First order and second order indirectness in Korean and Chinese

Xi Chen, Jiayi Wang

Abstract

In this study, we investigate two types of indirectness in East Asian context, namely, native Korean and Chinese speakers' understanding of indirectness (i.e. first order indirectness) and their linguistic performance of indirectness (i.e. second order indirectness). In comparison to their western counterparts, East Asian communities have often been labeled as being indirect, while little attention has been paid to the variations in their indirectness. Our study explores this topic by analyzing three different sets of data, including Korean and Chinese speakers' contextual awareness, linguistic performance, and metapragmatic comments. The findings reveal a great deal of within-group variability in both the Korean and Chinese speakers' choice of directness and indirectness, as well as a considerable number of cross-cultural differences. Korean and Chinese participants demonstrate different assessments of first order indirectness and reversed patterns in their use of second order indirectness. The variation in their communication styles and cross-cultural differences can only be explained by taking into consideration both the visible role relationships in an immediate context and the invisible interpersonal interests defined by each culture. The two aspects mesh together to form an intricate relational web, to which both native Korean and Chinese speakers are highly sensitive.

Keywords: directness; evaluation; perception; relational web; East Asia

1. Introduction

One widespread argument about communication style is that East Asian language communities tend to be more indirect in comparison to their western counterparts (Fong 1998; Gudykunst et al., 1988; Neuliep, 2012). They are often labeled as 'not outspoken' of their personal opinions for the purpose of maintaining group harmony (Spencer-Oatey,2000; Tang 2016). While a number of case studies have disputed whether East Asian groups speak more indirectly than non-Asian groups, little attention has been paid to variations in indirectness within East Asian languages.

In this study, then, we explore first order and second order indirectness in East Asia by comparing Korean and Chinese, a language pair that has received little attention in pragmatics. Specifically, we examine the indirectness of Korean and Chinese evaluations, namely, the 'thorny' behavior of expressing one's opinions, attitudes and feelings (Thompson and Hunston,

2000). Being analogous to the distinction between first order and second order politeness (Eelen, 2001), Mills and Grainger (2016:46) separate first order (in)directness, which is the common-sense interpretation of (in)directness by ordinary language users (i.e. indirectness 1), from second order (in)directness – the technical notion as analyzed by researchers (i.e. indirectness 2). Both orders of indirectness are culturally specific and contextually defined.

The study employs perceptual and performance data of native Korean and Chinese speakers to assess their indirectness 1 and indirectness 2 in context. We also incorporate their metapragmatic comments into our analysis to explain the dynamics underpinning their choice of being direct and indirect. Our findings suggest that East Asian indirectness needs to be understood in an intricately meshed relational web, which includes dyadic interpersonal relationships that are visible in immediate contexts and invisible interpersonal interests that are specific to each culture.

In the next section, we begin by reviewing evaluation studies and their dilemma in defining indirectness. We then review previous studies on indirectness 1 and 2 as well as factors which influence them. In Section 4, we introduce three different types of data we used to analyze contextual information, indirectness 1 and indirectness 2 respectively. Findings are presented in Section 5 and discussed in Section 6 by considering Korean and Chinese speakers' concepts of a relational web. Finally, we briefly remark on the findings and highlight their potential contribution to cross-cultural communication and second language acquisition as well as suggesting future directions to address our study's limitations.

2. Evaluation

Evaluation has been defined by Thompson and Hunston (2000:5) as "the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feeling about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about". Fourteen years later, Alba-Juez and Thompson further developed this definition by placing evaluative language in context. They did not consider evaluation as just an 'expression', but rather "a dynamical subsystem of language" which is interpersonal, socially constructed and value-laden (2014:13).

The value-saturated act of evaluation has shown its cultural specificity in cross-cultural comparisons. Tantucci and Wang (2018), who analyzed 120 phone calls in both English and Chinese, identified Chinese evaluations as more complex in terms of illocutional construction than English evaluations. They were also influenced by a greater number of variables, of which rapport seeking was the most important. Another study, Liu and You (2019), analyzed evaluative strategies used by native English speakers and Chinese learners of English in their

peer review of homework. They found that native English speakers were more inclined to sugar-coat their criticism whereas Chinese learners preferred to depreciate themselves. These two studies are, however, the few that have examined evaluations in an East Asian language or its speech community.

The increasing number of evaluation studies have focused primarily on Western languages and contexts, such as Danish news reports (Holmgreen and Vestergaard, 2009), Spanish medical discussions (Gallardo and Ferrari, 2010), English workplace communications (Ho, 2014), English online social networks (Santamariá-Garcia, 2014), and English academic feedback (Starfield et al., 2015). These studies focused on different types of evaluations (e.g. affect, judgment and appreciation as defined by Martin and White, 2005) and the roles they played in a particular genre. The indirectness of evaluations was, however, either understood as a self-explanatory concept or left as a "practical problem" (Santamariá-Garcia, 2014:391).

Indeed, Thompson (2014) described indirectness as a 'Russian Doll' problem in evaluations. By examining Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal system which categorized attitude, a semantic domain of evaluations, into affect, judgment and appreciation, Thompson (2014) pointed out that a direct expression of one category can be read as an indirect token of another. For example, a doctor's direct appreciation of insufficient pay may serve indirectly as an affect of dissatisfaction about economic rewards (Gallardo and Ferrari, 2010). A direct affect can also be read as an indirect judgment, such as the phrase "I don't like" used between friends on online social platforms (Santamaria-Garcia, 2014). To disentangle the different layers of an evaluation, Thompson (2014) suggested analyzing an evaluation from what is inscribed in its linguistic manifestations and then extending the analysis, if necessary, to individual intuitions of that evaluation in its broader context.

In evaluation studies, 'inscribedness' refers to the presence of attitudinal lexis (Martin and White, 2005:61). The researchers distinguished inscribed evaluations, which are marked by denotative expressions such as 'exciting', 'interesting', 'happy', from invoked evaluations, which rely more on decoding conventional or context-specific forms. Such distinction between direct and indirect evaluations shares a high level of similarity with the pragmatic analysis of (in)directness 2, while Thompson's (2014) concept of individual intuitions about indirect evaluations corresponds to indirectness 1. We provide further specifics of both in the next section.

3. First order and second order indirectness

There is no unanimous definition of indirectness. Some widely accepted definitions treat it as an additional layer of the propositional meaning of a sentence (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1975), as a deviation from literal meanings (Brown and Levinson, 1987), or as an inferential process for understanding the illocutionary point of an utterance (Blum-Kulka, 1987). Despite their different viewpoints, these definitions share one underlying assumption, namely, being indirect is to depart from an "explicit primary" meaning (i.e. propositional meaning, literal meaning) and move to an "implicit and functional" one (Silverstein 2010:343; Terkourafi, 2014). This assumption has guided analytical frameworks of indirectness 2, as we will demonstrate below. We also revisit previous studies of indirectness 1 in the same section, and move on to discuss the factors which have been found to influence indirectness in Section 3.2.

3.1 Previous examinations of indirectness 1 and indirectness 2

In previous analytical works, the distinction between directness and indirectness has often been made upon the presence or absence of a "denotational code", namely, the shortest linguistic way linking a form to its function (Silverstein 2010). Denotational codes include syntactically marked forms (e.g. 'Do X' in a request), performative verbs, illocutionary force indicating devices (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Blum-Kulka et al. 1985), semantic carriers such as 'good' in compliments (Ren et al., 2013) and 'bad' in complaints (House and Kasper 1980). In evaluation studies, they are regionalized as 'attitudinal lexis' or 'inscribed expressions', as mentioned in the previous section.

Indirect speech is often identified by the absence of a denotational code. It can take on a variety of conventional or context-dependent forms which link to an illocutionary point without overtly marking it. Examples include 'could you…' in English requests (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984:201), or a syntactic combination of '*com*' and '*cu-ta*' (lit: give me a little bit of a favor by doing X) in Korean (Yu, 2004). Indirectness, which is decoded into such linguistic formulations by their form-function correlations, pertains to what Mills and Grainger (2016) define as indirectness 2. Thus, second order indirectness has also been regarded as linguistic indirectness (Byon, 2006; Decock and Depraetere, 2018).

