made, there will be agreements and disagreements (in this thesis, the latter are called refusals). In these cases, modification can develop in a more and more complicated way with the members arguing more intensely and one party trying to persuade or dissuade the other. This function is frequently found in the process of group members trying to reach an agreement in a common task such as where and how to go for a collective trip, what to see or where to stay as a group. In these situations, modification of a head act helps the discussion or argument to grow, or promotes better mutual understanding among the parties, rather than reduce the face-threatening force of the utterance, because FTAs rarely occur in these cases, as discussed in Chapter IV and V. Face needs are less important than those of the common task. The discussion is of a supportive nature.

The third function of modification is its use as a fake refusal for the sake of politeness in Chinese. It is "intrinsically polite" (Gu 1990: 253) and face-supportive (See 5.2 and 7.3).

6.4 Conclusions

In Chapter VI, politeness phenomena in Chinese and English requests and refusals have been approached from the perspective of internal and external modification. The results of this study have yielded a few important points in relation to modification.

Firstly, numerically the percentages of internal and external modifiers in Chinese and English are quite similar to each other, though a qualitative analysis shows a few differences as well as similarities between modifications in the two languages. With regard to similarities, both languages are rich in internal modifiers as requestives. When the request act happens to be for information or idea/suggestion, both languages favour direct question forms, sometimes with supportive moves. If it is for H to do something, costing energy and time, S usually adopts the conventionally indirect form, sometimes with polite expressions or other forms of internal modifiers. Nevertheless, in both languages, polite expressions and terms of address are infrequently used because of the common task they are trying to accomplish in the discussion.

Secondly, the modal particles *ba*, *ya*, *ne* and *ma* are generally regarded as internal modifiers in Chinese. However, they are all used as modifiers. The function of 吗 *ma*, for example, is to form questions at the end of an utterance. There is no mitigating use of the particle. Each of the other modal particles found in this investigation has various uses. When employed to form questions only, they are not modifiers, either. However, if they are used as requestive particles, they do have modifying powers. Sometimes, they may also be used to strengthen the force of an act, as an upgrader. These preliminary findings indicate that the multifunctional modal particles in Chinese deserve more in depth and careful study in future research.

Thirdly, external modification is equally important in the speech act of refusals. Scholars such as Lee-Wong (2000: 135) claim that "Chinese native speakers favour strategies that are direct and expressions that are economical. Internal modification is a more economical move than external modification". However, my data analysis does not entirely support this claim. It demonstrates that even in such a casual discussion that demands efficiency and where participants tend to use internal modification the most often, participants do adopt a less economical device (external modification) when requesting a member to do something even for the collective and especially when arguing with other members against their ideas. This is found to be a prevalent pattern in both languages in this research.

As to Lee-Wong's (2000: 135) claim that Chinese favour direct and economical strategies, the data analysis seems to show that the English participants are at least as direct and economical as the Chinese in my investigation.

CHAPTER VII: CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In this chapter, I will deal with some cultural aspects because I have been studying the speech acts of requests and refusals in both a Chinese context and an English context. First let us define culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: 46) compiled a list of 164 different definitions, two of which are as follows:

[Culture] applies to that whole 'way of life' which is determined by the social environment. To paraphrase Taylor it includes all the capabilities and habits acquired by an individual as a member of a particular society.

The culture of a society is the way of life of its members; the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share, and transmit from generation to generation (ibid.: 50).

Triandis (1994: 20) defines culture as "Humans have largely overlapping biologies and live in fairly similar social structures and physical environments which create major similarities in the way they form cultures. But within the framework of similarities, there are differences". "Culture has both universal (etic) and distinctive (emic) elements."

With the above definitions of culture, I will try to examine some of the most prominent phenomena that occur in my data from the angle of cultural influences. In other words, I will try to, from the viewpoint of culture, (1) analyze the behaviour of Chinese and English that occur in the speech acts of requests and refusals and (2) understand the similarities and differences across the two cultures that appear in my investigation. In my data, the participants seem to display more universal cultural features in the role-play and more distinctive features, especially in the invitation-acceptance investigation, in the questionnaires.

In this chapter, I will first deal with a few conceptual problems regarding face, and analyse further the fake refusal phenomenon. Then, I will examine the directness features displayed in the role-play discussion from the viewpoint of culture.

7.1 The Notion of English *Face* and Chinese 臉 *Liǎn* / 面子 *Miànzi*

A few scholars such as Gu (1990: 241) and Mao (1994: 454) claim that the notion of face in Brown & Levinson's theory is different from Chinese face. They divide Chinese face into two different types: *liǎn* and *miànzi*.

Gu (1992: 13) claims that the distinction between *liǎn* and *miànzi* lies in the fact that the positive social value in the former is lower than in the latter. Mao (1994: 454)

carries this point further by quoting Hu Hsien Chin's definition that "*miànzi* stands for prestige or reputation, which is either achieved through getting on in life." and "*liǎn* refers to the respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation" (Hu 1944, cited in Mao 1994: 454).

My studies, however, show that their claims with regard to the notion of face cannot be supported. It is true that in ancient Chinese *liǎn* and *miàn* were two different notions. Wang²⁶ (1993: 77) writes that the word *liǎn* originated in the South and North Dynasties 南北朝 (420AD-589AD) referring to the cheeks and especially referring to where women used cosmetics. So, a person did not have only one *liǎn* (face) but had two *jiàn* (cheeks) (Note the pronunciation of the latter is *jiàn*, but not *liǎn*). The same author (1958: 498) notes in his *Hanyu Shigao*²⁷ that the word *liǎn* appeared later (than *miànzi*), not until after the sixth century. He goes on to say that *liǎn* meant only cheeks and was not a synonym for *miàn*. This meaning of *liǎn* referring to cheeks only, lasted till the Tang (618AD-907AD) and Song Dynasties (960AD-1279). He concludes that it was a long time after this period that *liǎn* replaced the word *miàn* in spoken Chinese. Wang (ibid.: 566) concludes that "So at that time, a person had two *liǎn*'s, unlike the modern man who has only one *liǎn*."

Hanyu Da Cidian «汉语大词典»²⁸ (Luo Zhufeng: 1990) records *liǎn* as having three references: (1) *miànjiá* (cheeks), *miànbù* (face); (2) *miànzi* (self-respect, dignity), with examples all from novels of the more modern periods from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), such as *Shui Hu Zhuan* «水浒传» (a novel from the Ming Dynasty), *Hong Lou Meng* «红楼梦» (a novel from the Qing Dynasty, 1616-1911) and *Deng Ji* «登记» (a novel from 'New China', i.e. after 1949). The same dictionary records *miàn* as appearing long before *liǎn* and quotes 墨子 Mozi (468BC-376BC) «非攻» *Not to Attack*: 镜于水，见面之容。(The mirror is better than water. It reflects the face). According to the dictionary, of the Tang Dynasty (618AD-907AD), the phrase *miànzi* had the metaphorical meaning of (体面) dignity and (光彩) honour. For example: 贼平之后，方见面子。(After I defeat the enemy, I will have the *miànzi* to drink the wine you offer me). Lu Xun says in his "On Face" of the collection of *Qie Jie Ting Prose* «介亭杂文» that every kind of identity carries a kind of *miànzi*, that is the so-called *liǎn*²⁹.

²⁶ *Hanyu Cihui Shi* «汉语词汇史» (History of Chinese Words, Commercial Press, Beijing).

²⁷ «汉语史稿» *Hanyu Shigao* (Notes of History of Chinese, Science Press, Beijing).

²⁸ *The Great Dictionary of Chinese*, Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风 being Editor-in-Chief, Hanyu Da Cidian Press, Beijing, 1990.

²⁹ Quoted in «汉语大字典», *The Great Dictionary of Chinese Words*, Sichuan and Hubei Dictionaries Publishers, 1988.

To summarise:

1. In ancient Chinese *miàn* and *liǎn* are two different notions, the former appearing much earlier than the latter and referring to the whole of the face and *liǎn* referring to the two cheeks. Thus at that time one person had two different types of face.

2. Later on, *liǎn* began to replace *miàn* in spoken Chinese. So, the former was used in more formal situations while the latter was used as a spoken substitute.

3. In Modern Chinese, one has only one *liǎn*.

Now I will analyze the problem in more detail with additional examples. The modern notion *liǎn* has two basic types of meaning in Chinese:

(1) Literally, it is the front part of the head. In this sense, one can only use *liǎn* now, but not any other word including *miànzi*. For example: *Tā měitiān xǐ liǎngcì liǎn*. 她每天洗两次脸³⁰. Here, one can never say *Tā měitiān xǐ liǎngcì miànzi*. 她每天洗两次面子。The counterpart of *liǎn* in this sense in English is 'face' (also referring to the front part of the head).

(2) Figuratively, however, the word *liǎn* is totally different. There is a whole set (about a dozen) of synonyms of the figurative *liǎn* in Chinese such as *miànzi* 面子, *liǎnmiàn* 脸面, *yánmiàn* 颜面, *miànmù* 面目, *liǎnpí* 脸皮, *tǐmiàn* 体面, *qíngmiàn* 情面, *qíngfēn* 情分, *miǎner* 面儿, *liǎner* 脸儿 and *rén* 人.³¹ These synonyms are interchangeable without any change in meaning, depending on context and collocations. For instance, *Xiandai Hanyu Xiao Cidian* 《现代汉语小词典》 (*Compact Dictionary of Modern Chinese*), (1979), one of the authentic Chinese dictionaries, says *diūliǎn* 丢脸 (lose face) means *sàngshī tǐmiàn* 丧失体面 (lose dignity). One can also say *diū miànzi* 丢面子 (lose face), or *diūchǒu* 丢丑³², or *diūrén* 丢人³³. *A Chinese-English Dictionary* 《汉英词典》 (1995) lists *liǎnmiàn* 脸面 as a synonym of face, with the example *Kàn wǒde liǎnmiàn, búyào shēng tāde qì le*. 看我的脸面, 不要生他的气了。³⁴ Here the synonyms of face: *liǎnmiàn* 脸面, *miànzi* 面子, *qíngmiàn* 情面, etc. are interchangeable in particular situations. The same dictionary defines *yán* 颜 and *yánmiàn* 颜面 as meaning 'face, prestige', with the example *wúyán jiànrén* 无颜见人³⁵ and *gùquán*

³⁰ She washes her face twice a day.

³¹ See the dictionaries: 《新华字典》 *Xinhua Dictionary*, revised edition, 2000; 《现代汉语小词典》, *Compact Dictionary of Modern Chinese*, 1979; 《辞海》 *Cihai Dictionary*, 1980; *A Chinese-English Dictionary* 《汉英词典》 by Wu Jingrong et al., 1978.

³² Literally: lose ugliness, meaning 'lose face'.

³³ Literally: lose person, meaning 'lose face'.

³⁴ For my sake, don't get angry with him.

³⁵ Not to have the face to appear in public.

yánmiàn 顾全颜面³⁶, *yánmiàn sǎodì* 颜面扫地³⁷. However, it also says in Chinese: *méiliǎn jiàn rén* 没脸见人, *gùquán liǎnmiàn/yàoliǎn/yào miànzi* 顾全脸面/要脸/要面子 and *chèdǐ diūle rén* 彻底丢了人, respectively. *The New Students Dictionary* «新编小学生字典» (Beijing: People's Education Press 1990) explains *liǎn* as meaning *tǐmiàn* 体面 (dignity), and gives an example *shǎngliǎn* 赏脸 (give face). Yet it is equally idiomatic to say *gěiliǎn* 给脸 or *gěi miànzi* 给面子. For example, 我请他吃饭, 可是他没赏脸/没给这个脸/没给这个面子/没给这个面儿. Further examples are: *bǎoquán miànzi* 保全面子 (save face), *gù miànzi* 顾面子 (save face), *gùliǎn (miàn)* 顾脸(面) (save face), *yàoliǎn* 要脸 (desire for face), *yào miànzi* 要面子 (desire for face); *liúliǎn* 留脸 (give face), *liú miànzi* 留面子 (give face), *liú qíngmiàn* 留情面 (give face), etc. All that has been said above points to the fact that the Chinese *liǎn* has many synonyms: *liǎner* 脸儿, *miàn* 面, *miàner* 面儿, *liǎnmiàn* 脸面, *yán* 颜, *yánmiàn* 颜面, *tǐmiàn* 体面, *qíngmiàn* 情面, *rén* 人, etc., including *miànzi*. When they are used to mean dignity, self-respect, self-image, reputation etc, very often several of these synonyms are interchangeable in particular situations. They are used in the same way and mean the same, without any change in meaning when one is used to replace another.

