

FROM MAY YOU...? TO DO YOU MIND...?
A CASE STUDY OF ILP DEVELOPMENT IN REQUESTS

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This is a case study about interlanguage pragmatic (ILP) development in speech acts of request based on natural as well as elicited data from a 12-year-old Chinese girl (Amy) over the period of her seven-month stay in Hawai'i. The two research questions are: (a) To what extent did Amy's performance in requests change over time with regard to request realization strategies and modification? (b) How was Amy's request development identical with or different from the participants in previous studies? The analysis and results of the data show that in request strategies there is a shift from conventional indirectness to directness and nonconventional indirectness in accordance with the degree of request imposition and obligation/right of the interlocutors, but no variation is observed with respect to the social distance between the interlocutors. For request modification, the politeness marker *please* is consistently the primary internal modification device, and there is a decrease in the use of grounders in external modification over the time.

Amy's early reliance on speech formulas, the overwhelming use of conventional indirect strategies and the politeness marker *please*, the improvement in strategies prior to that in realizational linguistic means, the imitation learning strategy, and the function of conscious noticing are consistent with the findings in previous studies. However, the acquisitional sequence of requestive strategies, the sensitivity of some situational factors, and the decrease in the use of grounders are aspects different from previous studies.

INTRODUCTION

In the literature on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), studies have shown that many instructed advanced second language (L2) learners, though quite proficient in grammar, often fail pragmatically in communicative tasks (Kasper, 1979; Trosborg, 1987; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Siegal, 1996). That is to say, a learner with high grammatical proficiency may not necessarily show concomitant pragmatic competence, which suggests a gap exists between L2 classroom teaching/learning and its application outside the classroom. In a conventional L2 course, grammatical items are often taught because they are considered important in themselves, while in practice the communicative validity of the language often takes precedence over grammar in transactions and interactions. As Alexander (1980) pointed out, "Verbal communication is seen to be highly complex for it is recognized that not only are there 'grammatical rules' but rules which are part of the system of social behavior: what we say and how we say it depends

on such factors as what the speakers want to do through language, what their relationship is, what the setting is and so on" (p. 237). Then it follows that in L2 pedagogy there is a need to present, explain, and teach the rules that govern the use of language in context, especially in communicative approach, so as to make the subsection of ILP in the field of second language acquisition less obscure and more teachable.

Up to now, a great deal of research has been done regarding ILP performance, which has definitely contributed substantially to making teachers, students, and curriculum designers aware of the gap between L2 use in classroom and in non-classroom settings. But ILP development is a much less studied area. "We have examined how non-native speakers use their L2 pragmatic competence, but have not explored much how their pragmatic knowledge develops" (Kasper, 1997, p. 121). Therefore "approaches to language instruction and assessment should be informed by theory and research on pragmatic development, but as yet ILP does not have much to offer to second language pedagogy" (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 149). ILP development is a dynamic and on-going process. It may vary from learner to learner at different developmental stages, but among all these interlearner and intralearner ILP diversities and variations, there might be some generalizable and consistent patterns in development. In this respect, some studies have already been done which have comparable findings and which, at the same time, have brought out new issues waiting for further investigation.

Background

Schmidt (1983) is one of the earliest studies of pragmatic development in a second language. This case study is about a Japanese artist (Wes) acquiring communicative ability in English without formal instruction in Hawai'i during a three-year-period. The data were from close observation and tape-recorded dialogues between Wes and the author in natural settings. Schmidt analyzed the learner's accomplishments in terms of a four-part framework of the components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Wes' grammatical control of English had hardly improved at all during the three-year observation period and because of his inadequacy in handling of English grammar, misunderstandings sometimes arose in interactions with native speakers. Sociolinguistically, Wes showed a strong reliance from the beginning on a limited number of speech formulas for directives. *Please* occurs frequently in Wes' early directives sometimes as a politeness marker and sometimes as a communication strategy to indicate a request. He used hints extensively from the beginning, some by mentioning a reason, some by transfer of a Japanese hinting pattern to English. Discourse competence, mainly

conversational and interactional competence, seemed to be Wes' greatest strength in his use of English. This was also the area in which his greatest improvement was observed, from less coherence to the use of structuring elements and striking expressiveness. The frequent strategies he used in conversations over the period were: (a) transfer of Japanese grammatical principles, (b) use of formulaic utterances, (c) paraphrase with associations to context and to real world knowledge, and (d) repetition. Of his two major learning strategies, imitation and rule formation, imitation was more successful. The study showed the subject's impressive progress in communication, but not in competence in English grammar.

Three years later, Schmidt and Frota (1986) did a study on Schmidt's acquisition of Brazilian-Portuguese over a five-month stay in Brazil. This descriptive study dealt with the kind and amount of language that was learned in order to communicate with native speakers, and the way in which both instruction and conversational interaction contributed to learning the language. The study was based on two data sources: the learner's language learning journal and a series of four tape-recorded unstructured conversations in Portuguese between the learner (the first author) and the co-author (native-speaker of Brazilian-Portuguese) of the study. There was an interplay between the sources which complemented and supported each other. Schmidt's use of Portuguese throughout his stay in Brazil was exclusively for social purposes. Repetition, especially other-repetition (imitation), was one of the more obvious characteristics of Schmidt's early conversational behavior in Portuguese. On the whole the influence of the classroom was positive and necessary in providing comprehensible input, but not sufficient. If Schmidt was to learn and use a particular type of verb form, it was not enough for it to have been taught and drilled in class; it was not enough for the form to occur in out-class input either. He had to notice it in the input and consciously used it. The authors found classroom instruction and interaction with native speakers provided input that sometimes led to language learning, but did not guarantee grammaticality nor idiomaticity in the early development stages. One possible explanation is that many or most learners begin language learning with a preference for a telegraphic style, concentrating on content words and letting the details concerning grammaticality and idiomaticity wait. Though a linguist with knowledge of many languages, Schmidt's ability to generalize accurately from formulaics in Portuguese to more productive use was limited, which was the same case with Wes in English. After detailed analysis, the authors attributed the learner's linguistic and communicative progress to a combination of instruction and interaction, and came up with the "conscious notice-the-gap principle" which they thought is an important factor in language acquisition. There were differences between Wes' and Schmidt's learning

contexts and between their respective IL speech act failures, but they both benefited from interactions with native speakers and exposure to the host cultures in ILP development, and their data, as Kasper and Rose (1999) noted, suggest that early pragmatic and morphosyntactic development interact, an area that requires further study.

