

Teaching Requests and Request Responses in a Chinese Study Abroad Program: Speech Acts and Discursive Pragmatics*

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Abstract

Research has suggested that explicit instruction of pragmatics in a study abroad context is beneficial (Taguchi, 2015b). Yet, so far there is not a comprehensive curriculum available to teach Chinese pragmatics. This exploratory study aims to fill this gap by demonstrating an innovative and research-informed curriculum on teaching request and request responses implemented in a study abroad program in China. The pedagogical design of the current curriculum is based on two research areas: 1) pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic instruction, drawing upon findings from Speech Act-based frameworks (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010, p. 2) instruction on sequential aspects of requests in conversation, based on research within Discursive Pragmatics (Kasper, 2006) and Conversation Analysis. In addition to instruction, this paper also discusses the use of authentic conversation and the activities designed for students to practice pragmatic strategies in social interactions offered in study abroad contexts. Student learning results in this curriculum are evaluated by open-ended role plays. An analysis of student role-play performance is included to show that explicit instruction and the interactional opportunities during study abroad are beneficial to guide students to

employ pragmatic resources in request sequences in a co-constructed interaction.

Keywords: Instructed Chinese Pragmatics, Requests & Refusals, study abroad, Discursive Pragmatics, Conversation Analysis, speech acts

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1 INTRODUCTION

The study abroad environment is considered a promising environment to develop L2 learners' pragmatic competence via diverse opportunities for social interactions (Kinging, 2013; Shively, 2011). However, the study abroad context alone may not be sufficient. Research focusing on pragmatics that compares learner performance in study abroad and domestic classroom settings in China (Zhang & Yu, 2008) and Japan (Taguchi, 2015a) has suggested that study abroad participants do not necessarily out-perform their non-study abroad counterparts. Taguchi (2015b) suggests, furthermore, that there is "a clear benefit of instruction over non-instructional context" (p. 11), based on her review of 58 studies on pragmatic instruction in various second languages. The findings of these studies indicate that explicit instruction is effective when students were provided metapragmatic explanation followed by communicative practice.

However, to my knowledge, no study to date has developed a comprehensive curriculum to teach Chinese pragmatics explicitly in either a study abroad or a domestic context. Teng & Fei (2013) designed web-based materials to increase students' pragmatic awareness in Chinese before they embark on a study-abroad program in China. Winke & Teng (2010) developed a task-based tutorial workbook, written in Chinese with English translation, aiming to help students learn Chinese pragmatic features outside classroom with tutors. These two studies developed pragmatic learning materials for students studying in China, but did not provide explicit classroom instruction and a comprehensive curriculum. The current study presents such a curriculum designed to fill this gap.

This paper presents a unit on requests and request responses that was taught during a six week intensive Chinese study abroad program, drawing heavily upon two theoretical perspectives towards pragmatics: A general speech act-based framework (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Ishihara, & Cohen, 2010), and an interactional Discursive Pragmatics (Kasper, 2006) approach derived from the findings of Conversation Analysis (CA) and its application to second language

teaching, such as English (Barraja-Rohan, 2011; Wong & Waring, 2010), German (Betz & Huth, 2014), and Chinese (Yeh, 2018; Kunitz & Yeh, 2019). While these theoretical frameworks constitute two very different epistemological stances towards the nature of pragmatics and interaction, both provide useful insights for developing pedagogical materials and procedures for teaching requests and request responses, especially in the study abroad context where learners have access to target language (TL) speakers and the mundane activities of social life in the target community.

Before discussing the specifics of the curriculum, Section 2 provides a brief overview of how requests and request responses are viewed from the perspectives of Speech Act Theory research and Conversation Analysis. Section 3 focuses on the curriculum of teaching Chinese pragmatics in a study abroad context, discussion including learning objectives, teaching materials, instruction, practice/production tasks and assessment. Section 4 presents an analysis of a role-play conducted by two students after instruction to show how these learners employ the pragmatic resources explicitly taught in the curriculum. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications and suggestions for future curriculum development.

2 REQUESTS AND REQUEST RESPONSES IN INTERACTION

Broadly speaking, the approaches to analyzing and describing requests and their responses fall within two general schools of thought. The first, which can be thought of as a “Speech Act-based approach,” draws heavily upon the work of Austin (1962), Searle (1969), Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Levinson (1983), amongst others. They examined the pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms used by speakers to express their meanings and intentions in social interactions. The second approach, the Conversation Analysis, the basis of “Discursive Pragmatics” (Kasper, 2006), examines closely the resources that participants employ as they formulate actions, and focuses on how the actions

unfold across multiple turns at talk, as participants achieve mutual understanding.

A representative approach to analyzing requests within the Speech Act-based approach was conducted under the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, as presented in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). Requests are analyzed into three units: a) address terms, b) head acts, and c) adjuncts to head acts. Address terms invite the recipient’s attention, and can include names, honorific titles, or attention-getters. Head acts are the speech act proper, and can be modified (internally) through strategies that relate to directness, perspective (“Could you” as compared to “Could we”), and other formulaic modifications such as downgraders, upgraders, or hedges. Adjuncts can occur either prior to or after the head act, and modify the context without modifying the head act itself. These can include grounders that give a reason for the request, cost-minimizers that downgrade the imposition upon the recipient, and disarmers, which display the speaker’s awareness of the possible offense a request can cause, among many others (for a full list with examples, see Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (ibid, p. 205) provide an example analysis of a request along these dimensions, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Speech Act Analysis of Requests

Pardon me, but could you give me a lift if you're going my way, as I've just missed the bus and there isn't another one for an hour .

	Dimension	Category	Element
1	Address term	Attention getter	'Pardon me'
2	Request perspective	Hearer dominant	'Could you'
3	Request strategy	Preparatory	'Could you give'
4	Downgrades	—	none
5	Upgraders	—	none
6	Adjuncts to Head act	1 Cost minimizer	'if you're going my way'
		2 Grounder	'as I've just missed'

Refusals, as one type of response to requests, can be similarly parsed into head acts and adjuncts. Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) developed a classification system that categorized the refusal head act into direct and indirect strategies, with an extensive list of subcategories for indirect refusals, including expressions of regret, explanations for the refusal, unspecific acceptance that functions as a refusal, and various forms of avoidance. Félix- Brasdefer (2004) expanded these categories to also include mitigated refusals, and clarification requests, the latter of which was also included by Gass and Houck (1999) as a way to further open negotiations between the speaker and recipient.