Tā bù gěi (shǎng) miànzi. 他不给(赏)面子。

Tā bù gěi zhègè liǎnmiàn. 他不给这个脸面。

Tā bù gěi zhègè liǎner. 他不给这个脸儿。

Tā bù gěi zhègè miàner. 他不给这个面儿。

and *Tā bù gěi (shǎng) liǎn.* 他不给(赏)脸。

All the above statements mean the same thing in a particular context. All indicate he didn't give me face, literally. (He did not satisfy the needs of my face.) The following examples all mean 'He is not afraid of losing face', but they use different words for face.

Tā bùpà diūliǎn. 他不怕丢脸。

Tā bùpà diū miànzi. 他不怕丢面子。

Tā bùpà diūrén. 他不怕丢人。

Tā bùpà zhāi miànzi. 他不怕摘面子。

Tā bùpà zhāimiàner. 他不怕摘面儿。

Tā bùpà diū liǎnmiàn. 他不怕丢脸面。

³⁶ Save face

³⁷ Lose face altogether

All the above sentences are the same in structure and in meaning. They can all be grouped under one and the same word *liǎn*, but not just *miànzi*, which is only one of the many synonyms of the general modern term *liǎn* in Chinese.

Similarly, the English face has its own synonyms, expressing similar meaning(s), depending on contexts and collocations. From the viewpoint of politeness phenomena, they can also be grouped together under the general cover of face, such as self-esteem, self-respect, self-image, pride, reputation, dignity, prestige, public self-image, grace, reputation, shame, skin, etc. (Wu Jingrong 1978: 424).

As face has its synonyms of self-esteem, dignity, etc. in English, so *liǎn* has its synonyms of *yánmiàn* 颜面, *tǐmiàn* 体面 (dignity), etc. in Chinese. It should now be clear that what Gu, Mao and a few others said about the difference between the English notion of face and the Chinese notion of *liǎn* and *miànzi* does not seem to be justified in this sense. With regard to the study of linguistic politeness, there does not seem to be much difference between the notion of the English face and the Chinese *liǎn*, each representing a whole set of synonyms in its own language.

I argue that the root cause of the above misunderstanding with the notion of face is the confusion of two different kinds of face. I call them 'event face' and 'linguistic / conversational face', respectively. The former is about an event related to the face of an individual or a collective such as an organization or a nation or both. For example, if a pingpong player or a team wins the world championship (an event), people often comment that he/she/they earn(s) *liǎn* not only for him/herself, but more importantly, they earn *liǎn* for their country. In Chinese, they say *Tāmén wèi zǔguó zhēngqì / zhēngliǎn / zhēngguāng / zhēng róngyù*. 他们为祖国争气/争脸/争光/争荣誉。³⁸ If they are beaten or fail to win in the contest, however, they often say that the players have lost the face of China. They say *Tāmén diūjìnle zhōngguó de liǎn/ liǎnmiàn/ yánmiàn*. 他们丢尽中国的脸/脸面/颜面。³⁹ One can also say *Tāmén ràng zhōngguó zhaīle liǎn/liǎner/miàner*. 他们让中国摘了脸/脸儿/面儿。⁴⁰ Or *Tāmén zhēn gěi zhōngguó diūrén*. 他们真给中国丢人。⁴¹ Winning the contest is a great event of which both the individual player(s) and the nation as a whole feel proud. Losing in the contest is an equally important event of which both the individual player(s) and the nation feel disappointed or even ashamed. The honour of the player(s) in the event is that of the nation and their disappointment or shame is the nation's too. In other words,

³⁸ They won honour for the motherland.

³⁹ They have lost face for China.

⁴⁰ They have caused China to lose face.

⁴¹ They have really made China lose face.

this kind of face is both individual and communal, and often more communal than individual in Chinese. The success or failure of a student in an important examination causes similar feelings in the individual student and the family or school. To some extent, this also may be true in England.

However, the second type of face (linguistic/conversational face) is related to the on-going linguistic interaction or conversation between the speaker and the hearer as interlocutors only. These interlocutors as individuals use various linguistic strategies or methods to save face, maintain face or not to lose face, in the interaction they are engaged in. Generally, such cases are individual not communal. Broadly speaking of course, all human behaviour is social and communal including speech behaviour which is influenced by society or community. However, in contrast with the first type of face 'event face', the linguistic or conversational face is principally individual. In a specific linguistic interaction (conversation), it is the face of the individual that will be threatened when impoliteness phenomena occur between S and H. It is the individual who will feel his/her feelings are hurt, but not the community in which they live.

As linguists studying linguistic politeness our primary task is concerned with the second type of face – linguistic or conversational face. Therefore, our aim is to study how interactants save or maintain each other's face. Take my study in this thesis as an example, what I aim for is an explanation of how the subjects realize the speech acts of requests and refusals and do not threaten or maintain face. The aim is to ease the relationships between individuals in conversation with regard to the two speech acts. Therefore, my research does not involve the first type of face (event face) – commenting on other people in events that have nothing to do with the on-going conversation related to requests or refusals. For example: "Your department are an argumentative lot, aren't they?" a comment in question form on an event. "That team has lost in the match, which causes loss of face" (See above). Such event face is not within the scope of this research.

In this sense, the English face and the Chinese face are similar to each other. Both are related to the individual, to the self. Neither is directly related to the community as the researchers (Mao 1994, Gu 1992 and Hu 1944) have emphasized.

Because they have not realized that there are two different uses of face (event and linguistic), they wrongly contrast Brown & Levinson's face (the second type) with the first type of Chinese face. As a result, they criticize Brown & Levinson's face as being individualistic on the one hand and claim that the Chinese face is communal or collective. What they are doing is comparing that which should not be compared.

Some of the above researchers regard face as public property. For example, when Mao (1994: 454) criticizes Brown & Levinson's definition of face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987: 61), he quotes Goffman (1967) and says, "For Goffman, face is a public property that is only assigned to individuals contingent upon their interactional behaviour" (Mao 1994: 454). He goes on to say that "Here, the public characteristic that is essential to Goffman's analysis of face seems to become an 'external' modifier or adjunct rather than an 'intrinsic' constituent of this image".

I contend that face in linguistic exchange or conversation does refer to the self-image which mirrors or reflects one's dignity⁴². It also refers to shame or disgrace⁴³, and self-respect, prestige, shame, feelings.⁴⁴ Since the figurative use of face in linguistic politeness means self-image, it represents a person's self-respect, dignity, feelings, etc. This self-image can only belong to the person himself or herself. S/he owns or possesses it. It is a private property. It can never be public property, as Mao suggests above. It can never be something "on loan from society" or something "withdrawn from them if they prove unworthy of it" (Goffman 1967: 10). Nobody else, no community or even society, however powerful they might be, would normally be able to take it away from the person who owns it as a personal property. It is an essential part of his/her character, personality or nature. The person is born with it. Just like the physical face a person has, which cannot be taken away by any other person or community or society, the figurative face cannot be taken away by them either.

However, what other people or the community or society *can* do is to choose whether they are acting in order to satisfy, or not satisfy, the needs of, or the desire for, the individual person's face. In linguistic communication, if such needs or desires of their face are satisfied, they maintain or save face. Otherwise, they lose it. It all depends on their conversational partner whether face will be given or not. The first partner only has the right to satisfy or not, but has no ability to withdraw or take away the face of the second partner. One's self-image (or dignity or self-respect) is exposed to the other person(s) in linguistic communication. So this self-image is brought into the public arena. Viewed in this way, neither Goffman's nor Brown & Levinson's definition of face above seems to be problematic.

Here I want to stress that, through the above analysis, it is evident that the English definition for face seems similar to that of the Chinese face *liǎn*. There does not seem to be much difference between Chinese face and Western face. *Miànzi* is only one of a

⁴² Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1986.

⁴³ Oxford English Dictionary, 1987, in explaining the phrase 'to save face'.

⁴⁴ Wu, et al.: A Chinese-English Dictionary, Beijing 1978, in explaining the Chinese face *liǎn*.

dozen synonyms under *liǎn* in Modern Chinese. One cannot equate one with the other. The double notion of Chinese face (*liǎn* and *miànzi*) does not seem to be justified.

Li, Y. (2001: 18-21) also finds that Mao's (1994: 454) Chinese notion of face is problematic, but he does not find that the problem originated with Hu (1944: 45, 457), followed by Gu (1992: 13) and Mao (*ibid.*: 454). He prefers Brown & Levinson's notion of face to Mao's conceptualization of Chinese face (*miànzi*) and argues that:

In contrast to Brown & Levinson's perception of negative face as an individual's need to be free of impositions, *miànzi* identifies a Chinese desire to secure public acknowledgement of one's prestige or reputation. They are two different notions and therefore not really comparable.

Therefore, Li, Y already feels the Chinese *miànzi* and the English face are not equivalent, but he does not seem to have found the reason. The problem is that this inaccurate conceptualization of the modern Chinese face by the above-mentioned researchers is being quoted more and more not only by researchers of Chinese politeness but also by other researchers such as Watts (2003: 120) and Bargiela-Chiappini (2003: 1462). This research will probably be able to shed some fresh insights into clarifying this erroneous conceptualization of Chinese face.

7.2 The Notion of Negative Face and Positive Face

Having said that the Chinese face is similar to the English face in terms of concepts, I will now examine Brown & Levinson's notion of negative and positive face (1987: 62), which has incurred some criticisms since the beginning of the 1990s. They define their face as:

- *Negative face*: the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.
- *Positive face*: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others (For details, see 1.4).

Then they introduce the concept of 'intrinsic FTAs' (face-threatening acts), which include requests, offers, expressing thanks, excuses, etc. (threatening negative face) and disagreements, apologies, etc. (threatening positive face).

Quite a few researchers have criticized Brown & Levinson's theory. The criticisms mainly focus on the following points: Some researchers criticize their idea that only one type of face can be threatened at a given time, depending on decontextualized speech acts (e.g. Wilson et al. 1991/1992: 218). Others point out that their conceptualization of negative and positive politeness is mutually exclusive and therefore is unjustifiable because empirical experiments indicate that the co-existence of many types of face-

work in situations in which many face-wants can be threatened, (e.g. Lim et al. 1991: 418). Indeed, sometimes it is more than one type of face which is threatened. In certain situations, no face is necessarily threatened, especially in Chinese (Du 1995: 169, Chen 1996, Zhang 1995: 23, Gu 1990: 253 and Spencer-Oatey 2000: 12). In my role-play data, quite a few acts are not found to be face-threatening. Refusing gifts, for example, is not supposed to be interpreted as face-threatening. Consider the following example from the role-play.

C3AF: 你有哥哥，我们还是到他那儿还是再找一下？

Your brother is there. Can we live with him or try to look for a hotel?

C3AF: 你哥哥喜欢什么啊？咱们带点东西去。

What does your brother like? Let's take something (as a present) to him.

C3CF: 咱们都那么熟，无所谓的事。

We're good friends. That will be nothing.

C3AF: 还打扰人家。We'll cause some inconvenience for him by living there.

C3CF: 哎呀，不用客气，不用客气，再说咱们到那里

Oh, don't stand on ceremony. Don't stand on ceremony. And when we get there, ...

C3AF: 咱们买点东西去，买点特产。

Let's buy something for him, buy some specialties.

C3BF: 行，买点特产吗的。

OK. Buy some specialty or something like that.

C3CF: 哎呀，不用。真的不用客气。就像到我家一样。

Oh, no. No need. Don't be polite, really. It's the same as going to my home.

C3BF: 行，到那以后，咱们再商量。

All right. We'll talk about the matter when we get there.

In the above interaction, C3AF offers to buy a present for C3CF's brother (with whom they intend to stay, to save some money on the trip) and C3BF supports C3AF's idea to prepare some present for a chance to be welcome to stay with C3CF's brother, but C3CF refuses/declines their offer three times for her brother. In the end, C3BF calls a stop for the time being and promises/suggests that they should continue the discussion later on. Nobody knows anything about the result of the final decision. In Chinese, there are two possibilities: either acceptance or refusal.

According to Brown & Levinson's model of positive and negative face analysis, C3AF threatens C3CF's negative face with a request and then threatens C3CF's positive face with the offer of a present to incur a debt on C3CF. C3AF and C3BF already owe a debt to C3CF, and through C3CF, to her brother. Then C3CF disagrees and refuses C3AF and C3BF's offer and therefore threatens their positive face according to Brown & Levinson.