Indirectness 1, on the other hand, is assessed through the interlocutor's interpretations. It represents the language user's emic judgment of different utterances on the scale between directness and indirectness. Previous studies of indirectness 1 tested participants' perceptions of indirectness in English, Hebrew, Luganda and Korean (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Lwanga-Lumu, 1999; Yu 2011). In these studies, native speakers ranked nine request strategies on a nine-point scale of indirectness. The strategies involved in the ranking activity were, however, stripped of their modifications. Intriguingly, indirectness 1 as ranked on the plain requests did

not match indirectness 2 as analyzed by the researchers. For example, performatives, which involve the "overt marking of request force" (Blum-Kulka, 1984:138), were analyzed as one of the most direct request strategies. This strategy was, however, judged by native Hebrew and Korean speakers to be more indirect than obligation and want statements (e.g. "you have to..."). In Luganda, performatives were even perceived to be the least direct, in other words, more indirect than any other request strategy including hints (Lwanga-Lumu, 1999:88).

These studies attributed the mismatches between indirectness 1 and 2 to the conventional linguistic means that each language adopts to formulate indirect requests. Blum-Kulka (1987) argued that conventional expressions which illuminate one's obligation or wish in English or Hebrew might be equally powerful as denotational codes in shaping one's understanding of directness (i.e. directness 1). Conventionalization thus seems to have "a direct consequence" for people's judgment of indirectness, as "the more strongly an expression is conventionalized as a marker of indirectness, the less indirectly communicated the message will be" (Bond et al., 2000:68).

In fact, Blum-Kulka's (1987) and Yu's (2010) explanations also pointed to the different natures of indirectness 1 and indirectness 2. That is, a person's understanding of indirectness, i.e. indirectness 1, is often constructed on their intuitive assessment of multiple linguistic sources rather than the calculation of denotational codes or certain semantic strategies. In particular, modifications and speech styles, which have been removed from or aligned in the request strategies investigated by Blum-Kulka (1984), Lwanga-Lumu (1999) and Yu (2011), may play an important role in the variation of indirectness 1. In Chinese, Zhang (1995) and Skewis (2003) argued through discourse analysis that the indirectness of a request is influenced by supportive moves. In Korean, the deferential speech style, albeit aligned by Yu (2011) in her data, seems to have led Korean participants to rate request strategies as more indirect than English or Hebrew participants. In other words, the honorific system in Korean has led to cross-cultural differences in indirectness 1.

In this study, we investigate both indirectness 1 and 2 using unedited production of evaluation acts. In other words, all linguistic sources are preserved in the exact way that they were deployed by the participants to realize an evaluation. Furthermore, we also provide participants with the same contexts in which linguistic sources for evaluations were deployed, as Blum-Kulka (1987) and Yu (2011) did. In the next sub-section, we will review constituents of a context and the social rules of politeness, both of which have been argued to influence indirectness.

3.2 Factors influencing indirectness

Indirectness was believed to be motivated by social rules of politeness (Lakoff, 1973), particularly the rules of “do not impose” and “give options” (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Blum-Kulka et al 1985; House and Kasper 1980). That is, compared to direct speech, which shares a speaker’s non-negotiable intention, indirect speech allows the hearer more flexibility in interpreting the speaker’s message, thereby imposing less on the hearer’s freedom and being polite.

However, two statistical tests conducted by Yu (2011) have clearly demonstrated that Korean speakers’ perceptions of indirectness and politeness, namely, their indirectness 1 and politeness 1, were not significantly correlated in requests. In other languages such as English, Hebrew, and Polish, no linear relationship was found between indirectness and politeness either (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1985). Possible reasons for the divorce of indirectness from politeness include the following: first, other linguistic means may carry the social meaning of politeness independently from semantic strategies, for example, the complex system of Korean honorifics (Byon, 2006); second, indirectness is not necessarily adopted for the purpose of being polite. Politeness and indirectness may be accessed with distinct mechanisms and assessed on different scales (Lee and Pinker, 2010). This argument is supported by findings that directness creates a variety of social meanings other than impoliteness. It can index sincerity and solidarity in Chinese (Lee-Wong, 1994), closeness and honesty in Hebrew (Blum-Kulka et al., 1985; Katriel, 1986), positive politeness and cultural cohesiveness in Arabic (Kerkam, 2015), in-group membership in Igbo (Nwoye, 1992), and warmth and affection in Polish (van Dijk, 1997). In our study, therefore, indirectness is not treated as adhering to politeness, but rather as an independent pragmatic phenomenon which may evoke politeness as one of its interpersonal effects (Haugh, 2005:15).

Following the traditional belief that indirectness and politeness are connected, however, contextual variables proposed by politeness theory have been widely examined and found to influence indirectness. Given both indirectness and politeness are contextually defined, it is not surprising that the findings of empirical studies, which refute a correlation between politeness and indirectness “may be read as an affirmation of the importance of contextual factors to the use of indirectness” (Skewis, 2003:165). Factors that have received most attention are social power, distance, and rank of imposition (P, D, R) from Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework of politeness. Other factors examined include request goals (Blum-Kulka et al., 1985), refusal stimuli (Beebe et al. 1990), interlocutors’ rights and obligations (Blum-Kulka and House 1989) and the formality of a situation (Félix-Brasdefer, 2006). Some of these factors can in fact be subsumed under P, D, R (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010). For example, interlocutors’ rights and obligations can be reflected in the ranking of imposition (Lee-Wong, 1994:505). In evaluation studies, Blackwell’s (2010) findings confirmed

that the variables P and D affect the extent to which Spanish speakers elaborate their evaluations.

The values of P, D, R are culturally characterized. Although many researchers pre-designed their values to investigate speech acts across cultures, those who based their experiments on the participants' own assessments have clearly recorded the cultural specificity of these variables (Bergman and Kasper, 1993; Economidou-Kogetsdis, 2010; H. Kim, 2008). For example, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) found Greek English learners perceived P, D, R differently from native English speakers in eight out of ten tested situations. The perceptual differences of P, D, R demonstrated "the individual's cognitive processes as inextricably interwoven with their experiences in the physical and social world" (Leather and van Dam, 2003:13). It reminds us that, for cross-cultural comparisons, one of the first steps is to understand how participants from different language communities assess a context.

In the current study, we use P, D, R to collect basic contextual information from the participants. These variables are certainly not the only prominent constituents of a context, and not all of them influence indirectness. Each of them might merely be "one dimension in the multidimensional framework that speakers seem to rely on in choosing a specific strategy to fit a social situation" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1985:134). We intend to explore other dimensions, which may not be as measurable as these variables, through the lens of contextual influences on indirectness.

4. Data

We employed three different types of data to analyze (i) the participants' contextual awareness; (ii) indirectness 2; and (iii) indirectness 1, respectively. Different data collection tools were utilized according to the data type. Likert scales were adopted to collect the participants' awareness of P, D, R. A Discourse Completion Task (DCT, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) was used to collect the participants' performance of evaluation, which was then analyzed in terms of indirectness 2. Metapragmatic focus group interviews allowed the participants to assess indirectness 1 while providing emic explanations for their assessment.

4.1 Participants

To avoid cross-influence between different data collections, we recruited three separate groups of participants for the collection of each type of data. The different groups of

participants were of a similar range of age and had similar educational backgrounds. Table 1 below presents participant information in each data type.

Table 1. Participant information

Data type	Number of participants	Participant age range	Participant gender	Participant education background
Rating P, D, R	15 KNSs, 15 CNSs*	21 ~ 31	KNS: 9F, 6M** CNS: 11F, 4M	Undergraduates in local universities
DCT	45 KNSs, 44 CNSs	19 ~ 27	KNS: 22F, 23M CNS:22F, 22M	Undergraduates in local universities
Metapragmatic focus group interview	5 KNSs, 7 CNSs	20 ~ 28	KNS: 5F CNS: 5F, 2M	Undergraduate exchange students at a British university from China and South Korea

*KNSs stand for native speakers of the Korean language and CNSs for native speakers of the Chinese language.

**F stands for female, M for male.

The influence of unbalanced gender distribution between the different participant groups was examined first using the Pearson correlation tests. The statistical analysis indicated that gender and the participants' production of evaluations were only weakly correlated (KNS: $r(43)=.14$, $p>0.05$; CNS: $r(42)=.09$, $p>0.05$)[1]. The correlation was particularly weak for the participants' choice of direct (KNS: $r(43)=.21$, $p>0.05$; CNS: $r(42)=.01$, $p>0.05$) and indirect strategies (KNS: $r(43)=-.01$, $p>0.05$; CNS: $r(42)=.02$, $p>0.05$). However, we are aware that gender may exert a moderate or strong influence in specific situations, such as in Situation 5 (evaluating a date's appearance, see Table 2). Meanwhile, a similar choice of strategy does not warrant homogeneous contextual perceptions across the different genders. Thus, we further tested via a Free Kappa test whether the participants' ratings of P, D, R were sufficiently convergent that they could be considered as pertaining to their own language community. After validating within-group homogeneity, we carried out the cross-cultural study, with the expectation that situation-specific gender influence would be addressed in the future.