The Speech Act-based approach has proven fruitful in its application to both research on L2 pragmatics, including in the study abroad context (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Li, 2014; Li & Taguchi, 2014; Schauer, 2009) and research on language instruction (Kondo, 2008; Taguchi, 2015b). However, Conversation Analysis (CA), and the approach to Discursive Pragmatics (Kasper, 2006) derived from it, provides a different perspective on requests and request responses, especially as they unfold across interactional sequences. From the CA perspective, a request sequence is comprised of an adjacency pair (Schegloff, 2007), where the request constitutes a first pair part which makes a response as the second pair part relevant. Commonly, these responses are either a granting or a denial of the request. CA also introduces the notion of preference (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018; Davidson, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984), defined as the general tendency that a granting response is preferred, and will be generally produced without hesitation, while a non-granting response is dispreferred and will be generally produced with hesitations, delays, and accounts for why the request cannot be granted.

Moreover, many request sequences are comprised of much more than a simple adjacency pair and often expanded (Schegloff, 2007) through pre-expansions, insertions, and post-expansions. Pre-request expansions often announce that a request is forthcoming and check for the availability of the

recipient. Insertions appear between the request and response, often dealing with some sort of trouble with the request, and can occasionally be quite lengthy. Post-expansions occur after the response turns. In the case of grantings, this is often where appreciation is expressed. In the case of a non-granting response, the request speaker can re-do the request (often with upgraded formulations of the requester's need or downgraded formulations of the imposition upon the recipient), or the participants can work out an alternative course of action.

In recent years, CA research on requests has identified other phenomena that impact the formulation and trajectory of request sequences. Most relevant here are the notions of *entitlement* and *contingency* (Curl & Drew, 2008; Craven & Potter, 2010; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014). Entitlement refers to the rights or expectations on the part of the request speaker to have the request granted, while contingency refers to the orientation to possible factors influencing the ability or willingness of the recipient to grant the request. Through these, the participants manage their interactional rights and obligations vis-à-vis the production of requests and their responses.

The epistemological differences between Speech Act-based approaches and Conversation Analysis-based approaches means that research on pragmatics that attempts to incorporate both may face challenges (Kasper, 2006), although there have been fruitful attempts (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012, 2014; Youn, 2015). Both perspectives, however, provide valuable insights that can be applied to designing curriculum for teaching pragmatics, particularly in contexts such as study abroad where the learners have much greater access to TL speakers and can go about using the language both in and outside of the classroom. The curriculum presented in this paper draws upon both perspectives in its design. I will provide a detailed account of the teaching methodologies in the following section.

3 CURRICULUM OF CHINESE PRAGMATICS IN STUDY ABROAD CONTEXT

The curriculum presented here developed three main pedagogical components to guide students to notice and use pragmatic strategies. First, the instruction draws students' attention to the lexical/syntactic resources for pragmatics using data from Speech Act studies on Chinese. Second, I guided students to analyze how these resources are deployed in contextualized natural conversations from opening to closing, following a CA-based discursive pedagogical approach, inspired by Barraja-Rohan (2011), Betz and Huth (2014), Wong and Waring (2010) and Kunitz & Yeh (2019). Third, students are provided opportunities for social interactions in which they use the pragmatic strategies to complete tasks. The curriculum, designed for students at the level of intermediate-low proficiency, consists of four units: compliment, invitation, request sequences, and agreement/disagreement, with each unit lasting 8 hours. In this section, I will describe five aspects of the pedagogical procedures: 1) student learning objectives, 2) teaching and learning materials, 3) instruction, 4) practice and production tasks, and 5) assessment.

3.1 Student learning objectives

The four learning objectives for the request sequence unit, presented here, were developed based on the interaction-sensitive rating criteria for assessing pragmatics, developed by Youn (2015).

- 1) Able to use linguistic resources and formulaic expressions appropriately to express pragmatic meanings, such as *neng bu neng* "Can or cannot...", *mafan* "trouble you," verb + *yidian* "a bit" for requests (Hong, 1998; Li, 2014), and *kongpa* "I'm afraid," *keneng* "probably," *buhaoyisi* "embarrassing" for refusals (Guo, 2012; Yang, 2008).
- 2) Able to formulate requests and request responses, showing sensitivity to issues such as the imposition a request places on the recipient, and Chinese cultural norms such as indirectness and deference (Chen, Ye,

& Zhang, 1995; Hong, 1998; Guo, 2012; Li, 2014; Yang, 2008; Zhang, 1995a, 1995b).

- 3) Able to accomplish various actions to deliver turns without undue pauses or delays, to initiate and switch topics smoothly, and to open and close conversations appropriately.
- 4) Able to use response tokens and expressions to show active participation in the conversation and maintain a shared understanding (Clancy et al., 1996; Yeh, 2018).

These objectives focus on three aspects. Objective 1 focuses on pragmalinguistic forms, i.e. using appropriate linguistic forms for requests and responses. Objective 2 focuses on sensitivity to sociopragmatic norms, i.e. evaluating the situations in which the forms are used to support social interactions. Objectives 3 and 4 focus on normative turn-taking and sequential organization in conversation. These objectives were presented to students at the beginning of the unit and evaluated at the end.

3.2 Teaching and learning materials

The teaching materials were developed from three sources: 1) research studies on Chinese requests and refusals; 2) role-plays conducted by TL speakers; and 3) naturally occurring conversations. The language data from the studies on requests and refusals in Chinese (Chen et al., 1995; Hong, 1998; Guo, 2012; Liao, 1994; Yang, 2008; Zhang, 1995a, 1995b) were collected through Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs). While such data provides valuable examples of how requests are formulated, they often tend to reflect short responses (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012). Thus, in order to draw the students' attention to how request sequences can unfold across multiple turns in interaction, students also need conversation examples with openings, closings, and request sequences (Bardovi-Harlig, 2015).

