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"THANK YOU" AND "NO, NO":

COMMUNICATIVE CONTEXT AND CHINESE PERCEPTIONS OF AND RESPONSES TO AMERICAN ENGLISH COMPLIMENTS

A Dissertation

Presented for

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to
my parents,
Mr. Lang Yulin and Mrs.Guan Qihuan
and my brother and his wife
Mr. Lang Weihua and Mrs. Ma Yanling
For their loving support by taking care of my son, Jonathan Lang.

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies of American English compliments and responses have suggested that the major communicative function of compliments in American English culture is to create and reinforce solidarity between interlocutors in conversations. The purpose of this study was to gather The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of and responses to American English compliments, in order to determine to what degree they understand the communicative functions of American English compliments given in various contexts. This study explored further the interactive effects of contextual factors such as status, gender, and particular compliment topics, on Chinese students' perceptions of American English compliments.

This study specified perceptions of the American English compliments as perceptions of politeness functions in discourse context. Data were obtained from a questionnaire originally designed by the researcher. The questionnaire asked the Chinese students to indicate their perceptions of the various politeness and discourse functions of the compliments given in eight hypothetical situations, and to give written replies to them. Fifty Mainland Chinese students responded to the questionnaire.

The study found that the Chinese students in this study perceived American English compliments as formal politeness acts that were not to be taken for their truth values. They, therefore, chose either American formal politeness strategies (e.g. saying "Thank you") or Chinese formal politeness strategies (e.g. giving modest replies) in their responses. This study further found that status, gender, and particular compliment types were important contextual factors interacting to affect Chinese students' perceptions of

the discourse functions of American English compliments, such as formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and judgmentalness. For example, the respondents perceived the compliments given by high-status speakers on the topic of performance to be more formal, serious, evaluative, and judgmental than those given by equal-status speakers.

A major implication of this study is that Mainland Chinese students are sociolinguistically sensitive to American English compliments, and may be more so than Americans. It is important and necessary, therefore, that ESL teachers be aware of the cultural differences underlying particular speech acts such as complimenting, when they teach students from other cultural backgrounds to use English compliments.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Complimenting is a clearly named, distinctly defined, and readily recognizable English speech act in many English-speaking countries. Holmes (1987) defines complimenting as "a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer" (p.485). Herbert (1990) conceptualizes giving and responding to a compliment as a two-unit turn in a speech event, in which the compliment and the response are linked by temporal and relevant conditions, as shown in the following two examples:

1) A: That's a beautiful sweater.

B. Thanks, my sister made it for me.

2) A: You look very nice today.

B: I'm in such a hurry though.

As common as compliments are in American mainstream society, learning to respond appropriately to various types of compliments is especially important for foreign learners of American English. It is, however, a troublesome cultural element of American English to acquire. For example, learners from many Asian cultures often find it difficult to understand why Americans give compliments so frequently and why Americans always seem so interested in personal appearances such as nice looks or new clothes. It is, therefore, important and necessary that ESL teachers and researchers understand the difficulties of English learners who came from different cultural backgrounds in

acquiring particular English speech acts, such as complimenting and responding to compliments.

Statement of the Problem

Previous studies of Chinese responses to English compliments suggest that Chinese tend to reject English compliments. Liu's (1994) study of 20 Mainland Chinese students at the Oklahoma State University reported that 70% of them said "No! No" to reject English compliments in natural conversations. Chiang and Pochtrager (1993), who studied the compliment responses of 15 Mainland Chinese females in New York City, reported that 69% of their responses were either denials (e.g. "No, not at all," "No, my baby is ugly") or negative accounts (e.g. "The house is a bit too small for us"). Their study also indicated that Chinese females were especially negative toward appearance-related compliments, for 62% denial responses were made to appearance-related compliments. Although only 10% denial responses were given to performance compliments, 59% responses indicated a sense of duty (e.g. "It is my duty") or emphasized a need for further improvement (e.g. "I still need a lot of improvement").

Wolfson (1989b), who analyzed a number of non-native English speaker compliment responses, suggested that the reason that non-native English speakers have difficulties in responding to American English compliments is that they lack sociolinguistic knowledge of complimenting in the American English culture. That is, they do not know when, where, how, to whom, and why Americans use a compliment, hence they do not know how to respond to it.

Based on her own studies of English speech acts such as invitation (Wolfson,

1978) and compliments (Wolfson,1980; 1983), Wolfson (1990b) proposed that social distance was a major discourse variable affecting American English speech patterns in general. Though not clearly defined, social distance was used by Wolfson (1989a) as a cover term for many features that interacted with it, such as age, sex, ethnic background, and relative social status. For example, status was found to be a major variable affecting performance compliments exchanged at work places (Wolfson, 1981a), and gender was found overriding status to affect appearance compliments between males and females (Wolfson, 1984). Given that status, gender, and compliment topic affected patterns of American English compliments, this study sought to gather how Mainland Chinese students perceive the communicative functions of American English compliments given in various contexts in order to explore further whether and how the same factors that affect American English compliments and responses may also affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of and responses to American English compliments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gather data from the Mainland Chinese students who were enrolled in The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the spring semester of 1998, regarding their perceptions of and responses to American English compliments. Specifically, this study sought to solve the following problems:

1. how Mainland Chinese students perceive the various politeness-related functions of American English compliments.
2. how status, gender, and particular compliment types may affect their perceptions of the various discourse functions of American English compliments.

3. what types of pragmatic strategies Chinese students are likely to use in response to particular types of American English compliments.

Significance of the Study

Cross-cultural studies of compliment responses being conducted in the past two decades have found strong evidence on how miscommunication often occurs due to second language learners' misapplications of discourse rules when responding to English compliments (Daikuhara, 1986; Liu, 1993). Holmes and Brown (1987) identified such misuses as pragmatic failures (i.e. errors in language use). They distinguished two types of pragmatic failures, "pragmalinguistic failure"and "sociopragmatic failure." According to Riley (1989), a pragmalinguistic failure is the "failure to identify and express meanings correctly," which is "a dysfunction in discourse processing and production" (p. 235). A sociopragmatic failure, is the "failure to identify the situation correctly," which results from "the failure to perceive, categorize and evaluate social reality in accordance with a particular set of cultural norms" (p. 235). Various cross-cultural pragmatic studies conducted in the recent years have only focused on describing various patterns of pragmatic failures made by second language learners from different cultural backgrounds (Eisenstein, 1989; Kasper & Kahl, 1991). Few studies, however, have looked in depth at how communicative contexts may affect second language learners' choices of linguistic expressions as well as sociolinguistic or pragmatic strategies. This study contributes to the body of cross-cultural pragmatic research through an in-depth investigation of a particular cultural group's perceptions of and responses to one particular English speech act, compliments. The results of this study are not only informative but also thought-

provoking to ESL researchers and practitioners for their future designing of appropriate and effective instructional strategies to teach American English compliments and responses to ESL learners. They are also valuable to individuals and organizations who desire to understand and communicate effectively with people from Mainland China.

Assumptions

The first assumption of this study is based on John Gumperz (1982): "what we perceive and retain in our mind is a function of our culturally determined predisposition to perceive and assimilate" (p. 12). This study, therefore, further assumes that the way one talks with another reveals not only who one is as a member of a socio-cultural group but also whom one chooses to be as a unique individual when entering into a new language environment.

The second assumption of this study is based on Anderson's (1985, 1993, 1995) Cognitive Production Theory (i.e. ACT*, Adaptive Controlled of Thought), which describes the acquisition of a skill as the application of a set of production rules. Anderson (1995) defined production rules as the set of "condition-action pairs that are postulated to represent procedural knowledge of a skill"(p. 333). The condition IF part specifies when the rule is to apply and the THEN part specifies what to do in that situation. Anderson (1985) illustrates the application of the production rules by the process of a person learning to drive a car. The illustration is shown below.

IF: If the goal of the driver is to drive a standard transmission car, and
if the car is in first gear, and
if the car is going more than 10 miles an hour now,

THEN: shift the car into second gear.

This study further assumes, then, that a second language learner's production of a linguistic expression (e.g. a reply to an American English compliment) is similar to the skill acquisition of a new driver learning to shift first gear to second gear. The context in which a compliment occurs provides the condition (IF), because it prompts the decision-making (THEN) of the compliment receiver.

The third assumption of this study is that the participants' responses to the questionnaire are true and honest.

Limitations

This study is a result of an analysis of self-reported data. This result, therefore, only reflects Chinese students' conscious or subconscious knowledge about American English compliments, but not how they actually use compliments in natural conversations. Results suggest potential research problems and directions, but do not prescribe nor predict the actual complimenting behaviors of any cultural groups.

The second limitation is that the Chinese students' responses to the questionnaire may be affected by their inherent cultural bias on the definitions of the compliment adjectives given in the questionnaire.

Definitions of Terms

Communicative Context

Context is important for the understanding and interpretation of how language functions. Based on Hymes's (1962) "ethnography of communication" (reviewed in Chapter 2), this study defines a communicative context as a social occasion or event in

which speech activities, such as conversations, are involved. The alternative terms used in this study are "situation," "circumstances," and "conditions." Three communicative factors are used by this study to form an ideal communicative context in which an American English compliment may occur. They are 1) the relative status of the speaker in relation to the listener (e.g. status-superiors, status-equals); 2) the relative gender relation of the speaker to the listener (e.g. same sex, opposite sex); and 3) the topic of a compliment (e.g. appearance or performance).

Compliment Responses

Based on Holmes' (1987) definition of a compliment, which is quoted in the beginning of this chapter, this study conceptualizes a compliment and its response as a sequence of two acts. A compliment response is a verbal or non-verbal response immediately following a compliment. A verbal response to a compliment is not restricted in syntactic forms and content, as shown in the following examples given by Herbert (1989):

1) Female 1: I love that shirt.

   Female 2: Mmm. I think blue's my color, don't you?

2) Female: Frank, I really like your overalls.

   Male: I'm only wearing them because it's cold in here.

3) Male: Nice haircut. You look good.

   Female: I hate it.

A compliment response can also be expressed non-verbally, such as a smile, nod, or silence.

Discourse Functions

According to Schiffrin (1994), discourse is "a system (a socially and culturally organized way of speaking) through which particular functions are realized" (p. 32). Based on this definition, this study explores the various discourse functions of American English compliments through a group of Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of four particular aspects of a compliment: formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and judgmentalness. They are defined in the following .

Evaluativeness

This study defines the evaluativeness of a compliment as an objective assessment of another person's appearance or performance. For example, a professor may give a complimentary statement about a student's academic performance at the end of a semester, "You did very well this semester!"

Formality

This study defines the formality of a compliment as the conventional form or style of a compliment normally used in a particular social event. A compliment used in a formal social event is usually more formal in form (e.g. linguistic structure) and content (e.g. type of topics) than a compliment used in a casual conversation.

Judgmentalness

Like an evaluation, a judgement is also a type of assessment. The differences is that a person who judges assumes authority, superiority, or expertise over another person according to one's own standards or belief.

Seriousness

This study defines the seriousness of a compliment as the undertone or key expressed by a speaker in uttering a compliment. In the Chinese culture, seriousness is often associated with sincerity and respectfulness. One is often considered "serious" and "respectful" when one appears to mean and do what one says. A person who jokes, flatters, or says something too personal in formal occasions is often considered as insincere or disrespectful.

American English Compliments

This study uses Holmes's (1987) definition of a compliment for this study. (See the definition on page 1).

This study chose two particular types of compliments, appearance compliments and performance compliments to specify American English compliments. Manes and Wolfson (1980) found that the most common topics that Americans use in daily life are personal appearances (e.g. look, hair, clothes), performance (as a result of effort, skill and ability), and (new) possessions; the two verbs used most frequently by Americans are "like" and "love," and the five adjectives are "nice," "good," "pretty," "beautiful," and "great." The majority of American English compliments take the following three sentence forms:

NP(noun phrase) is/look (really) adjective (e.g. "Your hair looks nice").

I (really) like/love NP (e.g. "I really like those shoes").

Pronoun is (really) (a) adjective noun (e.g. "That was really a great meal").

(Manes & Wolfson, 1980, p. 120)

Gender

Previous studies have found that gender is an important variable affecting complimenting behaviors of native speakers of English (Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1988; Wolfson, 1984). This study explored the effects of gender on Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of American English compliments from two speaker-based variables: the same sex variable (i.e. while a complimenter is the same sex as the receiver) and the opposite-sex variable (i.e. while a complimenter is the opposite sex of the receiver). This study also examined the effects of two hearer-based gender variables, males and females (i.e. gender of the compliment receivers), on their perceptions of American English compliments.

Intercultural Communication and Cross-cultural Communication

"Intercultural communication" and "cross-cultural communication" are used interchangeably in this study. Both terms refer to the communication between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A common language is used in intercultural communication. This study dealt with the communication between native speakers of American English and native speakers of Mandarin Chinese with English as the communicative language.

Mainland China and Mainland Chinese Students

Mainland China refers to the People's Republic of China (P. R. C). Mainland Chinese students refers to the university students who come from Mainland China to pursue various academic degrees in the United States. Their native language is Mandarin Chinese.

Politeness Functions

Politeness of language use (i.e. linguistic politeness) has been studied in various theoretical perspectives in the human linguistic communication literature. There has not been a unanimous agreement reached by politeness researchers as to what linguistic politeness is. This study dealt with politeness expressed and interpreted in giving and responding to American English compliments by people from different cultural backgrounds. Among the various views held by various politeness theorists, Fraser and Nolen's (1981) Conversational-Contract view of politeness, seemed to be most suitable for this study to use, for it reflects the dynamic and interactive nature of complimenting and responding acts. Fraser (1990) summarized this view of politeness as,

> upon entering a given conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, what the participants can expect from the other(s). During the course of time, or because of a change in the context, there is always the possibility for a renegotiation of the conversational contract: the two parties may readjust just what rights and obligations they hold towards each other (p. 232).

Drawing from various politeness theories (reviewed in Chapter II), this study measured Chinese perceptions of politeness functions by nine descriptive scales: truthfulness, sincerity, respectfulness, appropriateness, tactfulness, friendliness, closeness (intimacy), politeness, and refinement.