In addition, none of the KNSs had ever learned Chinese or visited China, and vice versa. In fact, none of them has stayed longer than six months in a foreign country. Although the participants in the focus group interviews were exchanged to a British university, data collection took place one month after their arrival in the UK. The interviewees maintained that

[1] According to Cohen (1988), an *r* value of ±0.1 indicates a weak correlation, a value of ±0.3 indicates a moderate correlation, and a value of ±0.5 indicates a strong correlation.

their intercultural experience of studying in the UK had enabled them to re-think their native culture in East Asia and to deepen their understanding of their native language.

4.2 Data Type I: Ratings of P, D, R

Eight different situations were presented to the first group of participants to collect their awareness of P, D, R. The situations were selected from an initial collection of fifteen candidate situations which the researchers gleaned from daily observations and previous studies. 15 KNSs and 15 CNSs separately judged whether the fifteen situations were realistic and accessible in their experience. Those being assessed as less realistic or unusual were eliminated, leaving only eight situations for rating P, D, R. Then, following Billmyer and Varghese's (2000) suggestion, each situation was enriched with detailed contextual information including gender-neutral names of given roles, age of the interlocutors, and frequency of encounters. A Chinese version of these situations was given to the CNSs and a Korean version to the KNSs. (see Appendix A for an English translation of the complete questionnaire).

The situations were shuffled and then presented to the participants in random order. Below, we use one of the situations as an example to illustrate how the ratings of P, D, R were obtained.

Example (1)

Situation 1

You are a university student in your 20s. Today, in the school cafeteria you met Jihyeon (Xiaozhang in the Chinese version), a friend from another department who was in your class last year. Both of you chose to take a joint honors degree at the start of this year, and thus the workload has suddenly increased. You are tired of having classes 24 hours per week. Now you and Jihyeon are catching up as you have not seen each other over the summer.

Rating P, D, R In the above situation,

1) What is your social status in comparison to Jihyeon's?
   Point-1: much lower than Jihyeon
   Point-2: lower than Jihyeon
   Point-3: equal to Jihyeon
   Point-4: higher than Jihyeon
   Point-5: much higher than Jihyeon

2) How well do you think you know Jihyeon?

Point-1: completely stranger
Point-2: not knowing well
Point-3: knowing fairly well
Point-4: Knowing well
Point-5: Knowing very well

3) How difficult do you think it is to tell Jihyeon your 'true thoughts' about the workload?
Point-1: very easy to tell
Point-2: easy to tell
Point-3: seems fine to tell
Point-4: hard to tell
Point-5: very hard to tell

A five-point Likert Scale was used to investigate each characteristic of P, D, and R. The five consecutive answers were designed to reduce individual cognitive differences when matching a number to its meaning. To prevent further conceptual differences in P and D, we followed Economidou-Kogetsidis' (2010) experimental design to define D as the 'familiarity' between speaker and hearer. P, on the other hand, is treated differently from Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010), handling of it as 'social status'. This is because, compared to the British and Greek societies that Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) investigated, Korean participants (and also Japanese) are more likely to observe the social position given to them in a context (Hwang, 1990; Ide, 1989).

In each scenario, P, D, R were loaded with information about the interlocutors' ages (e.g. "you are in your 20s"), their professional positions (e.g. a new employee, a third-year student), frequency of encounters (e.g. "you met for the first time"), locations and time of meetings (e.g. "your class last year"), and the speaker's innermost feeling (e.g. "the conference was boring"). We have also used two relational terms, "a friend" in Situations 1 and 8 and "your date" in Situation 5, which are the conventionalized and intuitive ways of addressing the given roles in the specific situations. For example, 'classmate' in Korean is *pan-chinku* (lit: class-friend) and 'alumnus' in Chinese is *xiaoyou* (lit: school-friend), similar to how the interlocutor was regarded in Example 1 (i.e. Situation 1). Relational terms and other registers used to describe social categories may have different indexicality in Korean and Chinese. Therefore, we allowed participants to assess the provided information and reorganized the membership categories according to their ratings of P, D, R.

On the basis of the participants' ratings, mean values of each variable were calculated in each situation. Given that, for the most part, the mean ratings ranged from 1.5 to 4.5 (Appendix B), each whole point within this range was considered to be one level. For instance, a range from 1.5 to 2.49 in distance was defined as a 'first-met' relationship and labeled as [-D]. 2.5 to 3.49

and 3.5 to 4.5 were then [D] (acquaintance) and [+D] (friend), respectively. Outliers in the ratings were grouped into the polar categories. This categorization followed that of Bergman and Kasper (1993). Table 2 below lists the various categories.

Table 2. Categorization of P, D, R ratings

Situation	To evaluate on	KNS	CNS
Situation 1	Tiring workload	[P +D R]	[P +D R]
Situation 2	Boring conference	[P -D R]	[P D R]
Situation 3	Professor's character	[+P D R]	[+P D -R]
Situation4	Noisy drinking party	[-P +D +R]	[-P D R]
Situation 5	Date's appearance	[P -D +R]	[P -D R]
Situation 6	Unwanted freebies	[P D R]	[P D R]
Situation 7	Tutee's work	[P D +R]	[P D R]
Situation 8	Friend's self-reflection	[+P +D R]	[+P +D -R]

4.3 Data Type II: DCT

The same eight situations were transformed into a DCT to collect the linguistic performance of the evaluations, the resource for the analysis of indirectness 2. Specifically, each situation was followed by a dialog with one of its turns omitted. The dialog was prompted by a given speaker (e.g. 'Jihyeon' in example 1) inquiring about the participant's general wellbeing (e.g. How are you doing?) or how the participant is feeling/thinking about the evaluative target (e.g. How do you feel about today's conference?).

DCTs have been criticized for not adequately capturing naturalistic conversational features, such as tones and intonations. However, they have been proven to be effective tools for collecting typical speech act strategies (Beebe & Cumming 1985; Economidou-Kogetsidis 2013), hence serving our purpose of analyzing indirectness 2. In addition, we conducted focus group interviews to triangulate the data (Section 4.4).

The indirectness 2 of the evaluations was coded according to linguistic formulations, following the widely accepted coding method adopted by previous studies as reviewed in Section 3.1. Direct evaluations (i.e. directness 2) contain at least one attitudinal lexeme, such as 'tiring', 'boring', 'well done', or a straightforward confirmation of or doubt about the speaker's prompt, such as "indeed", "I don't think it should be in this way", similar to the way that Kong (2008)

categorized evaluations. The unambiguous correlation between form and function was absent in indirect evaluations (i.e. indirectness 2). Instead, indirect strategies were linked to the illocutionary point without overtly marking it, which created uncertainties about the speaker's attitude (as well as his/her stance, feelings or opinions). The indirect strategies used in our data consisted of conventional evaluative forms , such as equivocations "*haixing* (lit: all right)", "*chabuduo* (lit: not too far)" in Chinese and a syntactic combination "*-myen coh-keyss-ta*" (lit: I would hope …) in Korean, and/or context-specific strategies, such as excuses, jokes, and generalizations (e.g. "I'm gonna die [because of the heavy workload]", "You know, conferences!").

We should emphasize that, although we distinguish direct and indirect evaluation strategies, we have no intention of ordering them in a linear manner from the most direct to the most indirect. According to Terkourafi (2014), directness and indirectness are not conceptualized on a linear scale with each occupying one extreme. They may be produced from separate mechanisms but are comparable concepts.

Using the above stated coding method, two coders from each language community independently categorized each utterance as direct or indirect evaluation. The inter-rater reliability was tested using a Kappa test, and its results show a high level of agreement between .74 and .80. The coders then discussed any remaining discrepancies and reached a consensus.

4.4 Data Type III: Metapragmatic focus group interview

We chose focus group interviews to assess indirectness 1 because indirectness 1 itself is often socially negotiated between interlocutors instead of being engraved on an individual's knowledge. To initiate the negotiations, our interviewees were provided with 30 frequently used evaluations that had been separately extracted from three comparable situations in the Korean and Chinese DCTs (10 from each situation). All provided evaluations were kept in exactly the same original form, as phrased by the DCT participants, together with the exact DCT situations. The multiple resources that were used in an evaluation included its semantic strategies, modifications, speech styles, and semiotic devices (e.g. ~, or …). These were all preserved to enable interviewees to assess indirectness 1.

Two interviewers from each language community were involved in the interviews with the KNSs and CNSs, respectively. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. During the interviews neither the word "(in)direct" (and similar words such as "straightforward") nor the terms "P, D, R" were initiated by the interviewers. Instead, interviewers simply asked the

interviewees to compare the provided DCT situations and their answers. Based on the spontaneous comparisons of indirectness given by the interviewees, the interviewers prompted them to further explain their understandings.