While the two case studies mentioned above were concerned with the learners' general pragmatic abilities, Ellis' case study (1992) observed only the development of the request speech act by two L2 beginners in classroom settings in the U.K. for more than three school terms. The participants (two boys aged 10 and 11), as Ellis stated, were almost complete beginners in English and were placed in a language unit designed to provide initial instruction in English as preparation for their transfer to local secondary schools. The language aims of the unit were to develop basic interpersonal communication skills in English and then the proficiency to use English for studying school subjects. In this unit, English served not only as the pedagogic target but also as the means for conducting the day-by-day business of the classroom. The data were collected primarily by means of a paper-and-pencil record of the utterances that the learners produced. Ellis investigated the relationship between the opportunities for production that arose in a classroom setting and the development of the participants' requestive speech act. The data showed that both learners relied heavily on internal modification (mainly the lexical item downgrader *please*) rather than external modification and that both of them had a strong preference for conventional over nonconventional indirectness. Most requests in the data emphasized the role of the hearer with a growing tendency in speaker perspective. The results suggested that though considerable development took place over the study period, both learners failed to develop either the full range of request types or a broad declarative knowledge for performing those types they acquired. In other words, they didn't have at their disposal the same dimensions of request realization by which native speakers are known to modify their requests because there was no opportunity to address a non-intimate or socially distant hearer in classrooms, thus no opportunity for elaborated requests and little pressure to develop the sociolinguistic competence needed to vary their choice of request. The constraints of classroom settings, the author suggested, were partly accountable for these failures.

In contrast to the previous studies of beginners, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) conducted a longitudinal study of the change in pragmatic competence in advanced nonnative speakers of English on the two speech acts of suggestion and rejection in academic advising sessions in the U.S.A. The study was done within the framework of *status congruence*—the match of speakers' status and the appropriateness of speech acts. Sixteen graduate students (six NSs of English and 10 NNSs of English) and seven native

English-speaking faculty members took part in the study. A total of 35 advising sessions were taped and transcribed. Because there were both NSs and NNSs taking part, the study had the advantage of displaying the performance differences between the two groups and the progress made by NNSs toward the targetlike linguistic behavior. The data showed that NNSs improved their pragmatic competence in selection of speech acts (more initiated suggestions and less rejections) in advising sessions over time; but they were markedly different from NSs in their realizational implementation (nonnativelike use of aggravators). The authors concluded from the study that for these learners, in the ILP domain, knowing what one needs to do is logically prior to knowing how to do that thing and that knowing how to do that thing takes a much longer time to acquire than does knowing what to do.

Rose's (in press) cross-sectional study is worth mentioning because of its relevance to the study to be reported here with respect to the participants' age, L1 background, data eliciting instrument, and the focused speech act of requests. In this cross-sectional study, Rose looked at different learners at different moments in time and established development by comparing these successive states in different people to provide developmental information in the three speech acts of request, apology, and compliment response. The participants were 2nd, 4th, and 6th graders from a Hong Kong primary school (P-2, P-4, P-6). They were chosen at such grade or age intervals because Rose considered a two-year period to be reasonably long enough to show some progress in the development of ILP in the EFL situation in Hong Kong. The data collection instrument was a cartoon oral-production task intended to elicit the speech acts. The study showed that, in request, conventional indirectness was the most frequent strategy overall, and that directness was the most common among the P-2 group. This confirms the existing evidence for reliance on direct requests in the early stages of pragmatic development. Nonetheless, the frequency of hints in P-2 group was higher than that in P-4 and P-6 groups, which is a bit surprising as this strategy usually comes in a later stage of pragmatic development. There was only minimal use of supportive moves, which consisted mainly of grounders employed by the P-6 participants. This may be indicative of developmental stages in the use of external modification. The data showed virtually no situational variation in request strategy among these groups, which may indicate the precedence of pragmalinguistics over sociopragmatics, and which is in line with Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) conclusion that, in ILP development, knowing what to do is prior to knowing how to do that thing appropriately. One possible reason might be the learners' lack of either declarative or procedural knowledge, or both in English to exhibit such situational variations. Another likely reason might lie in the cartoons and their captions, which might

not have made external as well as internal contextual features like social distance or degree of imposition as salient as they are in natural settings.

There are many other studies concerning ILP performances or ILP development (Bardovi-Harlig & Dornyei, 1998; Cathcart, 1986; Cohen, 1997; House, 1996; Ohta, 1994, 1997; Siegal, 1996; Takahashi, 1996; Walters, 1980). They were either about classroom interactions like that of Ellis (1992), pragmatic transferability, pragmatic versus grammatical awareness, routines and metapragmatic awareness, or the role of learner's subjectivity in ILP competency. Considering the comparability (to be mentioned later) between the participant and speech act in the study to be reported and those in other studies, only the foregoing five studies are reviewed in this paper.

The Study

Following Ellis (1992) and Rose (in press) in observing the ILP development of requests, the present study is based on the data of requests from my daughter (Amy) since she came to Hawai'i about seven months ago. This case study is like that of Schmidt (1983) and Schmidt and Frota (1986) because Amy was exposed to the host language and culture here and had close interactions with native speakers, as Wes and Schmidt did. It is similar to that of Rose (in press) in the sense that Amy was about the same age as the P-6 group in Rose's study and that Amy shared almost the same L1 background with the Hong Kong students, whose L1 was Cantonese, because Cantonese and Mandarin (Amy's L1), though quite different in pronunciation, are almost the same in written form. It also bears some resemblance to Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) since I am interested in observing how Amy progresses in matching request strategies with context and in realizational implementation. Above all, when the study began, Amy was in almost the same situation as the participants in Ellis (1992). She and the two boys were all almost beginners in English, were of almost the same age, and were newly arrived in an English-speaking country. They had formal instruction about and natural interaction with the host language as Schmidt (in Schmidt & Frota, 1986) did, although the nature and the context of the instruction and interaction were somewhat different owing to age and sociocultural differences.

The research questions of the present study are:

1. To what extent did Amy's performance of requests change over time with regard to request realization strategies and modification?
2. How was Amy's request development identical with or different from the participants in previous studies?

METHOD

Participant

Amy was just twelve when she arrived in Honolulu, Hawai'i in July 1998. She had finished fifth grade in China. At the time of the study, she was a six grader in a local primary school in Honolulu. Her first language is Mandarin, and it was the first time she had ever been abroad.

When Amy was about four-years old, I began to teach her some English, as I was a teacher of English myself. I bought her English-learning tapes and books for children compiled by Chinese scholars, and introduced her to the English TV program *Muzzy*. I also helped her learn English from books one and two from a series of four textbooks *Look, Listen, and Learn* by L. G. Alexander. When I left China for Honolulu in August 1997, she had finished fourth grade with no formal English learning in school. She stayed in China and continued to fifth grade, when English began to be taught in her school. Ten months later, I went back to pick her up. She told me that she hadn't learned anything new about English in school. At least in her own perception, what she had learned about English was basically from my home tutoring.