Response Strategies

The verbal and non-verbal responses to an American English compliment were

analyzed by this study in terms of response strategies. Pomerantz (1978) considered a compliment act as serving two types of social actions simultaneously: it is a supportive social act which offers a compliment to a hearer as a gift of good will, thus leaving the option to the hearer whether to accept or reject it; it is also an assessment act which evaluates the hearer's (good) behavior or personal quality, thus leaving the option to the hearer whether to agree or disagree with it. This study, therefore, defines a response strategy as the type of responses that one chooses to use in a specific context in order to meet a particular communicative goal, such as, to acknowledge, agree or disagree with the speaker's assessment, to accept a compliment with appreciation, or to please and flatter the compliment giver by returning a compliment.

Status

Social status is an important variable affecting speech patterns of a society (Herbert, 1989; Wolfson, 1990b). This study defines status as the relative social roles taken by a person in various social occasions. A person plays the role of a professor by profession in an academic setting, but he or she assumes the role of a husband or wife at home. Status-superiors are those who are relatively superior to some others due to seniority of rank, age, or expertise. For example, a professor is academically superior in status to a student. Status-equals are people whose social distance is relatively equal by profession (e.g. colleagues, fellow workers, or classmates) or by intimacy (e.g. acquaintances, non-intimate friends or relatives).

Research Questions

1. How do Mainland Chinese students perceive the various politeness functions of

American English compliments given in various situations?

2. How do Mainland Chinese students perceive the various discourse functions of American English compliments given in various situations?
3. Are there any relationships between Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of politeness and their perceptions of particular politeness-related functions of American English compliments given in various situations?
4. How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the formality of American English compliments given in various situations?
5. How do status, gender, and topic affect Chinese students' perceptions of the seriousness of American English compliments given in various situations?
6. How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the evaluativeness of American English compliments given in various situations?
7. How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the judgmentalness of the American English compliments given in various situations?
8. What response strategies do Mainland Chinese students are likely to use in response to American English compliments given in various situations?

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the background, statement of the problem, purpose, and significance of this study, followed by assumptions, limitations, and definitions of key terms. Research questions are given at the end of this chapter.

Chapter II reviews the related literature. It consists of two sections. Section I reviews the theoretical background of this study. Section II reviews the empirical background of this study. Each section is organized into a number of subsections.

Chapter III describes the research methodology used by this study. It includes population and subjects, instrumentation, and procedures of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter IV presents results and findings of data analysis and answers the research questions.

Chapter V summarizes findings, discusses implications of the findings, and suggests directions for future studies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation was to gather Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of and responses to American English compliments in order to explore how communicative contexts may affect their perceptions and choices of response strategies to American English compliments. This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical background relevant to this study. It is organized into two sections. Section One is a theoretical review of related literature. Section Two is an empirical review of related literature. Each section is organized into a number of subsections. Section One reviews four theoretical frameworks for understanding the functions of speech acts. They are 1) speech act functions in speech act theory, 2) communicative context in Ethnography of Communication/Speaking, 3) politeness functions in Pragmatics, and 4) situated inferences in Interactional Sociolinguistics. Section Two includes a review of empirical studies of American English compliments and responses and a review of studies of Chinese responses to English compliments.

Theoretical Review

Functions of Speech Acts

The notion of speech acts was introduced by the British philosopher, John Austin, in the study of philosophy of language. Austin (1962) regarded speaking a language as performing linguistic actions, often called speech acts. He first noticed that the uttering of a sentence is not always "saying" something; it is often "doing" something. Then he

began to study the function of speech acts in terms of what people actually "do" with language. For example, when one says, "I order you to leave," the sentence is not merely a meaningful cluster of sounds and words, but it involves a verbal act of the speaker (giving an order) and a future act of the hearer (to leave). Austin, therefore, distinguished the notion of saying something from the notion of meaning something. He believed that an utterance of a sentence has at least two major layers of meaning. The first layer of meaning is the "locutionary meaning." The locutionary meaning includes the sentence meaning, which is realized by linguistic means (e.g. word order, pronunciation, punctuation, sentence structure), and the referential meaning, which is expressed by its relevancy to the reality (e.g. who says what, to whom, and where). The second layer of meaning of an utterance is the "illocutionary force." It is the meaning intended by the speaker by or in saying something. For example, when a speaker says to someone in the same room, "Leave the room," the utterance is intended by the speaker to issue an order that the hearer should leave the room.

An American philosopher of language, John Searle, a student of Austin, incorporated Austin's speech acts concept into a linguistic communication theory. In order to understand the functions of language use, Searle (1979) started out by classifying all speech acts into five types. He named the acts that tell people how things are "representatives" (e.g. report, describe, state), acts that get people to do things "directives" (e.g. order, command, request), acts that commit people to doing things "commissives" (e.g. promise, bet), acts that express feelings and attitudes, "expresssives" (e.g. apologize, compliment, congratulate), and acts that bring about changes to reality,

"declaratives" (e.g. appoint, approve). Searle's classification of speech acts provides a detailed description of how language functions by "doing" different things to achieve different communicative goals.

Searle (1985) believed that the meaning of a speech act can be communicated and understood because people share knowledge of what counts as a speech act. He described four conditions which are essential for the successful performance of a speech act. The most important condition is the illocutionary point (purpose) of the act. The second condition is the prepositional content condition of the act. The third condition is the preparatory conditions, which include the background information prior to the performance of the act. The fourth condition is the sincerity condition, which is the speaker's psychological state expressed in the utterance of the act, such as emotions, feelings, and attitudes. Take the act of a promise for example. The illocutionary point of a promise is to commit the speaker to doing something in the future. The prepositional condition of a promise is someone's future act. The preparatory conditions of a promise include 1) knowledge of what the hearer expects the speaker to do, 2) knowledge of what is to be done by the speaker is for the hearer's benefit; 3) the speaker's ability and availability to carry out the promised act. The sincerity condition of a promise is the speaker's true desire to do the future act he or she is committed to. It was from these four conditions that Searle derived four corresponding speech act rules, based on which an act can be produced and recognized. It is shared knowledge of speech act rules that enables people to label, identify, and interpret a speech act. Searle considered such knowledge as part of linguistic competence which any competent speakers of a language should possess

in order to communicate effectively in that language.

A big problem that Austin and Searle's speech act theory cannot be used to solve is the multiple functionability of a speech act. Both Austin and Searle recognized that a speech act can "do" more than one thing at a time. Searle (1969) especially discussed the concept of "indirect speech acts." To put it simply, an indirect act is an act which means something else other than what the sentence literally says. An example given by Austin (1962) of an indirect speech act was the utterance of the English sentence, "It's yours" (p. 62). The literal meaning of the sentence is, "it is in your possession." It, however, becomes an act of "bequeathing" when it is meant as, "I give it (the ring) to you." It may also become an act of "acknowledgment" when it is meant as, "it (already) belongs to you." Although speech act theory recognizes the importance of the context in which a speech act occurs, it does not provide explanations as to what communicative elements of a context help communicators identify the meaning of a particular act.

Communicative Context

In the early 60s, linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes began studying human linguistic communication in cultural contexts, thus introducing the "ethnography of communication" or "ethnography of speaking" into the study of linguistics (Hymes, 1962, 1974). This approach of study to linguistic communication, according to Fukushima (1990), views language as social behavior and its speaker as a socio-cultural entity. The speaker's knowledge of a language, therefore, consists of knowledge of rules recognized by a particular culture for encoding and decoding both the referential meaning (sentence meaning) and the social meanings of what is being said. That is, the meaning of

a language expression depends on the communicative context in which it is used. To know what a particular utterance or act means, one needs to know such contextual information as to where it occurs, who says it, to whom, and how and why it is said.

In order to understand how language functions in various contexts, Hymes (1974) organized a specific communicative context into a taxonomy of units. According to him, the largest unit of a communicative context is the speech situation where speech may occur, such as a meal, a meeting, or a party. The next unit is the speech event, which is a type of social activity "directly governed by conventional rules or social norms of the use of speech" (Hymes, 1962, p. 56), such as a Sunday morning sermon, or a classroom lecture. The smallest unit consists of speech acts, usually defined through their illocutionary forces, such as a complaint, a question, or a compliment. For example, a party is a speech situation; a conversation with a friend at the party is a speech event; the greeting, a question, an answer, and a joke during the conversation are constituents of the conversation.

As speech situations are not subject to linguistic rules, Hymes (1974) focused on analyzing the unit of a speech event. He segmented a speech event into eight communicative components, known as the SPEAKING grid. S stands for Scene or physical setting. P stands for participants of an event. E stands for ends, the goal or objective of an event. A stands for act, or a sequence of acts. K stands for key, which is the tone or manner in which a message is delivered. I stands for instrumentality, which includes the dialect, register, or speech style. N stands for norm of an interaction and interpretation of its underlying social values. G stands for genre, the textual categories

used in an event.

Hymes's SPEAKING grid is important in the study of speech acts functions. Descriptions of a larger unit of a context can help one to determine and interpret the specific meanings of a speech act. On the other hand, descriptions of particular communicative elements, such as a particular speech act, help one to understand the nature of a social event as it occurs. Schiffrin (1994) applied Hymes' SPEAKING grid to discourse analysis. She compared and analyzed the communicative components of a library reference interview and a sociolinguistic research interview in order to determine the types and functions of questions used in interviews. Her analysis of these two events showed that, three components of the SPEAKING grid could best differentiate the types and functions of the questions in the two speech events. The three components were Participants, Ends, and Acts. Participants are the identities of the people involved in the event. Ends is the purpose of the event. Acts specifies the form and content of the question and its replies.

Many recent sociolinguistic studies have also applied Hymes' ethnographic framework to discover speech patterns of a particular culture or community. Nessa Wolfson (1990a), one of the earliest sociolinguistic researchers, recognized the sociolinguistic diversity of language uses. She proposed a principle of "sociolinguistic relativity " to solve cross-cultural communication problems. This principle included the following three corollaries:

1) First, each community has its own rules, conventions, and patterns for the conduct of communication, and these are part of a general system that reflects the values

and structures of the society or group.

2) It follows from this first corollary that no two societies or communities are ever completely alike with respect to sociolinguistic patterns, just as no two languages have the same phonemic inventories.

3) Third, and most important from the point of view of intercultural communication, we must acknowledge that no society has a monopoly on correct sociolinguistic behavior. Lack of knowledge of the rules of speaking of interlocutors from other cultural backgrounds can lead to breakdowns in communication. However, when speakers recognize that it is normal for cultures to differ in this respect, such miscommunication problems can be overcome. It is only when people are convinced that their own rules are somehow the only rules, that we encounter the kind of negative stereotyping that can do serious, and perhaps irreparable damage. (Wolfson, 1990a, p. 10)

Based on this principle of "sociolinguistic relativity," Wolfson (1990a) identified two specific problems in intercultural communication. First of all, the diversity in value systems and the way it is manifest in speech behavior is usually not understood as cultural differences, but often taken as character flaws such as "rudeness." Second, when people from different backgrounds interact, they tend to judge each other's behaviors according to their own value systems and deal with differences in terms of right and wrong or good and bad. Therefore, the more one knows about a culture, the more he or she is able to acknowledge the fact that the difference in language expressions is a matter of being different, but not a matter of being better or worse.

Descriptions of sociolinguistic patterns suggest different communicative forms

that members of a culture may have available in that culture. It does not mean, however, that an individual must know everything there is to know in a culture in order to communicate with people in that culture. Hymes (1974) pointed out, "what is distinctively cultural, as an aspect of behavior or of things, is a question of capabilities acquired or elicited in social life, rather than a question of the extent to, or realized by, every member" (p. 20). In other words, communicative competence depends on the individual's capability to acquire knowledge and behaviors of a particular culture (including rules of speaking). However, the cognitive variations as often demonstrated by individuals in their acquisition of communicative competence, were not further explored in Hymes's ethnography of communication. Research conducted under this framework is not able to explain why individuals from different cultural backgrounds have difficulty communicating with each other effectively when using the same language.

Politeness Functions

Going beyond Dell Hymes's cultural framework, researchers in the field of pragmatics (i.e. study of language in use) have been seeking to discover universal principles that govern human speech behavior. Linguistic politeness (i.e. polite use of language) is a central issue in this field. The basic assumption of politeness research, according to Schiffrin (1994), is that the purpose of human linguistic communication is not only to communicate the "speaker meaning" via language, but also to communicate the speaker intention outside of language (i.e. "pragmatic meaning"). Successful communication, therefore, is achieved only when the hearer recognizes the speaker's intended meaning accurately and responds to it accordingly. An example would be what

is involved in making an indirect request for the time of day in American English culture. When asking a stranger at a public place about the time, native speakers of American English seldom issue a direct request, saying, "Tell me what time it is;" rather, they would look or point at the person's watch and ask, "Do you have the time?" For people who are familiar with this English convention, the correct and appropriate response is to tell the speaker the time instead of just saying "yes" or "no." The pragmatic interpretations of such convention of using a question as a request are such that the speaker's intention is not to say what the sentence literally means (i.e. asking a simple question), but to express two other meanings: the speaker meaning (i.e. a request for time), and the speaker intention (i.e. to be polite). The following sections present a review of two different pragmatic approaches used by researchers of linguistic politeness.

Western Approach

British philosopher Paul Grice's (1975) well-known article, entitled "Logic and Conversation," laid the foundation of modern western pragmatics. The logic of Grice's conversation theory was based on the belief that human linguistic communication is intentional and rational behavior. It is intentional because people say things to convey intentions. It is rational because people often have to infer from what is said and what is not said to know what is actually intended by the speaker. Therefore, the key to understanding language communication is to discover a human conversational "logic" which may make such a rationalization possible. To this end, Grice (1975) proposed a Cooperative Principle (CP), assuming that communication takes place through the cooperative efforts of the conversation participants. He then developed four specific

maxims under this principle. That is, the four maxims require that the speaker only say as much as is needed ("quantity maxim"); he or she only say what he or she believes to be true ("quality maxim"); he or she only say what is relevant to the context ("relevancy maxim"); and he or she should speak in a perspicuous manner ("manner maxim").

Grice's conversational logic has been used by western politeness theorists to account for indirect speech acts. Their argument was that when people are not saying directly and clearly what they mean (i.e. a violation of Grice's conversation logic), they intend to be polite. These theoriests, therefore, attempted to add or developed specific politeness principles and strategies into Grice's conversational framework.