However, there is an unfortunate paucity of studies in Chinese that investigate request and refusal sequences using CA, with Rue and Zhang (2008)

and Li and Wen (2016) as two rare examples. Therefore, in order to provide the study abroad students a variety of request and refusal scenarios and use them as teaching materials, conversation data in China were collected through three methods: 1) recordings of naturally occurring conversations between TL speakers; 2) role-plays conducted by local Chinese speakers based on given situations; and 3) selected audio files recorded by students of their conversations with TL speakers during their study abroad sojourn. The students' recordings with TL speakers were used both to provide feedback and as examples in class.

3.3 Instruction

Step 1: Awareness-raising activities

The first step focuses on raising the students' awareness of the linguistic resources used to make indirect and polite requests and request responses. As one example, the following request prompt modified from Hong (1998) was used. Before showing the example, students were given the same scenario and asked how they would formulate their request. Then, in pairs, the students compared their request formulations with those from a TL speaker. Here is an example. The prompt is: *You want to buy a snack at a nearby store, but don't have money with you. Ask your friend to lend some money to you.*

the request produced by a native speaker:

小张，真不好意思，我忘了带钱，能不能借点钱？明天就还你。

Xiao Zhang, it's so embarrassing, but I forgot to bring money. Can I borrow a little? I will pay you back tomorrow.

the request produced by a learner:

我没有钱。你可以借我钱吗？

I do not have money. Can you lend me money?

The goal of this parallel comparison is to raise students' awareness

(Schmidt, 1993) of the differences between their requests and the TL speakers'. In particular, students should notice that the TL speaker's request is more indirect. This indirectness was achieved by using various linguistic resources and request strategies (Hong, 1998; Li, 2014; Zhang, 1995a, 1995b), including an address term, the prefacing of the request with the external modification *zhen buhaoyisi* "so embarrassing," and the grounder *wo wang le dai qian* "I forgot money," internal modification with the minimizing device *dian* "a bit", and further external modification with *jiu* "just" (indicating "as soon as possible") when promising to return the money the next day. This task shows students the common words and patterns used to accomplish requests.

Step 2: Reflect on how a request/refusal sequence in English is accomplished

Research shows that, many request and refusal strategies in Chinese are similar to those found in English (Chen et al., 1995; Hong, 1998; Guo, 2012; Yang, 2008; Zhang, 1995a, 1995b). Before working on conversations in Chinese, the students were guided to reflect on a request-refusal sequence in English to draw attention to the overall organization of a request sequence. A modified version of the oft-cited "MTE: Stalled" (Clayman & Heritage, 2014, p. 67) phone conversation was used to demonstrate the sequencing of actions such as opening, pre-announcement, describing troubles, delaying the production of a request, and the non-granting of a request without saying "no" explicitly. This activity was designed as pair work. After the pair discussion, the teacher checked their comments and conducted an explicit review of the main sequences and request/refusal actions. The worksheet given to the students in class is provided in Appendix B-1.

The worksheet and the questions were designed to orient students to the sequential organization and the actions accomplished through what the interlocutors said or did not say, focusing on three main sequences: 1) the opening sequence; 2) the request-refusal sequence; and 3) the closing sequence. This exercise helps to draw attention to the preparatory work that request speakers must often do before

producing a request, and to how non-granting responses are often not formulated with an explicit refusal, and thus highlights that the intricate interaction between speakers in request sequences in conversation is often more complex than a simple request and response adjacency pair.

Step 3: Comprehend the conversation: vocabulary and grammar

Bardovi-Harlig (2013) and Kasper & Rose (2013) argued that sufficient lexical and grammatical knowledge are critical for developing pragmatic competence. Therefore, it is beneficial for the students to have a strong grasp of the vocabulary and grammar used in the conversations they are exposed to. In this step, before analyzing the requests and refusals in Chinese, students study and practice the new words and grammatical patterns used in the conversations, and also listen to the conversations before reading the transcriptions to grasp the gist of conversation.

Step 4: Analyze request and refusal sequence in Chinese Conversation

In this step, the students were led to analyze a request sequence in a Chinese conversation between two local TL speakers, recorded during the study abroad period. The students are provided a worksheet of the transcribed talk (Figure 2), and guided to analyze the first few lines through annotations and then had them discuss the remaining lines in small groups. The conversation is between Tian and Li. Li is asking Tian to substitute for tutoring an elementary student. Note the following: a) the English translations were not included in the original handout, and b) the annotations were designed to be non-technical, and thus do not necessarily represent CA terminology.

Figure 2: Conversation Handout

1. 李： 田鑫，田鑫，我想让妳帮我个忙。 Li: Tian, Tian, I would like you to do me a favor.	Preface upcoming request; use a statement indicating they are good friends
2. 田： 怎么啦 What happened?	Sympathetic tone
3. 李： 我那个明天下午的时候，有个面试的机会， 然后那个工作特别好，是我一直想要的 Li: I have a job interview in the afternoon tomorrow. It is a position that I always want	Preface upcoming request; providing the trouble
4. 可是我明天下午还有个辅导，要去一个小学 给一个小学生辅导英文，怎么办？ But I have a tutoring job tomorrow afternoon. I have to tutor a kid English. What should I?	Preface upcoming request; providing the trouble
5. 你能不能代我去啊？ Can you substitute it for me?	Make the request
6. 田： Uh...	“uh”, Delay, dispreferred response, not explicit refusal
7. 李： 求你啦 Li: please	make the request again, desperately
8. 田： 可是辅导的话，可以随便代吗？ Tian: But, can anyone substitute for a tutoring job?	Non-acceptance, ask a question, not explicit refusal
9. 李： 没关系，辅导，那个辅导，只要，反正我觉得 你英文也挺好，完全没有关系。 Li: No problem. In any case, I think your English is very good. Absolutely fine.	Provide compliment of her good English
10. 能不能代我去？求求你啦 Can you substitute it for me? Please.	make the request again, desperately
11. 田： Uh... 因为我明天可能有个同学，他说明天 要来找我玩， Uh...because I have a classmate who may come to see me tomorrow	“uh”, Delay, dispreferred response, not explicit refusal, provide a possible reason to refuse
12. 所以... 我... 他也从很远的地方来南京，我 不确定明天下午什么时候有空。 So, I, he is from a far-away place. I am not sure if I have time tomorrow afternoon	provide a possible reason to refuse
13. 你那个时间是什么时候啊？ What time is it in the afternoon?	Non-acceptance, ask a question, not explicit refusal