Before she came to Hawai'i, Amy had a limited English vocabulary, which included pronouns, names of the seven days of the week, the four seasons, etc. She had some idea of *be+noun/adjective*, the simple present, and simple past tenses. But they had never become automatic in her linguistic production. In terms of English pragmatic knowledge, she had none except for a few formulaic chunks: *Excuse me. I am sorry. Thank you. May I...?*

Some of the materials I used in tutoring her were based on graded sequences of grammatical structures. The pattern drills were things like: This is a pencil. Is this a pencil? That is a book. Is that a pencil, too? And so forth. There was almost no evidence of practical application in these materials. Some others were based on structural/functional framework and were more interesting to the learner and more communicative. Yet as I tutored Amy at home in my spare time, the tutoring was not carried out on a regular basis, and she wasn't as motivated as she would have been in classrooms where she could practice with her classmates. In spite of all this, the little English she learned in China had laid a preliminary foundation for her later development in ILP. Schmidt and Frota (1986) pointed out, "Without any target language vocabulary and without some rudiments of grammar, a nonnative speaker cannot begin to communicate with native speakers of the target language. At the same time, the ability to carry on conversations is not just a reflection of grammatical competence" (p. 262). So in a strict

sense, Amy was not a complete beginner of English when she first came to Hawai'i, but pragmatically she started from scratch when this study began.

For the first month in Hawai'i, Amy didn't stay at home alone for fear of ringing phones, or go out alone for fear of having to ask for information. I took her to health centers for physical check-ups and to beaches for sightseeing. She later recollected that during these trips she often heard me say, "Would you please...?" to the local people. Later I encouraged her to dial 983-3211 for local time information. About one month after her arrival, I asked her to call our friend in Mililani. She rehearsed the formulas and chunks I gave her, "Hello, could I speak to Aunt D? Hi, Aunt D! How are you?...I am fine, too. Would you please speak to my mom?" before she finally picked up the receiver reluctantly. My friend's husband answered the phone. At first he didn't know who Amy was and couldn't make out who she wanted to speak to. He kept asking at the other end of the phone, "Sorry, who? Sorry, who?" Amy couldn't go on with what she had rehearsed and immediately handed me the receiver. At the end of the call, she showed me her sweaty palms and told me how nervous she was on the phone.

On the one hand, Amy was shy and afraid of speaking to strangers; on the other, she was competitive and anxious to learn. In late August she enrolled in a local school. She has been put in a mainstream class where English is taught as a subject (spelling and writing, but no explicit instruction about pragmatics) and used as a means of instruction. She was also asked to attend a pullout ESL class, but soon got bored with it because she felt she couldn't learn much from it owing to the diversity of the students' age, language background, and English proficiency, and because she missed a lot of content instruction in the mainstream class. At her own request, and on the condition that she passed some tests, she was exited from the pullout ESL class two months later.

At the end of the first day in school here, the teacher asked Amy, "Did you have fun?" She couldn't understand. The teacher repeated the question with fingers on both cheeks to show a smiling face. She still couldn't make out the meaning. In class she couldn't follow the teacher and often needed extra repetition and paralinguistic explanation for homework requirements. In the first spelling test she made three errors out of the thirty words. She felt sad and frustrated. Motivated by a desire to catch up with her classmates in English, she continued learning English from books three and four in *Look, Listen and Learn* with my help. Later she got all the words correct in spelling tests and even helped her classmates solve math problems. In the annual Great World geographic contests (twenty-four in all) held by the school, Amy was one of the five students in her class to participate. The teachers were amazed to see that she could do all the twenty-four tests within two weeks.

Compared with Wes in Schmidt (1983) and Schmidt in Schmidt and Frota (1986), Amy's exposure to the target culture and interactions with the native speakers were not as wide and diverse as theirs in Hawai'i and in Brazil, respectively. For one thing, being a student, her daytime routines were mainly confined to school activities; for another, she was under legal age and dependent on me in many respects. As I am also a learner of English, she couldn't benefit as much from the interactions with me as Wes from his with Schmidt and Schmidt from his with Frota. But she was only 12, beginning a second language at a much younger age than Wes began to learn English and Schmidt Portuguese, which may be advantageous as the maturational state hypothesis predicts that children will be better for second language acquisition (SLA) (Long, 1993). Besides, her school life and academic studies have required and, at the same time, offered increasing interactions with English native speakers in a variety of school situations. This opportunity fulfills what Long (1996) suggested:

(N)egotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers inter-actional adjustments by the NS... facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways (pp. 451-452).

Materials and Procedures

Data for this study were collected by means of two procedures. First I kept a record of what Amy did with English by taking notes from the time she came to Honolulu. But at the time, when I began to analyze the data I had collected, I found the total number (57) of requests was not large enough for an adequate analysis, especially in July, August, and September when school hadn't start yet or when she was just beginning to adjust herself to the new school environment here. At home, we often converse in Mandarin for the sake of convenience and for keeping up our first language. By the end of the year, the winter recess began and extended from December into January. Her requests in these two months were mostly made in familial contexts. Therefore these natural requests are classified into four periods: July-September, October, November, and December-January. They were in paper-and-pencil notes I took at Amy's school when I went to pick her up or when I took part in parental school activities, at home when we made a point of practicing English, or in public places when there were other people present and Amy considered it better to speak in English.

Although the data collected in authentic settings have the potential to shed light on the relationship between social and institutional contexts and pragmatic development, the corpus of data I collected was far from enough to reflect and substantiate Amy's

developmental patterns. What is more, the social and institutional contexts in which these requests occurred were rather limited owing to the constraints of the specific time I went to her school and to the constraints of limited interactional patterns between her and me at home. Therefore, I also collected data by means of an elicitation instrument, a cartoon oral-production task (COPT). This instrument had been developed by Rose (in press) in order to examine speech act realization strategies by EFL students in Hong Kong. In his study every participant was asked to respond to, or to opt out if he/she so chose, thirty cartoons (ten for each speech act of request, apology, and compliment response). Considering the similarities between Amy and the Hong Kong students in age (around ten), L1 background (Cantonese and Mandarin are almost the same in written form), and the speech act to be analyzed, I chose the ten request-eliciting cartoons from Rose (in press) for collecting more requests to reinforce the natural data I was collecting. The ten scenarios are as follows:

1. Siu Keung asks to borrow a pencil from his classmate.
2. Siu Keung asks his father to take him to McDonald's for lunch.
3. Siu Keung asks his classmate to help him with his homework.
4. Siu Keung asks to borrow his friend's bicycle.
5. Siu Keung asks to borrow an eraser from his older brother.
6. Siu Keung asks his classmate to buy him some stationery.
7. Siu Keung asks his older sister to help him with his homework.
8. Siu Keung asks his classmate to give him some M&Ms.
9. Siu Keung asks to use his older brother's Game Boy.
10. Siu Keung asks his father to buy him a new school bag.