However, one might ask here whether C3CF's refusal also threatens her own face while threatening C3AF and C3BF's? If it does, which face does it threaten? Another

question could be: whose and which face will be threatened by C3BF's last suggestion that they should drop the matter for the time being and pick it up later on? Is it C3CF's face or C3BF's or both (if C3AF's can be included in C3BF's)? Is it the positive or the negative face that is threatened?

In my data, and according to Chinese culture, none of the faces of the participants is threatened because what C3CF refuses is C3AF and C3BF's offer to buy some presents for her brother. Refusing offers of presents is similar to refusing invitations to dinner in Chinese, which "is intrinsically polite" (Gu 1990: 253). The reason is that all of them are trying to find the best solution to the problem of accommodation, which is their common objective, as I have previously said. In this case, the speech act of refusals, which is another example of the fake refusal phenomenon, is not used to threaten face. On the contrary, it functions as a face-supporting and therefore face-constructing act. I will further discuss this point in 7.4.

Leech (1983: 104) posits that "illocutionary functions relate to the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity" and Watts (2003: 103) points out that "politeness is often geared to the goal of achieving maximum benefits for the speaker and the hearer at a minimum cost to both parties". So, the participants in the above communication are interacting with each other, showing civility or good manners to each other; and they are trying to achieve a common goal that will benefit each participant. When commenting on the differences between Brown & Levinson's and Goffman's face, Bargiela-Chiappini (2003: 1458) states that "Social encounters are enacted in such a way that own face and other's face are maintained through self-respect and considerateness" (Goffman 1967: 11). According to this comment, C3AF, C3BF and C3CF are being considerate to each other and making an effort to maintain each other's face rather than (as Brown & Levinson expect) threaten each other's face. The result is that all of them will probably benefit (if the brother can and will accommodate them) from the cooperative interaction. I will discuss this point in detail in the next section.

7.3 Analysis of the Fake Refusal Phenomenon

The fake refusal is a very common politeness phenomenon, widely used by the Chinese, in accepting invitations, offers, presents, etc. (Leech 2005: 9). In the DCT data, most of the Chinese choose this fake refusal strategy. As the data show in 5.2, the Chinese use the fake refusal act almost regardless of relationship. Power or distance normally does not influence the choice of such strategies either. The English, however, are different. With the boss and the acquaintance, most of them choose fake refusals,

almost as much as the Chinese. With the relative and friend, the English rarely choose the strategy, comparatively speaking (See 5.2).

In Chapter V, I have preliminarily explained this fake refusal phenomenon with *lǐràng/círàng/qiānràng*. Here, I will try to examine this phenomenon with more models, in more detail and from the viewpoint of culture. First, I will examine a few other researchers' analysis. Gu (1990: 252) has explained the present-offering and invitation-refusing speech acts in Chinese with both his Generosity and Tact Maxims combined together (See 1.6).

In Gu's example, the son-in-law invites the mother-in-law to stay for dinner. After three rounds of inviting and refusing, she accepts the invitation. Gu takes quite a few lines in explaining the combined use of his Generosity Maxim and Tact Maxim. He says, for example, that in view of the cost-benefit scale, S's impositives will be H's commissives, and S's commissives H's impositives. Gu goes on to say that in impositives, S observes the Tact Maxim in performing them, but H observes the Generosity Maxim in responding (including perlocutionary response) to S's acts. In commissives, S observes the Generosity Maxim, but H observes the Tact Maxim.

Then Gu (*ibid.*: 252-253) uses these two of his maxims to explain his above invitation example. The inviter first observes the Generosity Maxim and maximizes benefit to other at the motivational level. Accepting an invitation, however, renders the invitee indebted to the inviter and goes against the Tact Maxim, and this requires the invitee to minimize cost to other and risks the invitee's face. He might be seen as being greedy, if the inviter were not sincerely inviting the invitee or issuing the invitation purely for formality. These three factors interact on the invitee's desire to accept it. This seems to be an unnecessary complex way of explaining this phenomenon.

Gu (*ibid.*: 253) sums up the implicatures of such invitation acceptance/refusal as:

- (a) B would like to accept the invitation,
- (b) B declined it for the sake of politeness,
- (c) B might be protecting his own face from being seen as greedy, for he is uncertain that my inviting was sincere, and
- (d) B might be worried about the debt he would owe to me if he should accept the invitation.

However, after comparing my data with Gu's data and analysis, I began to find that Gu's summary of the implicatures (a), (c) and (d) is not completely appropriate for my data. The participants in my DCTs are asked/expected to accept the invitation and so (a) in my investigation is not an implicature; it is a requirement to accept it. (The DCT question requires that the subjects should accept the invitation). In my data, the worry in

(c) and (d) above is minimized because B has just repaired A's computer and so A already owes a debt to B and invites him/her to stay for dinner. Therefore, 'protecting his own face' does not seem to be B's main concern and B would not be seen as greedy to accept the invitation, whether A is sincere or not. For B deserves the invitation for the repair work.

Finally, therefore, only (b) above is valid for my data. (B declined the invitation for the sake of politeness.) As my data shows, most of the Chinese participants in each group chose this fake refusal strategy, whether it was with the boss, close relative, best friend, or acquaintance, the purpose being to show good manners.

Gu spares no effort in the above analysis to explain the possible implicatures: now threatening A's face and then B's face. Now B is afraid of being seen as greedy and then s/he might be worried about the debt he would owe, but data analysis indicates that none of these problems coincide with mine.

In addition to the explanation with two maxims combined above (See 1.6), Gu (1990: 254) supplies another reason why sometimes the invitee will not accept the invitation s/he is offered in the beginning. That is "if S invites H, H is thus indebted to S, and H will in the near future, pay back the debt, e.g. by inviting S. Thus an initial S-inviting-H transaction calls for a follow-up H-inviting-S transaction in conformity with the Principle of Balance". There are people who simply do not want to be indebted to others in this way. They want to save the trouble. So they try to refuse the invitation in the beginning. When they cannot resist S's repeated invitation, they accept it.

However, Gu's Principle of Balance (1990: 254) does not seem to suit the example in my data because S is already in debt to H, as I have said above – the meal is an alternative to get back in balance. The question is that even so, most Chinese will adopt the fake refusal strategy at first just for politeness. If S is sincere in inviting, s/he will definitely insist again (and again). So, Gu's Maxims do not seem to be good for explaining my Chinese data. Perhaps my data is too specific for his theoretical model.

Chen et al. (1995: 121) divide Chinese refusals into substantive and ritual. With regard to the latter type, they state that "speakers may say 'no' to invitations when in fact they are willing to accept" (ibid.: 122). However, this is only a behavioural phenomenon. It needs explanation. Chen et al. call this kind of refusal ritual but that is not enough. One must ask where this ritual came from and what influence it has on Chinese behaviour and to what extent (See 1.8).

Chen (1996: 143) uses Gu's attitudinal warmth to explain an example of Chinese politeness similar to the invitation/acceptance event: offering food repeatedly (four times) until it is finally accepted. Although this kind of warmth can be employed to

describe these interactions as invitation, offer, compliment, etc. in Chinese, there are problems:

(1) 'Warmth' is only a superficial phenomenon but what is the socio-cultural root cause for it?

(2) 'Warmth' seems to be able to solve the food-plying/acceptance problem but it doesn't explain the problem that some people do not eat their fill at a dinner they are invited to, i.e. they eat less than they are able to in order to show good manners. They say that they are quite full when they are invited to have some more but actually they are not (See 1.8). Where is their attitudinal warmth in this case?

Leech (2005: 9) explains the Chinese invitation/acceptance phenomenon with 'battles for politeness'. There do not seem to be problems with that but it is rather superficial. One could ask why the Chinese do that. Obviously Leech does not provide a proper answer (See 2.5 and 5.2).

Spencer-Oatey has attempted to cope with Chinese politeness more than once. In an early publication, she attributes modesty to the politeness phenomenon, "Another underlying principle that is different in the two cultures is the concept of modesty. In Chinese, it is common for people to make negative comments which are not necessarily true, but which are said out of modesty" (1987: 124).

Spencer-Oatey (2005: 110) has explained the invitation/offer exchanges in the following way.

The starting point is the conventions for handling invitations. In Chinese, it is conventionally expected that the host exhibits insistence, and that the guest displays reluctance by declining it several times. Although this pattern is not formally prescribed, the pattern has become so common and expected in many parts of the country that it has come to be regarded as socially obligatory.

She accurately encapsulates these exchanges when she attributes them to conventions for handling invitations. She has found the real reason why Chinese behave this way in these situations, and has also found that it has become a common and expected pattern that is socially obligatory to many Chinese. She further unpacks these Chinese politeness phenomena from the angle of 'conformity and tradition', saying that for people who attach great importance to these valuable constructs, adherence to the traditional pattern is very important, and any breach is thus likely to be particularly face-threatening. Among individuals or groups where these value constructs are held less firmly, people will feel freer to interact in different ways, and the conventional pattern thus becomes less obligatory (ibid.: 111).

Here, Spencer-Oatey does not only see the people who obey the traditional constructs but also those that do not follow them and thus has based her analysis on a more all-round and robust approach.

In fact, a better and more insightful explanation is the combination of Spencer-Oatey's explanation with what I have recommended – a set of traditional constraints: *lǐràng/círàng/qiānràng* in Chinese (Zhao Yi 2004: 59⁴⁵), which is similar to modesty (a social norm first recorded in *Tai Xuan Jing*⁴⁶, according to *Ci Yuan*, the Dictionary of Etymology in Chinese) and which roughly refers to the act of declining, politely retreating from, politely offering, etc., as the case may be. It is more than modesty, denigration, and humbleness combined together. For example, when A is offered something as a gift, A should refrain from accepting it for a while or a few times before finally accepting or refusing it. This is *círàng* (politely declining). Or when friends or relatives go and eat together in a restaurant, they rush to get the first chance to pay for the food. Often the competition can be very fierce, involving use of physical power (pulling and pushing) to try to stop anybody else from paying but him/herself). This is an example of *lǐràng* (not modesty but something like trying to seize the chance of doing something good for others to give up one's own interest). Sometimes, even if some people have accepted an offer of food or an invitation to dinner, they tend not to eat their fill. This is called *qiānràng*. This underlying principle in Chinese encourages people to consider other people's benefits first or give benefits to others at the cost of their own. Chinese do this for the purpose of politeness (sincerely or insincerely).

Apart from politeness, there may be a secondary reason for some Chinese invitees to decline the invitation at first. Sometimes the inviter does not really want to invite the invitee to dinner but only pays lip-service or issues the invitation out of sheer consideration of formality (Gu 1990: 254), then the invitee may run the risk of being called greedy and therefore lose his/her face. The result could be worse than this: If he runs the risk of accepting the invitation at the first attempt of the inviter's and if the latter is not prepared to really invite him, the inviter has two choices in this case:

One is to begin to prepare for the dinner. The state of unpreparedness will be easily seen by the invitee. Once s/he finds the fact that the speaker had no intention of really inviting him /her to dinner, s/he will feel humiliated or that his/her face will be lost. S/he will be very much embarrassed and in a dilemma. S/he cannot leave without the dinner s/he has been invited to but his/her heart cannot be at ease, or s/he cannot have any appetite for the dinner. The inviter's conscience will probably be equally troubled.

⁴⁵ Recorded in *Mencius* as early as 475-221BC, Jilin Photographing Press

⁴⁶ A book of dialects by Yang Xiong published in Western Han Dynasty, 206BC-24AD

S/he is embarrassed, too. S/he regrets that she has made such a fake/superficial invitation. Sometimes, such cases do appear, though rarely, in Chinese invitation.

For example, in an item about honesty and face-saving performed by Guo Donglin and two others at the National Evening Party on the Eve of the Chinese Spring Festival⁴⁷ from 8:00pm Beijing time, a friend who is a guest comes in just when a husband and wife are going to have the dumplings they have boiled for supper. This couple is in a hurry to leave for the expensive concert (500 yuan a ticket). When the dumplings are brought to the table, the husband 'invites' the guest to eat for pure politeness. The hungry and honest guest starts to eat until he is full. The wife cannot wait but go hungry away to the concert hall but the husband says he has to stay at home. When the guest gets to know the host has a ticket for the concert but he cannot go, he grabs the ticket and runs quickly to the concert for him in order not to waste such an expensive ticket. Although there is a little exaggeration here, it reflects the social reality in Chinese politeness to some extent.