By examining the details of interaction, students can see actions in request and response sequences that are more subtle and complicated than isolated responses from speakers in DCT materials. In the above example, the students' were drawn to notice the following points. First, the preface of a request in line 1, *wo xiang rang ni bang ge mang*, which is casual and informal, indicates that Li and Tian are friends, not just acquaintances. Second, in line 3-4, Li provides an account of the trouble she is facing before making the request in line 5. Tian first responds with *uh* in line 6, which delays a granting or refusal, and also projects Tian's non-granting of the request. In line 7, Li orients to the non-granting *uh* in the prior turn and issues the request again, upgrading it to a more desperate expression *qiuqiu ni* "please" (literally "I beg you."). In line 8, Tian still does not explicitly refuse, but asks a question, further delaying granting the request. In line 9, Li does not respond Tian's question about the policy of substitution directly, but compliments her by saying that her English is very good, and then continues her desperate request in line 10. Particles such as *uh*, silence, pauses, and questions are frequently used as an action to delay an explicit rejection to a request (Pomerantz, 1984). A request can further be upgraded after a non-granting response from *Can you help me?* to *I beg you* (Davidson, 1984). This exercise draws the students' attention to the sequential aspects of request sequences, including pre-request moves and how grantings can be formulated as dependent upon the interaction unfolded. Furthermore, analyzing a whole conversation brings students to notice other actions commonly accomplished in interaction, such as employing response tokens (such as *oh*, *yes*), or various ways of opening and closing interactions. (See the rest conversation in Appendix B-2.)

3.4 Practice and production tasks

The practice and production tasks designed for this curriculum rely upon the affordances of the study-abroad settings and resources to provide students with the opportunities to observe, practice and use pragmatic resources in social interactions. In this step, students started with the task of listening to and observing how

local people around them conduct requests sequences, and moved on to actively producing requests and responses in their interactions with TL speakers. Students were first asked to jot down any requests and responses that they gave, received or overheard in Chinese in the local community (Ishihara and Cohen, 2010). Then, students explained the appropriateness of each comment in consideration of the given contextual factors (e.g. age, gender, social status, distance between two speakers, topic). Students then provided this data for class discussions.

After these discussions, students were required to complete two practice tasks outside of the classroom. In the first, students were asked to make a request to their local TL-speaking language tutors. They were encouraged to think of a genuine request, a favor they hoped their tutors could help them with during the study abroad period, but that might require some time and effort on the part of the tutors, and thus orient to issues of entitlement and contingency (Curl & Drew, 2008; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014). Their tutors were not informed about the nature of this assignment beforehand (although they were informed after completion), to enhance the “real life” consequences and stakes of the request.

After the conversation, students listened to their own recordings and critiqued their performances by writing a reflection focusing on the appropriateness of the request and response strategies they and their tutors used, and the areas that they need to improve. The students’ conversations with the TL speakers were further used as learning materials in class to strengthen their understanding and provide feedback.

The second task was designed for students to practice responding to a request. The instructor asked the language tutors to make requests to the students and recorded their conversations. Just as in the previous task, the tutors asked genuine requests of the students. The tutors recorded their conversations, again without informing the students that this was an assigned task until after completion. The instructor then gave the students the recorded conversations to reflect upon and critique their performances. The practice ended with a feedback session as well.

In both tasks, the students engaged in longer, open-ended conversations

with real world stakes, taking advantage of the affordances provided by the study abroad context. They reflected upon and self-evaluated the appropriateness and effectiveness of their request sequences. These activities, in turn, prepared the students for the role-plays, the final assessment of this unit.

3.5 Assessment

In his review of the instruments used to assess pragmatic competence, Roever (2011) notes that the assessment of learners' ability to engage in extended dialogue was often missing. To elicit such extended dialogue, open-ended role-plays were employed. Open-ended role-plays afford the opportunity to evaluate the extent to which students have reached the learning objectives set out at the beginning. In these role-plays, the interlocutors do not share the prompts, so the interactional outcome is not fixed. The speakers have to cope with the uncertainties and emerging contingencies of the unfolding interaction. Thus, this method allows negotiation and elicits more meaningful and authentic interactional organization (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018). See an example of the role-play prompt in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Math Prompt

Prompt: Help to Review a Math exam

Student A:

It is the final exam week. You try to get your classmate to help you to review the content of some math classes that you missed. You know that your classmate is quite busy now, but without her help, you definitely will not do well in the test. How do you ask your classmate to help you?

Student B

It is the final exam week. Your classmate wants you to help her review some math problems. You would like to help, but are busy preparing for your own finals, and really do not have time. How do you reply to your classmate's request?

4 STUDENT ROLE-PLAY PERFORMANCE

The curricular materials presented in the previous section were incorporated into a six-week intensive study abroad program conducted in Nanjing, China. The class met for four hours daily, five days a week, with the time split evenly between

the pragmatics and literacy development. There were eight non-heritage students enrolled in this intermediate-low class, and all of whom had completed one year of Chinese language instruction at their home university. The study abroad program also included components for language practice outside of class, including daily one-hour tutoring sessions, communicative tasks with host family members, service learning opportunities, and field trips to local historical sites.

The eight students were divided in four pairs. Every student did two role-plays with his/her partner, once as requester and once as recipient, so they could demonstrate their performance for both requests and request responses. Thus, eight role-plays were produced and video recorded. Our preliminary analysis of the role-play data indicates that all of the eight students demonstrated their ability to accomplish the task, using linguistic resources and the co-constructed sequence organization involved in producing and responding to requests in the context of highly contingent nature of the open role-plays. Due to the space limitation, one role-play was selected to analyze, which was performed by two students: Jiao and Qiu (both pseudonyms). The following open role-play was transcribed using Jefferson's (2004) transcription keys (see Appendix A). The analysis first focused on the sequential organization of the request and response sequences (Schegloff, 2007), including pre-requests, requests, insertions, responses, and post-expansions. Then, the focus turned to how the learners formulated these actions, including the use of pragmalinguistic formula presented in the curriculum and other formulations that relate to entitlement and contingency (Curl & Drew, 2008; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014).