These scenarios reflect factors like the social distance between the interactants and the degree of imposition on the addressees, both of which are considered likely to affect linguistic choice. In Rose (in press) every participant responded to each scenario once, and by comparison of the data from the three successive groups, some developmental information was obtained. For the present study, the 10 request-eliciting cartoon tasks were repeated five times at an interval of about one month for a total of 50 requests. The task was implemented between Amy and me at a leisurely pace in the evenings, over weekends, or in winter recess. She was aware of being tape-recorded, but didn't seem to mind it. Each time I transcribed the recordings right after the task was done. This procedure provided an excellent means for the comparison of the requests produced in the five evenly spread out periods because the scenarios were consistent, and because pace and environment variables like noise, the number of persons present, time of the day, the actual place at home, etc. were controlled. Yet it might also have its negative effects, i.e.,

Amy's growing familiarity with the scenarios may blur the picture of development to a certain degree.

Analysis

Data were analyzed according to time sequence. For the natural data, time was divided into four periods as I explained above: period 1 (July - September), period 2 (October), period 3 (November), and period 4 (December - January). For the elicited data, time sequence was based on the five dates on which the task was carried out (September 5, October 3, November 14, December 30, and January 24). These five dates seemed to correlate with the four periods in the natural data, respectively, except the last two dates, which fit together into period 4. Following the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka, House, Kasper, 1989, pp. 273-294), the nine request strategies below are ordered according to decreasing degree of directness. The examples are taken from the data unless otherwise noted.

1. Mood derivable. The grammatical mood of the locution conventionally determines its illocutionary force as a request. The prototypical form is the imperative.
Help me, please!
2. Explicit performative. The illocutionary intent is explicitly named by the speaker by using a relevant illocutionary verb.
I am asking you to move your car (from the coding manual).
3. Hedged performative. The illocutionary verb denoting the requestive intent is modified by modal verbs or verbs expressing intention.
I would like to ask you to present your paper a week earlier (from coding manual).
4. Locution derivable. The illocutionary intent is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.
You must be hurry.
5. Want statement. The utterance expresses the speaker's desire that the event denoted in the proposition come about.
I want you to quick.
6. Suggestory formula. The illocutionary intent is phrased as a suggestion by means of a framing routine formula.
Let's go out, OK?
7. Preparatory. The utterance contains reference to a preparatory condition for the feasibility of the request, typically one of ability, willingness, or possibility, as conventionalized in the given language.
Would you please buy me some pencils and erasers?

8. Strong hint. The illocutionary intent is not immediately derivable from the locution; however, the locution refers to relevant elements of the intended illocutionary and/or propositional act.

(intent: asking the interlocutor to take out the garbage)

I think the garbage bag may be thrown out.

9. Mild hint. The locution contains no elements which are of immediate relevance to the intended illocution or proposition.

(intent: getting the hearer to buy a telescope for her)

Do you think I like the stars, sky, sun, moon...?

The first five strategies are considered direct, the following two conventionally indirect, and the two hints nonconventionally indirect.

Apart from request strategies, learners' ILP development in requests may be demonstrated in the use of internal and external modification. According to Faerch and Kasper (1989), internal modification includes syntactic downgraders (such as interrogative or conditional structures, negation, tense, and aspect markings), and lexical/phrasal downgraders, comprising a large number of mitigating devices (such as politeness markers, hedgers, subjectivizers, and many others). They defined external request modification as supportive moves like grounders, preparators, disarmers, imposition minimizers, etc. In this study, both data types indicated that the majority of internal modification was the lexical politeness marker *please* and the overwhelming external modification was grounders. Therefore, internal modification was simply classified into two categories (syntactic downgrader and lexical/phrasal downgraders), and external modification was grouped into either *grounder* or *others* categories.

Request development can also be observed in request perspectives: hearer, speaker, both, or impersonal. The following examples (from the data unless otherwise noted) illustrate these four perspectives:

Hearer: Would you please tell me where is the office?

Speaker: Can I have a quarter, please?

Both hearer and speaker: Let's ask Mr. P, OK?

Impersonal: Can one ask for a little quiet? (from the coding manual)

In comparing the data, I found that natural requests were considerably shorter than the elicited ones. Length differences also existed among the five rounds of the elicited data. Therefore, based on word-unit, length comparison was made between the natural and elicited data sources, and within the five rounds of the elicited data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question one: 1. To what extent did Amy's performance of requests change over time with regard to request realization strategies and modification?

In order to answer this question, observed and elicited requests were analyzed for request strategies, internal and external modification, request perspective, and differences in request length.

Request Strategies

In request strategies (see Tables 1 & 2), the natural data display a rather skewed distribution in terms of directness with the direct (40%), and the conventionally indirect (42.4%) dominating, and the non-conventionally indirect the lowest (17.7%). A close look at the four periods reveals that there is a tendency towards increasing use of mood derivable, and hints. A bit different from the natural data in Table 1, the elicited data in Table 2 indicate a bell curve with the respect to directness with the direct being 6%, conventionally indirect 94%, and non-conventionally indirect 0%. Among the nine strategies, the frequency of the preparatory forms is overwhelming (90%). Both sources of data confirm, in terms of the preparatory forms, the statement by Faerch and Kasper (1989) that "the most widely used request strategy is conventional indirectness in the form of query preparatory procedure" (pp. 222-223). Even among the query preparatory forms, the elicited data show a sharp decline in the use of *Would you please...?* among the first three rounds. Of the ten cartoon-elicited requests, nine are made with *Would you please...?*, and only one with *I am glad that if you...* in the first round; in the second round, six are with *Would you please...?*, and the other four with the forms *I am glad and it would be better if you...*, *Let's ...*, *OK?*, *Please borrow me your...*, *OK?*, and *May I ...?*, respectively; in the third round, only four are with *Would you please...?*, and they are all concerned with requests of higher degree of imposition such as solving a problem, helping with homework, buying pencils, or a new school bag. For the other six, five are with *May I...?* for borrowing pencils, erasers, etc. and one with *Let's...*, *OK?* But then the decline seems to fluctuate a little bit. In the fourth round, five requests begin with *May I...?* and five with *Would you please...?* In the fifth, five are made in *May I...?*, two with *Can you...?*, two with *Could/Would you please...?*, and one with *Can I...?*