The other choice is for the inviter to withdraw the invitation he has made for the invitee. Then s/he would have to find some excuse for the withdrawal. For example, s/he could have a quick look in the kitchen and say that s/he is so sorry that s/he has forgotten there is nothing to eat at home and would like to invite the invitee some other time. In such cases, the face of both the inviter and the invitee would be threatened and lost.

Most Chinese tend to adopt this polite refusal strategy in such situations regardless of occupation, age, gender, etc. as my data demonstrate. Many Chinese try to overdo this kind of politeness behaviour (verbal or nonverbal) to such a degree that "To a cultural outsider, A might appear imposing, while B would act hypocritically, i.e. making fake refusals" (Gu 1990: 253).

This does not mean that Chinese invitees have to refuse when they do want to accept the invitation. Chinese invitees do not always have to use this method – first refusing and then accepting. Sometimes they do accept directly, without any hesitation or superficial refusal. That depends on quite a few factors such as the situation, the relationship (including power and distance), and the participants S and H, especially the character of H.

Some people – especially young people working in big companies or agencies that are related to Westerners in one way or another – are beginning to copy Westerners' behaviour and accept invitations with 'thanks' at the first opportunity if they do want to.

⁴⁷ This is an annual national TV programme prepared by the Chinese Central TV station, containing various performances catering for all nationalities and shown on TV on the eve of the traditional Spring Festival, 8pm-12pm, to welcome the new year.

They do not adhere strictly to the traditional pattern and have more freedom to communicate in more modern ways, and “the conventional pattern thus becomes less obligatory”, as Spencer-Oatey (2005: 111) points out.

In English, my data show that the fake refusal phenomenon does not occur in the English role-play. In English Group 3, when E3AF suggests that they should buy something for E3CF’s brother, E3CF does not refuse E3AF’s suggestion. Instead, she offers her ideas on what to buy for her brother and even suggests giving some money to him when they get there. This is quite different from the case in Chinese Group 3, where C3CF refuses C3AF and C3BF’s offer of a present for her brother three times. This shows cultural differences captured in my role-play data.

However, the DCT data show that there are also many English subjects who do choose fake refusals. With the boss and the acquaintance, the number of choices for that strategy is almost the same as the Chinese subjects but with the relative and the friend, there are very few such choices for the English (See 5.2, Situation 2).

When Spencer-Oatey (1987: 82) explains English strategies in accepting, rejecting and giving tentative response to definite invitations, she says, “With regard to invitations, Westerners are sometimes frank and direct in their responses and at other times they are not”. She explains the Tentative Response in English this way. “One of the acceptance responses is used first and then followed by a comment such as the following: ‘But I think I may have to work that evening. Could I let you know tomorrow?’”

Spencer-Oatey (ibid.: 122-125) compares the principle of directness or frankness and the differences between Chinese and English customs, and states that in English “‘No’ is interpreted as a genuine ‘no’ rather than a polite refusal, and so the host rarely offers more than once or twice.” “However, in China it seems common not to give a direct refusal.”

The above analysis of data seems to support the assumption that the purpose of this refusal strategy in Chinese is to show good manners or for politeness and the same strategy in English (and also the English tentative refusal strategy) may be used as a measure for considerateness. Power and distance clearly play a role here with the English. For when they interact with the boss and the acquaintance they use it but when they communicate with the relative and the best friend, they rarely choose it. That shows that with closer relationships, there is not so much face problem as with people of power and distance. The face-threatening risk is minimized in these cases. If the above assumption about the English behaviour can be supported, cultural differences also play an obvious and crucial role in the realization of the speech act of refusals.

7.4 Analysis of the Politeness Strategy of Directness in the Role-play

Before I start addressing the problem of directness in the role-play, I want to mention that my DCT data in requests shows similar results to those of CCSARP. Both results demonstrate that participants favour the conventional indirect strategies the most.

In the role-play, however, most Chinese and English prefer to adopt the impositive strategy (69.2% and 72.1% in requests and 59.6% and 58.9% in refusals), which is much higher than my DCT results for both speech acts and the CCSARP results of request. Also, these results are quite different from other role-play research results such as Zhang (1995: 87), who finds the Chinese interlocutors prefer an indirect strategy – the lengthy hints – in requests (See 1.8). Garcia (1993: 127) also finds, in her role-play, that her Spanish speakers “when making a request showed a marked preference for the expression of deference over camaraderie”, but only when responding to the requests they prefer the strategy of camaraderie.

In my investigation, both Chinese and English are direct in the role-play discussion, as we have seen in Chapters IV and V, where I have already explained the higher percentages for the direct strategy in the role-play. It is because the role-play is a joint/communal task-oriented communication where not very much face work is needed (3.4.5). Both Scollen & Scollen (1983: 156) and Spencer-Oatey’s (2005: 107) first interactional goal can explain this direct phenomenon. The former scholars explain it from the viewpoint of solidarity (2.4) and the latter says, “if a transactional goal is perceived to be urgent and important, then people may make allowances for any behaviour that would typically be judged inappropriate in different circumstances” (See 2.2).

In this section, I have examined the same phenomenon from the cultural dimension in an attempt to get more insights into it. From my data, these questions have arisen again. How can one explain such high percentages of direct strategies used in my investigation both in Chinese and in English? Aren’t the Chinese well-known for their directness or straightforwardness (Lee-Wong 2000: 74) while the English are famous for their ‘conventional indirectness’ (Blum-Kulka 1989: 47 and Watts 2003: 182)? Why are the English also so direct as, and even a little more direct than, the Chinese in the strategy of impositives in the role-play data?

According to Triandis (1994: 20), the social structures and physical environments human beings live in are fairly similar, despite differences within the framework of similarities, which brings about similarities as well as differences in their behaviour (verbal or non-verbal). Eelen (2001: 129) calls such similarities sharedness and explains, “When the culture adopts some strategy as its dominant mode, its members

will use it". If we look at the human world as one cultural group, then it is not difficult to understand that the English and the Chinese also have this sharedness in concepts, beliefs, attitudes that guide their behaviour. It is exactly this sharedness that seems to guide both English and Chinese to believe that in this kind of joint/communal task-oriented and mutually beneficial interaction, in which they have a common interest or benefit, they should be direct rather than indirect to each other. It is also this sharedness that seems to make other influencing factors such as power, distance, etc. less important. Watts (1989a, cited in Eelen 2001: 131) states that "politic behaviour is socioculturally determined, i.e. also (implicitly) shared".

However, there are differences, too. For example, the Chinese family members are quite direct with each other whereas the English ones are not. The fake refusal phenomenon appears in Chinese but doesn't in English.

Whatever differences there are between the Chinese and the English strategies in the role-play, they cannot hide the evidence that both Chinese and English prefer direct strategies. This challenging phenomenon has been explained from the viewpoint of culture here.

Summary

In this chapter, I have singled out a few prominent problems such as the conceptualization of Chinese face, the problem of positive and negative face, the Chinese fake refusal and the English tentative refusal phenomena, and the unusual directness found in the role-play, displayed by both Chinese and English, especially by the latter, and analyzed all of them from the point of view of cultural similarities and differences so as to give them more profound insights into them.

CHAPTER VIII: FINDINGS AND EVALUATIONS

8.1 Introduction

This thesis has researched into the two speech acts of requests and refusals in Chinese and English. The methods I used in collecting data were role-play and DCTs. The task in the role-play was for each group of participants to discuss or plan a trip that they could make together during a supposed holiday. The speech acts of requests and refusals used in the role-plays were grouped as data for analysis.

The situations investigated in the DCTs included questions about borrowing money, refusing to lend money, refusing invitations and suggestions, and feelings about making refusals. These questions also manipulated the variables of different types of relationships: the boss, close relative, best friend, and acquaintance.

Then the data from the role-play investigation was compared against the different levels of directness between the Chinese and the English groups, also with the results of Lee-Wong's interview/role-play (2000: 75) and Zhang's (1995: 69) role-play. Not only the head acts (Chapters IV and V) but also the internal and external modification of the speech acts of requests and refusals (Chapter VI) were analyzed. The results of the DCTs were compared with Lee-Wong's and CCSARP DCT results. They were analyzed in detail with Brown & Levinson's framework of strategies, power and distance (Chapters IV and V) and from the viewpoint of cultures (Chapter VII).

In this chapter, I will first summarize the findings of this study in 8.2 in order to answer the research questions asked in the Introduction to this thesis:

1. What differences and similarities are there between Chinese and English in the realization patterns of the above two speech acts? What factors (linguistic, social, cultural, or other) may influence the choice of strategies of politeness most? What do the differences and similarities tell us as politeness researchers?

2. Do the above two speech acts really intrinsically threaten participants' face? To what extent and in what situations do they threaten participants' face? Is there any situation in which they do not?

I will also evaluate the contributions and the limitations of this research work in 8.3 and finally put forward a few proposals for further research in 8.4.

8.2 Findings

In this research, one of the findings from the analysis of the data is that Chinese and English share a few important features in the realization patterns in requests and refusals. In the role-play investigation, for example, both favour the most direct and

informal strategy type, which accounts for a very high percentage of all the strategies they adopted (See Chapter IV and V). This finding contrasts with other studies. For example, Zhang (1995: 69) studies requests in Chinese by role-play and finds a very high proportion of an elaborate use of supportive moves with the speech act (See 1.8 and 7.4). Lee-Wong (2000: 75) finds a dominant use of the direct strategy as a request strategy in her interview/role-play investigation but indicates that such direct strategies, unlike in English, are not considered to be impolite in Chinese. This implies that direct strategies such as imperatives are regarded as impolite in English. However, my data analysis shows that they are the main strategy used in both languages and neither is generally thought of as being impolite or inappropriate.

These are some of the most important similarities that this thesis finds between the two languages regarding the two speech acts studied. Analysis demonstrates that the common goal and the mutual benefits as part of the context play a very important role in deciding participants' attitudes and their choices of strategies, as well as other contextual factors such as relationships between participants, etc. Their general task in interaction is to contribute their views to the collective discussion. Every idea, whether it is expressed in agreement or disagreement, appears to play a role in bringing about a final agreement, which is beneficial to all the participants. In such circumstances, face effects are minimized, as the investigation in 3.4.5 shows. As a result, both Chinese and English have used more direct strategies than indirect ones.

However, the matter is complicated by the fact that indirect strategies (conventional indirect and hints) are also employed in the role-play (See chapter VI). In requests, when it comes to asking somebody to do something that has a cost in terms of either time or labour, some speakers do choose to employ indirect strategies. In refusals, a speaker can be very direct in rejecting a suggestion initially, but when these rejections are repeated s/he repeats his/her rejections of the same suggestion in the argument, speakers tend to use more and more supportive moves (for example, to give reasons, etc.) in order to persuade without sounding impolite (See 6.3).

What has been said is applicable to both Chinese and English. That shows that similarities are fundamental in the realization patterns of the two speech acts in similar situations in spite of differences. The most obvious difference between them is that the English interlocutors make more use of the conventionally indirect strategy than the Chinese, who employ more hints than the English in the role-play investigation.

In the DCT data analysis, there are similarities and differences found in the two languages too. The face effects are clearly seen in the acts of requests and refusals in some situations, such as borrowing money from people with power (the boss), or

distance (the acquaintance). Most of the participants in both languages choose more relatively indirect strategies with the boss and the acquaintance, but with relatives and friends, they prefer direct strategies. Clearly, the relationship between S and H begins to take an effect. Here, the face-threatening nature depends on whom you are talking to. The relative power or social distance usually has an influence on the choice of strategies in this case. Where power or distance is present, face-threatening effects seem to appear.

Data analysis with regard to the feelings of the speaker after refusing to lend money shows that most of the Chinese and English participants choose 'having a troubled mind'. That shows that the refusal act in the DCTs is face-threatening. It threatens both the refuser's and the refused's face. When the latter borrows money, s/he threatens the former's face. When s/he is refused, his/her face is threatened, but the refuser does not feel at ease either because s/he could not help.

In the DCT investigation, it is found that the biggest difference between the two languages with regard to strategy choices lies in the invitation-acceptance situation. Most of the Chinese choose the strategy of fake refusals, which is to show good manners rather than threaten face. The English, however, choose almost as much of the fake strategy for the boss and the acquaintance but they usually do not choose it for those with whom they have closer relations. According to Spencer-Oatey, they use the tentative strategy out of consideration. Data analysis shows that this is related to cultural differences (See 7.3).

