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Abstract: This study analyses the language of successful spoken requests used by Chinese intermediate level English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students in Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) at a UK higher education institution. Using corpus tools, the authors examined the frequent words, chunks and moves in request data and compared this to general reference corpora. Findings suggest that successful spoken requests often made use of high frequency modals and chunks. The data also demonstrated that the use of appropriate request moves were often associated with success, even if the language used contained linguistic errors. The findings have important implications for how spoken requests are taught in an academic context. The study also shows how learner data can be analysed with open-access corpus analysis tools used to provide a model of successful learner language; something which may be a more achievable model to aspire to than native speaker language.

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