Table 1

Request Strategies in Natural Data

Strategy→	Direct 40%					Conventionally Indirect 42.4%		Nonconventionally Indirect 17.7%	
Time↓	MD	EP	HP	LD	WS	SF	P	SH	MH
	N %	N %		N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %
Jul-Sept	2 3.5						4 7		
Oct.	4 7	1 1.8			1 1.8	1 1.8	4 7	3 5.3	
Nov.	5 8.8			2 3.5			3 5.3	2 3.5	1 1.8
Dec-Jan	7 12			1 1.8		3 5.3	9 16	3 5.3	1 1.8

Note: MD=Mood derivable, EP=Explicit performative, HP=Hedged performative, LD=Locution derivable, WS=Want statement, SF=Suggestory formulae, P=Preparatory, SH=Strong hint, MH=Mild hint

Table 2

Request Strategies in Elicited Data

Strategy→	Direct 6%					Conventionally Indirect 94%		Nonconventionally Indirect 0%	
Round ↓	MD	EP	HP	LD	WS	SF	P	SH	MH
	N %		N %			N %	N %		
1			1 2				9 18		
2	1 2		1 2			1 2	7 14		
3						1 2	9 18		
4							10 20		
5							10 20		

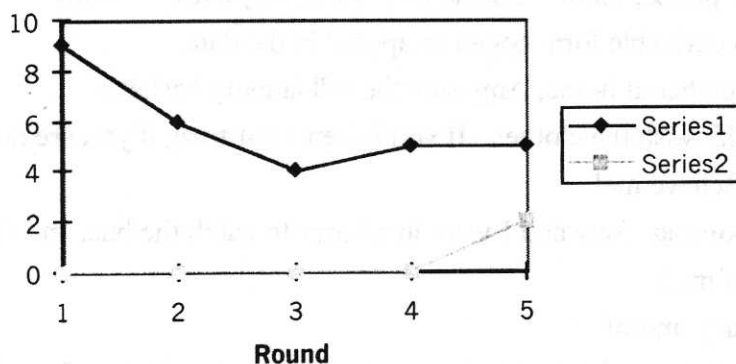
Note: MD=Mood derivable, EP=Explicit performative, HP=Hedged performative, LD=Locution derivable, WS=Want statement, SF=Suggestory formulae, P=Preparatory, SH=Strong hint, MH=Mild hint

Generally speaking, *Can you...?* appears prior to *Would you...?* in learners' query preparatory requests (Schmidt, 1983; Ellis, 1992; Rose, in press). But with Amy, *Can you...?* was produced at a much later stage than *Would you please...?*, as indicated in Figure 1. I assume that this is closely linked to the input she got. She learned the formula *May I...?* in China before she came here. In early July, shortly after her arrival, Amy went to the post office with me. Despite her unwillingness, I let her do the transaction. She

thought for a while (I think she was rehearsing) and then asked the clerk, "May you give me a stamp? This is the money." That was the first request she ever made in English to a stranger. Here she generalized *May I...?* to the hearer's perspective "May you...?"

Figure 1

Frequency Comparison of Would You...? and Can You...? in Elicited Data



Note: Series 1 - *Would you please...?* Series 2 - *Can you...?*

When she first got to Honolulu, the only person she had regular contact with was me and the English requestive formula she heard most from me was *Would you...?* when I made requests to the local people here. Then she used this formula indiscriminately whenever she made a request.

In the elicited data in September:

Would you please, would you please lend...lend me your rubber?

Would you please buy this bag, this new bag to me?

In the natural data from July to September:

Would you please tell me where, where is ESL classroom?

Would you please quick, mom!

Amy started making requests in English in Hawai'i with *May you...?*, which was a generalization of what she learned in classroom in China. After hearing me make requests to local people many times, however, she picked up *Would you please...?*, which turned out to be what she used most at the early stage.

After Amy attended the local school for about a month or so, more and more of her requests were in the mood derivable form. One day after school she said to me while she was doing her homework: "Help me please, mom!" At the Back to School Night I heard her say, "Give me the pencil, give me the pencil!" to her classmate. It seemed that the query preparatory form *Would you please...?* was no longer Amy's only linguistic means

in making requests. She began to use mood derivable form and show some control in the request strategies in accordance with the obligation and right between the interlocutors and the degree of imposition. When she considered the hearer obliged to implement the request, she often chose mood derivable as in "Give me the pencil!" When she expected a request with a high degree of imposition on the hearer who didn't necessarily have the obligation to comply with it, she would also use mood derivable with the politeness marker *please* as in "Help me, please, mom!" instead of *Would you please...?* only.

By November the locution derivable form began to appear in the data.

- (One Saturday in November at home, Amy saw the full laundry basket.)

Amy: Mom, you should wash the clothes. If you haven't got time, if you are not free, I can help you. Believe me!

- (One early Tuesday morning, Amy and I were in a hurry to catch the bus, and she was running in front of me.)

Amy: You must be hurry, mom!

Now Amy depended more on the situation in making her requests rather than on formulas. She might consider doing laundry was my responsibility and that as a dependent she had the right to ask me for a change of clean clothes. She used *You should...* to imply the hearer's obligation and the speaker's right. But to compensate for the face-threatening effects, she modified the request with the cost minimizer to sweeten the imposition: "If you haven't...I can..." In the catching-bus context, the requirement of being at school on time was the most salient demanding force. Amy used "You must be hurry" to indicate a request from the exterior environment. Obviously she was not yet clear about the parts of speech for *hurry*.

However, she didn't replace the query preparatory form *Would you please...?* with the strategies at the direct level randomly.

- (On the school playground, Amy asked her classmate to take care of her backpack while she went upstairs to her classroom.)

Amy: Would you please hold this for me?

Being her classmate doesn't entail taking care of her backpack. Therefore what Amy asked from the classmate was not an obligation, but a favor. In order to increase the likelihood of a positive response, she encoded her request in a preparatory strategy, which sounded more polite and at the same time transparent.

According to the natural data, the continuum of the level of directness also spreads in the other direction towards nonconventionally indirect strategies (hints) at a later stage. One day after John Glenn's return from his second trip to space, Amy and I were in a

store at a shopping center. She was glued to a telescope and lingered around it for a long time before asking me:

Amy: Mom, do you think I like the stars, sky, the moon, sun, ...astronaut?

M: astronomy

Amy: Do you think I like astronomy?

M: Yes.

Amy: Yes, I like it very much. If I want you to buy this tele..tele..

M: telescope

Amy: If I want you to buy this telescope, are you going to buy it for me? It's very good.