The role-play presented here is based upon the math prompt illustrated in Figure 3. Jiao is asking Qiu for help studying for his math exam, and Qiu is busy with other tests. The full exchange is divided into four sections: the opening, the pre-request, the request proper, and the post-request expansion. Extract 1 shows how the participants produce request-relevant actions prior even to pre-request moves.

Extract 1 Jiao & Qiu Math: Opening

01 J: 呃:: (.) 邱峰, 呃, 你的周末怎么样? ¹

uh:: (.) Qiu Feng, uh, How was your weekend?

02 Q: 哦, 我觉得好啊!

I think it was good!

03 J: 很好。

Great.

04 Q: 我有 (0.2) 很多作业。

I have (0.2) a lot of homework.

05 J: 哦::, 是吗? 很多作业, 我也有。

Oh::, really? Many homework. Me too

06 呃::: 可是, 上个上个星期我 (0.2) 呃, 太病了, 我没上课。

Uh:::, but, last last week, I, (0.2) uh, too sick. I did not attend classes.

07 Q: 哦::, 我知道我知道。

Oh::, I know I know.

Jiao opens the role-play by asking Qiu about his weekend, to which Qiu initially responds positively (02) then launches into a trouble telling (04) by stating that he had a lot of homework. Jiao responds to this telling with *oh* and asks *shi ma?* ‘really?’ (05), orienting to Qiu’s response as introducing a complicating factor that may block a granting of his upcoming request. Jiao states that he also had a lot of homework, and then expands upon this telling by adding further detail, explaining that he had been too sick to attend class the previous week (05-06), a move that would be categorized as a grounder in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984) framework. Through this expansion, Jiao begins the transition from the opening to the topic at hand, leading to the request. Qiu acknowledges Jiao’s turn with

¹ The students did this role play impromptu, so there were some grammatical mistakes. However, the mistakes did not cause any misunderstanding in the conversation.

wo zhidao wo zhidao ‘I know, I know’ (07), which displays recognition of Jiao’s situation, and provides warrant for Jiao to continue his course of action. In Extract 2, Jiao moves into a pre-request phase, providing accounts for the upcoming action.

Extract 2 Jiao & Qiu Math: Pre-Request

08 J: 对 (0.2) 呃 :: (.) 那这个这个星期，我有很大的考试，一个呃 数学考试。

Yeah (0.2) uh:: (.) so this week this week, I have a very big test, a, uh, math test.

09 Q: 是，是，我知道 ((nodding))

Yeah, yeah I know.

10 J: 那，我，我，我知道 :: 你 :: 知道数学，你数学很好。

So, I, I, I know::you::know math. Your math is very good.

11 Q: 呃：不，不，不 ((waving his hand))

uh: no no no

12 J: 噢，是，是，是 ((nodding))

Oh, yes it is.

13 Q: 不是 hh ((shaking his head))

No

Jiao launches his next turn with the upshot marker *na* ‘so’, and states that he has a test coming up, saying *hen da* ‘very big’ (08), which emphasizes the severity of his problem. Qiu receipts this with nods and a claim to have known this information (09). Jiao’s next action builds upon this telling, again with *na* as he compliments Qiu by saying that he knows Qiu is good at math (10). While this accounts for the upcoming request and works on minimizing the putative effort required of Qiu to grant the request, it also places Qiu in a bind, as accepting compliments is often dispreferred (Golato, 2003; Pomerantz, 1978). Qiu thus responds in a self-deprecating fashion by waving his hand, and saying on *bu*

‘not’ (11). In overlap, Jiao prefaces his response with *oh* (12), claiming his own assessment of Qiu’s skills and reinforces his compliment with *shi shi* ‘it is’ while nodding. Qiu responds with a denial (13), again shaking his head. It is important to note that the compliment and its response matter in terms of the progress of the course of action: Qiu’s skill at math is a prerequisite for his ability to assist Jiao, and by denying these skills, he can potentially block the relevance of the request.

Extract 3 details how the main request sequence between Jiao and Qiu unfolds. Qiu’s response is delayed, which Jiao treats as a sign of an upcoming refusal. When Qiu responds, not with a refusal but a reason, this becomes a resource for Jiao’s offer of reciprocation.

Extract 3 Jiao & Qiu Math: Request

- 14 J: 呃你::觉得你::呃,我麻烦你,你(.)
uh you::think you::uh, I am troubling you(.)
- 15 你:::觉得你:::有没有空 帮我,练习复习数学? ((gesture towards himself))
you::: think you::: have time to help me, to practice and review math?
- 16 Q: 呃 (0.4) 呃 (0.6) ((shaking his head))
uh (0.4) uh (0.6)
- 17 J: 你,你有别的考试吗?
Do you, you have other tests?
- 18 Q: 呃,是,呃,我::星期四有,呃,电脑考试。
Uh, yes, uh, I:: have, uh, a computer test on Thursday.
- 19 J: 电脑考试? 哦↑,可是,我的,我的专业是计算机!
A computer test? Oh↑, but my my major is computer.
- 20 我可以呃,帮你呃练习考试,如果你::呃 (0.7) 帮我考试,练习数学
I can uh help you to prepare for the test, if you:: uh (0.7) help me for the test, practicing math.