The video-recorded focus group interviews were transcribed and translated into English by a Korean translator who was a native speaker of Korean and a Chinese translator who was a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, using the same conventions provided by the researchers[2]. Both the transcriptions and English translations were reviewed by the authors to ensure accuracy. All interviewees were given pseudonyms with their nationality and a number, e.g. K1, which means Korean interviewee 1.

5. Findings

Drawing on the analyses of the three types of data, we found that indirectness 1 and indirectness 2 did not always correspond in Korean and Chinese. The KNSs and CNSs demonstrated a different understanding of indirectness 1 and reversed patterns in their linguistic manifestations of indirectness 2. The variable D of P, D, R and the KNSs' use of honorifics explained a statistically significant proportion of the mismatches and indirectness 2 variations. To explain the remaining cross-cultural differences, however, we needed to explore further the invisible interpersonal interests of both the KNSs and CNSs.

5.1 Visible contextual and linguistic influence on indirectness

To account for contextual influences on indirectness, we first employed Chi-square tests and Cramer's V measurements to calculate the effect of P, D, R on the KNSs' and CNSs' choice of direct and indirect evaluation strategies. Specifically, a Chi-square test examines whether the participants' choice of direct and indirect evaluation strategies is independent of one particular variable when the other two variables are controlled. Cramer's V then calculates the effect size of that variable. We should emphasize that neither tests assumes that P, D, R are the only functioning variables. They also allow for the influence of other untested variables. The results of these tests, however, only reveal if a tested variable has any significant influence on indirectness 2 and how large that influence is, i.e. the effect size.

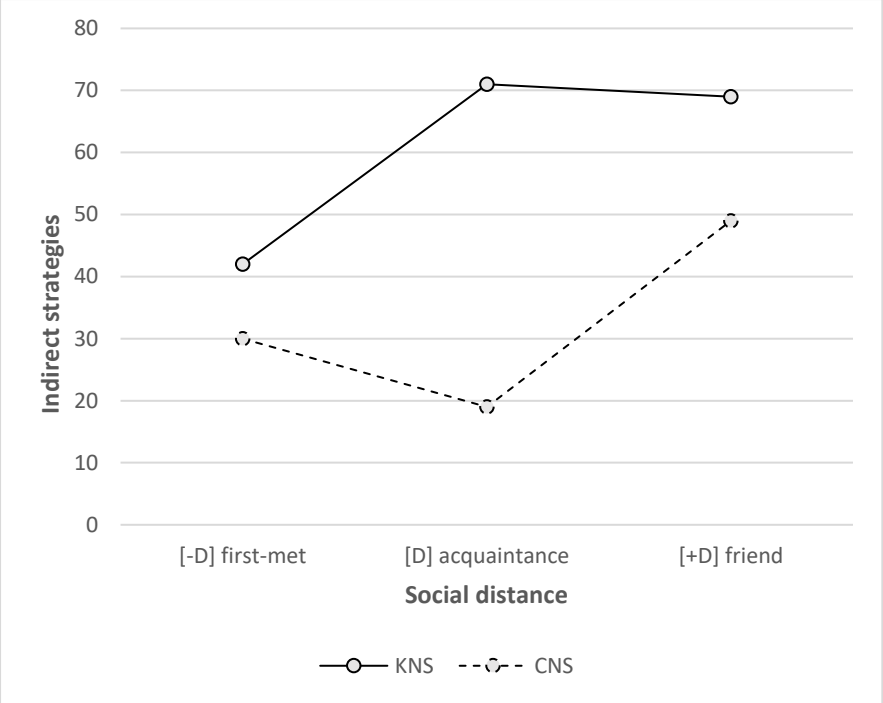
[2] Transcription convention was adapted for Korean and Chinese as follows:
[ ] parts omitted in the original language expression
= no gap between lines
(( )) Transcriber's observation in addition to transcription

The statistical results showed that D was the only variable of P, D, R which exerted a significant influence on both the KNSs' and CNSs' choice of evaluation strategies. Varying D from [D] (acquaintance) to [+D] (friend) accounted for 24.06% of the variation in the KNSs' choice of direct and indirect evaluation strategies (X^2=15.46 df=2[3] p<0.001) and 20.75% in the case of the CNSs' (X^2=7.67 df=2 p<0.025). A change from [D] (acquaintance) to [+D] (friend) had a smaller effect, but still explains 19.86% of the KNSs' and 16.49% of the CNSs' indirectness 2 variations. In contrast, both the KNSs' and CNSs' strategy choice appeared to be statistically independent of changes in variables P (KNS: X^2=1.36 df=2 p>0.05; CNS: X^2=3.15 df=2 p>0.05) and R (KNS: X^2=1.18 df=2 p>0.05; CNS: X^2=5.03 df=2 p>0.05).

Scrutinizing the influence of D, however, showed that the KNSs and CNSs have almost reversed patterns in their indirectness 2. Specifically, when D changed from [-D] (first-met) to [D] (acquaintance), KNSs increased their use of indirect evaluations from 42 to 71 instances in contrast to CNSs whose indirect strategies decreased from 30 to 19. Their use of direct evaluations remained the same between the two situations, though. When D changed from [D] (acquaintance) to [+D] (friend), KNSs reduced their use of both direct and indirect evaluations by 7 and 2, whereas CNSs increased their use by 3 and 30, respectively. Figure 1 visualizes the reversed patterns by drawing on KNSs' and CNSs' frequencies of using indirect evaluative strategies.

Figure 1. Changes of Indirectness 2 in Korean and Chinese

[3] The degree of freedom (df) was 2 because we allowed a separate category to contain adjuncts independent from direct and indirect strategies, such as a greeting formula "Hi".



Intriguingly, the above reversed patterns did not fully conform with the KNSs' and CNSs' understanding of indirectness. In other words, we found mismatches between indirectness 1 and indirectness 2, similar to what Blum-Kulka (1987) and Yu (2011) previously noticed. To ensure indirectness 1 and indirectness 2 were both assessed in the same context, during the metapragmatic focus group interviews we presented the interviewees with 30 typical evaluations used in the same situations that had undergone the Chi-square and Cramer's V tests of D. KNS and CNS interviewees spontaneously recognized that D was an influential variable across the situations. However, compared to the polyline of indirectness 2 in the Figure 1, KNS interviewees insisted that indirectness 1 decreases gradually from [-D] to [+D]. In other words, they considered evaluations in [-D] situations to be the most indirect and evaluations in [+D] situations to be the most direct.

CNS interviewees, on the other hand, largely agreed with the Chinese polyline in Figure 1. However, they commented that the given friendship in [+D] situations is "half-cooked" (*ban sheng bu shu*). This coincides with the participants' ratings of [+D] as ranging from 3.5 to 4.5, instead of approximating at 5, i.e. an extreme intimacy. Chinese interviewees argued that, with a true intimate, they might become exaggeratedly direct.

In line with Blum-Kulka's (1987) and Yu's (2011) findings, the current mismatches between indirectness 1 and 2 were attributed to language-specific conventional means, i.e. honorifics. Although Korean has an established system of honorifics, Chinese no longer does (Kádár and Pan, 2011). The Korean system of honorifics includes verbs, nouns, address terms and

speech styles. It is a conventional belief that, in Korean, honorific use decreases as the relationship between interlocutors becomes closer, corresponding to our finding. This decreased use does not necessarily trigger impoliteness or create politeness, unless a speaker intends to do so (Brown, 2015; Author 1 and Co-author, 2021). Korean interviewees found that the extensive use of honorifics in [-D] (first-met) situations masked their judgment of indirectness (Excerpt 1).

Excerpt 1

1 K5: *mak panmal-ha-myense, mak wa cincca caymi-eps-ci anh-ass-na? ((all laugh)) ilehkey malhal su iss-ul-theyntey. ((K3 nodding))*

'Just comfortably using non-honorific speech, just, wah, really not interesting, isn't it? ((all laugh)) [S/he] could speak like this. ((K3 nodding))'

2 *yeki-sen ta **contaymal** ssu-ko kyeysok Yeongju **ssi**-lako eccaytun, kulehkey hoching-ul senthayk-ul ha-ko ile-ko,*

'Here s/he uses honorific speech and calls [him/her] Yeongju *ssi* all the time. Anyway, [the speaker] chooses this kind of personal address and,'

3 *mwen-ka sasil, e, cheum po-nun kwankyey-la-nun key ce-nun kacang nukki-eci-nun key pyelo solcikha-key malha-ci anh-nun kes kath-ayo.*

'so something actually, eh, in the relationship with [someone] you've met for the first time, such a difficult relationship, what I feel the most is [the speaker] is not very straightforward.'