The second finding is related to the problem of whether the speech acts that this thesis studies are intrinsically face-threatening. Brown & Levinson (1987: 65) maintain that they belong to the acts that intrinsically threaten face. However, it is found through my data analysis that that is not always true (See Chapters IV, V and VII). For example, in the face effect investigation (3.4.5), none of the Chinese and just an average 5.55% of the English participants think that the impositive strategies out of the role-play data are face-threatening. With the invitation acceptance/refusal, the act of refusals is used to show good manners or politeness instead of impoliteness. Gu (1990: 253) even calls it "intrinsically polite".

Through the analysis of the two findings above, the two research questions asked in the Introduction to this thesis have been answered. In addition to the above main findings, I have made a few implicit ones as follows:

Firstly, I have traced one of the important reasons (though they are not models) of why Chinese speakers of English are often misunderstood as being impolite by native speakers of English. That is because of the difference of linguistic systems: modal auxiliaries including *can*, *may*, *will*, *must*, etc. In Chinese, these English base forms and

uses have counterparts, though they may be given different grammatical names. However, the English past forms for politeness use, such as *could*, *might*, *would* cannot be found in Chinese (See 2.8.2).

The lack of inflections of the Chinese verbs sometimes can even paralyse communication between Chinese speakers of English and native speakers of English if the former have not learned the conjugation of English verbs well. The following is such an example:

In the 1980s, an English teacher was invited to give a talk to the third and fourth year students of the English Department of Nankai University, China. The topic was 'The Monarch in Great Britain'. When he said, "Now I am going to entertain questions if you have any", one of the best students immediately responded, "I have a question: If there is no Queen in England now, what will happen?" The English speaker seemed to be puzzled at first. Then the following dialogue occurred between them:

English Speaker (ES): What do you mean?

Chinese Student (CS): I mean if there is no Queen, what will happen in your country?

ES: But we have one.

CS: But *if* you have no Queen, I think English people will still go on working, going to school, ...

ES: But we do have one.

CS: But I mean *if*.

ES: But we HAVE the Queen. Her name is Elizabeth II. She lives in Buckingham Palace in London.

At this point, the Chinese teacher began to intervene by saying, "Perhaps, the student means if there *were* no Queen, what *would* happen". The English teacher immediately said with a sigh, "Oh, I see!" (Li, L. 2000: 90).

From the above example, it is clear that the difference between the Chinese and the English verb systems can heavily influence interactions between native English speakers and Chinese students of English.

Secondly, based on the study in Chapter VII, I have argued that the Chinese notion of face has been wrongly conceptualized as two different types: *liǎn* and *miànzi*. In modern Chinese, one person has only one face, whether literal or metaphorical. *miànzi* is only one of more than a dozen synonyms of *liǎn* (See 7.1). I will discuss the importance of this point in the next section.

8.3 Evaluation

The major contributions I have made in this study are listed as follows:

Firstly, in joint/communal task-oriented communication, if the individual's goals and benefits are closely bound/related to the general common goals and benefits, this binding seems to minimize the face-threatening force of requests and refusals. That is true not only of Chinese but also of English in my role-play research (See 4.3.2.1, 5.4.1 and 3.4.5).

In contrast, in other researchers' role-play investigations such as Zhang's (1995: 87) research and Garcia's, there is no common goal and benefit between S and H in their research. The result is that the participants used lengthy hints "to avoid performing an impolite act, to perform a polite act, and to perform an impolite act in a non-conflicting way". There was not any direct strategy used at all (See 1.8 and 7.4).

Garcia (1992: 127) studied Spanish requests and refusals in role-plays, too. The result is that the subjects showed a marked preference for "the expression of deference over camaraderie" in requests. Only when responding to the requests, did they "show preference for the strategy of camaraderie with the interlocutor" (ibid.: 127, 1.8, 7.4).

Therefore, I have demonstrated (a) that there is a difference in politeness requirements in different contexts, and (b) what those differences are, giving reasons, for task-oriented dialogues.

Secondly, as has been mentioned in the previous section, a fresh approach is found with which to explain the fake refusal phenomena. I have proposed the approach of *lǐràng/qiānràng/círàng* in 2.7 and 7.3, which together with Spencer-Oatey's explanation by 'conformity and tradition' can best explain the fake refusals in Chinese. This is another contribution of this research to politeness research.

Thirdly, with regard to internal and external modification, I have done some original work – finding the complexity and multifunctionality of a few kinds of modification, especially the modal particles *ah/ya*, *ba*, *ne*, and *ma*. I have distinguished two categories of such modal particles: (1) mitigating, and (2) non-mitigating. In the former category, I have identified the subcategories of request-forming and pausing. In the latter category, I have discovered those of question-forming, listing, and upgrading. Take the modal particle 吗 *ma* for example. It may be used as a mitigator to weaken the illocutionary force of an utterance or as a structural constituent to form questions only, depending on specific context (See 6.2.4.2 and 6.3.2).

This is a very important contribution because this aspect of modification has been studied in depth in this thesis. Although a few traditional grammarians have discussed them at the level of grammar or lexicon, few researchers have studied them from the viewpoint of pragmatics. Where they have, the consideration has been more superficial (See 6.3.4).

Fourthly, finding that Hu (1944: 45, 457), Gu (1992: 13) and Mao's (1994: 454) notion of Chinese face does not appear to be valid (See 7.1) is another contribution made in this thesis. They have claimed that the Chinese face is divided into two types: *liǎn* and *miànzi* and therefore different from the English face. This claim of theirs is already widespread. Even Watts (2003: 120) quotes their conceptualization of Chinese face. However, research evidence shows that there is not such a distinction of *liǎn* and *miànzi* in modern Chinese. The *miànzi* is only one of several synonyms of *liǎn* (face), just as the English face has several synonyms (See 7.1).

Fifthly, another contribution in this research is that I have identified two different kinds of face both in Chinese and English, that is, 'event' and 'linguistic/conversational' face. When people interact or communicate with each other as individuals in conversation, they use various linguistic strategies or methods to save face, maintain face or not to lose face. Such cases are linguistic/conversational. Therefore, when a person's face is threatened, lost or saved, it refers to his/her face in the on-going interaction with regard to specific speech acts, for instance, requests or refusals. In English, the general word is face, which has its synonyms and in Chinese, it is the word *liǎn* (face) with its own synonyms, too (See 7.1).

Another type is related to the face of an individual or a collective such as an organization or a nation or both, related to an event. A basketball player or a team wins in a match and he/she/they earn(s) *liǎn* not only for him/herself, but more importantly, they earn *liǎn* for the collective. If they lose, they lose the face of the community as well as their own.

The above two types of face should not be mixed up in Chinese. Event face can be given to a person or taken away from him/her by society. However, linguistic/conversational face usually involves what strategies that interlocutors use in verbal communication so as to maintain or save face or not to threaten face. What we are concerned with as researchers is the linguistic/conversational face but not the event face.

This research has the following limitations however.

The first limitation is that the analysis is mainly based on similarities and differences in strategies between the two languages. This method seems to be superficial to some degree. The reason is that even if the similarities in the data have been discovered in strategies, and even if there are all those percentages for comparison and analysis, that does not always guarantee that these similarities convey similar social meanings in interactions across different languages or cultures (Blum-Kulka 1989: 47). For example, the numbers and percentages chosen by the English and Chinese groups

for the 'boss' are very similar to each other. Obviously, one cannot draw the conclusion that the former and the latter have similar assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the act of refusing here. As I have previously argued, the Chinese use this strategy for the sake of politeness or to show good manners while the English choose it out of consideration.

The second limitation is related to the methods of data collection. Although the role-play is very good in the sense that once it starts out, it moves freely as if it were a real life event, producing very useful data for analysis, yet the researcher, who does not join them in discussion, cannot control its development. Therefore, problems sometimes occur. For example, I intended for each group, both Chinese and English, to produce some data on gift offering acts so that I could compare the results with those fake refusal results collected in the questionnaire. However, only one Chinese group and one English group produced the required data. In the Chinese group, C3AF suggests taking something as a present for C3CF's brother, with whom they intend to stay but Member C3CF refuses the offer. In the English group, the same offer occurs, but E3CF does not refuse it. Instead, E3CF welcomes the offer and gives his idea about where to buy the present for his brother. These would have been very good examples not only for comparisons between them in the role-play, but also for comparisons with the DCT data. However, similar data did not appear in the other groups in both languages. Therefore, I had to omit that comparison. The DCT questions were designed before the role-play took place, without knowing what would take place in the role-play. As a result, the data in the DCTs and the role-play do not go hand in hand (See 'Proposals for future work' in the next section).

If we compare the methods used, data analysis shows, the questionnaire investigation can compensate for some of the limitations of the role-play. It satisfies the requirements of the researcher, who needed fake refusals, and the subjects in both languages made choices using this speech act in the questionnaire even though few in Chinese and none in English were recorded in the role-play. However, it is not certain that to what extent it is the representative of the spoken method. Another problem is that we cannot hope "that short, decontextualized written texts are comparable to the longer routines typical of actual interaction" (Wolfson et al. 1989: 182). A combination of both methods is much better because they complement each other to some extent.

The third limitation to this research lies in the problem of selection or organization of subjects. There are two main problems in this respect. One of them is the number – there are only thirty subjects, half Chinese and half English, and because the sample sizes are small, any results have to be interpreted cautiously. The other is the scope or

variety (from each language, one group consisting of people who work, three groups consisting of university students and one family). However, the constraints of doctoral work did not allow the collection of more data. The transcription process in particular was very time-consuming, and accessing subjects was also not easy.

The fourth limitation lies in the difficulty in classifying data. Sometimes this job has been rather challenging. For example, though I have criteria for classification of data, sometimes it has been very difficult to decide whether a certain utterance should go to suggestions or requests, given the differences between English and Chinese. After I finished the classification work, I had to face the job of categorising them into the levels of directness. Should a certain utterance of request belong to the group of direct (impositive), or conventionally indirect, or non-conventionally indirect (hints)? In this case, it is inevitable that such decisions are subject to a certain amount of subjectivity in classifying and categorizing particular utterances or speech acts.

8.4 Proposals for Future Research

The following are some proposals for future research in the empirical work of the field of politeness.

1. Some pragmatic aspects have not been investigated fully enough, especially in the role-plays, due to the lack of anticipated data. The fake politeness phenomenon is an obvious example. Therefore, it should be investigated in more depth and, if possible, including more languages. In Chinese, it is a widely used strategy in interactions, as we see in my data analysis. My data shows that the English also choose this strategy (with the boss and the acquaintance in the DCTs), but to a lesser degree and depending on the relationship between the interlocutors, and the motivation may be different from Chinese. Leech (1983: 112) has also noticed such phenomena that "Similar paradoxes of behaviour are ritualized in certain cultures in which an offer has to be repeated and declined n times before it is accepted". Brown & Levinson (1987: 233) have mentioned similar fake refusal phenomena, saying, "To accept an offer is an FTA. In many cultures, the polite modification of both offers and requests may be spread over a conversational sequence between the two parties." So, much evidence seems to indicate that this is not an isolated but a widespread politeness phenomenon. Therefore, researchers of politeness should not neglect it, as part of cross-cultural politeness phenomena in general.

2. Further and more in-depth research should be carried out in the speech acts both in role-play and DCTs. Since I have found that both Chinese and English favour impositives (direct strategies) in both role-play requests and refusals (See 7.4). I would

be interested in undertaking a wider and more penetrative scope of research. In role-plays, I would like to research further into such questions as the following:

- Do all languages exhibit directness for requests and refusals, as has been found in this thesis?
- Do the specific translation equivalents of such direct strategies in one language retain their pragmatic characteristics in another?
- Do these direct strategies carry similar social meanings across different languages?

To undertake such a research project would need larger groups of people and a large amount of work, involving several more languages. In the DCTs, the necessity of a more in-depth project comes from comparisons in requests with the CCSARP. The findings in my DCTs are similar to those of the CCSARP to some extent. Both favour the conventional indirect strategy the most but the latter obviously use more of this strategy than in my research. In the CCSARP results, there is much less use of the other strategies such as the nonconventionally indirect, compared with that in my research.

These are only numerical similarities and differences. They can sometimes be superficial, especially when the number of subjects is small. The number of my DCT subjects is much smaller than that of the CCSARP, as has been said in 3.2.1. So further and more reliable investigations need to be done, preferably with research questions similar to the last two listed above, namely, do the specific translation equivalents of the strategies used in one language retain their pragmatic peculiarities in another? Also, do the strategies carry similar social meanings across different languages?