- 21 Q: 呃 ::: (1.0)
uh:::(1.0)
- 22 J: 可以, 可以吗?
Can, can you?
- 23 Q: 呃: 我不知道 ((slight head shake)).
Uh:, I do not know
- 24 因为我还有呃 (0.7) 呃 (0.5) 练习, 呃::: 准备 呃 数学的考试。
because I also have uh (0.7) other practices uh:::prepare uh the math test.
- 25 J: 哦, 对
Oh, right

Jiao produces his request with the formula *wo mafan ni* ‘I’m troubling you’ (Hong, 1998; Zhang, 1995a) in line 14. He then asks if Qiu has time, which further orients to the imposition of the request. As he produces *bang wo* ‘help me’ (15), Jiao adds extra emphasis on *bang* while gesturing towards himself, reinforcing the nature of the request. Qiu’s response is not forthcoming, but he only utters *uh* with his head shaking and lengthy pauses (16). Here Qiu delays his response, an action used for delivering dispreferred answer (Pomerantz, 1984), while searching for how to formulate the response. In line 17, Jiao asks if Qiu has other tests, providing a possible reason for Qiu’s delayed response. Qiu confirms this (18), then specifies that he has a computer test on Thursday. While he has not produced an outright rejection, his delays and the reason make a rejection inferable.

Jiao then builds upon this new information to formulate a new action. He first repeats *diannao kaoshi* ‘computer test’ with rising intonation, treating it as news (19). He then produces a high pitched *oh*, indicating this news as relevant to a new action: an offer of reciprocation. In Blum-Kulka and Olshtain’s (1984) framework, this would be classified as a sweetener. Jiao states that his major is computer, and suggests that he can help Qiu study if Qiu can help him (20), while

Qiu seems to signal a problem by preparing to speak (21). With Qiu's response again delayed, Jiao then employs the formula *keyi ma* 'can you?' (Zhang, 1995a) in line 22. Qiu states *bu zhidao* 'I don't know' and shakes his head slightly (23). Qiu then provides another reason that he has more tests he must prepare for (24), which Jiao responds with a claim of recognition (25). Again, Qiu has not yet produced an explicit refusal.

This extract underscores how learners, through learning from explicit teaching, can orient to the preference organization of request sequences by delaying non-granting responses (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018), and utilize resources from within the interaction to conduct new actions aimed at making a granting response more likely, in this case an offer of reciprocation. In Extract 4, Jiao reformulates his prior offer, further pursuing the granting.

Extract 4 Jiao & Qiu Math: Post-Request Offer

- 26 J: 我们可以一起准备, ° 对吗° ? (0.6) 什么时候你有空?
We can prepare together, °right°? (0.6) When do you have time?
- 27 Q: (0.4) 我觉得, 我觉得 (.) 因为星期四是考试吗?
(0.4) I think, I think, because the test is on Thursday, right?
- 28 J: 对, 这是, 星期四是电脑考试还是? ((nodding))
Yeah. Is it the computer test on Thursday, or?
- 29 Q: 呃, 数学考试。
Uh, The math test.
- 30 J: 数学考试, 都是星期四, 对不对?
Math test. They are all on Thursday, correct?
- 31 Q: 电脑在星期三。
The computer test is on Wednesday.
- 32 J: 星期三, 哦, 对啊, 对啊。完后, 完后你的电脑考试, 我们可以练习。
Wednesday, oh, yeah, yeah. After, after your computer test, we can practice.

- 33 Q: 我觉得, 我觉得, 我可以 (0.8) 呃 (1.0) 你 (1.0) 可是 你 (0.6)
跟我练习电脑以前 (0.4), 可以?
*I think, I think, I can (0.8) uh (1.0) you (1.0) but you (0.6) practice
with me computer before, can you?*
- 34 J: 好, 好 ((nodding)) 什么时候见面?
Good, good, when shall we meet?
- 35 Q: 呃, 因为我的考试是, 呃下午 4 点。10 点我们可以
Uh, because my test is, uh, at 4 in the afternoon. We can at 10 am.
- 36 J: 10 点, 好好。星期三我们 10 点见面。
10 am, good, good. We meet at 10 am on Wednesday.
- 37 Q: 这好
This is good.
- 38 J: 再见
Bye
- 39 Q: 再见
Bye

Having not yet received a positive response from his offer of reciprocal assistance, Jiao suggests that they can prepare together (26), which through its formulation as a statement initially appears to no longer orient to issues of entitlement or contingency. However, he immediately (though quietly) appends this with *dui ma* ‘right?’, transforming the statement into a question which may likely receive a positive response. Qiu initiates a response with *wo jue de* ‘I feel/think’ (27), but then restarts with a confirmation question regarding the timing of the test. This leads to a sequence in which Jiao and Qiu clarify the days of the math and computer tests (28-31), information that is necessary for establishing a time to review the tests together. In (32), Jiao proposes that they can review math after Qiu’s computer test, essentially making his offer of reciprocal assistance settled. Also note that Jiao’s proposal is formulated as a statement, treating Qiu’s granting

response as already on the table. Qiu responds with ‘I think I can’ and initiates a request of his own by asking if Jiao can practice computer material before the test (33). Jiao responds to Qiu’s request positively (34), establishing a mutual course of future action. They confirm the date and time to meet and close the role-play with a reciprocal *zaijian* ‘bye’ (34-39). Thus, in this extract, a granting of the request has been achieved after a great deal of interactional effort. Furthermore, this granting has been achieved through a reversal of roles, so to speak, as Qiu, the original request recipient, is the one to ultimately produce the request that settles the issue.

Throughout this role-play, the participants orient to the normative sequential aspects of conducting requests (including pre-requests and providing accounts), preference organization, and the contextually sensitive co-construction of actions based upon each prior turn as they unfold over the course of the interaction. Furthermore, they negotiate and manage issues relating to entitlement and contingency (Curl & Drew, 2008; Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014), both through the use of pragmalinguistic formulae such as *wo mafan ni* ‘I’m troubling you’ and *keyi ma* ‘can you’, and by dealing with other matters such as checking Qiu’s availability and willingness to help. The role-play provided Jiao and Qiu the opportunity to display their competence in these areas, as well as the chance to practice what had been covered in the curriculum, the pragmatic resources based on the findings from the Speech Act-based approach and the CA-based Discursive Pragmatics approach.