American sociolinguist Robin Lakoff was among the earliest researchers who used Grice's conversational principle to account for politeness. Lakoff (1973) reformulated the Cooperative Principle into two pragmatic rules: 1) Be clear, 2) Be polite. She applied the notion of grammatical well-formedness to pragmatics, and attempted to judge an utterance by its pragmatic well-formedness. She believed that certain forms of sentence in a language are more polite than other forms. For example, in English, the use of the past tense of a modal verb in a request (e.g. "Could I come in?") is always more polite than the use of its present tense (e.g. "Can I come in?"). It is the consistent use of certain forms, she argued, that forms different politeness styles. She, therefore, summarized the following three general forms or styles of politeness: formal, deferential, and intimate. Using Grice's approach, she developed three politeness maxims which correspond to her three politeness forms. They are: 1) keep the distance (be formal), 2) give options (be deferential), and 3) show sympathy (be friendly). Lakoff (1975) did not

specifically define what politeness is, but suggested that the function of politeness use of language is to reduce friction in interpersonal communication.

Like Lakoff, British linguist Geoffrey Leech also treated politeness in the framework of Grice's conversation logic. Leech (1983) believed that the purpose of linguistic politeness is not just to attain the speaker's illocutionary goal (e.g. to greet, to compliment), but the speaker's communicative goal (e.g. to be truthful, polite, or ironic). He, therefore, developed six politeness maxims. They are 1) tact maxim, 2) generosity maxim, 3) approbation maxim, 4) modesty maxim, 5) agreement maxim, and 6) sympathy maxim. Leech also believed that different cultures have different hierarchical arrangements of the six maxims. For example, the tact maxim is of the greatest importance in American English culture. However, in oriental cultures, such as Chinese and Japanese cultures, the modesty maxim is more important than all other maxims.

Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory brought forth the issue of the universality of linguistic politeness. Rather than extending Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle as Lakoff and Leech did to account for politeness, Brown and Levinson fit politeness directly into Grice's conversation cooperative model. Central to this theory was the notion of "face." Brown and Levinson (1978) took the concept of face from Goffman's theory of social interactions. According to Goffman (1967), face is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p. 5), or the self-image "delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p. 5). Brown and Levinson used Goffman's concept of face as a starting point for their politeness model. First of all, they developed Goffman's

notion of face into two aspects: positive face, which is the public self-image desirable to at least some others in a society, and negative face, which is the desire that one's actions not to be impeded by others. Then, they extended the two aspects of face into two basic face wants: the want to be liked, respected, valued by other members of the society, and the want for freedom of actions. They used these two basic face wants to account for individuals' choice of language use in conversations. Politeness, according to this framework, is the maintenance of two basic face wants, which is claimed by Brown and Levinson to be universal needs.

To apply the concept of face wants to language behaviors, Brown and Levinson (1987) used Searle's classification of English speech acts and categorized speech acts into two basic types: "face-satisfying-acts"(FSAs) and face-threatening-acts (FTAs). Face-satisfying-acts are acts performed to give what the hearer wants. For example, acts of praising, complimenting, and congratulating others are FSAs. Face-threatening acts are acts which are "intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening" (p. 24). Acts such as criticizing, giving orders, and making requests are FTAs. For the purpose of maintaining face wants, different groups of language users develop different "face-saving" principles and from which they derive acceptable linguistic strategies. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) presented a list of specific face-threatening-acts and face-saving-acts. A look at the list of face-threatening-acts shows that many positive acts in the English culture, such as saying "Thank you," giving a compliment, and offering help, are potential face-threatening-acts. Kasper (1990) pointed out that the western view of politeness reflects a western view of interpersonal communication as "a fundamentally

dangerous and antagonistic endeavor" (p. 194).

Eastern Approach

Politeness researchers from non-western cultures held different views of politeness from their western counterparts. Brown and Levinson's face-saving view of politeness was especially contested by the Japanese view of politeness. Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989) studied the politeness use of language in the Japanese society. They argued that the function of politeness in Japanese society is to conform to norms of expected behavior rather than attending to individuals' interests, needs, and freedom. Therefore, individuals' wants to be liked and admired by others (i.e. positive face wants) as well as individuals' wants for freedom of actions (i.e. negative face wants) are not important issues in the Japanese society.

Gu (1990) has also studied Chinese concept of politeness. He claimed that Brown and Levinson's model cannot account for Chinese politeness. His argument was that Brown and Levinson's model overlooked the social constraints of politeness in individuals' linguistic choices. Gu summarized four basic elements which formed the modern notion of Chinese politeness. The four elements were respectfulness (i.e. respect for others' social status), modesty (i.e. self-denigration), attitudinal warmth (i.e. kindness, consideration, or hospitality), and refinement (i.e. self-cultivation). Behavior that meets any one of the four elements may count as polite. As an illustration to Mao's notion of Chinese politeness, Mao (1992), through a study of Chinese invitation discourse, found that, Chinese tend to ceremonially decline an invitation for a meal at least three times before they actually accept it. Chiang and Pochtrager (1993), Liu (1994), Yang (1987),

and Dong and Wang (1993) also found in separate studies that Chinese tend to respond to compliments by belittling themselves in order to show modesty. Such acts, which were traditionally considered as positive politeness acts in the Chinese cultures, tend to be considered impolite or rude in western cultures.

Politeness and Intracultural Tact

Upon a general review of contemporary politeness research, Janney and Arndt (1992) claimed that previous politeness studies failed to distinguish these two different types of politeness: social politeness and intracultural tact. According to them, social politeness is politeness from a social point of view, which functions to enforce rules of conducts and is often conveyed through daily speech acts such as greetings, thanking, complimenting, conversation opening, or partings. Intracultural tact, however, are strategies used by individuals to facilitate successful interpersonal relationships. Janney and Arndt considered the politeness maxims and principles identified by western politeness theorists to be intracultural tact rather than social politeness. They further claimed that intracultural tact may be simply impossible for intercultural communication, because many basic assumptions underlying certain strategies, especially those concerning human needs, wants, beliefs, interpersonal relationships, are deep-rooted and unnegotiable for people who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Summary of Politeness Research

The most important difference between western approaches under Grice's framework and eastern approaches in the studies of linguistic politeness is that the former is individual-centered, and the latter, society-centered. The similarity is that they both

treat politeness as if it were a "timeless" and "static" universalism (Werkhofer, 1992). Compared with the various approaches to the study of linguistic politeness, Janney and Ardnt's approach is more realistic for the understanding of politeness in intercultural communication.

Situation Inferences

The ethnography of speaking and politeness research, reviewed in the previous sections, have demonstrated how culture and society constrain human speech behavior. Both approaches view human linguistic communication as being dependent on mutual and shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer. The ethnography of speaking emphasizes shared knowledge of contextual information, such as knowledge of speech events. Pragmatic politeness theories emphasize shared knowledge of basic human needs, beliefs, and rationality. The interactional sociolinguistic approach to be reviewed in this section explores how individuals interact with culture and society to create and discover contextual and situational meanings in face-to-face encounters. Schiffrin (1994) summarized the interactional sociolinguistic view of language as,

> a view of language as socially and culturally constructed symbol system that is used in ways that reflect macro-level social meanings (e.g. group identity, status differences) and create micro-level social meanings (i.e. what one is saying and doing at a moment in time). Speakers are members of social and cultural groups: the way we use language not only reflects our group based identity but also provides continual indices as to who we are, what we want to communicate, and how we know how to do so. The ability to produce and understand these indexical

processes as they occur in, and are influenced by, local contexts is part of our communicative competence. (p. 102)

John Gumperz is one of the two major contributors to interactional sociolingustics. His conversational inferential model (Gumperz, 1982) describes the situated or context-bound processes of interpretations of speaker meaning and intentions. According to this model, the interpretive process in a conversation is interactional because conversation participants constantly assess each other's intended meanings in the course of an interaction, and on which they base their responses to what is said to them.

A key concept of Gumperz's inferential model was "contextualization cues." Gumperz (1982) believed that people rely on contextualization cues in a conversation to interpret speaker intentions. Contextualization cues can be any aspects of language and behavior, including verbal and nonverbal expressions. These cues can give special meanings to what is being said at a particular time and in a particular situation. For example, the choice of dialect, style switching, lexical and syntactic choices, formulaic expressions, conversational opening, closing, and sequencing strategies, can all function as contextualization cues to signal a speaker's intention of saying something. The meaning of a contextualization cue usually depends on the hearer's interpretations. That is, a speaker meaning is communicated only when the hearer is aware of or recognizes its meaningfulness. For example, if a guest noticed the yawning of the host at a late evening visit and interpreted it as a sign of the host's weariness, then the act of yawning had a significant meaning in this particular interaction: that is, a signal from the host to close a conversation. Often, when the hearer understood the implied meaning of a cue and

responds to it accordingly, the interpretation process would go past unnoticed. If, however, the hearer did not recognize a particular meaning of a cue, he/she may then have various other interpretations. Miscommunication occurs when a different interpretation is felt and noticed by the other(s) and is taken in attitudinal terms, such as unfriendly, rude, and uncooperative.

Another important concept in Gumperz's model was "contextualization presuppositions."According to Gumperz (1982), contextual presuppositions are background assumptions built upon participants' existing grammatical and lexical knowledge as well as knowledge and experiences of similar situations and events. Presuppositions usually help conversation participants to presuppose the form of a context, the interactive goals, and interpersonal relations of an up-coming and on-going speech interaction. Such activities enable conversation participants to choose from among various interpretive options about what is going on, to decide how much they should say, in what manner, and to infer the intended meaning of the speaker and the purpose of the interaction.

Interpretive conventions are generally shared by speakers within a given culture (Kleifgen, 1989). In Gumperz's model, grammatical and lexical knowledge were seen as only two factors in the interpretation process. The knowledge of speech situations, knowledge of interpersonal relationships, as well as socio-cultural values and beliefs underlying various message content, all play more important roles in the interpretation of the speaker's intended meanings. Gumperz (1982) analyzed the example which follows. When an American house painter attempted to compliment a British woman after seeing

many framed original paintings on the wall in her house, he said in a friendly tone, "Who's the artist?" The woman took it as a question and answered, "The painter's not too well known. He's a modern London painter named--" In this case, explained Gumperz, "Who's the artist?" is a formulaic complimentary expression used commonly among Americans. Such formulas are often conversational conventions. In American culture, one is expected to give a complimentary remark upon noticing some thing new or unique for the first time, and the one who receives a compliment is also expected to acknowledge the compliment. Therefore, the British wife should have said such things as, "I am just a fan," or "It's just a hobby," to acknowledge the American house painter's compliment on her artistic appreciation. Gumperz suggested a few important linguistic and extralinguistic cues that help interpret the intended meaning of a formulaic expression. The extralinguistic cues include the setting and the participants' knowledge of what precedes the interaction. The linguistic cues include the semantic content (what is said), the syntactic form (how it is said), and the linguistic features and speech styles such as stress, tone, and the pitch that the speaker assumes. Both types of cues serve to alert the listener to the possibility of a formulaic interpretation, even if the utterance may have never been heard before.

Sociologist Erving Goffman is the other major contributor to interactional sociolinguistics. His work on social interactions complements Gumperz's work on situated inferences. What Goffman added to Gumperz's model of conversational inference was a better understanding of the form and meaning of a social context which facilitates individuals in a conversation to identify presuppositions about an interaction.

For example, Goffman's (1974) work on frame analysis shows how the organization of a framing activity is itself socially situated. The concept of framing provides a link between participation framework and social interactions.

A frame, according to Schiffrin (1994), is the "organizational and interaction principles by which situations are defined and sustained as experiences" (p. 104). Goffman (1974) identified two levels of framing activities in the inferential process of an interaction. The first level of inference is the framing of the speech form of a speech activity (i.e. "speech event" in Hymes's framework). For example, prior to an interaction, the participants may presuppose whether an interaction should be formal or informal, casual or intimate, based on his or her previous knowledge or experience of similar situations. The second level of framing is to determine what and how a particular utterance or act may mean which contributes to the objective of a speech activity. Thus, Goffman's work on framing added to Gumperz' situated inferences. It provided a broader view of the communicative context through and in which meaning can be interpreted and understood.

Gumperz (1982) believed that "what we perceive and retain in our mind is a function of our culturally determined predisposition to perceive and assimilate" (p. 12). Therefore, individuals' cognitive functioning (i.e. the ability to make inferences in conversation), are culturally bound. When people from different linguistic, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds speak with one another using the same language, communicative difficulties arise more often from misinterpretations of contextualization cues than from linguistic difficulties.

Summary of the Theoretical Review

This section reviewed concepts of speech acts and four theoretical views on speech act functions. Speech act theory describes the functions of speech acts according to what they "do" via conventional speech act rules. The ethnography of communication and pragmatics describe speech act functions as expressions of cultural values and social principles. The interactional sociolinguistic view of speech acts recognizes the dynamic and interactive nature of interpersonal communication. It seeks to discover the functions of a speech act in its situated as well as its larger social context. With insights drawn from all four theories, this dissertation based its research on the interactional sociolinguistic approach.

Empirical Review

American English Compliments and Responses

Formulaic American English Compliments

The most important finding of studies of American English compliments is that American English compliments, like everyday greetings, are formulaic by nature. Manes and Wolfson (1980) analyzed the content and forms of a corpus of approximately 700 compliments. They found that 80% of them used an adjective and two-thirds of such adjectival compliments made use of five semantically vague adjectives ("nice," "good," "beautiful," "pretty," and "great"). They also found that most non-adjectival compliments depended on five semantically positive verbs (i.e. "like," "love," "enjoy," "admire," and "be impressed by"), and that the first two verbs took up 86% of the compliments in this category. They found that only a few compliments made use of an adverb (usually well)

or a noun (e.g. genius).

Evidence of regularity in American English compliments has been found at the syntactic level. Manes and Wolfson (1980) exhibited a few syntactic patterns as shown in Figure 1.