K5 attributed her "not very straightforward" feeling in the [-D] situation to speech style (*contaymal*) and address forms (*ssi*) in line 2. She later reflected further on the decreased use of honorifics from [-D] to [D] in another part of the same interview. At that point, she re-emphasized that evaluations of [-D] situations "had not a single non-honorific word" (*panmal hana-to eps-canha*) and compared it to a blend of honorifics and non-honorifics used in evaluations of [D] situations, which she believed to be more direct. Her comments were supported by other KNS interviewees who claimed that they were of the same mind (*pisusha-key sayngkakha-nun kes kat-ayo*).

Honorifics appear to have mediated Korean indirectness 1, viz, the native Korean speakers' understanding of indirectness. Their mediating role also explains why indirectness 1 and 2 displayed a greater level of mismatch in Korean than in Chinese. That is, lacking the mediation

of honorifics, Chinese indirectness 1 was assessed by CNSs more on the semantic formulations of an evaluation, which also grounded the analysis of indirectness 2.

The systematic use of honorifics alone, however, does not explain why the Korean and Chinese speakers had reversed patterns of indirectness 2 and a different understanding of indirectness 1. The significantly influential variable D explains only approximately 20% of the variation in indirectness 2. Many of the unexplained findings need to be understood in light of the participants' insights into invisible interpersonal interests, which we present in the next section.

5.2 Invisible interpersonal interests

When further explicating their understanding of a speaker's choice of evaluating directly or indirectly, both the KNSs and CNSs proposed the concept of interpersonal interest, namely, *ihay kwankyey* in Korean and *lihai guanxi* in Chinese (lit: the relationship of benefit and loss). This interpersonal interest they perceived is, however, often invisible. For example, when evaluating a boring conference, both the KNSs and CNSs were cautious of a potential connection between their interlocutor and the conference organizer. We should reiterate here that, in this situation (i.e. Situation 2), the interlocutor was designed to be a hotel roommate who was attending the same conference. In the given situation, there was not any indication to imply a connection between the roommate and the conference organizer. The KNSs and CNSs hypothetically created an extra layer of context in which such a potential conflict of interest emerged if they directly evaluated the boring conference (Excerpt 2).

Excerpt 2

1	C6	*Dan wo juede turan huibuhui, wo zaixiang yidian nashenme yinmoulun jiushi, ruguo wo juede guanxi henhao keneng hui zheme shuo. Ruguo yudao nazhong shenme zhichang shenme, jiushi duifang yao zenmezenmeyang, woshuo na=* But I feel suddenly, wouldn't it be, I am just thinking something a bit conspiring, if I feel the relationship is a close one, I will say it like this. If I meet that kind of workplace thing, like s/he wants something, I will say that=
2	C2	*=Ge qiang you er, shima?* =Walls have ears, don't they?

3	Interviewer 01	*((laughs)) ge qiang you er.* ((laughs)) walls have ears.
4	C6	*Jiushi huibuhui, duifang nage ruguo ta jiushi xiang gan yixie shenme, zhuazhu shenme babing-dehua, wo juede jiushi =* It's like, wouldn't it be, if s/he wants to do something, catching some unfavourable points, I feel like=
5	C2	*=da xiao baogao?* =report me behind my back?
6	C6	*Yinwei wanyi ta shi nage, lingdao de shenme shenme.* Because, just in case, s/he is someone to the leader.

During the interview, C2 and C6 demonstrated their inferential process in creating a hypothetical conflict of interests. On two occasions, C2 closely followed C6's turns to express their concerns that the roommate might tell their negative evaluations of the conference to someone else ("*ge qiang you er*") in turn 2 or report them ("*da xiao baogao*") in turn 5. In the last turn, C6 made clear the hypothetical context, in which the roommate might have a connection with an important person ("the leader") and may intentionally or accidentally pass on their negative evaluation of the conference to that person.

Similar concerns were expressed by both the KNSs and CNSs when they evaluated a date's appearance. They worried about a hypothetical link between their current date and other available dates as well as an imagined connection between the matchmaker and their families. Neither of these assumptions was provided in the given situation. These hypothetical interpersonal relationships are 'invisible' compared to the role relationships given in the context. The conflict of interests is even unforeseeable, something to which both Korean and Chinese speakers, however, have developed a high sensitivity.

Even though they shared similar concerns about invisible interpersonal interests, the KNSs and CNSs assigned different social meanings to directness and indirectness. Whilst both groups admitted that directness can indicate closeness, the KNSs considered that being direct with a [-D] (first-met) is rash ("*kyengsolhata"*) and shallow ("*kapyewu-n salam"*), while being overly blunt with a [D] (acquaintance) is selfish ("*caki-uy mokcek-i wusen"*). These meaning associations, together with the mediating role of honorifics, explained the KNSs' increase of indirectness 2 from [-D] to [D]. That is, when honorific use decreased from [-D] to [D], the KNSs had to adopt more indirect strategies to avoid being overly blunt and being judged as selfish. In contrast, the CNSs deemed being direct with a [-D] (first-met) shows that a person is not scheming ("*mei xinji"*) and being direct with a [D] (acquaintance) shows one's sincerity.

Furthermore, they criticized being indirect with an acquaintance as too slick ("*tai yuanhua"*). The CNSs decreased their level of indirectness 2 accordingly from [-D] to [D], which appeared to be a reversal of the pattern observed among the KNSs.

The KNSs and CNSs also made different decisions about who in their interpersonal relationships was 'interest-free'. To KNSs, a friend, as given in Situation 1 (evaluating a tiring workload), was legitimated as interest free. They confirmed that native Korean speakers tend to be direct with interest-free interlocutors because "I have nothing I want to obtain or avoid [from the friend]" ("*nay-ka et-kena phiha-lyeko ha-nun key eps-canhayo"*). The same friend was, however, judged as "half-cooked", "possibly competitive" and "needs to refrain from outright expressions" ("*keqikeqi"*) by CNSs. They even quoted an idiom in Chinese to describe the safe way to maintain such a relationship, namely, "*jun zi zhi jiao dan ru shui*" (a hedge between keeps the friendship green).

Given the different categorization of a friend, both indirectness 1 and 2 manifested a reverse pattern towards a [+D] (friend) with the KNSs becoming slightly more direct and the CNSs becoming more indirect comparatively. We should also mention that a true intimate might also not be interest-free from a CNS's perspective. The exaggerated directness that Chinese speakers prefer to use with a true intimate often slips into a competition of 'who is the worst' ("*bilan"*). They exaggerate how bad they are in achieving a good outcome (e.g. academic performance), in order "not to show off" ("*bu xuanyao"*) and "to be amiable and easy to approach" ("*pingyijinren"*). Directness thus becomes a means of establishing a positive social image, possibly with the aim of practicing solidarity politeness. In the next section, we discuss why interpersonal relationships are conceptualized by Korean and Chinese speakers as having both visible and invisible aspects. The associations between indirectness and social meanings, such as those we have found in this section, can then be better understood in the context of multi-layered relationships.

6. Discussion

The finding that variable D has a significant influence on Korean and Chinese indirectness supports previous arguments that ripple-like social relationships with inner and outer circles are important in deciding how East Asian groups communicate (Shim et al., 2008; Pan, 2000; Ye 2005;). Ye (2005) proposed two master cultural scripts that underlie Chinese interactional styles: the distinction between inner and outer circles (*neiwaiyoubie*) and the principle of 'from far to close' (*youshuzhiqin*). Likewise, the influence of asymmetrical power encoded in Korean has been "weakened considerably in favour of solidarity" (Sohn, 1981: 431).

However, the significantly influential variable D accounted for only approximately 20% of indirectness 2 variation in evaluations, because the interpersonal interests that KNSs and CNSs consider go far beyond the visible and measurable relationships between interlocutors in given contexts. Behind a dyadic conversational relationship, the participants were also concerned about invisible relationships which may generate relational and/or substantial gains or losses. Visible and invisible relationships thus mesh together into a multi-layered relational web. We have been able to identify its layers through the KNSs' and CNSs' hypotheses of an unknown connection between their roommate and the conference organizer, an unspecified link between their date and other dates, and so on. The concerns of Korean and Chinese speakers about the relational web become more obvious when they believe the hearer has a potential connection to an important figure (e.g. "the leader" in Excerpt 2), even though the important figure was not involved in their meetings with the hearer. As Hwang (1987) found, in such cases, Chinese people are under a greater pressure to grant a person's request. They hope that, by doing so, it "will place them in a favourable position for any future allocation of some others' resources" (1987:953), or at least does not result in any future unfavourable consequence.