5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Returning to the objectives presented earlier, the analysis of the role-play produced by the students shows that, at least for these learners, the stated objectives had been met in the following ways:

Objective 1: Able to use linguistic resources and formulaic expressions appropriately to express pragmatic meanings

Jiao and Qiu both used the various pragmalinguistic formulas that had been covered in the curriculum in order to accomplish requests. In Qiu’s responses, on

the other hand, he did not use such formulas (i.e. *kongpa* “I’m afraid,” or *buhaoyisi* “embarrassing”, cf. Zhang, 1995a), although this requires a caveat. As Qiu never produced an explicit refusal, such formulas may not be relevant for the actions he carried out; furthermore, refusals are dispreferred responses, and Qiu produced relevant alternatives such as reasons that allowed him to respond in an appropriate fashion (Pomerantz, 1984). Many of other students in role-plays did produce such forms when relevant.

Objective 2: Able to formulate requests and request responses, showing sensitivity to issues such as the imposition a request places on the recipient, and Chinese cultural norms such as indirectness and deference.

Jiao’s formulation of his request displayed a sensitivity to the imposition it placed upon Qiu in terms of time and effort. Throughout, Jiao made reference to Qiu’s availability and his rights to determine the time he could meet (display an orientation to the notion of contingency, Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014), as well as his low entitlement to have the request granted, negotiated the possibilities to have his request granted. This was particularly evident in Jiao’s offer of reciprocal help in Extract 4, which “sweetened” (cf. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) the request. Qiu’s not producing an explicit refusal is relevant here as well. Again, by not producing the dispreferred response, but instead hedging and delaying (Extract 3), he displays an action what can be characterized as indirectness.

Objective 3: Able to accomplish various actions to deliver turns without undue pauses or delays, to initiate and switch topics smoothly, and to open and close conversations appropriately.

The key term here in regards to pauses or delays is *undue*. Dispreferred responses are regularly delayed, often through pauses or other resources (Davidson, 1984; Golato, 2003; Pomerantz, 1984) such as we see produced by Qiu in his responses. This poses a challenge: how to distinguish, as a teacher or researcher, between a pragmatically functional pause and one that is fluency or word search related. The answer to this is beyond the scope of this paper, and requires further

study, although Al-Gahtani and Roever (2018) have begun to deal with this very issue. The challenge, does however, suggest the need for revising the learning objective for greater specification in future curriculum. This caveat aside, Jiao and Qiu were able to open and close the role-play appropriately, and Jiao in particular initiated each phase of the request sequence (pre-request, request, and post-expansion) relatively smoothly. Qiu also appropriately initiated a counter request regarding when they would meet.

Objective 4: Able to use response tokens and expressions to show active participation in the conversation and maintain a shared understanding.

This objective essentially gets at the participants' ability to co-construct their interaction in a way that is sensitive to prior turns, and to deal with complications that arise. Both participants displayed sensitivity to each other's contributions throughout, and built their subsequent turns upon the understandings they had achieved. In particular, Jiao's treatment of Qiu's delayed response as indicative of a problem with availability, and his offer of reciprocal help displays a sophisticated turn-by-turn sensitivity. The participants' ability to maintain a shared understanding was further displayed by how they accomplished the task, transforming it from a simple request-response adjacency pair to a sequence where each took into account the other's availability, and created an opportunity to further negotiate the details of timing required for the request to be actionable.

The student role-play performance suggests that explicit instruction, based on the research findings from Speech Acts, Discursive Pragmatics, and Conversation Analysis, was effective in guiding students to meet the objectives of the curriculum. Through the analyses of whole, naturally occurring conversations (in both English and Chinese), the explicit instruction draws students attention not only to pragmalinguistic formulas and sociopragmatic norms, but also how request sequences play out across turns beyond the scope of the adjacency pair, including pre-request and post-expansion moves that ascertain the availability of the recipient to grant a request and hammer out the details of the granting.

Their performance also suggests that with explicit instruction, learners at the intermediate-low level are capable of producing complex sequences that include pre-requests, orientations to how requests impose upon the recipient, and post-expansions. This contrasts with findings in Al-Gahtani and Roevers (2012, 2018) and Youn (2015) which suggested that lower proficiency learners were often quite abrupt in how they produced requests, and often did not provide pre- or post-expansions, or work out the details of how a request is to be granted.

The curriculum was designed to take advantage of the affordances provided by the study abroad context, particularly through learner observations of how TL speakers conducted request sequences (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), interactive tasks with TL speaking tutors that incorporated aspects of living life in the target culture, and interactions with host family members. Through each of these steps, students reflected on their observations and production, and were provided feedback. The student role-play performance suggests that the situating of the curriculum in the study abroad context helped to provide the opportunities for the learners to develop their pragmatic competencies.

As the curriculum presented was not designed for the sake of research, it lacks pre- and post-comparative measures to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum. Thus, this study is purely exploratory and suggestive. Beyond pre- and post-measurement, this study paves the way for future curricular design research that can address other speech acts such as agreements and disagreements, compliments, and invitations by drawing attention to how these unfold sequentially. Such future research can also further explore methods for explicit instruction, including the development of tasks that take students into the TL speaking community, thus more fully taking advantage of the affordances of the study abroad context.

I hope that the current curriculum on teaching request and request responses provides a step towards greater integration of pedagogical practice and research that can prove beneficial for learners, teachers, and researchers alike.

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Appendix A: Transcription Keys

hh (series of h's) laughter

(.) (period in parentheses) micro-pause: 0.2 seconds or less

(0.4) (number in parentheses) length of a silence in tenths of a second

:: (colon(s)) prolonging of sound

(()) nonverbal action

word (underlining) stress

°word° (degree symbols) quiet speech

↑word (upward arrow) raised pitch

Appendix B-1: Step 2 Handout – Donny and Marcia English Example

Note: English translations provided for example, and were not included in the original handout.

(Donny is calling Marcia.)