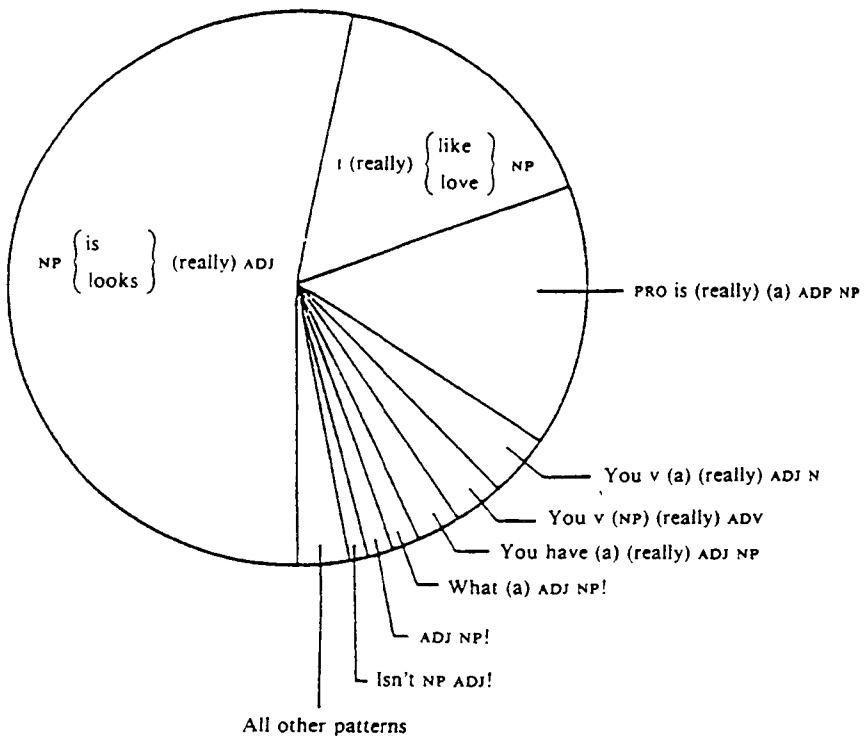


Figure 1. Distribution of Syntactic Patterns of American English Compliments

* From "The Compliment Formula," by J. Manes and N. Wolfson, 1980, p. 121

The content of the American English compliments has also been found limited in topics. Manes and Wolfson's study (1980) highlighted three topics which were used most frequently by Americans: personal appearances (e.g. look, clothing, and hair), (new)

possessions, and performances (as a result of effort, skill, and ability). Knapp, Hopper, and Bell (1984) also found limited range of compliments used by Americans. More than 80 percent of the compliments reported in their studies were related to appearances and performances.

Multiple Functions of American English Compliments

Based on descriptions of compliment content and forms, researchers went further to explore the communicative functions of American English compliments. Manes & Wolfson (1980) found that American English compliments are multiple functional speech acts. That is, a compliment may express more than one illocutionary force under different circumstances. For example, Americans often use compliments to encourage and reinforce desired social behaviors (often seen in classrooms). Americans use compliments to express gratitude, to soften criticisms (Wolfson, 1983), and to express admiration and approval (Wolfson, 1984). Americans not only use compliments alone but also along with other speech acts such as apologies, thanking, and greetings to enhance and create better communicative effects (Wolfson & Manes, 1980).

Turner and Edgely (in Schneider, 1978) interviewed a group of Americans, asking them how they felt about receiving compliments. They found that, though compliments were ostensibly positive acts in America, 60% of the subjects in this study reported feeling uneasy about the compliments they received. The following six reasons were given:

1. feeling obligated to return a compliment.
2. feeling need of being modest, i.e. to neutralize a compliment or to avoid coming

off as conceited.

3. suspecting hidden motives behind the compliment.
4. afraid that a compliment is a prelude to criticism ("You did a good job but...")
5. feeling being evaluated or judged, for the person who gives a compliment assumes superiority over the person who receives the compliment.
6. afraid of benchmarks for future behavior. e.g. 'Keep up the good work' can mean that future actions should be at least as good as the complimented performance (p. 13).

This finding implies how communicators may create and comprehend pragmatic strategies in responding to compliments. At face value, a compliment may be a direct positive communicative act. At a deeper level, however, how to use compliments effectively and how to interpret them properly require knowledge of the social functions of the complimenting act.

Social Functions of American English Compliments

Other important findings of Wolfson and Manes's studies were that American English compliments can be used in various social situations, and they may occur at almost any point within a speech event. In their analysis, Wolfson and Manes (1980) argued that whatever the immediate discourse function that a compliment may serve (e.g. greeting, praising, congratulating), its underlying social function is to create and reinforce solidarity (i.e. establishing closer interpersonal relationships). The reason that Americans use formulaic forms to express compliments, according to Wolfson (1983), is that it may prevent misunderstandings and minimize differences that might interfere with the

solidarity-creating function of American English compliments.

Social Distribution of American English Compliments

Both Wolfson's (1983) and Knapp's (1984) studies found that the overwhelming majority of American English compliments were given to people of the same age and equal status. Wolfson (1983) also found that, majority of the compliments exchanged between people of unequal status were initiated by people of higher status, and that most interactions between status non-equals were work-related and focused predominantly on ability and performance. Few compliments were found given to high-status males. When the speaker's status was lower than or equal to the listener, the compliment generally related to an appearance or a possession.

Gender has been found to affect lexical choices of American English compliments. Wolfson (1984) found that all five most frequently used adjectives ("nice," "good," "beautiful," "pretty," "great") were used to describe what women did, how they worked, and what they owned; only three of them (i.e. "nice," "good," and "great") were used to compliment men. "Beautiful" may be used by men in certain limited ways, but "pretty" is off-limits entirely. Although there seemed to be restrictions on how these adjectives may be used "to" and "about" men, it did not show any limitation of their use by men. Men used them freely as long as the object or activity they modified had to do with women. Wolfson (1981a) found that women appeared to give and receive compliments much more frequently, especially when compliments had to do with apparel and appearance.

Politeness Functions of English Compliments

Holmes (1988) analyzed functions of English compliments (including American English and New Zealand English) responses using Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness framework. She suggested that complimenting others in western English-speaking cultures is a positive politeness act, for it generally functions to make others feel good. She also suggested that complimenting is a "positive politeness strategy" used by native speakers of English to redress the negative effects of "face-threatening acts," such as giving an order, a complaint, criticism, refusal, or disagreement. For example, before giving a criticism, native speakers of English tend to start with a compliment, saying, "You did very well, but..." On the other hand, Holmes (1988) claimed that giving and responding to compliments can also be face-threatening-acts in English language cultures. For example, a compliment may be perceived to be given out of envy; offering a compliment may indicate the speaker's desire for the hearer's possession, and a compliment is often perceived as a flattery for ulterior motives. Similarly, responses to compliments can also be face-threatening-acts. For example, the compliment receiver may say something that disagrees with the compliment giver, or makes him or her feel inferior when the compliment was accepted in a self-praising manner.

Holmes (1988) analyzed gender difference in complimenting behaviors from Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) face-saving view of politeness. She found that women use compliments more often than do men, because they view complimenting others as positive politeness acts (i.e. attending to others' positive face wants, that is, the needs to be liked, admired, and respected, in order to reinforce interpersonal solidarity).

Men do not give many compliments because they tend to view complimenting others as more face threatening (e.g. evaluative or judgmental) than it is face satisfying (e.g. praising or showing admiration).

Pragmatic Functions of American English Compliment Responses

Studies of American English responses began with the categorization of compliment responses. Pomerantz (1978) grouped the compliment responses collected in her study into 12 types. They were 1) appreciation token, 2) comment acceptance, 3) praise upgrade, 4) comment history, 5) reassignment, 6) return, 7) scale down, 8) question, 9) disagreement, 10) qualification, 11) no acknowledgment, and 12) request interpretation (summarized in Herbert, 1986, p. 78). Herbert (1986) went further to categorize Pomerantz's 12 types into three pragmatic functions: agreement, non-agreement, and other interpretations as shown in Table 1.

The focus of compliment responses in further studies was on the pragmatic functions of compliment responses, that is, how the functions of responses correspond with the functions of the compliments. Pomerantz (1978) linked compliments and responses as a chain of social actions. She believes that the act of complimenting serves two types of social actions. It is a supportive act that offers a compliment as a gift of good will, and leaves the option for the listener to accept or reject it. It is also an assessment act that assesses the receiver's behavioral or personal qualities, and leaves the option for the listener to agree or disagree with it. Sims (1989) treated a compliment and its response as a sequence of acts. His study showed that the way a compliment is worded, the type of statement that proceeds or follows the compliment, and the status and sex of the

Table 1. Compliment Response Types according to Pragmatic Functions

Response Types	Examples
I. Agreement	
acceptance	
1) appreciation token	Thanks; Thank you; (smile)
2) comment acceptance	Thanks, it's my favorite too.
3) praise upgrade	Really brings out the blue in my eyes, doesn't it
comment history	I bought it for the trip to Arizona.
transfer	
1) reassignment	My brother gave it to me.
2) return	So's yours.
II. Non-agreement	
scale down	It's really quite old.
question	Do you really think so?
non-acceptance	
1) disagreement	I hate it.
2) qualification	It's all right, but Len's nicer.
no acknowledgment	(silence)
III. Other Interpretations	
Request	You wanna borrow this one too?

Note. From "Say 'Thank you' --- Or something," by K. Herbert, 1986, American Speech, 61, p. 76

compliment participants affect the course and outcome of parts of the compliment sequence. Herbert (1989) and Herbert & Straight (1989) treated the interaction involving a compliment and a response as a speech act sequence or a speech event. His contrastive studies of American English and South African English (Herbert, 1989) showed that Americans gave compliments more frequently than did South African white English speakers. Americans felt the need to establish solidarity because, in the American society, individuals' status was relatively uncertain. Therefore, Americans tended not to accept compliments, thus furthering work toward the building of solidarity by stressing equality. The reason that South African white English speakers gave fewer compliments but accepted most compliments was that, there was no need for them to establish solidarity, because in their society, individuals' status was relatively fixed and stable; thus, the function of a compliment, whatever it may be, does not serve to negotiate status balance as it does in the American English society. Herbert finally concluded that to have culturally appropriate linguistic behaviors requires knowledge of the socio-cultural norms of the language being used in a society.

Chinese Responses to Compliments

Little has been found in the literature about how the complimenting act functions among native Chinese speakers in their own language communities. The difficulty that Yang (1987) felt in collecting English compliments from native speakers of Chinese on a Mainland Chinese university campus (only four compliments were collected in a month) indicated a low frequency of compliments among Chinese. However, results of Lii and Yu's (1988) study on a Taiwan university campus showed that the Taiwan Mandarin

Chinese speakers had a much wider range of complimentable topics than American English compliments. They found that the Chinese complimented each other often on family members, good luck, property possession, gaining weight, children's growing up, passing exams, going abroad, and getting married. Zou (1990) suggested in a Chinese article that compliments should be best exchanged among close friends and acquaintances, for it is easier to know on what they like to be complimented.

Chinese Responses

A few previous studies of Chinese responses to English compliments found that Chinese English learners tend to deny and give negative accounts to compliments they receive from native speakers of English (Chiang & Pochtrager, 1993; Liu, 1994; Yang, 1987). Chiang and Pochtrager (1993) found that the Chinese in their study used Chinese response formulas to respond to English compliments. For example, they expressed a sense of duty (e.g. "It's my duty"), or a need for improvement (e.g. "I still need to improve it"), when being complimented on job performances. Liu's (1994) study of a group of Mainland Chinese students at Oklahoma State University indicated that Chinese negate compliments in order to show modesty, which is a quality valued very highly in the Chinese culture.

In their discussion of the various styles of politeness, Dong and Wang (1993) suggest that Chinese politeness is often achieved by the lowering of oneself so that others can be elevated. Therefore, when being complimented, a Chinese would say, "No, No, I'm not..." to belittle themselves. Dong and Wang also suggest that linguistic politeness rules are subjective to social rules. Social politeness principles are often expressed in

daily speech acts such as greetings, thanking, and compliments. These linguistic politeness formulas cannot be judged on their truth value. In certain social occasions, according to Dong and Wang, people may be obligated to say what is not true in order to obtain social politeness. Su (1992) had the following descriptions on how social politeness is manifest in the Chinese society in the act of responding to compliments:

> In China, one is not supposed to accept a praise by saying "Thank you." In order not to seem pompous, one should say something to the contrary, even to apologize, regardless of how highly one may think at heart about one's own achievement. This is the golden rule for the workplace as well as for social occasions. If you are a capable hostess who prepares a dinner of 10 or 12 delicious dishes for your invited guests and are praised for your wonderful cooking feat, you not only need to deny the fact that you cook well, but you also are expected to apologize for "simpleness" and "shabbiness" of your offering--there are ONLY 10 or 12 dishes and there is always room for a more elaborated dinner. (p. 3- 4)

Social Distribution of Chinese Compliments

Lii and Yu's (1988) study of Taiwan university Chinese students described how age, sex, and degree of intimacy affected compliment-response exchanges in the Chinese language. They found that women tended to use more humble, polite forms. People of close relationships were more likely to use less polite forms such as bragging. Adults between 20 to 55 tended to use formal rejection formulas. Older people often used polite rejection forms among friends, but they tended to add remarks of encouragement when responding to the compliments given by young people, saying, "This is nothing, but if

you work hard, some day you will be as good as (or even better than) I." Teenagers were found to prefer upgrading praises and blunt replies to compliments from peers.

Summary of the Empirical Review

The second section of this chapter reviewed major empirical findings of previous studies of American English compliments and responses, and Chinese perceptions and responses to compliments. Differences shown in compliments and responses by people from the two cultures seemed to reflect a conflict of politeness principles. The Chinese modesty politeness emphasized that one should raise others and lower oneself in order that appropriate social distance may be maintained. Therefore, when receiving a compliment, no matter how much the complimented person is pleased with and whether or not he or she agrees with what the other says, he or she should deny it or scale it down to show modesty (Su, 1992). Yang (1987) felt that to respond to a compliment as Americans do would be considered arrogant by Chinese. On the other hand, the American solidarity politeness tended to emphasize interpersonal solidarity which was often achieved through negotiations of status to strike even the distance. Herbert (1986) illustrated the American negotiation in the following compliment response, "I recognize that your compliment was intended to make me feel good. I choose to avoid self-praise and thus assert that we are equal" (p. 211). The American emphasis on equality may account for why American English compliments tend to be given by high-status persons to low-status persons, because the American society encourages an effort made to shorten the social distance in order to increase interpersonal solidarity. The Chinese emphasis on modesty may account for why Chinese tend to negate compliments by belittling

themselves, because the Chinese society advocates that proper distance should be kept to maintain the social order and interpersonal harmony.