3. Future research should have a more complex sampling procedure, including varieties of age, occupation, status, gender, numbers of subjects, and data collection methods which produce the appropriate data types desired. The number of participants can influence the variety of types of representations. In other words, if the number of subjects is too small, it will be difficult for them to represent different types of roles. The results of any investigation would not be as robust as those where larger samples are used.

Families should be separated from the ordinary groups because they may need different criteria for their linguistic behaviour. In order to avoid any confusion in data, it is advised not to have mixed groups of family and other groups. Students should be included, but too many of them could reduce the degree of representativeness of the samples. In this connection, people with power and of varied mixed gender groups should be more fully represented.

With regard to data collection methods, if the role-play plus DCTs was used, the DCT questions should not be designed until the role-play data were classified and was ready for data analysis. Based on this role-play data, the researcher could see what s/he could draw on so as to design a whole set of relevant DCT questions, so that the two sets of data would complement each other.

8.5 Conclusions

In this thesis I have studied the two speech acts of requests and refusals pragmatically, sociopragmatically and culturally. These speech acts are analyzed not only in terms of the head acts, but also in terms of their supporting acts. Through data analysis, two problems have been investigated.

The first is about similarities and differences between Chinese and English with regard to these speech acts. Data analysis indicates similarities between the two languages in several ways in the following situations. First, Chinese and English participants adopt similar strategies in similar situations, unlike the findings of other researchers. For instance, in studying requests, Lee-Wong (2000: 79) claims that the Chinese prefer to be direct for clarity and sincerity, while the English tend to be indirect and polite. Zhang (1995: 23) works out a catalog of Chinese requestive strategies but finds English speakers did not use imperatives as much. However, what I have found in the role-play investigation is that in requests in general, English and Chinese participants adopt almost equally direct strategies and even more of the former being direct than the latter. When it comes to requests of a more serious nature, for example, asking others to do something such as ordering tickets for the group in the role-play, more participants in both languages tend to choose less direct strategies. In these cases, Chinese and English participants behave similarly to a very large degree.

In previous research into refusals, there are also similar generalizations. For example, Chen, Ye & Zhang (1995: 145) claim that direct refusal is used the least frequently when the interlocutors are of equal status. However, data analysis in my investigation makes one draw a very different conclusion. Take the task-oriented role-plays again for example. Both Chinese and English participants employ direct strategies most frequently at the beginning of a topic. However, when repeated refusals occur, the discourse will turn from direct to indirect and become increasingly complex until the refusal act involves both internal and external modifications. Then participants are no longer as direct because face-risk increases with the repeated refusals. Here once again, it is true of both in Chinese and English.

In the DCT (borrowing money, for instance), participants in both Chinese and English groups mainly choose more indirect strategies for the boss and the acquaintance but more direct

ones for the relative and friend. Here the contents of the speech act and the relationships including social factors (power and distance) play a major role.

Data analysis also reveals differences between the two languages. One difference lies in accepting invitations (to dinner, etc.). Most of the Chinese prefer fake refusals regardless of relations, status, gender, age, etc., while many of the English choose fake refusals for the boss and the acquaintance but few use these refusals for the relative and the friend. Although many English participants choose the fake refusals for the boss and the acquaintance, the motivation can be different from that of the Chinese. The latter want to show politeness or good manners whereas the former may want to show tentativeness with the boss and the acquaintance.

Another important difference is that each language, apart from similarities, has its own characteristic ways of expressing the same or similar strategies for the same speech act. For example, English is famous for its complicated system of modal verbs (could, would, might, etc.) for discursive strategies whereas Chinese is full of polite expressions such as 麻烦你 *máfanǐ*, 劳驾 *láojià*, 您 *nín*, etc., as well as its complicated system of modal particles (吧 *ba*, 啊 *ah*/呀 *ya*, 呢 *ne* and 吗 *ma*) for similar purposes.

Last but not least, through data analysis it is found that Brown & Levinson's framework can still be used for analysis, especially of politeness strategies (including the concepts of solidarity and respect), and social factors (power and distance), despite criticisms of their intended universal theory of face (positive and negative). It has been shown that their face theory may not be so universally applicable as they expected (Watts 2003: 101).

All this demonstrates that speech acts are context-specific, situation-specific, language-specific, culture-related, multifunctional, and dynamic. Any generalization that can be over-simplistic, one-sided, or biased, and therefore unscientific, should be avoided.

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRES

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

Title Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Dr <input type="checkbox"/> Prof <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Specify _____	Date	Reference Number
	Age	Male/Female
Surname/Family Name	Country of Birth	Nationality
First Names (in full)	First Language	
Occupation Student <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting <input type="checkbox"/> Sales <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Customers Service <input type="checkbox"/> Consulting <input type="checkbox"/> Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Tradesman/Craftsman <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Specify _____	Second Language and its level English <input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Specify _____ Fluent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other Languages and their levels	
	Degree/Diploma/Certificate Obtain Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> Master <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Specify _____	

SECTION B: RELEVANT QUESTIONS

Please briefly answer the following questions or tick one of the choices.

1. Do you know any people in your group? If yes, please tell us how many years you have known each other.

Speaker A _____

Speaker B _____

Speaker C _____

2. What is the relationship between you and the other members of this group?

Speaker A _____

Speaker B _____

Speaker C _____

3. How often do you see each other?

Speaker A

- Seldom.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Everyday.
- Irregularly.
- Other, please specify _____

Speaker B

- Seldom.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Everyday.
- Irregularly.
- Other, please specify _____

Speaker C

- a. Seldom.
- b. Once or twice a week.
- c. Once or twice a month.
- d. Everyday.
- e. Irregularly.
- f. Other, please specify _____

4. You go shopping with somebody and spot a bargain *so* good that you *must* buy it. Unfortunately, you have not enough money on you. You need to borrow 1500 yuan/100 pounds. What would you say if this person is:

Your boss?

- a. Lend me some money, (please).
- b. Can you lend me some money?
- c. Could/Would you lend me some money?
- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money.
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me.
- f. Other, please specify _____

A close relative?

- a. Lend me some money, (please).
- b. Can you lend me some money?
- c. Could/Would you lend me some money?
- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money.
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me.
- f. Other, please specify _____

Your best friend?

- a. Lend me some money, (please).
- b. Can you lend me some money?
- c. Could/Would you lend me some money?
- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money.
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me.
- f. Other, please specify _____

Someone you don't know very well?

- a. Lend me some money, (please).
- b. Can you lend me some money?
- c. Could/Would you lend me some money?

- d. I wonder whether you could lend me some money.
- e. I would like very much to buy it, but I don't have enough money with me.
- f. Other, please specify _____

5. Imagine somebody is feeling ill. What would you say if this person is:

Your boss?

- a. I suggest that you see a doctor tomorrow.
- b. You should see a doctor tomorrow.
- c. You had better see a doctor tomorrow.
- d. It would be better if you see a doctor tomorrow.
- e. If I were you, I would see a doctor tomorrow.
- f. Other, please specify _____

A close relative?

- a. I suggest that you see a doctor tomorrow.
- b. You should see a doctor tomorrow.
- c. You had better see a doctor tomorrow.
- d. It would be better if you see a doctor tomorrow.
- e. If I were you, I would see a doctor tomorrow.
- f. Other, please specify _____

You best friend?

- a. I suggest that you see a doctor tomorrow.
- b. You should see a doctor tomorrow.
- c. You had better see a doctor tomorrow.
- d. It would be better if you see a doctor tomorrow.
- e. If I were you, I would see a doctor tomorrow.
- f. Other, please specify _____

Someone you don't know very well?

- a. I suggest that you see a doctor tomorrow.
- b. You should see a doctor tomorrow.
- c. You had better see a doctor tomorrow.
- d. It would be better if you see a doctor tomorrow.
- e. If I were you, I would see a doctor tomorrow.
- f. Other, please specify _____

6. Imagine that somebody who is in need wants to borrow some money, say, 100 pounds (1500 yuan) from you but you don't want to lend it. What would you say to refuse if the person is:

Your boss?

- a. I won't.
- b. I can't.
- c. I haven't got so much.
- d. I am so sorry I can't because I haven't got so much.
- e. I wish I could but I haven't got so much.
- f. Other, please specify _____

A close relative?

- a. I won't.
- b. I can't.
- c. I haven't got so much.
- d. I am so sorry I can't because I haven't got so much.
- e. I wish I could but I haven't got so much.
- f. Other, please specify _____

You best friend?

- a. I won't.
- b. I can't.
- c. I haven't got so much.
- d. I am so sorry I can't because I haven't got so much.
- e. I wish I could but I haven't got so much.
- f. Other, please specify _____

Someone you don't know very well?

- a. I won't.
- b. I can't.
- c. I haven't got so much.
- d. I am so sorry I can't because I haven't got so much.
- e. I wish I could but I haven't got so much.
- f. Other, please specify _____

7. Imagine that somebody whose computer you have spent several hours repairing wants to invite you to dinner. What would you say if you want to accept the invitation and if the person is:

Your boss?

- a. All right, I will come.
- b. You shouldn't do that. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- c. There is no need for you to do so. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- d. What do you want to do? (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- e. I would like very much to, thank you.
- f. Other, please specify _____

A close relative?

- a. All right, I will come.
- b. You shouldn't do that. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- c. There is no need for you to do so. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- d. What do you want to do? (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- e. I would like very much to, thank you.
- f. Other, please specify _____

You best friend?

- a. All right, I will come.
- b. You shouldn't do that. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- c. There is no need for you to do so. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- d. What do you want to do? (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- e. I would like very much to, thank you.
- f. Other, please specify _____

Someone you don't know very well?

- a. All right, I will come.
- b. You shouldn't do that. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- c. There is no need for you to do so. (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- d. What do you want to do? (Waiting for insistence on inviting.)
- e. I would like very much to, thank you.
- f. Other, please specify _____

8. Imagine that somebody wants to invite you to dinner as in the above case (See 7).

What would you say if you want to refuse the invitation and if the person is:

Your boss?

- a. I can't come because I have another appointment.
- b. I am so sorry I won't be able to come.
- c. Unluckily, I have no time.
- d. I'd love to, but I haven't got the time.

e. I would like very much to, but I really haven't got the time. Thank you all the same.

f. Other, please specify _____

A close relative?

a. I can't come because I have another appointment.

b. I am so sorry I won't be able to come.

c. Unluckily, I have no time.

d. I'd love to, but I haven't got the time.

e. I would like very much to, but I really haven't got the time. Thank you all the same.

f. Other, please specify _____

You best friend?

a. I can't come because I have another appointment.

b. I am so sorry I won't be able to come.

c. Unluckily, I have no time.

d. I'd love to, but I haven't got the time.

e. I would like very much to, but I really haven't got the time. Thank you all the same.

f. Other, please specify _____

Someone you don't know very well?

a. I can't come because I have another appointment.

b. I am so sorry I won't be able to come.

c. Unluckily, I have no time.

d. I'd love to, but I haven't got the time.

e. I would like very much to, but I really haven't got the time. Thank you all the same.

f. Other, please specify _____

9. How do you feel when you make a refusal to a request for help by someone who is:

Your boss?

a. Guilty.

b. Embarrassed.

c. Afraid.

d. OK, not bothered.

e. Relaxed.

f. Other, please specify _____

A close relative?

a. Guilty.

b. Embarrassed.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

Your best friend?

a. Guilty.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

Someone you don't know very well?

a. Guilty.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

b. Embarrassed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

b. Embarrassed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

10. How do you feel when you make a refusal to a suggestion beneficial to you and made by:

Your boss?

a. Guilty.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

A close relative?

a. Guilty.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

Your best friend?

a. Guilty.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

Someone you don't know very well?

a. Guilty.

c. Afraid.

e. Relaxed.

b. Embarrassed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

b. Embarrassed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

b. Embarrassed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

b. Embarrassed.

d. OK, not bothered.