The KNSs' and CNSs' concerns about a relational web can be explained by Ye's (2005) principle of 'from far to close'. That is, Chinese social interaction is often motivated by moving one's position from the outer circle to the inner circle, because Chinese people feel more obliged to "do something good for *zijiren* (one of us)" (2005:216). Many of them invest a great deal of effort in moving closer to the inner circle of an important figure who has more social resources and a greater social impact. In the meantime, they are aware that others are striving towards the same goal and may have succeeded or been granted (e.g. an important figure's relative) a connection to one's inner circle. It is, however, hard for them to grasp the full picture of one's relational web when this person is a first-met, i.e. [-D], or just an acquaintance. i.e. [D]. Therefore, Chinese people are cautious of these individuals' invisible relationships, in which gains and losses (i.e. interests) can occur without them knowing.

A similar wish to be included in the circle of *wuli* (us) can be observed in the pursuit of personal connections by Koreans (Shim et al., 2008). Upon being introduced, Korean speakers immediately seek out the 'sameness' between them and their interlocutors, such as the same hometown, school or age. The same hometown or school are then referred as *wuli* hometown or *wuli* school to ensure cohesiveness with the interlocutor. Different social circles overlap with each other and are thus meshed together into an intricate relational web. Koreans acknowledge the force of the relational web and at times manipulate the overlapping connections to expand their networks. For example, an effective way for a person to conduct business with Korean people is to be introduced by a member of their inner-circle, who also

happens to be a member of that person's social circles (Shim et al., 2008:69). It is not a surprise that the overlapping of personal and business relationships is also observed in the Chinese context (Mavondo and Rodrigo, 2001).

To avoid being excluded from the relational web and in order to be included, KNSs and CNSs prioritize different social values in relation to their choice of directness or indirectness. KNSs associate their judgment of directness (i.e. directness 1) with personal attributes, such as a speaker being rash, shallow, or inconsiderate. This is particularly conspicuous in their relationships with non-acquaintances. As discussed above, the relational web that a non-acquaintance possesses is generally difficult to access. Acting directly without a clear knowledge of one's relational reticulum then affords more risks of infringing the interests shared by the hearer's inner circle. Given the cohesiveness within the circle, it is very unlikely that KNSs would consider their inner circle to be intolerant, but rather define the outsider as reckless and careless.

In addition, Korean honorifics can help to recontextualize the evaluations of an item or property as the evaluations of a person. According to Agha (1998:166), the use of honorifics is "laden with social meanings about oneself" and is indexical of one's own position in a social relationship. By adjusting the use of honorifics, it is thus possible to create an extra layer of context in which other members of the society can judge how the speaker positions him/herself in the relational web. Consequently, (in)directness, which is mediated by the different use of honorifics (Section 5.1), becomes a reference of one's personal qualities, as manifested in the speaker's self-position.

CNSs, on the other hand, prioritize sincerity, when deciding whether to be direct or indirect. They consider directness to be sincere and criticize indirectness as being slick or hypocritical toward an acquaintance. Previously, Lee-Wong (1994:510) also identified one of the cultural beliefs underlying Chinese requests to "be sincere, be direct, be brief". In particular, when the request is minor or when interlocutors are close, indirectly inquiring about one's willingness to grant the request could be misread as doubting the person's generosity. Chang and Haugh (2011) further argued that sincerity, as a fundamental principle of Chinese politeness (Gu, 1990), is contained in many discourse-based sources including the repetition of an apology, gratitude, or invitation a few times to show that one's intention is genuine, securing the uptake of a redressive offer, acknowledging relational closeness and *keqi* (showing restraint in expressing one's wants or acknowledging one's own abilities, Haugh, 2006:20). *Keqi* was also found in our data where CNSs felt that they needed to *keqikeqi* with a 'half-cooked' friend and thereby demonstrate that they are genuinely addressing the friend's 'sincere' inquiry about their wellbeing.

Furthermore, Chinese speakers seem to have developed their own way of being indirect while not being insincere to deal with [-D] (first-met) or other types of difficult relationships. On the one hand, the Chinese language has a rich vocabulary of equivocations, such as *haixing* (lit: all right), *haihao* (lit: okay), *chabuduo* (lit: not too far), *name huishi* (lit: that's it) and many others. These equivocations are open to various interpretations, one of which might point to a speaker's sincere intention. The CNSs widely adopted these expressions in their evaluations to prevent them from being judged as insincere. On the other hand, Chinese speakers use linguistic indirectness (i.e. indirectness 2) as an 'indeterminate linguistic space' for them to negotiate interpersonal relationships while expressing their sincere stance (H. C. Chang 1999:542). H. C. Chang (1999) provided an interesting example to explicate this argument, in which a mother-in-law had to take a bullet from her daughter-in-law with whom she does not get along well. The daughter-in-law expressed her sincere position in their reluctant relationship by flattering the mother as being "financially well-off" enough to afford a taxi instead of offering her a lift.

In summary, both Korean and Chinese speakers are conscious of interpersonal interests as intricacies of a relational web. The attention paid to maintaining relational webs may have resulted in previous observations that East Asian language speakers adopt indirectness to maintain group harmony (e.g. Tang, 2016; Tantucci and Wang, 2018) or in-group relationships (Ren et al., 2013). However, our findings suggest that different East Asian language communities have different ways of managing their relational webs, which causes variation in their practice of indirectness.

7. Conclusion

Through exploring the emic understanding of indirectness 1 and the etic analyses of indirectness 2, we have found considerable variation in terms of the communication style that is adoped by different East Asian language communities. The Korean and Chinese participants in our study exhibited different assessments of indirectness 1 and reversed patterns of indirectness 2 in their evaluation acts. These cross-cultural differences are explicable only by taking into consideration both the visible role relationships in the immediate contexts and the invisible interpersonal interests defined in each culture. These two aspects mesh together to form a multi-layered relational web to which both KNSs and CNSs showed a high degree of sensitivity.

The relational web provides us with a conceptual framework through which the variability of indirectness in East Asian languages can be explained. In cross-cultural communication, encounters with members of East Asian cultural groups have often confused, if not misled,

their interlocutors, particularly those from non-Asian cultures. The communicative practices of East Asian language speakers were deemed erratic compared to the indirect style repeatedly claimed for their communicative style (Stadler, 2011). Reductionism, which is applied to explain the surprisingly variable experiences in dialogic relationships, would then find it difficult to account for the complex nature of East Asian communications. Only by understanding the sensitivity of East Asian language speakers to the relational web, can stereotypical beliefs about how they communicate be re-interpreted into context-specific choices of language use. In addition, our findings also help learners of East Asian languages to bridge the gap between what they have learned in the classroom and what they might encounter outside it. Classroom learning and textbook designs usually involve dyadic conversations only, whereas, in the outside world, what people actually manage is the multi-layered relational web. We therefore encourage research on facilitating learners' ability to manage multiplex ties of relationships, at the same time developing teaching materials to reflect this need.

We also expect future studies to broaden the current framework by addressing the influence of gender on linguistic choices that are made in relational webs and extremely intimate relationships, i.e. those approximating to a point 5 of rating, such as the relationship between husband and wife. A statistically significant correlation between gender and (in)directness was not identified in this study, possibly because our participants were university students whose relational webs contain fewer social roles conventionalized by gender (e.g. husband and wife in Korean or Chinese society). Further studies on the influence of gender and other types of social relationships are thus needed to support our conceptualization of a relational web as a dynamical and individualized system, while enriching our understanding of its collective features.

References

Agha, Asif. 1998. 'Stereotypes and Registers of Honorific Language'. *Language in Society* 27 (2): 151–93. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500019849.

Alba-Juez, Laura, and Geoff, Thompson. 2014. 'The many faces and phases of evaluations'. In. Thompson, Geoff, and Laura Alba-Juez. (eds). *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS, THE: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 3-19.

Beebe, Leslie, Tomoko Takahashi, and Robin Uliss-Weltz. 1990. 'Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals.' In Scarcella, Robin, Elaine Anderson and Stephen Krashen (eds.), *Developing Communication Competence in a Second Language*. 55-73. New York: Newbury House.

Beebe,Leslie M., and M.C.Cummings.1985. 'Speech act performance: A function of the data collection procedure?' *Paper presented at the TESOL Convention*, New York.