Summary of Chapter II

Chapter II reviewed major theoretical and empirical research and studies of compliments and responses. The theoretical review established the theoretical framework for this study. It conceptualized the speech acts of complimenting and responding to a compliment as a chain of social actions that involves interactive and inferential activities in the context. The empirical review provided the empirical evidence that social and cultural factors played important roles in determining how individuals from different cultural backgrounds might respond to compliments differently.

Chapter III will present the research methodology and procedures used for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gather The University of Tennessee Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of and responses to American English compliments in order to explore how certain contextual factors may affect their perceptions. Data was gathered from an original questionnaire designed by the researcher specifically for this study. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather perceptions of the Mainland Chinese students at The University of Tennessee regarding two particular types of American English compliments given in various hypothetical situations and to gather their written responses to the compliments.

This chapter presents the methodology of this study. It is organized into the following four sections: 1) population, 2) instrumentation, 3) procedures, and 4) data analysis.

Population

This study included the entire group of Mainland Chinese students who were enrolled in the various degree programs of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the spring semester of 1998. A list of the enrolled Mainland Chinese students was provided by the Student Data Analysis office of The University. The number of students registered in the first week of the spring semester of 1998 totaled 85. As some students' local addresses were left blank in the list, the total number of the students eligible for this study was 62.

Fifty students out of the 62 eligible students responded to the questionnaire. Responses to Section II of the questionnaire provided demographic information regarding the respondents' age, gender, and length of stay in United States, which will be presented graphically in Chapter IV.

Instrumentation

Instrument

The instrument of this study was an original questionnaire designed by the researcher specifically for this population (Appendix B). The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section I presents eight hypothetical situations written in Mandarin Chinese. In each situation, a compliment was given by an American on the topic of either appearance or performance. Participants were asked to do two things in this section. First, they were asked to give a written response to the compliment in each situation, then they were asked to indicate their perception of the compliment on each of the 14 five-point Likert scales. Section II asked the participants to indicate their gender, age, and total length of stay in the United States.

Designing of the Questionnaire

The researcher controlled the following three variables while designing the eight complimenting situations for the questionnaire.

Topic: Compliments in Situation 1, 2, 4, and 8 were appearance-related, and compliments in Situation 3, 5, 6, and 7 were performance-related.

Status: Situation 1, 3, 4, and 7 reflected equal status of the compliment giver and the receiver. Situation 2, 5, 6, and 8 reflected unequal status: the speaker's status was

higher than that of the respondent.

Gender: The compliment giver in Situation 2, 4, 5, and 7 was the same sex as the respondent, the opposite sex to the respondent in Situation 1, 3, 6, and 8.

Measures of Perceptions

Respondents' perceptions were measured by their ratings of 14 descriptive scales, with 1 and 5 representing the two extremes, and 3, the middle point. The 14 scales represent the following 14 dependent variables: politeness, sincerity, respectfulness, friendliness, refinement, appropriateness, tactfulness, closeness, truthfulness, superiority, formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and judgmentalness. The superiority scale was not used in the data analysis due to the negative connotation of the two English words, "superior" and "inferior," when translated into Chinese.

Written Responses

Written responses to the compliments were elicited by open-ended questions. Respondents were asked to describe their responses in the underlined blank space following the compliment in each situation.

Procedures

Distribution of the Questionnaires

Following the approval from the Human Subject Committee at The University of Tennessee (Appendix C), a total of 62 questionnaires were handed out in person by the researcher and three non-student volunteers to 62 eligible Mainland Chinese students, who resided in the four University Married Students Apartment Complexes (i.e. Laurel Apartments, Kingston Apartments, Sutherland Apartments, and Golf Range apartments),

during the first week of February, 1998. Their addresses were provided by the Student Data Analysis office. Each envelope was numbered in numeric order so that a telephone follow-up may be conducted to reach those who would not respond.

Collection of the Questionnaires

Some questionnaires were picked up by the researcher after the respondents notified her of their completion by phone. Some were returned to the researcher's home address in sealed envelopes by the respondents or through the researcher's colleagues and friends. The collection was completed by the end of February. Following the distribution of the questionnaires to all 62 students eligible for this study, forty-two questionnaires were completed and returned. A telephone follow-up was conducted to those who did not respond, thus yielding eight more responses. Among those who did not respond, three students indicated their unwillingness to participate in the study.

Out of the 62 questionnaires sent out, a total of 50 were returned. The return rate was 80%.

Data Analysis

Categorization of the Respondents

Data analysis began with the categorizing of the respondents. The respondents were first grouped by gender, then, by age. The original grouping which appeared in the questionnaire included four age ranges: 18-24; 25-34; 35-49; and 50+. The total length of stay (years and months) in the United States filled out by each respondent was converted into the number of years and rounded up to whole numbers. For example, if a respondent stayed in the United States for one year and six or more months, the total length of his or

her stay would count up to two years; if he or she stayed for one year and less than six months, his or her length of stay would count down to one year.

Statistical Measures

The data collected by the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) computer program assisted by the Statistical and Computational Consulting Center of The University of Tennessee.

For Research Questions 1 and 2, descriptive tests were conducted to obtain means of perceptions from each of the 13 dependent variables.

For research Question 3, the Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine the relationships between respondents' perceptions of politeness and their perceptions of each of other politeness-related functions.

Research Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7, multivariate tests were conducted to obtain the interactive effects of status, gender, and topic factors on perceptions of formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and judgmentalness, respectively.

Responses to Research Question 8 were categorized and analyzed according to their discourse functions. Frequencies, percentages, and examples of each category were presented in tabular formats.

Summary of Chapter III

This chapter described research methods and procedures used in collecting data. It included descriptions of the population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. A total of 62 Chinese students were contacted and 50 completed and returned the questionnaire. The results of data analysis will be presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation was to gather data from the Mainland Chinese students who were enrolled at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in the spring semester of 1998, regarding their perceptions of and responses to American English compliments. This chapter presents the results of data analysis and answers eight research questions. Findings are presented in tabular and graphic formats.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section presents participant information based on the collected responses to Section II of the questionnaire. The second section presents results of the data analysis in response to the eight research questions. The quantitative data were obtained from the following three statistical tests: descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation tests, and multivariate tests. The qualitative data were obtained from the Chinese respondents' written responses to the compliments given in eight hypothetic situations in the questionnaire. The third section discusses findings related to the eight research questions.

Participant Information

Demographic data were obtained from participants' responses to Section II of the questionnaire. Table 2, 3, and 4 present frequencies and percentages of the responses to the three demographic items: gender, age, and length of stay in the United States. Except for one student who did not indicate gender, respondents consisted of 30 males and 19 females (Table 2). Except for one respondent who did not indicate age, 27 respondents

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	30	60	61.2	61.2
Female	19	38	38.8	100
Missing	1	2	100	
Total	50	100		

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of Age

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
18-24 yrs.	4	8	8.2	8.2
25-34 yrs	27	54	55.1	63.3
35-49 yrs	17	34	34.7	98
50 & older	1	2	2	100
Missing	1	2	100	
Total	50	100		

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentages of Length of Stay in the United States

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0-2 years	20	40	40.8	40.8
3-5 years	16	32	32.7	73.5
6 or more	13	26	26.5	100
Missing	1	2	100	
Total	50	100		

Only two respondents were younger than 24 and one was older than 50 (Table 3). Each respondent's reported length of stay in the United States was converted into the number of years. Except for three who did not indicate the length of stay, 21 respondents stayed in the United States for one to three years; 16 respondents stayed for four to six years, and nine stayed for more than seven years (Table 4).

Results of Data Analysis

Research Question 1

Question

How do Mainland Chinese students perceive the various politeness functions of American English compliments given in various situations?

Rankings of Means by Situations

Figures 2 to 9 show the ranking order of the mean scores for perceptions of the nine politeness-related variables (i.e. sincerity, respectfulness, friendliness, refinement, truthfulness, appropriateness, tactfulness, closeness, and politeness) in each of the eight compliment situations. The means of all politeness variables are above the middle point 3 on the five-point Likert scale. The mean values for Situation 1 range from 3.20 (Truth1, i.e. the truthfulness of the compliment in Situation 1) (Figure 2) to 4.39 (Friend1, i.e. the friendliness of the compliment in Situation 1). The mean values for Situation 2 range from 3.31 (Truth1) to 4.20 (Friend1) (Figure 3). The mean values for Situation 3 range from 3.35 (Truth1) to 4.29 (Friend1) (Figure 4). The mean values for Situation 4 range from 3.24 (Truth1) to 3.98 (Friend1) (Figure 5).The mean values for Situation 5 range from 3.53 (Close1, i.e. the closeness of the compliment in Situation 1) to 4,06 (Friend1)

Situation 1

Event: Friday evening party

Speaker: equal-status friend, the opposite sex

Compliment: "That's a nice sweater you're wearing!"

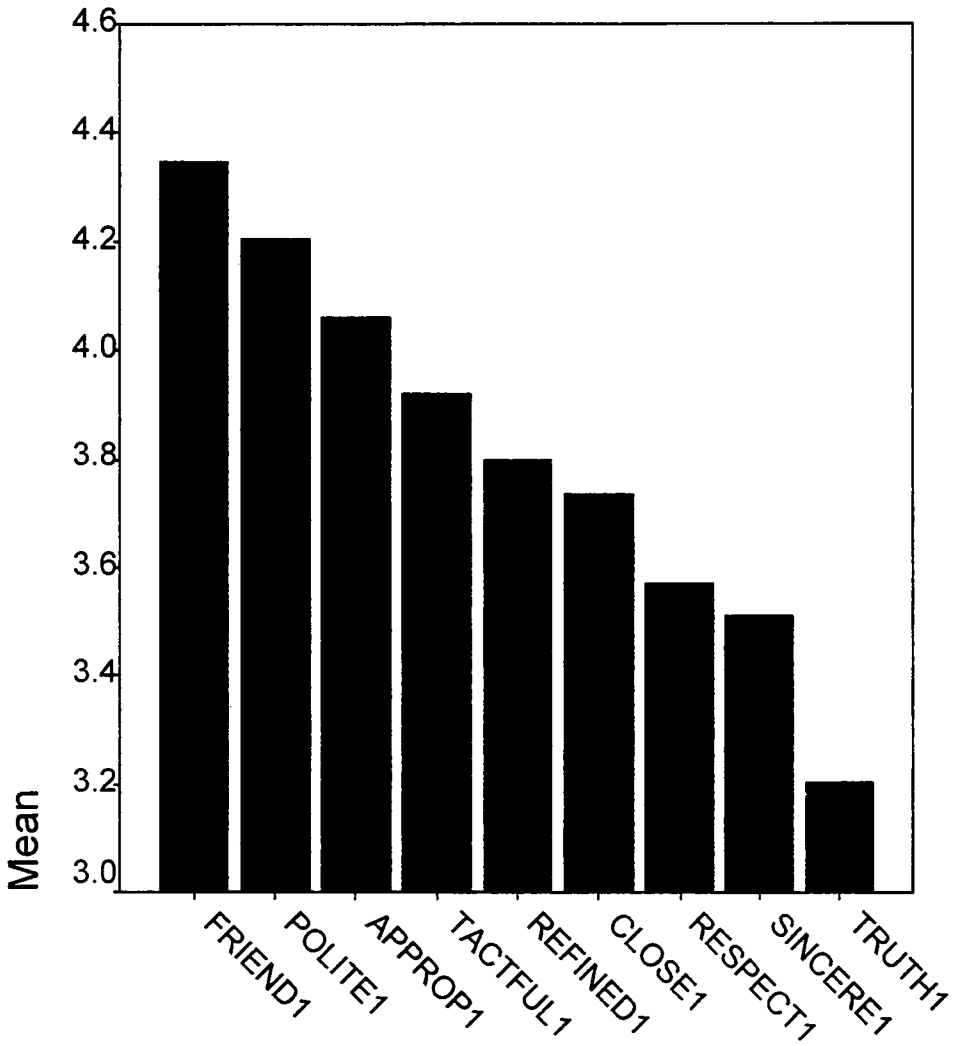


Figure 2. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 1

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

Situation 2

Event: conversation in the office after returning from vacation

Speaker: high-status boss, the same sex

Compliment: "How's the vacation? You look great!!"

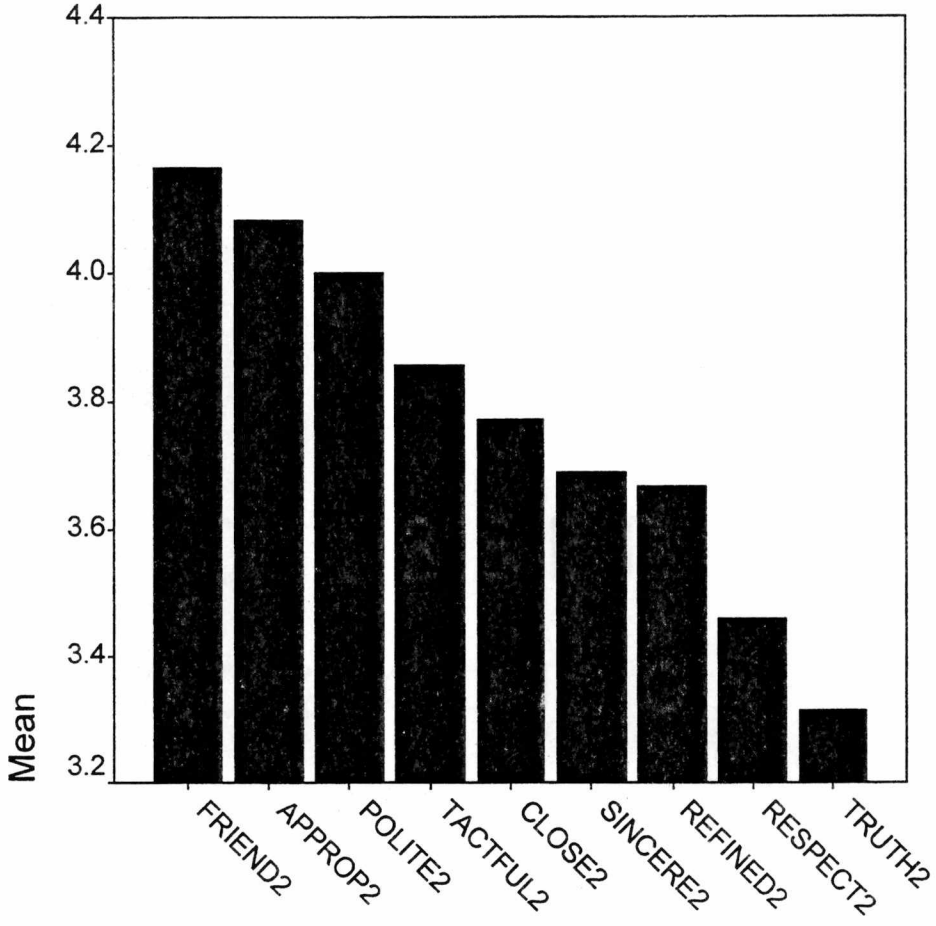


Figure 3. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 2

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

Situation 3

Event: conversation after presentation of research paper in class

Speaker: equal-status classmate, the opposite sex

Compliment: "I like your presentation. You did a good job!"

