## Review

*Request Strategies: A Comparative Study in Mandarin Chinese and Korean*. By Yong-Ju Rue and Grace Qiao Zhang. (Pragmatics & Beyond 177.) Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2008. Pp. xv, 320. ISBN 9789027254214.*

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*Request Strategies: A Comparative Study in Mandarin Chinese and Korean* (2008) represents one of the first attempts to systematically compare request strategies between two East Asian languages. The study is also methodologically significant, using naturally occurring conversational data rather than relying on written questionnaires, and taking multiple-turn sequences rather than isolated individual sentences, as the scope of analysis. However, while the goal of the study is to reveal real patterns and strategies in natural talk-in-interaction, some parts of the analysis are based solely on role-playing data. Given that communicational motivations in artificial role-playing can hardly be considered to be 'real,' this review concludes that more analysis should be based on natural conversation to ensure authenticity in the discussion of request strategies.

Key words: cross-cultural comparative pragmatics, naturally occurring conversation, request speech acts

In contrast to the considerable amount of cross-cultural comparative studies on request speech acts among Western languages or between Western and Asian languages, little work has been conducted for Asian languages. Yong-Ju Rue and Grace Qiao Zhang's *Request Strategies: A Comparative Study in Mandarin Chinese and Korean* is one of the first attempts to systematically compare request strategies between two East Asian languages.

Adopting the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), a widely used framework on identifying universal strategies in the realization of request speech acts in cross-cultural pragmatics, *Request Strategies* contributes to the development of CCSARP by expanding the scope of language data. It investigates the similarities and differences in request patterns present in certain types of Chinese and Korean spontaneous data, as well as the relation between request strategies and social factors.

Drawing data from audio-taped natural conversations (approximately 24 hours) and videotaped role-plays (36 under-5-minute clips) in the workplace, the study finds that Chinese native speakers are more indirect than Korean native speakers in making requests. It also finds that both Chinese and Koreans use more direct request strategies in natural conversations than in role-playing. This indicates that the genres that researchers use directly influence the results, a conclusion that supports the discourse-based functional approach.

The book is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the terms, research purpose and questions, and methodology. Request speech acts are basically examined from the perspective of 'Face-Threatening' (Brown & Levinson 1987), in which investigators focus on how speakers employ strategies and modifications to minimize the addressee's potential negative reaction in response to a request. Chapter 2 reviews previous studies on speech acts, conversation analysis, politeness, and CCSARP.

The data analysis of this study is covered in Chapters 3 through 7. Chapter 3 describes the methodologies of data collection and analysis. Adopting the CCSARP framework, request sequences are coded for four dimensions: openers (e.g. addressing the requestee), head acts (e.g. obligation statement), internal modifications (e.g. politeness marker), and external modifications (e.g. gratitude). Each dimension includes a range of linguistic devices marking the degree of directness or indirectness. Chapter 4 quantifies and compares the index of directness between the request speech acts in Chinese and Korean. Chapter 5 analyzes the relation between request strategies and social factors such as power and distance. Chapter 6 discusses the overall differences of request patterns between the two languages; for instance, Chinese is found to use more indirect head acts (i.e. more interrogatives than imperatives) than Korean. Chapter 7 explores how role-play participants took turns in making requests in the two languages. It finds that requests in Chinese are longer, using more turns as well as more reasons and justifications. This is taken to imply that Chinese native speakers expect reasons when requested to do something.

Finally, Chapter 8 presents the general conclusions and implications. The authors also provide an appendix of role-playing request scenarios in Chinese, Korean, and English.

The major contribution of this study is its methodological innovation. This is manifested in two aspects. First, that of using naturally occurring conversational data. Previous studies of inter-language pragmatics collected data mainly from written questionnaires, in which subjects were asked to respond to particular situations in writing. Aware of the limitations involved in previous written bias, this study, on the other hand, turns to naturally occurring conversation, with an aim to reveal the variations of request strategies that speakers actually use in real life. The study is in line with the increasing trend of using authentic interactive spoken data in the discourse functional tradition (for such studies in Chinese linguistics, cf. Biq 1990; Tao 1996; Tao & Thompson 1994; Thompson & Tao 2010, and others). Results obtained from different data collections once again demonstrate the importance of paying attention to discourse genres. The second aspect of methodological significance utilized in this study is that of taking sequences rather than isolated sentences as the scope of analysis. While many linguistic studies still restrict their scope of analysis to individual sentences, this study, inspired by the method of 'Conversation Analysis,' expands the scope of analysis to multiple-turn sequences. The sequential analysis adopted in this study turns out to be fruitful in revealing how participants take turns in making requests, and how they negotiate their way toward a conclusion.

While Rue and Zhang's study should be applauded for its systematic use of authentic interactive data as well as for its scope of analysis, it is not, however, without weakness. One such weakness is inconsistency in a number of places. The study claims to have collected data 'from real situations,' but some parts of the analysis are solely based on data collected in role-playing, which is, at best, an 'artificial' practice. For instance, the authors chose role-playing data instead of naturally occurring data to study turn-takings in request, simply because 'natural conversation data have much shorter request sequences' (Rue & Zhang 2008:209). One of the authors' primary goals is to 'examine request speech acts in naturally occurring talk-in-interactions to ensure authenticity in the discussion of request strategies' (Rue & Zhang 2008:10). Since communicational motivations in role-playing can hardly be considered 'real,' the authors' aim of revealing 'real' patterns and strategies would be better served if more analysis were based on naturally occurring data.

In spite of these shortcomings, though, there can be no doubt that the appearance of this monograph marks a new development in the study of cross-cultural pragmatics, especially with its contribution towards revealing inter-language universals and variations of speech acts, as well as seeking explanations for linguistic patterns in spontaneous interactive speech.

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# 書評

*Request Strategies: A Comparative Study in Mandarin Chinese and Korean.*
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蘇丹潔

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Rue & Zhang (2008) 考察漢語和韓語中請求言語行為的策略。該書是最早系統對比兩個東亞語言請求策略的著述之一。該研究在方法論上的貢獻有二：一是不依賴於書面問卷而是採用自然發生的錄音會話語料；二是對語料的分析不限於孤立的單句，而是著眼於多語輪的話語序列。然而，該研究的目的在於揭示自然語言交際中請求言語行為的真實策略，但其有些結論卻完全來自於對虛擬角色扮演的分析。考慮到虛擬角色扮演中的人物並不具備真實的交際動機，本評論認為其分析應該更多地建立在自然會話語料的基礎上，以確保實現其力求揭示真實會話中的請求規律這一目標。

關鍵詞：跨文化對比語用學，自然會話，請求言語行為