Amy knew from the price tag that the telescope was rather expensive. The request would be of a high degree of imposition on me and might be met with a refusal. She proceeded from appealing to my concern about her interest. When the mild hint failed, she resumed her request in the preparatory strategy with external conditional modification to assess the possibility and my willingness to comply with the request (If I want you to buy this telescope, are you going to buy it for me?). She might wish to indicate that she was pessimistic with regard to the outcome of the request or that she felt hesitant about making the request. At the end, she added the external modification of grounder "It's very good" as a supportive move. There are not many instances like this in the data. Still, this one shows that Amy is becoming more at home in handling requests of high imposition.

Lately, Amy seems to be able to use different modal verbs for different situations.

- (In the class the teacher asks the students to mark the articles they have chosen red if they are positive and blue if they are negative.)

Amy: (to her neighbour) Could you help me find out if this article is positive or negative?

- (Before the band lesson begins, Amy sees a vacant seat beside one of her classmates)

Amy: (to her classmate) May I sit here?

- (At home Amy has been asking me a lot of questions while I am in the middle of something, so I am getting impatient.)

Amy: (to me) Can you speak softly?

Amy might have interpreted the three contexts in the following ways. In seeking for help which the addressee is not obliged to supply, the modal verb *could* is acceptably polite; seeing me getting unreasonably impatient, she used *can* to convey a mild reproach; and since asking for permission to sit next to somebody doesn't actually impose much on the

hearer, she considered *may* polite enough. I have never asked her about her perception of the differences between the modal verbs. I think she acquired an implicit knowledge about them through interactions with her classmates and teachers, although she is probably not yet able to articulate it.

Unlike the natural data, the elicited data don't have much to say about the diversity of request strategies, though they also show a strong preference for conventional indirectness as the natural data do. The overwhelming requestive forms in the elicited data are in the query preparatory forms of *Would you please...?* and *May I...?* even to the end of the observation period.

Internal Modification

The two data sources agree with each other about the high frequency of the lexical downgrader and politeness marker *please*, and the rare occurrence of syntactic downgraders (Tables 3 & 4). It seems a little surprising that for the first two rounds in the elicited data, Amy used conditional structures as internal modification in Scenario Eight, *asking a classmate for M&M chocolate*. When I checked the tape again, I found that there were instructional effects here. At first, Amy said in real situations she would never ask her classmates here for something to eat. It is understandable because she was not familiar with them yet. In order to elicit the request, I encouraged her by giving her the formula *I would be glad if...* (I myself did not realize that, to native speakers, the formula is too formal for such a low imposition request). As she had also asked and got some information from me about *that + clause* previously, she made the request in the mixed form "I'm glad that if you could give me some M&M chocolate." For the second round, perhaps she still remembered what I had taught her and encoded the request in "I am glad and it would be better if you give me some M&M chocolate." So I would say that her use of this conditional internal modification device is a pure imitation. In the last two rounds she made the request "May I have some M&M chocolate, please?" for the same scenario. She even added in the fifth round that she would repeat "please, please, please!" if she met with a refusal because she heard her classmates say so.

Table 3

Internal Modification in Natural Data

Time	Syntactic downgraders		Lexical/Phrasal downgraders	
	N	%	N	%
July - September			3	5.3
October			2	3.5
November	1	1.7	2	3.5
December - January	1	1.7	8	14

Table 4

Internal Modification in Elicited Data

Round	Syntactic downgraders		Lexical/Phrasal downgraders	
	N	%	N	%
1	1	2	9	18
2	1	2	9	18
3			5	10
4			5	10
5			2	4

The prevailing internal modification device in both data sources is the politeness marker *please*, because it is embedded in the formula *Would/Could you please...?* which Amy used extensively and because she often added it to a mood derivable as an after-thought mitigator. One day at the dinner table at home, Amy asked me to pass her the salt, "Pass me the salt." As I didn't respond promptly, which she took as a refusal, she added, "Pass me the salt, please!" Faerch and Kasper (1989) attributed the learners' preference for the politeness marker to its double function as illocutionary force indicator and transparent mitigator and to its flexible syntactical position.

External Modification

As Amy had already had some English vocabulary and rudimentary knowledge about English grammar before she came to Hawai'i, she was in a position to provide grounders for her requests when this study began. What is a little strange is that the elicited data have plenty of grounders while in the natural data there are only a few. Also contrary to what I had expected, this kind of external modification is shrinking instead of growing over the observation period (see Tables 5 & 6).

Table 5

External Modification in Natural Data

Time	Grounders		Others	
	N	%	N	%
July - September	3	5		
October				
November			1	1.7
December - January	1	1.7	1	1.7

Table 6

External Modification in Elicited Data

Round	Grounders		Others	
	N	%	N	%
1	8	16	2	4
2	8	16	1	2
3	6	12		
4	2	4	3	6
5	2	4	3	6

The following are the production for the same scenario in the five rounds of the elicited data:

(Scenario one: Siu Keung asks to borrow a pencil from his classmate.)

- Round 1

Amy: Excuse me, Sue! Today I forgot my pencils. So er...would you please uhm... lend me a piece of your pencils, a piece your pencil?

- Round 2

Amy: Excuse me, Sue! Have you got two pencils? Uhm...uhm...I forgot my pencils in my ...in my home, you know. Would you please borrow me one?

- Round 3

Amy: Excuse me, Sue! May I borrow a pencil?

- Round 4

Amy: May I have a pencil, please?

- Round 5

Amy: Can I borrow a pencil?

There is a grounder and a pause before the request and self-correction after it in the first round; in the second there is a preparatory, pause, a grounder before the request. In retrospect, Amy said she paused not because she was hesitant about making the request, but because she was not sure what to say next. So pause here is a device for holding the floor and gaining the time for linguistic means. In the third round, there are no pauses or grounders. What is common in the first three rounds is that there is always an attention getter *Excuse me*. In the fourth and fifth, there are no grounders, pauses, or attention getters whatsoever. The modal verb *can* replaces *may* and the use of the politeness marker *please* is reduced to zero in the last round. It is hard to say whether the decrease in grounders and in degree of politeness was due to the growing familiarity with the scenario or due to the improved pragmatic ability with less waffling and better control of politeness with regard to request imposition and interlocutors' relationship.

Table 7
Request Perspectives in Natural Data

Time	Hearer		Speaker		Hearer & Speaker		Impersonal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
July - September	6	10.5	3	5				
October	9	15.7	4	7	1	1.7		
November	8	14	2	3.5				
December - January	13	23	9	15.8	2	3.5		

Table 8
Request Perspectives in Elicited Data

Round	Hearer		Speaker		Speaker & Hearer		Impersonal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	9	18	2	4				
2	7	14	1	2	1	2		
3	4	8	5	10	1	2		
4	5	10	5	10				
5	6	12	4	8				

Request Perspective

Request perspective, together with strategies and modification, also shows some development. It reflects how the learner correlates the agent with the proposition and the situation. Tables 7 and 8 show that *Hearer* was the most preferred, but as time went on, there was a growing tendency to spread out toward *Speaker*, and *Hearer & Speaker* perspectives. Analysis shows that this effect is mainly due to the gradually diversified request forms from high frequency of *Would you please...?* to *May I...?* and *Let's..., OK?* These formulas made it possible for Amy to choose among different perspectives. At first she seemed to request without any control over perspective. Later she used *Hearer* in *Would you please...?* when she perceived a high degree of imposition, *Speaker* in *May I...?* if the request was of low imposition, and *Hearer & Speaker* if she thought the request was beneficial to both sides.