f. Other, please specify _____

第一部分：个人简历

头衔/称呼: 先生 <input type="checkbox"/> 夫人 <input type="checkbox"/> 小姐 <input type="checkbox"/> 女士 <input type="checkbox"/> 博士 <input type="checkbox"/> 教授 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他 <input type="checkbox"/> 特殊说明 _____	日期	编号
	年龄	性别
姓	出生国家:	民族:
名	母语	
职业: 学生 <input type="checkbox"/> 会计 <input type="checkbox"/> 销售 <input type="checkbox"/> 教育 <input type="checkbox"/> 顾客服务 <input type="checkbox"/> 咨询 <input type="checkbox"/> 计算机 <input type="checkbox"/> 专业 <input type="checkbox"/> 退休 <input type="checkbox"/> 制造业 <input type="checkbox"/> 商人/手工业 <input type="checkbox"/> 政府部门 <input type="checkbox"/> 工程 <input type="checkbox"/> 失业 <input type="checkbox"/> 单干户 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他 <input type="checkbox"/> 特殊说明 _____	外语水平: 英语 <input type="checkbox"/> 法语 <input type="checkbox"/> 德语 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他 <input type="checkbox"/> 特殊说明 _____ 流利 <input type="checkbox"/> 很好 <input type="checkbox"/> 一般 <input type="checkbox"/> 差 <input type="checkbox"/>	
	其他语言及水平	
	获得的学位, 毕业证, 证明: 学士 <input type="checkbox"/> 硕士 <input type="checkbox"/> 博士 <input type="checkbox"/> 其他 <input type="checkbox"/> 特殊说明 _____	

第二部分：相关问题

请简明回答下列问题或选择(□)

1. 本组成员你认识谁？如果认识，认识几年了？

组员 A _____

组员 B _____

组员 C _____

2. 你与本组其他成员是什么关系？

组员 A _____

组员 B _____

组员 C _____

3. 多长时间见一次面？

组员 A

- a. 很少见面
- b. 每周一两次
- c. 每月一两次
- d. 每天见面
- e. 不定期
- f. 其他，请具体说明 _____

组员 B

- a. 很少见面
- b. 每周一两次
- c. 每月一两次
- d. 每天见面
- e. 不定期
- f. 其他，请具体说明 _____

组员 C

- a. 很少见面
- b. 每周一两次
- c. 每月一两次
- d. 每天见面
- e. 不定期
- f. 其他, 请具体说明 _____

4. 你和一个人一起买东西, 发现一件非常便宜的商品, 你就是想买下来。可惜你没带足够的钱。你需要借 1500 元/100 镑。你对他/她说什么, 如果这个人是你老板?

- a. (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. 我倒是很想买这个东西, 可是我带的钱不够。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

你的亲戚?

- a. (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. 我倒是很想买这个东西, 可是我带的钱不够。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

你最好的朋友?

- a. (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. 我到事很想买这个东西, 可是我带的钱不够。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

- a. (请)借给我点儿钱。
- b. 借给我点儿钱行吗?
- c. 您借给我点儿钱好吗?
- d. 不知道您能不能借给我点儿钱。
- e. 我倒是很想买这个东西,可是我带的钱不够。
- f. 其他说法,请具体说明 _____

5. 如果有一个人病了,你对他/她说什么如果这个人:

你的老板?

- a. 我建议你明天去看大夫。
- b. 明天你应该去看大夫。
- c. 你明天最好去看大夫。
- d. 你明天去看大夫比较好。
- e. 我要是你,我明天就去看大夫。
- f. 其他说法,请具体说明 _____

你的亲戚?

- a. 我建议你明天去看大夫。
- b. 明天你应该去看大夫。
- c. 你明天最好去看大夫。
- d. 你明天去看大夫比较好。
- e. 我要是你,我明天就去看大夫。
- f. 其他说法,请具体说明 _____

你最好的朋友?

- a. 我建议你明天去看大夫。
- b. 明天你应该去看大夫。
- c. 你明天最好去看大夫。
- d. 你明天去看大夫比较好。
- e. 我要是你,我明天就去看大夫。
- f. 其他说法,请具体说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

- a. 我建议你明天去看大夫。
- b. 明天你应该去看大夫。
- c. 你明天最好去看大夫。
- d. 你明天去看大夫就比较好。
- e. 我要是你, 我明天就去看大夫。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

6. 如果有个人需要向你借 1500 元钱 (100 英镑), 可是你不想借给他/她。你对他/她说什么, 如果这个人:

你的老板?

- a. 不借。
- b. 不行。
- c. 我没有这么多钱。
- d. 对不起, 我没有这么多钱借给你。
- e. 我要是能借给你就好了, 可是我没有那么多钱。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

你的亲戚?

- a. 不借。
- b. 不行。
- c. 我没有这么多钱。
- d. 对不起, 我没有这么多钱借给你。
- e. 我要是能借给你就好了, 可是我没有那么多钱。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

你最好的朋友?

- a. 不借。
- b. 不行。
- c. 我没有这么多钱。
- d. 对不起, 我没有这么多钱借给你。
- e. 我要是能借给你就好了, 可是我没有那么多钱。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

- a. 不借。
- b. 不行。
- c. 我没有这么多钱。
- d. 对不起，我没有这么多钱借给你。
- e. 我要是能借给你就好了，可是我没有那么多钱。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

7. 假设你为一个人花了好几个小时修好了计算机，这个人想请你吃饭，你想接受。你对他/她说什么如果这个人

你的老板?

- a. 好吧，我就来。
- b. 你不应该这么做。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- c. 你这样做没有必要。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- d. 你这是干什么? 等对方再进一步邀请)。
- e. 谢谢，十分荣幸，盛意难却。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

你的亲戚?

- a. 好吧，我就来。
- b. 你不应该这么做。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- c. 你这样做没有必要。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- d. 你这是干什么? 等对方再进一步邀请)。
- e. 谢谢，十分荣幸，盛意难却。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

你最好的朋友?

- a. 好吧，我就来。
- b. 你不应该这么做。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- c. 你这样做没有必要。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- d. 你这是干什么? 等对方再进一步邀请)。
- e. 谢谢，十分荣幸，盛意难却。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

- a. 好吧，我就来。
- b. 你不应该这么做。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- c. 你这样做没有必要。(等对方再进一步邀请)。
- d. 你这是干什么? 等对方再进一步邀请)。
- e. 谢谢，十分荣幸，盛意难却。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

8. 如果在以上(见7)情况下这个人想请你吃饭，你却想拒绝。你对他/她说什么
如果这个人:

你的老板?

- a. 不行，我还有事。
- b. 对不起，我来不了。
- c. 可惜我没有时间。
- d. 我很愿意来，可是我没有时间。
- e. 我倒是很愿意来，可是我确实没有时间。谢谢。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

你的亲戚?

- a. 不行，我还有事。
- b. 对不起，我来不了。
- c. 可惜我没有时间。
- d. 我很愿意来，可是我没有时间。
- e. 我倒是很愿意来，可是我确实没有时间。谢谢。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

你最好的朋友?

- a. 不行，我还有事。
- b. 对不起，我来不了。
- c. 可惜我没有时间。
- d. 我很愿意来，可是我没有时间。
- e. 我倒是很愿意来，可是我确实没有时间。谢谢。
- f. 其他说法，请具体说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

- a. 不行, 我还有事。
- b. 对不起, 我来不了。
- c. 可惜我没有时间。
- d. 我很愿意来, 可是我没有时间。
- e. 我到事很愿意来, 可是我确实没有时间。谢谢。
- f. 其他说法, 请具体说明 _____

9. 当你拒绝一个人的请求 (你的帮助) 时, 你心里是什么感觉如果这个人:
你的老板?

- a. 有内疚感
- b. 尴尬/不好意思
- c. 害怕/紧张
- d. 无所谓
- e. 轻松自然
- f. 其他, 请说明 _____

亲戚?

- a. 有内疚感
- b. 尴尬/不好意思
- c. 害怕/紧张
- d. 无所谓
- e. 轻松自然
- f. 其他, 请说明 _____

最好的朋友?

- a. 有内疚感
- b. 尴尬/不好意思
- c. 害怕/紧张
- d. 无所谓
- e. 轻松自然
- f. 其他, 请说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

- a. 有内疚感
- b. 尴尬/不好意思
- c. 害怕/紧张
- d. 无所谓
- e. 轻松自然
- f. 其他, 请说明 _____

10. 当有人提出对你有好处的建议可是你又要拒绝这个建议的时候, 你感觉如何
如果这个提建议的人是:

老板?

- a. 有内疚感
- b. 尴尬/不好意思
- c. 害怕/紧张
- d. 无所谓

e. 轻松自然

f. 其他, 请说明 _____

亲戚?

a. 有内疚感

b. 尴尬/不好意思

c. 害怕/紧张

d. 无所谓

e. 轻松自然

f. 其他, 请说明 _____

最好的朋友?

a. 有内疚感

b. 尴尬/不好意思

c. 害怕/紧张

d. 无所谓

e. 轻松自然

f. 其他, 请说明 _____

你不熟悉的人?

a. 有内疚感

b. 尴尬/不好意思

c. 害怕/紧张

d. 无所谓

e. 轻松自然

f. 其他, 请说明 _____

APPENDIX II: TASKS FOR SUBJECTS

Speaker A

Suppose you are in Leeds and have 9 days holiday from 12th June, Saturday 2004 to 20th June, Sunday 2004. You are planning to visit France together for 3 or 4 days. You will consider *four* aspects:

- Time: What dates will you be available?
- Cities: Where would you like to go?
- Hotels: Can you afford them? Do expensive hotels give you value for money?
- Transport: Do you prefer to take the train, the coach, the ferry or the plane

You will lead the group in discussing the holiday. Take notes about what the group has decided and read your conclusions out loud to your group. Once you have done this and the group agrees, the discussion is over. Try to complete the task within 30 minutes. Remember:

Speaker B doesn't have much money and can't spend a lot of money on hotels or transportation. But he/she lives near the city centre and is good at using computers. You would like him/her to book hotels and transportation tickets.

Speaker C has a brother living in Paris. Ask whether you can make use of his/her brother's house while you stay in Paris. What gift would the group buy for his/her brother if he agrees to putting everyone up?

Your time information is as follows:

12 th Sat	13 th Sun	14 th Mon	15 th Tue	16 th Wed	17 th Thu	18 th Fri	19 th Sat	20 th Sun
Attending computer series training courses from 9:00am to 11:00am every Sunday								Attending computer series training courses from 9:00am to 11:00am every Sunday

Your preferences and dislikes about French cities, hotels and transportation are as follows:

	Cities	Hotels	Transportation
Preferences	Paris and Strasbourg (border of France and Germany)	Expensive hotels such as ibis (at least £40 p. p.)	Trains
Dislikes	Basel (border of France, Germany and Switzerland)	Cheap hotels	Coaches

Speaker B

Suppose you are in Leeds and have 9 days holiday from 12th June, Saturday 2004 to 20th June, Sunday 2004. You are planning to visit France together for 3 or 4 days. You will consider *four* aspects:

- Time: What dates will you be available?
- Cities: Where would you like to go?
- Hotels: Can you afford them? Do expensive hotels give you value for money?
- Transport: Do you prefer to take the train, the coach, the ferry or the plane?

Remember:

You have only got £300 to spend on your holiday. Therefore you try to spend as little as possible on accommodation and transport. You live near the city centre and are good at using computers. What is your response if some of your friends have the intention of asking you to book hotels and transportation tickets? (You have two choices. a. You are happy to help out. b. You may feel that it is too bothersome. How do you refuse in this case?)

Your time information is as follows:

	12th Sat	13th Sun	14th Mon	15th Tue	16th Wed	17th Thu	18th Fri	19th Sat	20th Sun
Visiting parents in another city (starting early in the morning)		Visiting parents in another city (coming back late in the evening)							

Your preferences and dislikes about cities, hotels and transportation are as follows:

	Cities	Hotels	Transportation
Preferences	Paris and Basel (border of France, Germany and Switzerland)	Formule1 (£20 up to 3 people per night)	Coaches and ferries
Dislikes	Strasbourg (border of France and Germany)	Expensive hotels	Flights

Speaker C

Suppose you are in Leeds and have 9 days holiday from 12th June, Saturday 2004 to 20th June, Sunday 2004. You are planning to visit France together for 3 or 4 days. You will consider *four* aspects:

- Time: What dates will you be available?
- Cities: Where would you like to go?
- Hotels: Can you afford them? Do expensive hotels give you value for money?
- Transport: Do you prefer to take the train, the coach, the ferry or the plane?

Remember:

Everybody knows that you have got a brother living in Paris. What is your response if some of your friends have the intention of making use of your brother's house? (You have two choices. a. You are happy to help out. b. You may feel that it is too bothersome for your brother. How do you refuse in this case?)