Bergman, Marc.L and Gabriele Kasper. 1993. 'Perception and Performance in native and non-native apology'. In Kasper, G & S. Blum-Kulka (eds). *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

Billmyer, K., and M. Varghese. 2000. 'Investigating Instrument-Based Pragmatic Variability: Effects of Enhancing Discourse Completion Tests'. *Applied Linguistics* 21 (4): 517–52. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/21.4.517.

Blackwell, Sarah E. 2010. 'Evaluation as a Pragmatic Act in Spanish Film Narratives'. *Journal of Pragmatics*, Pragmemes, 42 (11): 2945–63. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.06.018.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, and House, Juliane, 1989. 'Cross-cultural and situational variation in requesting behavior.' In: Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., Kasper, G. (Eds.), *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. 123–154. Ablex, Norwood, NJ.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, and G. 1989. 'Investigating Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: An Introductory Overview'. In *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*, edited by Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House, and Gabriele Kasper. Vol. Advances in discourse processes. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 1987. 'Indirectness and Politeness in Requests: Same or Different?' *Journal of Pragmatics* 11 (2): 131–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(87)90192-5.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Brenda Danet, and Rimona Gherson. 1985. 'The Language of Requesting in Israeli Society'. In *Language and Social Situations*, edited by Joseph P. Forgas, 113–39. Springer Series in Social Psychology. New York, NY: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-5074-6_7.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, and Elite Olshtain. 1984. 'Requests and Apologies: A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP)1'. *Applied Linguistics* 5 (3): 196–213. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196.

Bond, Michael, Harris, Vladimir,Žegarac, and Helen, Spencer-Oatey. 2000. 'Culture as an explanatory variable: problems and possibilities'. In. Helen, Spencer-Oatey (ed). *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport Through Talk Across Cultures*. A&C Black. 47-72.

Brown, Lucien. 2015. 'Revisiting "Polite" –Yo and "Deferential" –Supnita Speech Style Shifting in Korean from the Viewpoint of Indexicality'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 79 (April): 43–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.01.009.

Brown, Penelope. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4. Cambridge: University Press.

Byon, Andrew Sangpil. 2006. 'The Role of Linguistic Indirectness and Honorifics in Achieving Linguistic Politeness in Korean Requests'. *Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture* 2 (2): 247–276. https://doi.org/10.1515/PR.2006.013.

Chang, Hui-Ching. 1999. 'The "Well-Defined" Is "Ambiguous" — Indeterminacy in Chinese Conversation'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 31 (4): 535–56. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00088-5.

Chang, Wei-Lin Melody, and Michael Haugh. 2011. 'Evaluations of Im/Politeness of an Intercultural Apology'. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 8 (3): 411–442. https://doi.org/10.1515/iprg.2011.019.

Chen, Xi, and Jungmin Lee. 2021. 'The Relationship between Stereotypical Meaning and Contextual Meaning of Korean Honorifics'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 171 (January): 118–30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.10.011.

Cohen, Jacob, 1988. *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral science*. Routledge, New York.

Decock, Sofie, and Ilse Depraetere. 2018. '(In)Directness and Complaints: A Reassessment'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 132 (July): 33–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.04.010.

van, Dijk, Teun A. 1997. *Discourse as Social Interaction: Discourse as Social Interactions v. 2*. 1st edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria. 2013. 'Strategies, Modification and Perspective in Native Speakers' Requests: A Comparison of WDCT and Naturally Occurring Requests.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 53 (July): 21–38.

Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria. 2010. 'Cross-Cultural and Situational Variation in Requesting Behaviour: Perceptions of Social Situations and Strategic Usage of Request Patterns'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42 (8): 2262–81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.02.001.

Eelen, Gino. 2001. *A Critique of Politeness Theories*. St. Jerome Pub. UK.

Félix-Brasdefer, J. César. 2006. 'Linguistic Politeness in Mexico: Refusal Strategies among Male Speakers of Mexican Spanish.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 38 (12). Focus-on Issue: Discourse and Conversation in Different Cultures: 2158–2187.

Fong, Mary. 1998. 'Chinese immigrants' perceptions of semantic dimensions of direct / indirect communication in intercultural compliment interactions with North Americans'. *Howard Journal of Communications* 9 (3): 245–62. https://doi.org/10.1080/106461798247014.

Gallardo, Susana, and Laura Ferrari. 2010. 'How Doctors View Their Health and Professional Practice: An Appraisal Analysis of Medical Discourse'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42 (12): 3172–87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.008.

Grice, Herbert Paul. 1975. 'Logic and conversation'. In. P,Cole and J. Morgan (eds). *Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts*, New York: Academic Press. 41-58.

Gudykunst, William B., Stella Ting-Toomey, and Elizabeth Chua. 1988. *Culture and Interpersonal Communication*. Culture and Interpersonal Communication. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Haugh, Michael. 2015. *Im/Politeness Implicatures*. *Im/Politeness Implicatures*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Ho, Victor. 2014. 'Managing Rapport through Evaluation in Grounder – A Qualitative Study'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 61 (January): 63–77. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.11.019.

Holmgreen, Lise-Lotte, and Torben Vestergaard. 2009. 'Evaluation and Audience Acceptance in Biotech News Texts'. *Journal of Pragmatics*, Speech Acts in Legal Language, 41 (3): 586–601. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2008.06.005.

House, Juliane, and Gabriele, Kasper. 1980. Politeness markers in English and German. In. Coulmas, Florian (ed). *Conversational routine: explorations in standardized communication situations and prepatterned speech*. New York: Mouton. 157-185.

Hwang, Juck-Ryoon. 2009. '"Deference" versus "Politeness" in Korean Speech'. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 1990 (82): 41–56. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1990.82.41.

Hwang, Kwang-kuo. 1987. 'Face and Favor: The Chinese Power Game'. *American Journal of Sociology* 92 (4): 944–74.

Ide, Sachiko. 1989. 'Formal forms and discernment: two neglected aspects of universals of linguistic politeness'. *Multilingua.* 8-2/3. 223-248.

Kádár, Daniel, and Yuling, Pan. 2011. 'Politeness in China'. In. Pan, Yuling, and Daniel Z. Kadar. (eds). *Politeness in Historical and Contemporary Chinese*. A&C Black.

Katriel, Tamar. 1986. *Talking Straight: Dugri Speech in Israeli Sabra Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kerkam, Zainab M. 2015. 'A Comparison of Arabic and English Directness and Indirectness : Cross-Cultural Politeness.' Doctoral, Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.

Kim, Heesoo. 2008. 'The Semantic and Pragmatic Analysis of South Korean and Australian English Apologetic Speech Acts'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 40 (2): 257–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2007.11.003.

Kong, Kenneth C. C. 2008. 'A Filial Son or a Loving Mother?: Evaluation as Recontextualisation Devices in Property Transaction Reports'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 40 (3): 431–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2007.02.004.

Lakoff, Robin, 1973. 'The logic of politeness; or, minding your p's and q's'. *Proceeding of the ninth regional meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. 292-305.

Leather, Jonathan., and Jet van Dam. 2003. 'Towards an ecology of language acquisition'. In. Leather, J. H & Jet van Dam. (eds). *Ecology of Language Acquisition*. Educational Linguistics. Springer Netherlands. 1-29. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-0341-3.

Lee, James and Steven, Pinker. 2010. 'Rationales for indirect speech: the theory of the strategic speaker'. *Psychological Review* 117(3): 785-807.

Lee-Wong, Song Mei. 1994. 'Imperatives in Requests: Direct or Impolite – Observations from Chinese'. *Pragmatics* 4 (4): 491–515. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.4.4.01lee.

Liu, Ping, and Xiaoye You. 2019. 'Metapragmatic Comments in Web-Based Intercultural Peer Evaluation'. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 16 (1): 57–83. https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2019-0003.

Lwanga-Lumu, Joy Christine. 1999. 'Politeness and Indirectness Revisited'. *South African Journal of African Languages* 19 (2): 83–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.1999.10587385.

Martin, J.R., and Peter R. R. White. 2007. *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Mavondo, Felix T, and Elaine M Rodrigo. 2001. 'The effect of relationship dimensions on interpersonal and interorganizational commitment in organizations conducting business between Australia and China'. *Journal of Business Research*, Doing Business in China, 52 (2): 111–21. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00064-8.

Mills, Sara, and Karen Grainger. 2016. *Directness and Indirectness Across Cultures*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Neuliep, James W. 2012. *Intercultural Communication: A Contextual Approach*. Sage Publication, US.

Nwoye, Onuigbo G. 1992. 'Linguistic Politeness and Socio-Cultural Variations of the Notion of Face'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 18 (4): 309–28. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(92)90092-P.

Pan, Yuling. 2000. *Politeness in Chinese Face-to-Face Interaction*. Advances in Discourse Processes ; v.67. Stamford, Conn: Ablex.