Would you please buy the school bag for me?

May I borrow you pen?

Let's go to McDonald's, OK?

To the addressees, buying a school bag is more demanding than lending a pen, so she used the formula *Would you please...?* in the hearer's perspective in the first example and *May I...?* in the speaker's perspective for borrowing a pen. As she thought going to McDonald's for something to eat was desirable for both interlocutors, Amy used the suggestory formula in hearer-speaker perspective. But over the whole observation period no request in the data was made in the impersonal perspective.

Request Length

Request length is another indicator of learners' ILP progress. Beginners tend to be telegraphic and focus on content words (Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Ellis, 1992), while pre-intermediate or intermediate learners are apt to waffle and take a the-more-the-better approach in order to implement a playing-it-safe strategy (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). As is shown in Table 9, the shortest request in the elicited data is the five-word long "May I use your eraser?" In the natural data, the shortest is the two-word long "Pencil, please!" Obviously, the elicited requests are much more wordy than the natural requests with means of 18.40 and 9.25, respectively. On the other hand, verbosity tends to shrink within the five rounds in the elicited data. The number (10) of the requests is the same for each round, but the number of total words drops from 248 in the first round to 104 in the fifth, reduced by more than 50%. Moreover, the standard deviations (SD) indicate that the elicited data have wider dispersion in the number of words around the mean than the natural data do, and the dispersion around the mean within the elicited data tends to

narrow in the fourth and fifth rounds. That is to say, the length of the elicited data varies more than that of the natural data, and the requests at later stages are more constant in length than those in earlier periods. Decreasing use of grounders in the elicited data, in part, accounts for the fact that the requests are getting shorter over the observation time as is shown in Table 10.

Table 9

Comparison of the Request Length Between the Two Data Sources

Sources	Number of Requests	Number of words				Total
		Shortest	Longest	Mean	SD	
Natural	57	2	23	9.25	5.89	527
Elicited	50	5	43	18.40	9.78	920

Table 10

Comparison of the Request Length in Five Cartoon Rounds of the Elicited Data

Rounds	Number of words				
	Shortest	Longest	Mean	SD	Total
1	15	34	24.8	5.3	248
2	8	43	27.2	11.5	272
3	6	30	15.6	7.8	156
4	7	27	14.0	5.5	140
5	5	18	10.4	4.2	104

So far, Amy's change in the speech act of request has been considered in terms of request strategies, internal and external modification, request perspective, and request length, which all converge to show her growing pragmatic ability in making requests.

Research question two: 2. How was Amy's request development identical with or different from the participants in previous studies?

Similarities:

- Heavy reliance on formulas. In the literature covered at the beginning of this paper, Wes (Schmidt, 1983), Schmidt (Schmidt & Frota, 1986), the Hong Kong students (Rose, in press), and the two boys (Ellis, 1992) all relied on a limited number of speech formulas in their early requests, and so did Amy. She used the *May I/you...* and *Would you...* formulas almost exclusively in the first month in Hawai'i. Even

when she was not ready with lexical items for the proposition, she just started the requests with them and paused or stumbled later, e.g., "Would you please...would you please...borrow me...lend me your...your Game Boy?" Formulas are favored by beginners because they require little linguistic processing and psychological preparation. They are like ready-made springboards where learners can get started.

- Predominant use of the request strategies at conventional indirectness. Amy, like the participants in Rose (in press), encoded the majority of her requests at the level of conventional indirectness. This is not only the case with some beginners, but also true of some advanced L2 learners (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). One assumption is that at this level there are more formulas (*Would/Could you please...? May I...? Can I/you...?* etc.) on which learners can safely rely than at direct and nonconventional indirect levels. Another assumption might be that the requests at this level are both polite and transparent, thus more acceptable and easier to process for the hearer.
- High frequency of the politeness marker *please*. As with the participants in other interlanguage pragmatic studies, Amy used *please* a lot as a lexical mitigator or illocutionary force indicator. Faerch and Kasper (1989) explained this phenomenon:

Language learners tend to adhere to the conversational principle of clarity, choosing explicit, transparent, unambiguous means of expression rather than implicit, opaque, and ambiguous realization. These qualities are exactly fulfilled by the politeness marker, in comparison with alternative lexical/phrasal downgraders (p. 233).
- Request strategies prior to realizational linguistic means. Like the participants in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993), Amy also first got more familiar with matching requestive strategies with the context, but lacked the use of tense aspect, hedgers, subjectivizers as downgraders, e.g., "Mom, you should wash the clothes." She knew the obligation of the hearer and the right of the speaker. She chose the right request strategy, but the wording sounded so strong and so aggravating. As there is no data from native speakers of the same age, it is not known whether this is an interlanguage pragmatic issue or age-graded phenomenon.
- Imitation as a successful learning strategy. Of the two learning strategies, imitation and generalization, both Wes (Schmidt, 1983) and Schmidt (Schmidt & Frota, 1986) were more successful in imitation, and it is the same with Amy. In the first request Amy ever made in English after coming to Honolulu, she generalized the formula *May I...?* to *May you...?* But later after hearing *Would you please...?* many times from me, she sometimes seemed able to utter a complete, grammatically correct, and pragmatically appropriate request. One day at a museum she asked a lady, "Would

you please tell me if there is a bathroom around here?" which is an exact imitation of what I had said several times to the local people while I took her out.

- Function of conscious noticing. In a sense Amy's learning process is identical with that of Schmidt (Schmidt & Frota, 1986), and confirms Schmidt and Frota's position on the function of conscious noticing. The other day, Amy told me what had happened in her class. The teacher asked, "FRIENDLY to HOSTILE equals VALUABLE to WHAT?" Some students said "free"; some said "cheap." Then Amy came up with "WORTHLESS." She told me that she had heard one of her classmates use this word the previous day when a boy threw a bunch of cards into the air and she tried to pick them up. "They are worthless cards, Amy. Don't take them." She also told me that *Hello* can not only be used as a greeting but also as an attention getter. Her classmates often walk quite close to a person and say "Hello" in his/her face if s/he fails to hear them. In early December, Amy and I were in my study room at Burns Hall. Amy asked me, "Mom, just now you said 'No, not at all.' to the American student when she wanted to borrow your umbrella, but then you gave it to her." At first I was a bit puzzled. Then I remembered that the American student had said "Do you mind lending me your umbrella for a while?" and explained the meaning to her. Later that day at home, while she was busy doing her invention project, she said to me, "Mom, do you mind give me a piece of paper?" Grammatically this sentence is wrong, and pragmatically this formula is a bit too marked for this minor request, yet this, together with the *Hello* instance, is a good example of how conscious noticing and keen observation contribute to diversifying linguistic devices of request.