说什么 ? What did they say?	什么行动? What actions
1. Marcia: Hello?	(a) 他们怎么开始这个会话? <i>How did they start the conversation?</i>
2. Donny: Hello Marcia. It's Donny.	
3. Marcia: Hi Donny	
4. Donny: Guess what	(b) 为什么 Donny 说 “guess what?” <i>Why did Donny say “guess what?”</i>
5. Marcia: What	
6. Donny: My car is stalled	(c) Donny 在请求帮忙吗? <i>Is Donny making a request for help?</i>
7. (silence)	(d) 为什么两个人都没说话? <i>Why did they both keep silent?</i>
8. Donny: And I'm up here in the Glen	(e) Donny 请 Marcia 帮忙了吗? <i>Did Donny ask Marcia to help yet?</i>
9. Marcia: Oh	(f) 为什么 Marcia 只说 “oh” ? <i>Why did Marcia only respond “oh”?</i>
10. Donny: And (breathes in)	
11. Donny: I don't know if it's possible, but (breathes) see I have to open up the bank	(g) Donny 想要 Marcia 请帮什么忙? 他说了吗? <i>What kind of help did Donny need from Marcia? Did he say it explicitly?</i>
12. (silence)	(h) 为什么两个人都没说话? <i>Why did they both keep silent?</i>
13. Donny: At uhin Brentwood	
14. Marcia: Yeahand I know you wantand I w- en I would, but except I've gotta leave in about five minutes	(i) Marcia 直接说了她不能帮 Donny 吗? <i>Did Marcia refuse to help Donny directly?</i> (j) Marcia 怎么拒绝 Donny 的请求? <i>How did Marcia refuse Donny's request?</i>
15. Donny: Okay then I gotta call somebody else right away	(k) 说 “再见” 以前, 他们还说了什么? <i>What did they say before saying “bye”?</i>
16. Donny: Okay Don	
17. Donny: Thanks a lot. Bye	
18. Marcia: Bye	

Appendix B-2: Step 4

Chinese TL Speaker Request Sequence Handout

Note: English translations provided for example, and were not included in the original handout.

1. 李： 田鑫，田鑫，我想让你帮我个忙。 Li: Tian, Tian, I would like you to do me a favor.	Preface upcoming request; use a statement indicating they are good friends
2. 田： 怎么啦 What happened?	Sympathetic tone
3. 李： 我那个明天下午的时候，有个面试的机会， 然后那个工作特别好，是我一直想要的 Li: I have a job interview in the afternoon tomorrow. It is a position that I always want	Preface upcoming request; providing the trouble
4. 可是我明天下午还有个辅导，要去一个小学 给一个小学生辅导英文，怎么办？ But I have a tutoring job tomorrow afternoon. I have to tutor a kid English. What should I?	Preface upcoming request; providing the trouble
5. 你能不能代我去啊？ Can you substitute it for me?	Make the request
6. 田： Uh...	“uh”, Delay, dispreferred response, not explicit refusal
7. 李： 求你啦 Li: please	make the request again, desperately
8. 田： 可是辅导的话，可以随便代吗？ Tian: But, can anyone substitute for a tutoring job?	Non-acceptance, ask a question, not explicit refusal
9. 李： 没关系，辅导，那个辅导，只要，反正我觉得你英文也挺好，完全没有关系。 Li: No problem. In any case, I think your English is very good. Absolutely fine.	Provide compliment of her good English
10. 能不能代我去？求求你啦 Can you substitute it for me? Please.	make the request again, desperately
11. 田： Uh... 因为我明天可能有个同学，他说明天要来找我玩， Uh...because I have a classmate who may come to see me tomorrow	“uh”, Delay, dispreferred response, not explicit refusal, provide a possible reason to refuse
12. 所以...我...他也从很远的地方来南京，我不确定明天下午什么时候有空。 So, I, he is from a far-away place. I am not sure if I have time tomorrow afternoon	provide a possible reason to refuse

[接上表]

13.	你那个时间是什么时候啊? What time is it in the afternoon?	Non-acceptance, ask a question, not explicit refusal
14. 李 :	我是明天下午四点有个面试的机会, 辅导的话, 只要一个小时就可以了。 Li: I have the interview at 4 pm tomorrow, and as for the tutoring, it'll only take one hour	
15.	你能不能让你同学稍微等你一个小时, 然后你再跟他见面, 你先帮我辅导完, Would it be possible to have your classmate wait for you for an hour? Then, you can meet him afterward, and you can first finish helping me with the tutoring first.	
16.	求你啦, 求你啦 please, please.	
17. 田 :	我问一问他什么来, 然后看一下我有没有空, 如果可以, 我再帮你。 Tian: I'll ask him when he'll come and see if I have time. If so, I will help you.	
18.	但是你先找找别人, 因为我不确定我的时间耶。 But, you should try to find someone else first, because I'm not sure if I'll have time, you know?	
19. 李 :	Uh... 我现在把希望就寄托在你身上了, 求你啦 Li: Uh, I'm really counting on <i>you</i> . Please.	
20.	你先问问你的同学, 然后再跟我说, 好不好? Ask your classmate first, then let me know. Is that ok?	
21. 田 :	好, 行, 我问问再告诉你 Tian: Ok, sure. I'll check and let you know.	
22. 李 :	好好好, 谢谢你。 Li: Great. Thank you.	
23. 田 :	好, 不用谢。 Tian: Ok, no problem.	

留学项目中的“请求、回应请求”语用教学： 运用言语行为及话语分析研究成果

叶萌

摘要

研究显示留学课程中的语用教学对学生有明显的帮助 (Taguchi, 2015b)。目前, 中文语用教学课程仍是非常缺乏。针对这方面的不足, 此篇论文探讨中文“请求、回应请求”语用课程的设计以及在中国留学课程中的实践。课程的设计是根据两大语用学理论及研究成果。第一为言语行为理论 (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010), 运用其研究成果教授词汇、语法在社会言谈中的使用。第二为话语分析 (Kasper, 2006), 其研究成果利于引导学生学习“请求、拒绝”会话交谈的结构及谈话者之间的互动。除教学方法之外, 此篇论文也谈论真实会话语料的收集与使用, 以及利用留学环境设计生活化的语用练习活动。此一教学课程以角色扮演的方式评估学生的学习成效。论文最后分析学生角色扮演的对话内容, 分析的结果更进一步说明课堂的教学及留学中的互动机会是有助于学生达到学习目标及语用能力的培养。

关键词: 中文语用教学 请求与请求回应 留学课程 话语分析
言语行为理论 言谈语用分析