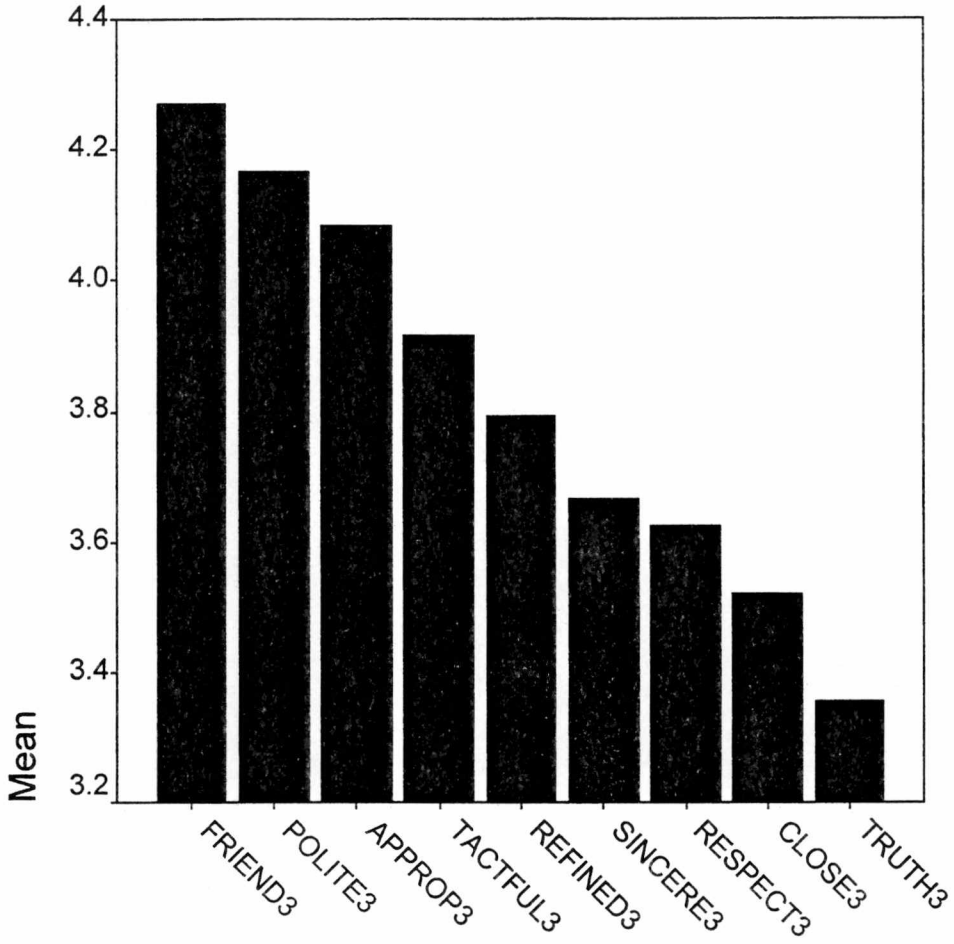


Figure 4. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 3

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

Situation 4

Event: conversation in the office before starting to work

Speaker: equal-status colleague, the same sex

Compliment: "Hey, what's the occasion? You look very nice today!"

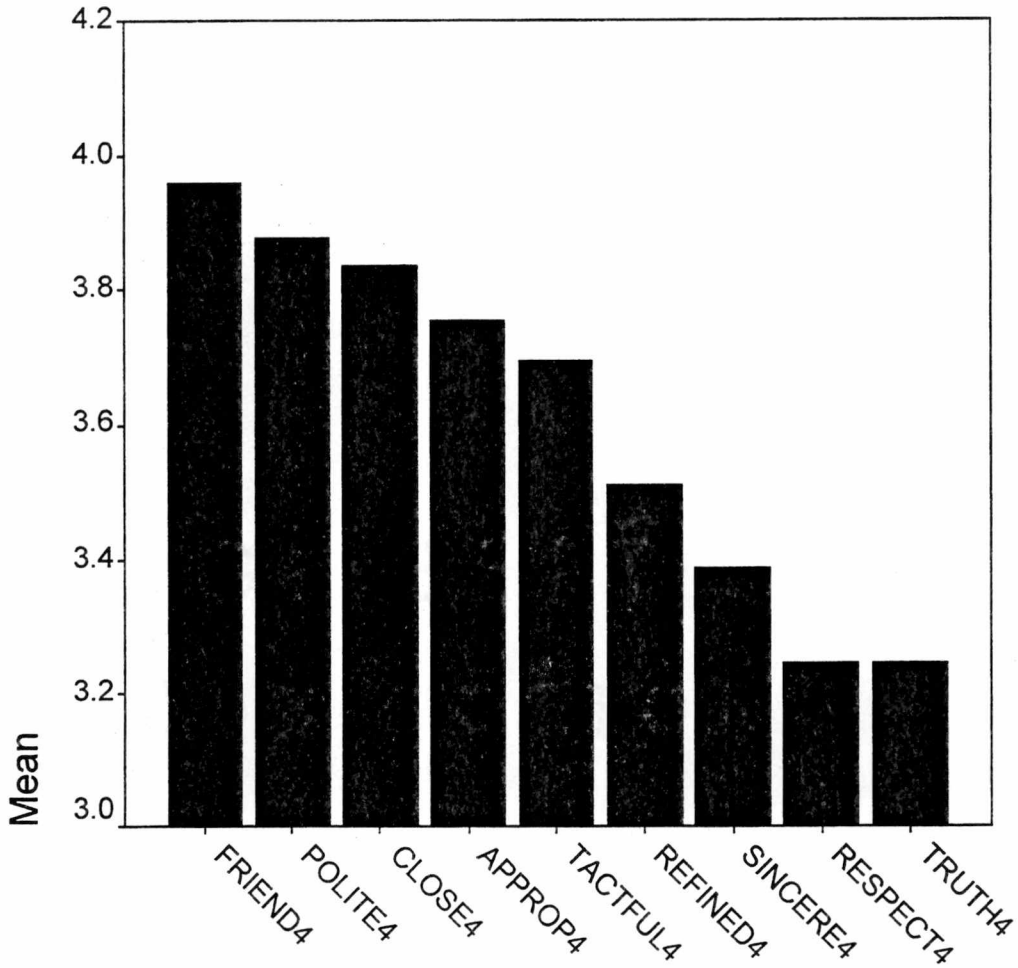


Figure 5. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 4

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

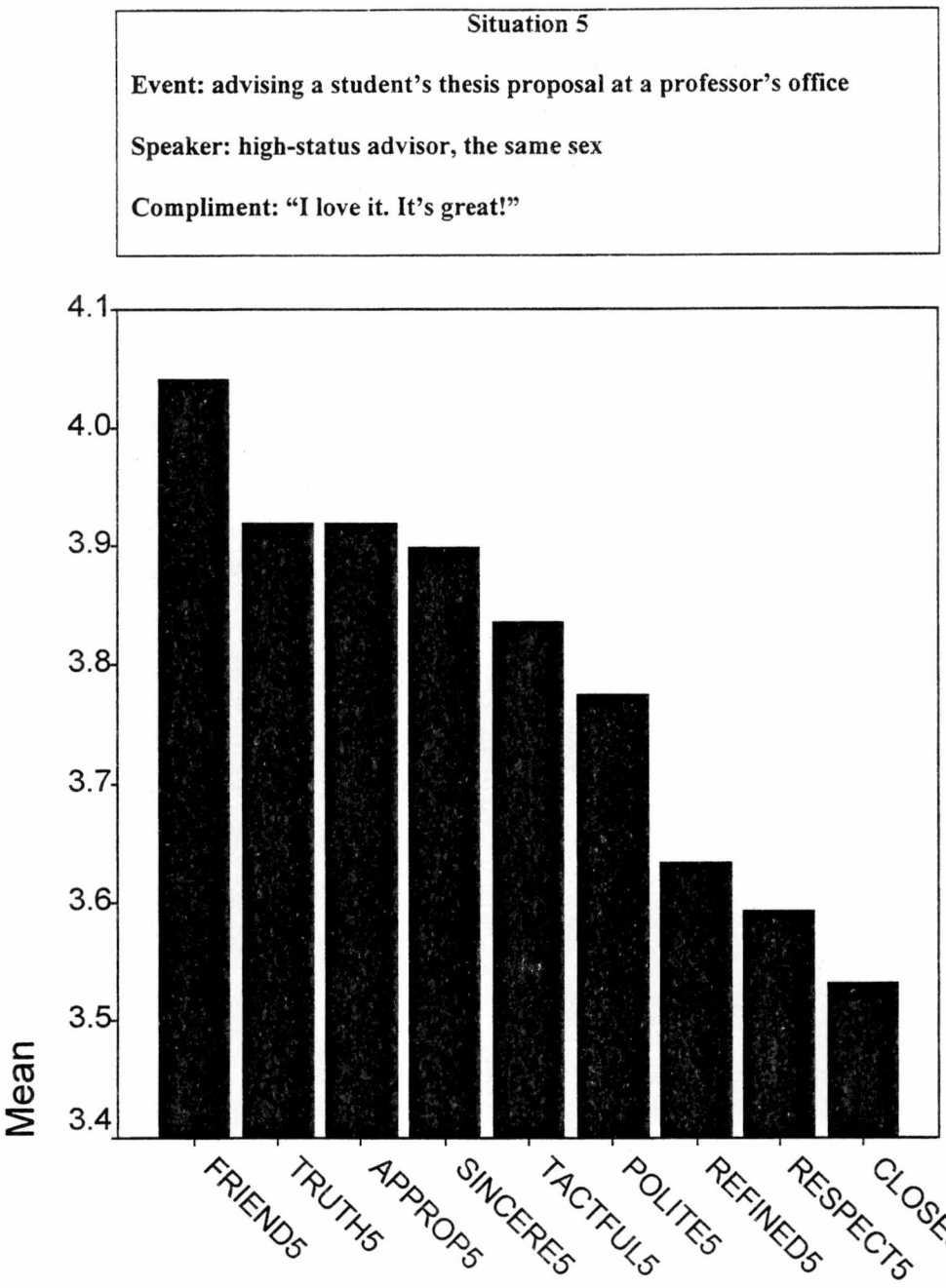


Figure 6. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 5

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

Situation 6

Event: returning a student's homework after class

Speaker: high-status professor, the opposite sex

Compliment: "You did great!"

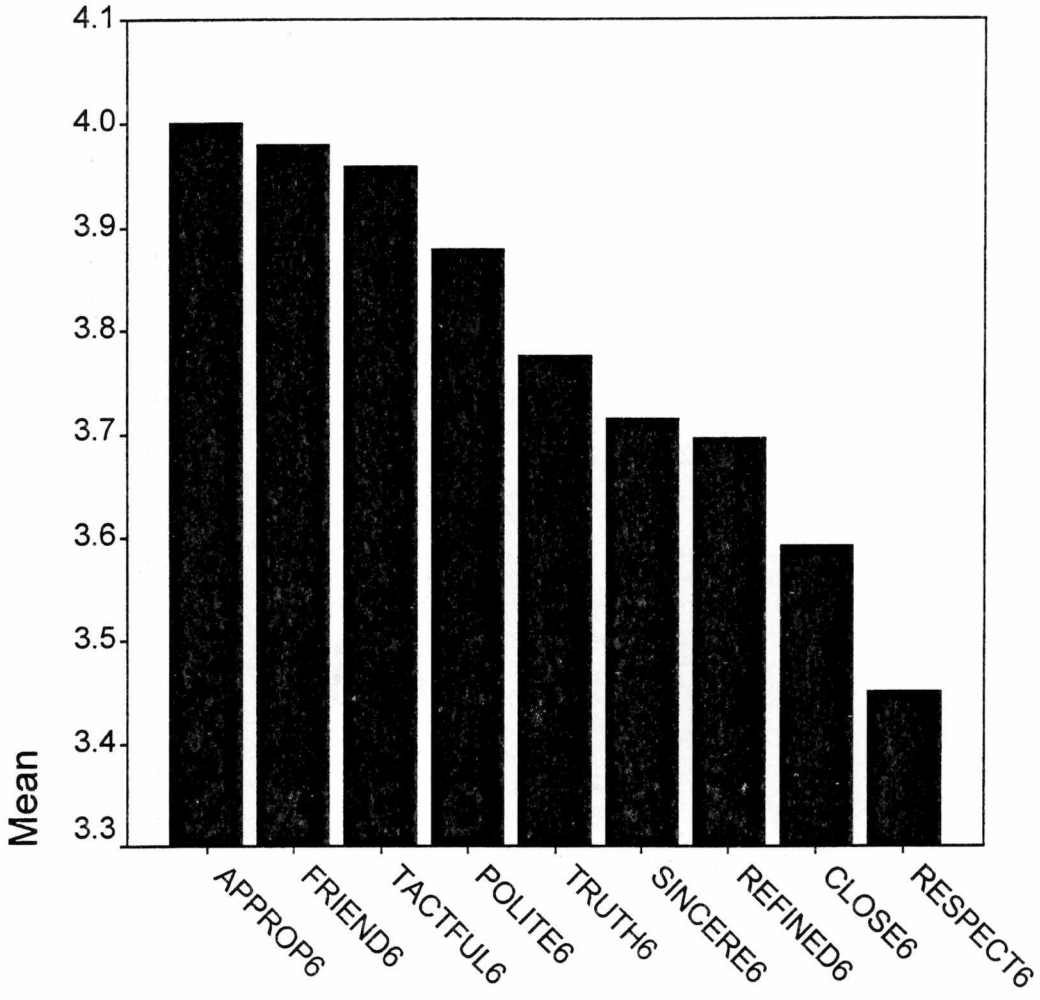


Figure 7. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 6

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

Situation 7

Event: group discussion in class

Speaker: equal-status classmate, the same sex

Compliment: "That's an excellent point! I've thought it in that way."