However, there are also devices she noticed but did not use.

- (The class is under way. Two students are talking while the teacher is explaining how to do a timetable.)

Teacher: M. and H., I would appreciate it if you stopped talking and listened to me.

From the context Amy understood the illocutionary force. Compared with what she would usually say and what she heard then, she noticed the tense difference. She memorized the sentence so as to ask me for explanation, but she has never used the subjunctive mood in her requests up to now. One reason might be its low frequency in daily input. That is to say, sometimes noticing is not enough unless the gap repeatedly occurs and confirms what the learner notices.

Differences

- **Acquisitional sequence of requestive strategies.** At the early stage, Wes and the Hong Kong students used more direct requests than preparatory ones and applied hints in requests from the beginning of the observation period. Amy, on the other hand, used more preparatory forms in the early stage than direct requests and came to use hint strategies only at a later stage. Comparison suggests that there is no hierarchical sequence as to which request strategy is acquired first, but the learners' acquisition of these strategies seems to be related to the input they receive. If there is no specific input concerning a strategy, learners tend to use a telegraphic learning style and focus on content words.
- **Sensitivity to situational factors.** In Rose's study (in press), there is little evidence of sensitivity to social status and degree of imposition differences in the choice of request strategies. Amy, though not at first, began to be sensitive to degrees of imposition, but has not displayed sensitivity to social status up to now. Presumably, growing to be a teenager, Amy's perception of request imposition was becoming more socially mature. Besides, she was in an ESL situation and the exposure to the target language and culture helped her comprehend the shades of difference among different strategies and lexical items. As yet, like the two boys in Ellis (1992), she didn't have the chance to make requests to unfamiliar hearers in school surroundings and family environment, so she was not sensitive to social status, either.
- **Decrease in the use of grounders.** The P-6 group in Rose (in press) used more grounders than the P-2 and P-4 groups, which is indicative of developmental stages in the use of external modification. Nonetheless, Amy's use of grounders tended to shrink over the observation period. I am not sure whether it is common that the use of this external modification device increases together with learners' growing linguistic proficiency in the early stage and decreases to a certain point as learners are becoming pragmatically competent. If it is, then the ascending tendency of grounders in Rose (in press) and the declining tendency in this study are not contradictory but complementary to each other, because the ending point (P-6) in Rose (in press) is the starting position (Amy was a six-grader when this study began) for the present study.

CONCLUSION

This case study of ILP development of requests is based on the natural (field-notes) and elicited (tape-recorded cartoon oral task) data from my daughter, Amy, over her seven-month stay in Hawai'i. The first research question was: To what extent did Amy's

performance of requests change over the time? The analysis and results of the data show that there was a shift from the conventional indirectness (primarily the query preparatory forms) to the directness (mostly the mood derivable form) and nonconventional indirectness (both strong and mild hints) in accordance with the degree of request imposition and obligation/right of the interlocutors, but no variation in request strategies and linguistic forms was observed in the respect of the social distance between the interlocutors. For request modification, the politeness marker *please* was consistently the primary internal modification device. There was a decrease in the use of grounders as external modification over the time, which might be a sign of improved pragmatic ability with less waffling. The request perspective tended to be diverse and the request length was becoming shorter. However, Amy had not developed a full range of request strategies and the linguistic devices she used were rather limited.

The second research question was: How was Amy's request development identical with or different from the participants in the related literature? Amy's early reliance on speech formulas, the overwhelming use of conventional indirect strategies and the politeness marker *please*, the improvement in strategies prior to that in realizational linguistic means, the imitation learning strategy, and the function of conscious noticing are consistent with the findings in previous studies.

However, while some studies showed that beginners usually start with direct strategies in making requests and apply nonconventional indirectness of hints in the early stages, Amy encoded her first English requests in the preparatory forms and didn't use hint strategy until a later stage. This seems to suggest that there is no fixed order in the acquisition of request strategies, and that how learners get started depends on what kind of input available to them. Sensitivity to degree of imposition and decreasing use of grounders are two other differences from the findings in previous studies, but they might be due to the different developmental stages.

Implications

Methodologically, for a case study, one data-gathering source is not enough to have a clear picture of change over time because each data collecting method has its constraints which may restrict the data to a certain degree. What is evidenced in one method might be concealed in another. For the present study, only the natural data indicate the spread toward nonconventionally indirect hints, and only the elicited data show frequent use of grounders and a gradual decline in its use. What is more, the elicited requests, though getting shorter over the time, are considerably longer than the natural ones.

Pedagogically, conscious noticing, and supporting environment like peer influence and repeated input are important factors in developing a full range of request strategies and varied linguistic devices of modification. It seems to me that Amy acquired most of her request strategies through interactions with her classmates and teachers. As the school routines are rather structured, the frequency of the same input is pretty high. Also, the exercises accompanying the textbooks, *Look, Listen, and Learn*, often put Amy on the alert for new linguistic forms in daily life interactions and raised her metalinguistic consciousness.

Limitations

This is a case study of one participant within a short period of time. Amy's personal characteristics and background make the findings less generalizable, because communicative competence is closely tied to cognitive ability and social experience (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). When Amy came to Hawai'i, she had already had a solid foundation in her first language. Literacy ability and cognitive experience in L1, according to Cummins (1981), can be transferred to the process of second language learning. In terms of age, she is only 12 with a large capacity to learn and with much to be learned not only linguistically, but also socially and scientifically. In addition, as her mother and intimate interactant, I may have influenced her to a certain degree.

Because of the constraints of the time, I collected the authentic data in school, and as a result, this study falls short of presenting a whole picture of Amy's requestive production. I never had the chance to observe how she made requests to her classmates in group activities, which require elaborate negotiation and interactions. A clearer picture of ILP development in requestive speech acts would require studies in full discourse contexts.

As there are no data in this study from native-speakers in the same age group, it is hard to say whether Amy's progress in requestive speech acts is learner-specific or age-specific. It would be better for future studies to include both NSs and NNSs at about the same age, as Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) did, so as to have a more precise and clearer picture of ILP development in the speech act of requests.

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