Ren, Wei, Chih-Ying Lin, and Helen Woodfield. 2013. 'Variational Pragmatics in Chinese: Some Insights from an Empirical Study'. In *Research Trends in Intercultural Pragmatics*, edited by Istvan Kecskes and Jesús Romero-Trillo. Berlin, Boston: DE GRUYTER. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614513735.283.

Santamariá-Garcia, Carmen. 2014. 'Evaluative discourse and politeness in university students' communication through social networking sites'. In. Thompson, Geoff & Laura Alba-Juez. (Eds). *Evaluation in Context*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam, Netherland. 387-411

Searle, John. 1975. Indirect speech acts. In. P,Cole and J. Morgan (eds). *Syntax and Semantics: Speech Acts*, New York: Academic Press. 59-82.

Shim, Theresa Youn-ja, Min-Sun Kim, and Judith N. Martin. 2008. *Changing Korea: Understanding Culture and Communication*. Peter Lang.

Skewis, Malcolm. 2003. 'Mitigated Directness in Honglou Meng: Directive Speech Acts and Politeness in Eighteenth Century Chinese'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35 (2): 161–89. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00084-X.

Silverstein, Michael. 2010. '"Direct" and "Indirect" Communicative Acts in Semiotic Perspective'. *Journal of Pragmatics*, Rethinking Indirection in interaction, 42 (2): 337–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2009.06.003.

Sohn, Ho-min. 1981. 'Power and Solidarity in the Korean Language'. *Paper in Linguistics* 14 (3): 431–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/08351818109370546.

Spencer-Oatey, Helen. 2000. *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport Through Talk Across Cultures*. London: A&C Black.

Stadler, Stefanie. 2011. 'Intercultural Communication and East Asian Politeness'. In *Politeness in East Asia*, edited by Dániel Z. Kádár and Sara Mills, 98–122. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511977886.007.

Starfield, Sue, Brian Paltridge, Robert McMurtrie, Allyson Holbrook, Sid Bourke, Hedy Fairbairn, Margaret Kiley, and Terry Lovat. 2015. 'Understanding the Language of Evaluation in Examiners' Reports on Doctoral Theses'. *Linguistics and Education* 31 (September): 130–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2015.06.004.

Tang, Chihsia. 2016. 'Managing Criticisms in US-Based and Taiwan-Based Reality Talent Contests: A Cross-Linguistic Comparison'. *Pragmatics* 26 (1): 111–36. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.26.1.06tan.

Tantucci, Vittorio, and Aiqing Wang. 2018. 'Illocutional Concurrences: The Case of Evaluative Speech Acts and Face-Work in Spoken Mandarin and American English'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 138 (December): 60–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.09.014.

Terkourafi, Marina. 2014. 'The Importance of Being Indirect: A New Nomenclature for Indirect Speech'. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 28 (1): 45–70. https://doi.org/10.1075/bjl.28.03ter.

Thompson, Geoffrey. 2014. 'Affect and emotion, target-value mismatches, and Russian dolls: refining the appraisal module'. In. Thompson, Geoff, and Laura Alba-Juez. (eds). *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS, THE: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 47-66.

Thompson, Geoffrey and Susan, Hunston. 2000. 'Evaluation: an introduction'. In. Hunston S and Thomson G (eds). *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. Oxford University Press, UK. 1-27.

Wierzbicka, Anna. 1985. 'Different Cultures, Different Languages, Different Speech Acts: Polish vs. English'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9 (2): 145–78. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(85)90023-2.

Ye, Zhengdao. 2005. 'Chinese Categorization of Interpersonal Relationships and the Cultural Logic of Chinese Social Interaction: An Indigenous Perspective'. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 1 (2): 211–230. https://doi.org/10.1515/iprg.2004.1.2.211.

Yu, Kyong-Ae. 2011. 'Culture-Specific Concepts of Politeness: Indirectness and Politeness in English, Hebrew and Korean Requests'. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 8 (3): 385–409. https://doi.org/10.1515/iprg.2011.018.

Yu, Kyong-Ae. 2004. 'Explicitness for Requests Is a Politer Strategy than Implicitness in Korean'. *담화와인지* (Discourse and Cognition). 11(1): 173-194.

Appendix A. English translations of the DCT

Situation 1. You are a university student in your 20s. Today, in the school cafeteria you met Jihyeon (Xiaozhang in its Chinese version), a friend from another department but in a same class with you last year. Both of you chose to take a joint honours degree at the start of this year, thus the workload suddenly increased. You are tired of having 24 hours of classes per week. Now you and Jihyeon are catching up as you have not seen each other during the whole summer.

Jihyeon (Xiaozhang): Long time no see. How is the new term?

You: _____

Situation 2. You are an office worker in your 30s. This week you have been sent to another city to attend a conference. You met Yeongju (Xiaowang), who was coming to the same conference, for the first time in the hotel. You found you two are at the same age after you were arranged in the same room. Today's conference was boring. It had barely ended and now you are having a drink with Yeongju (Xiaowang). What would you say in the following conversation?

Yeongju (Xiaowang): hoo~ long day. How did you find the conference?

You: _____

Situation 3. You are a third-year university student. Today you had a meal and then a drinking party with some first-year students. A first-year student, Jihyeon (Xiaozhang), is thinking to take a course from Prof. A. However, as you know, Prof. A is very picky and gives a lot of coursework. How would you answer the following question?

Jihyeon (Xiaozhang): Senpaynim (lit: honorific "my senior"), you know, I am thinking about taking a course from Prof. A. Do you know how his class is going to be?

You: _____

Situation 4. You are Yeongju (Xiaowang), a new employee in your 20s. Today you went to a welcome party for new recruits. As it was for the whole company, you met the President of your company, whom you barely saw before. As time went by, the party became very noisy and people got drunk. You are not very capable of drinking, but you were forced to drink, resulting in your stomach not feeling very well. When the party finishes, everyone comes to the front door to see the President off. How would you answer the following question from the President?

The President: Yeongju, how was today ('s party)?

You: _____

Situation 5. You are an office worker in your 20s. Today you went on a date that was arranged by your mother. Your date (Yeongju/Xiaowang) is the same age as you. Compared to what you have heard, your date was rather poor looking. You were disappointed. What would you say in the following conversation?

Yeongju (Xiaowang): hmmm…How do you feel about me?

You: _____

Situation 6. You are a housewife in your 40s. You went to an event organized by a department store near your house. Since you frequently go shopping there, the young salesmen and managers in the store know your face. Today's event had many fun games. However, they

only had toothpastes for game prizes. You got 6 toothpaste tubes which you hoped could be exchanged for other things. When the event finishes, a manager, Jihyeon (Xiaozhang), comes to ask about your feedback. How would you answer the following question?

Jihyeon (Xiaozhang): Acumeni(lit: “lady”), (I saw) you came today. How was the event?

You: _____

Situation 7. You are a postgraduate student in your 20s. You are tutoring an eleven-year-old student mathematics. During the private lesson, the student’s mother was always bringing you fruits and drinks. However, the student was not particularly talented at mathematics and always wanted to play during the classes. Today you found that the student’s mother was waiting for you after the tutorial finished. How would you answer the following question?

Student’s mother: Thank you for all the efforts you put into teaching my son. How is his attitude towards learning? Is it worth your efforts?

You: _____

Situation 8. You are an office worker in your 20s. A friend, who is two years younger than you and you spent your childhood with, passed an important exam and is going to become a civil servant. She called for a party with you and other close friends. In your opinion, the civil servant position is a very good one, as it creates stability and the workload is not heavy. Whilst you are really happy for your friend, you also feel a little jealous. During the party, what would you say in the following conversation?

Your friend: phew~ finally passed. My parents always nagged me about how good the job is…(I don’t understand) what is the good point. The exam is hard though…

You: _____

Appendix B. Mean ratings of P, D, R

Situation	To evaluate on	KNS			CNS		
		P	D	R	P	D	R
1	Tiring workload	3.083	3.5	2.6	3.067	3.733	2.733
2	Boring conference	3	2.25	2.8	3	3.4	2.533
3	Professor’s character	3.833	3.417	2.733	3.533	3.133	2.467
4	Noisy drinking party	1.167	3.5	4	1.867	3	3.267
5	Date’s appearance	2.833	1.5	4.6	3	1.867	3.2
6	Unwanted freebies	3.417	3.083	2.933	3.467	3.467	2.733
7	Tutee’s work	2.5	2.917	3.733	3.2	3.2	3.067
8	Friend’s self-reflection	3.5	4.167	2.533	4	4	2.467