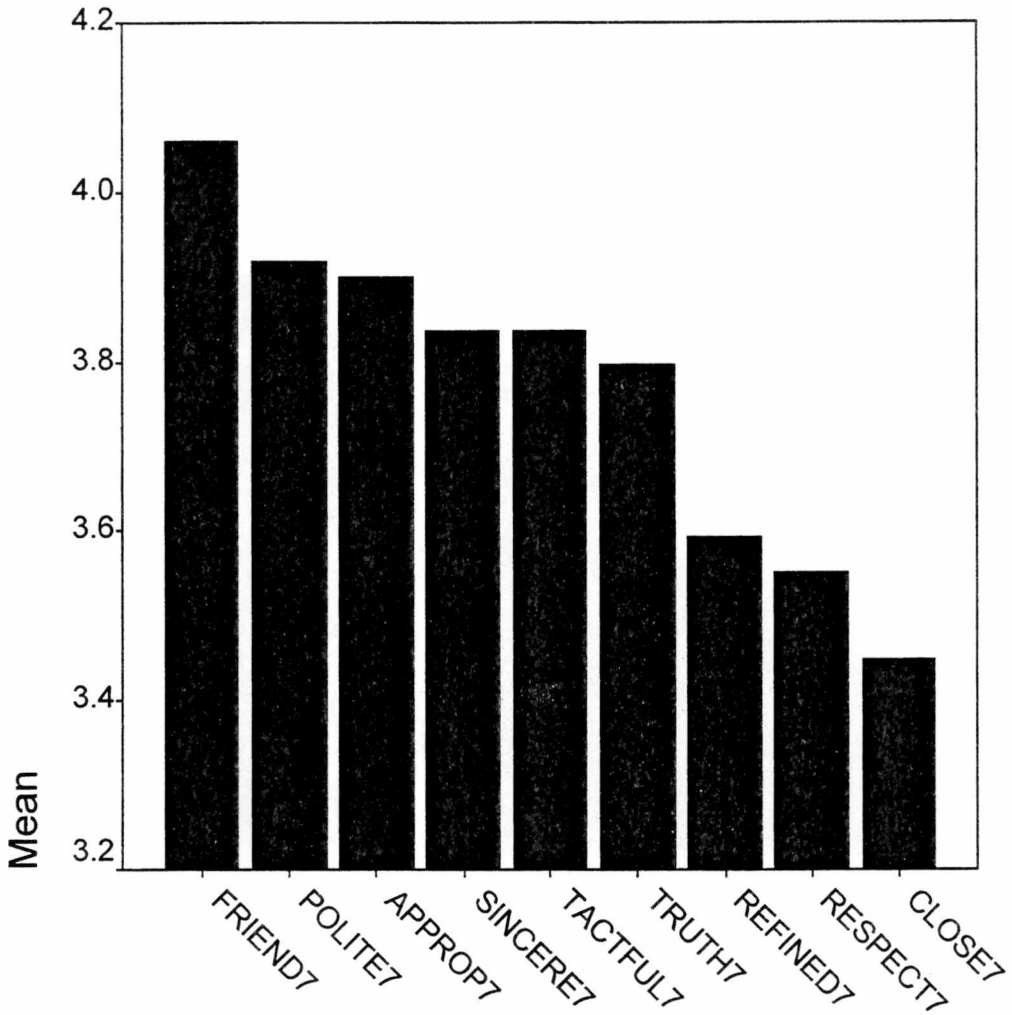


Figure 8. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 7

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

Situation 8

Event: Conversation at a dinner party at a professor's home

Speaker: high-status professor, the opposite sex

Compliment: "How are you? You look fantastic tonight!"

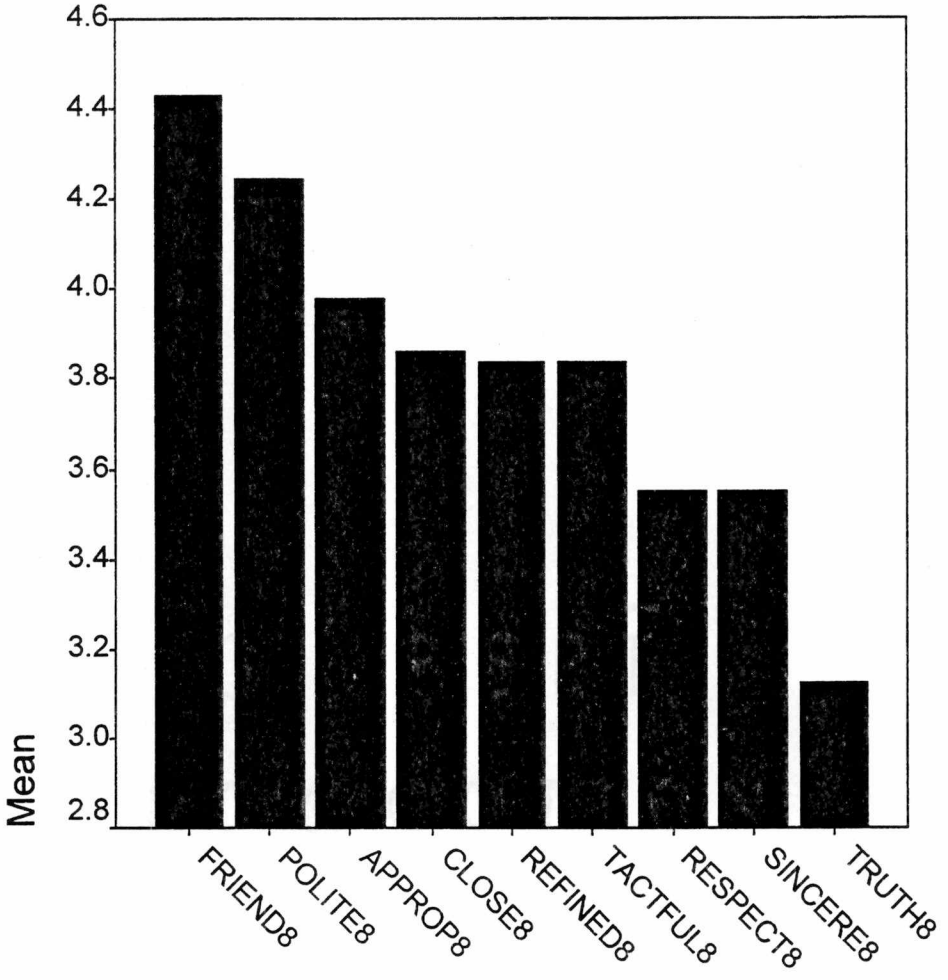


Figure 9. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Nine Politeness Variables in Situation 8

Note. Friend = Friendliness Polite = Politeness Approp = Appropriateness
Tactful = Tactfulness Refined = Refinement Close = Closeness
Respect = Respectfulness Sincere = Sincerity Truth = Truthfulness

(Figure 6). The mean values for Situation 6 range from 3.45 (Respect1, i.e. the respectfulness of the compliment in Situation 1) to 4.00 (Approp1, i.e. the appropriateness of the compliment in Situation 1) (Figure 7). The mean values for Situation 7 range from 3.45 (Close1) to 4.08 (Friend1) (Figure 8). The mean value for Situation 8 range from 3.12 (Truth1) to 4.44 (Friend 1) (Figure 9).

Ranking Means by Variables

Figures 10 to 18 show the ranking order of means by variables in the eight compliment situations. On perceptions of sincerity, the overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.59 (represented by the variable, "sincere"). The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of sincerity range from 3.39 (sincere4, i.e. sincerity of the compliment in Situation 4) to 3.90 (sincere5, i.e. sincerity of the compliment in Situation 5) (Figure 10). On perceptions of truthfulness, the overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.58 (represented by the variables, "truth"). The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of truthfulness range from 3.12 (truth8, i.e. the truthfulness of the compliment in Situation 8) to 3.92 (truth5, i.e. the truthfulness of the compliment in Situation 5) (Figure 11). On perceptions of respectfulness, the overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.59 (represented by the variable, "respect"). The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of respectfulness range from 3.24 (respect4, i.e. the respectfulness of the compliment in Situation 4) to 3.63 (respect3, i.e. the respectfulness of the compliment in Situation 3) (Figure 12). On perceptions of appropriateness, the overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.59. The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of appropriateness range from 3.76

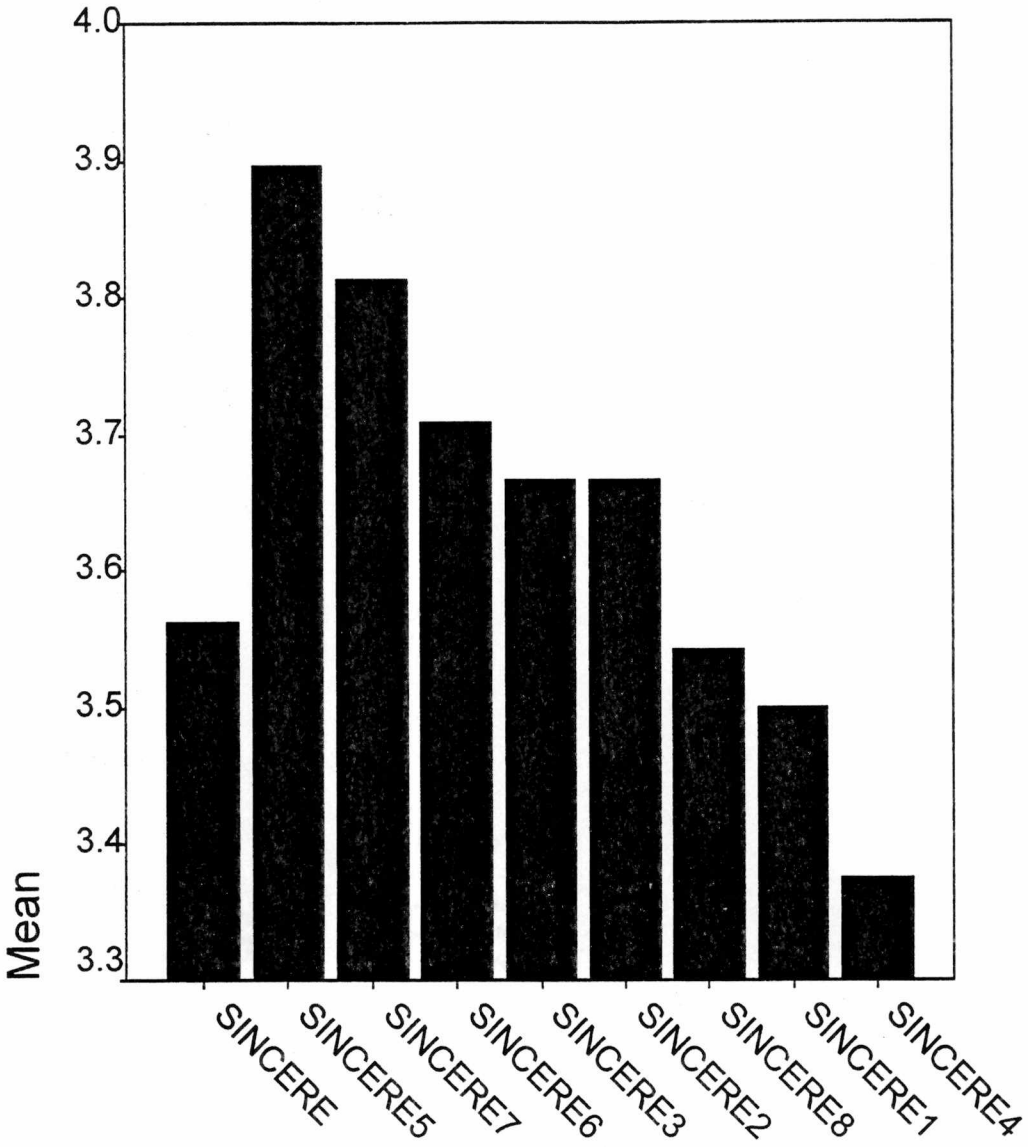


Figure 10. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Sincerity in Eight Compliment Situations