Your time information is as follows:

12th Sat	13th Sun	14th Mon	15th Tue	16th Wed	17th Thu	18th Fri	19th Sat	20th Sun
			7pm-12 midnight attending a friend's birthday party					Having to prepare for next week's work

Your preferences and dislikes about cities, hotels and transportation are as follows:

	Cities	Hotels	Transportation
Preferences	Paris and Strasbourg (border of France and Germany)	Bed and Breakfast (£20 p. p.)	Trains
Dislikes	Basel (border of France, Germany and Switzerland)	Expensive hotels	Coaches or flights

参加调查者的任务

组员 A

假设你在天津，2004年6月12日(星期六)至20日(星期日)，有9天假期。你打算用3,4天去上海旅游。有4个问题要考虑。

- 时间：有空的日期？
- 城市：想去哪里？
- 旅馆：花的起吗？住贵的值吗？
- 交通：你愿意坐火车，汽车，摆渡，还是飞机？

你要领导小组讨论假期旅游，记下讨论的决定意见，念给组员们听，之后全体意见一致，讨论结束。要在半小时内完成任务。

记住：

组员 B 钱不多，旅馆和交通费不能多花。可是他/她住市中心一带并且计算机技术好，你想让他/她预订旅馆和机票/车票。

组员 C 有哥哥住在上海，问问他/她到上海能不能住他/她哥哥家，如果同意住，小组给他带什么礼品？

你的时间情况如下：

12号(六)	13号(日)	14号(一)	15号(二)	16号(三)	17号(四)	18号(五)	19号(六)	20号(日)
	周日 9-11:00 参加计算机培训课							周日 9-11:00 参加计算机培训课

关于上海等城市旅馆交通你的爱憎如下：

	城市	旅馆	交通
喜欢	上海和杭州	高级宾馆 (100 元/人/夜)	火车
不喜欢	南京	便宜宾馆	汽车

组员 B

假设你在天津，2004年6月12日(星期六)至20日(星期日)，有9天假期。你打算用3,4天去上海旅游。有4个问题要考虑。

- 时间：有空的日期？
- 城市：想去哪里？
- 旅馆：花的起吗？住贵的值吗？
- 交通：你愿意坐火车，汽车，摆渡，还是飞机？

记住：

你只有600元花在假期旅游上，所以住宿和交通尽量少花。你住市中心一带并且计算机技术好，如果有人让你订旅馆和车船票你怎么回答？

你的时间情况如下：

12号(六)	13号(日)	14号(一)	15号(二)	16号(三)	17号(四)	18号(五)	19号(六)	20号(日)
到另一城市探父母(一早出发)	到另一城市探父母(晚上回来)							

关于上海等城市旅馆交通你的爱憎如下：

	城市	旅馆	交通
喜欢	上海, 南京	40元/人/夜	火车
不喜欢	杭州	高级宾馆	飞机

组员 C

假设你在天津，2004年6月12日(星期六)至20日(星期日)，有9天假期。你打算用3,4天去上海旅游。有4个问题要考虑。

- 时间：有空的日期？
- 城市：想去哪里？
- 旅馆：花的起吗？住贵的值吗？
- 交通：你愿意坐火车，汽车，摆渡，还是飞机？

记住：

大家都知道你哥哥在上海，有人提出到你哥哥家住你怎么回答？（你有两个选择：1. 帮助，2. 觉得麻烦，怎么拒绝？）

你的时间情况如下：

12号(六)	13号(日)	14号(一)	15号(二)	16号(三)	17号(四)	18号(五)	19号(六)	20号(日)
			上午 7-12:00 参加朋友生日聚会					必须为下周的工作做好准备

关于上海等城市旅馆交通你的爱憎如下：

	城市	旅馆	交通
喜欢	上海，杭州	60元/人/夜	火车
不喜欢	南京	高级宾馆	飞机

APPENDIX III QUESTIONNAIRES FOR FACE EFFECTS IN THE ROLE-PLAY

Name _____

Date _____

English Version

Suppose you are going to go traveling with two other people who are either: your classmates, friends or friends' friends, or family members. You are now having a discussion regarding places to visit, transportation means and hotels, etc. and expressing your personal ideas. Let's assume that Speakers A and C know that Speaker B is good at computer skills and Speaker B's brother lives in Paris. Therefore, A asks B to 'look at the prices', etc. and suggests going to stay with B's brother in Paris in order to save some money. Read the following conversations and respond to the questions as follows.

	Conversations	Questions	Answers (Delete as appropriate)
1	B: So that seems pretty in order, so we're going to go for a campsite. A: Yeah. C to B: <i>You'll look into that.</i> B: Yeah, yeah.	If you are speaker B, is your 'face' threatened by C's remark?	Yes/No If yes, why?
2	A: OK, well we'll look at that then, right so, now seeing as you're like got the Internet and everything, do you want to look at the prices between the trains and the ferry? B: Yes, that's a good idea, yeah but I've heard that if we should end up catching the ferry, I heard that it's actually better if you go down there.	If you are speaker B, is your 'face' threatened by A's remark?	Yes/No If yes, why?
3	A to B: <i>Do you reckon there'd be any chance of your brother putting us up for like maybe one night?</i> B: I could ask him, I could ask him if he's up to it. A: 'cause that would ... C: It would, it would bring down the price quite a bit.	If you are speaker B, is your 'face' threatened by A's remark?	Yes/No If yes, why?
4	A: Ok, Sonia would you mind, sort of, booking tickets and hotels for us? B: <i>Um, ... I've actually got quite a lot to do.</i>	If you are speaker A, is your 'face' threatened by B's remark?	Yes/No If yes, why?
5	B: Paris sounds like a good idea. C: Paris in the late spring, early summer. A: but, Strasbourg? B: <i>No, no no, terrible place.</i>	If you are speaker A, is your 'face' threatened by B's remark?	Yes/No If yes, why?
6	A: Yeah, um I suppose if we're going to Paris we can always like ask your brother to like stay in his flat. C: <i>Yeah I don't really, I don't really see him that much these days and I don't really know if he'd actually want me to bring two people over 'cause its not really that big a flat.</i>	If you are speaker A, is your 'face' threatened by C's remark?	Yes/No If yes, why?

Chinese Version

姓名 _____

日期 _____

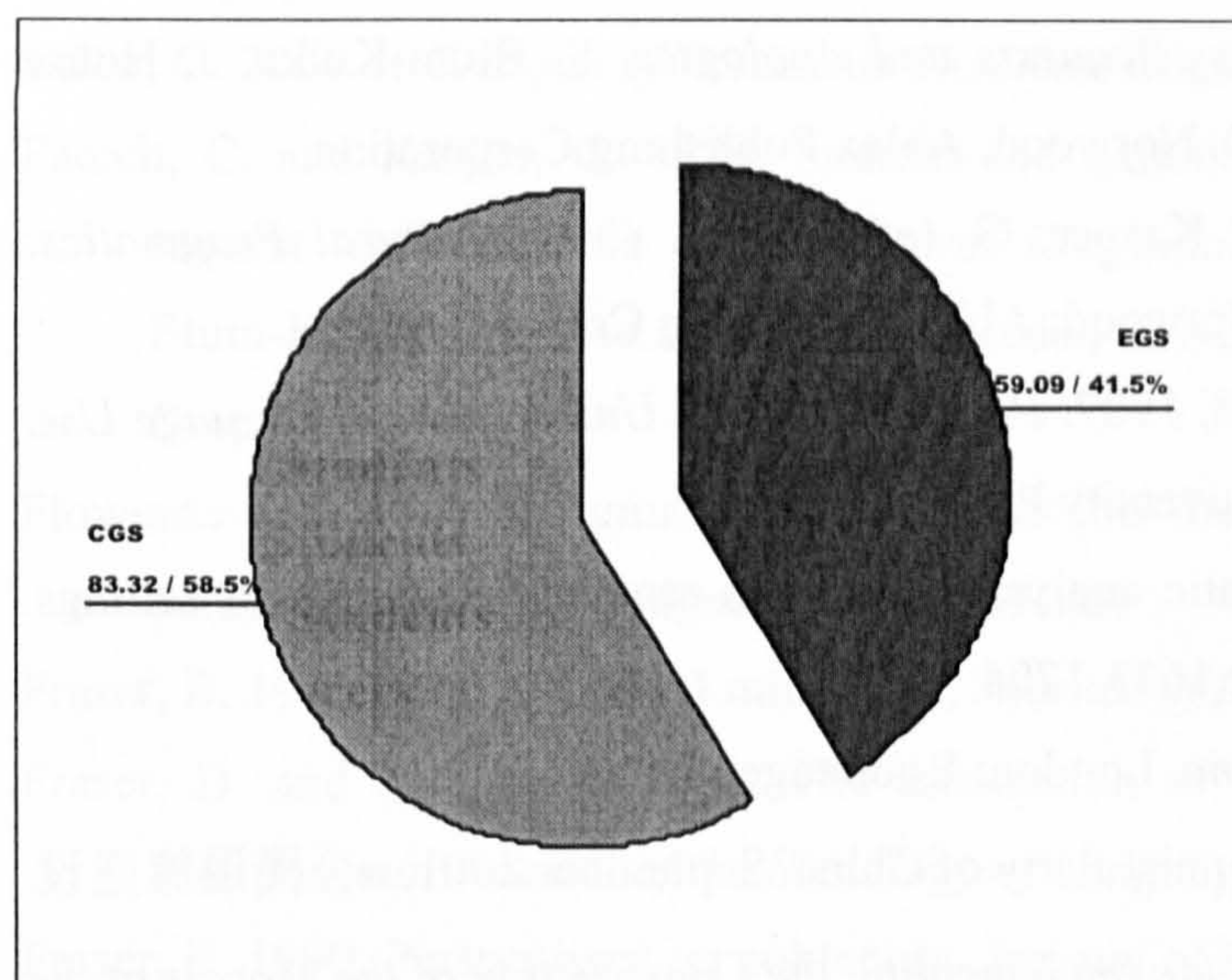
假设你和另外两个人一起去旅游，这两个人可能是你的同学，朋友或朋友的朋友，甚至家人。你们现在正在讨论一起旅游的地点，交通方式及旅馆等，发表个人的思想和看法。A和C两人知道B的计算机技术很高，B的哥哥在上海，所以，A请B‘订旅馆’等并建议到了上海借住B的哥哥家，省点旅费。请看下面的对话，并回答相应的问题。

	对话	问题	回答
1	A: 你计算机很熟练, 你来订旅馆吧。 B: 那没问题, 订票我可以。	如果你是B的话, 你觉得A的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?
2	A: 你哥哥在上海工作, 是吧? 请跟你哥哥打个招呼, 就说, 咱们能不能住在你哥家里? B: 那可以。我和她联系一下。	如果你是B的话, 你觉得A的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?
3	B: 周五晚上走, 对吧? 得先订车票啊。 A (对B): (麻烦) 你去干。 C (对B): 你就负责, 就是行和主我包了, ……	如果你是B的话, 你觉得A和C的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?
4	B: 我看我们去南京。 A: 可我就是不想去南京。	如果你是B的话, 你觉得A的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?
5	A: 我们在上海可以住100元一夜的宾馆。 B: 我不同意住太贵的, 一晚上也就是60元吧。	如果你是A的话, 你觉得B的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?
6	A: 不能和你哥哥联系, 问问他我们可以住他家吗? B: 我觉得最好不要打扰他。我哥哥忙。我都不愿意打扰他。	如果你是A的话, 你觉得B的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?
7	A: 你哥哥喜欢什么? 我们给他带点儿礼物去。 B: 没有必要。 A: 最好买点儿什么带去, 我们还要麻烦他。 B: 不用客气。就像到我家一样。	如果你是A的话, 你觉得B的话伤你的面子吗?	伤面子/不伤面子, 要是觉得伤面子, 为什么?

APPENDIX IV: GROUP LENGTH

Group Number	Group Description	English Group (Minutes)	Chinese Group (Minutes)
1	Mixed Students	10'10	17'47
2	Male Students	15'20	16'30
3	Female Students	10'45	14'35
4	Lecturers	11'10	18'50
5	Families	11'40	15'38
Total Time	<i>Five Groups</i>	59'05	83'20
Average Time	<i>Per Group</i>	11'49	16'40

Subjects	English Groups	Chinese Groups
1. Mixed Students	10.17	17.78
2. Male Students	15.33	16.50
3. Female Students	10.75	14.58
4. Lecturers	11.17	18.83
5. Families	11.67	15.63
Total	59.09	83.32
Percentage	41.5%	58.5%



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