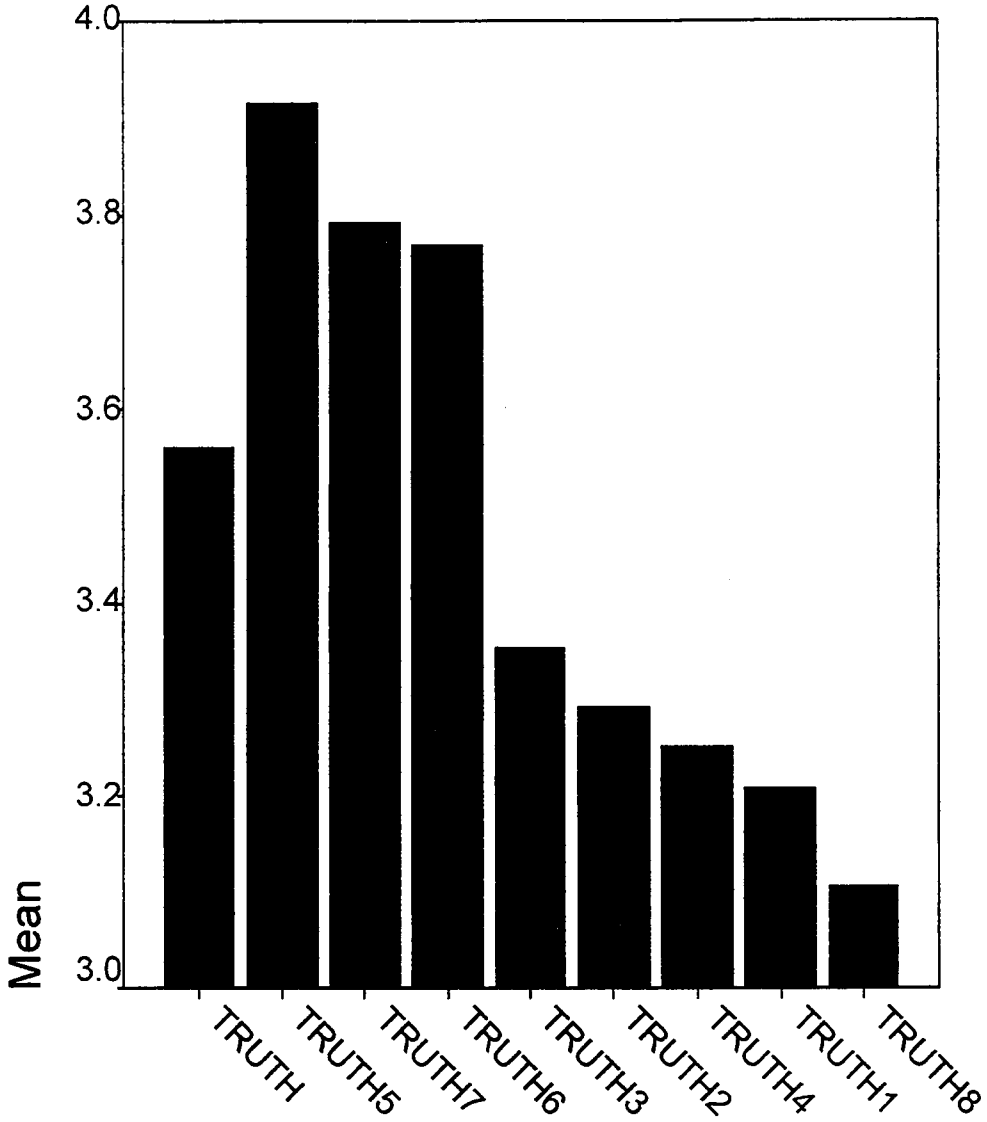


Figure 11. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Truthfulness in Eight Compliment Situations

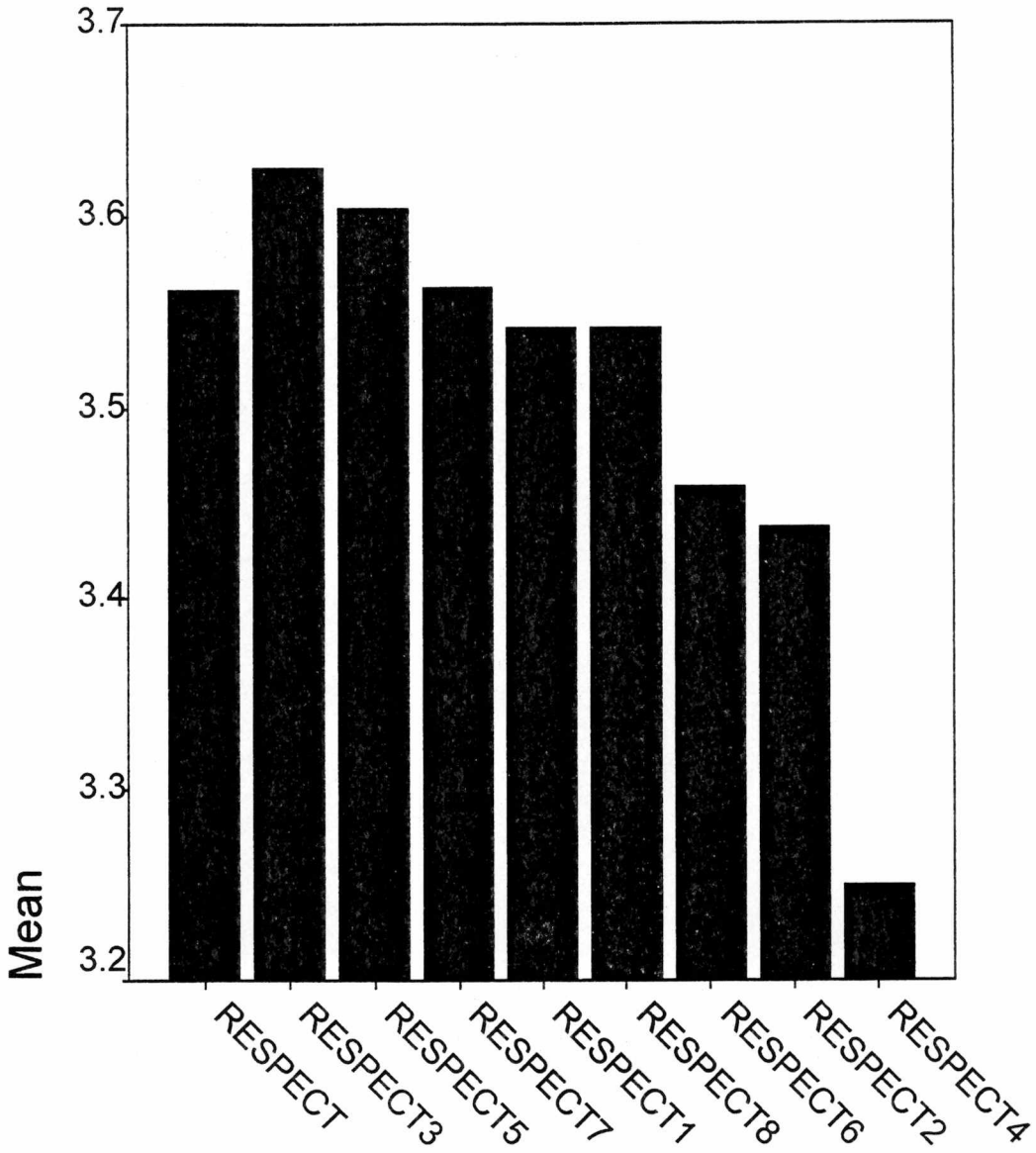


Figure 12. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Respectfulness in Eight Compliment Situations

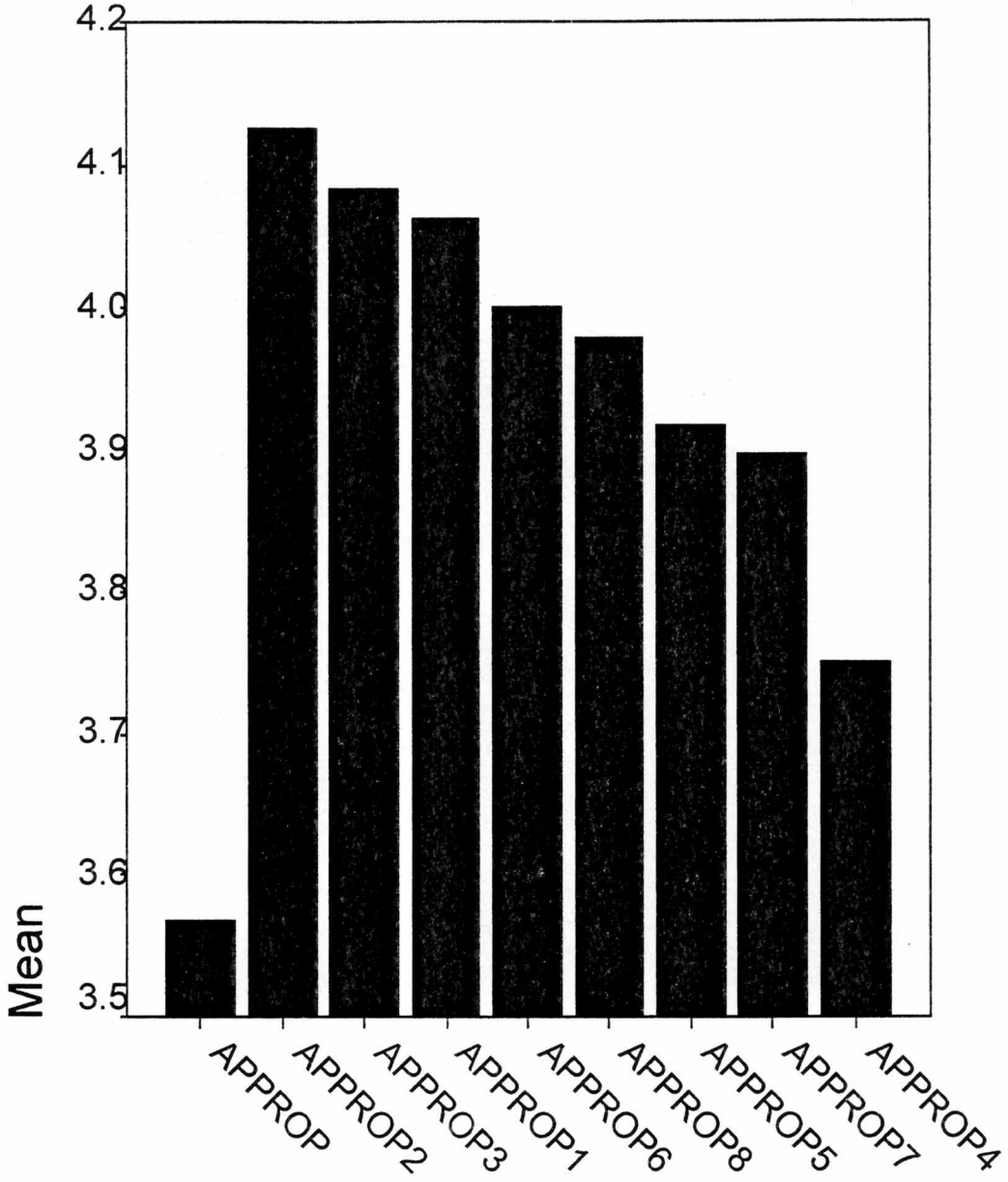


Figure 13. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Appropriateness in Eight Compliment Situations

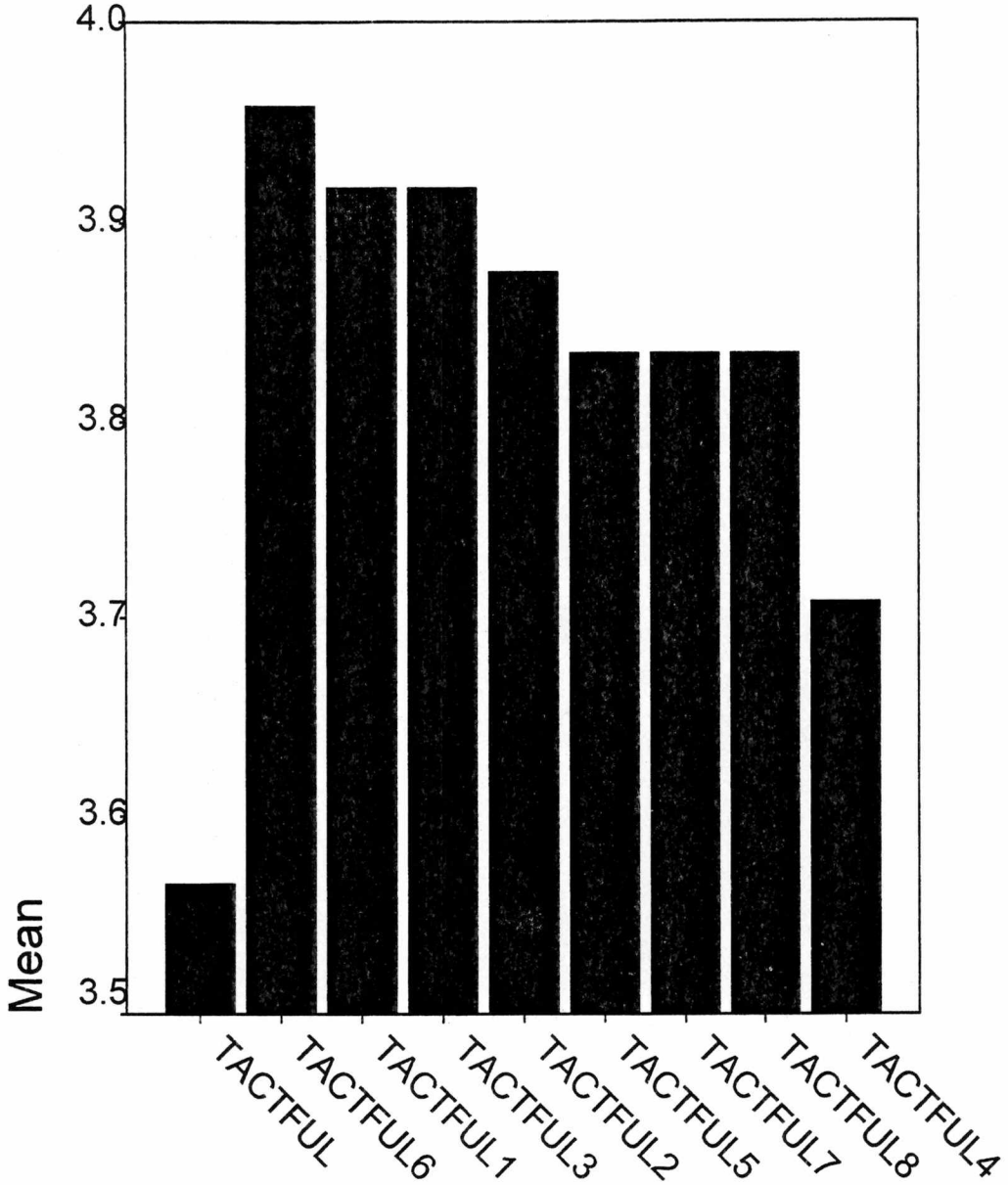


Figure 14. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Tactfulness in Eight Compliment Situations

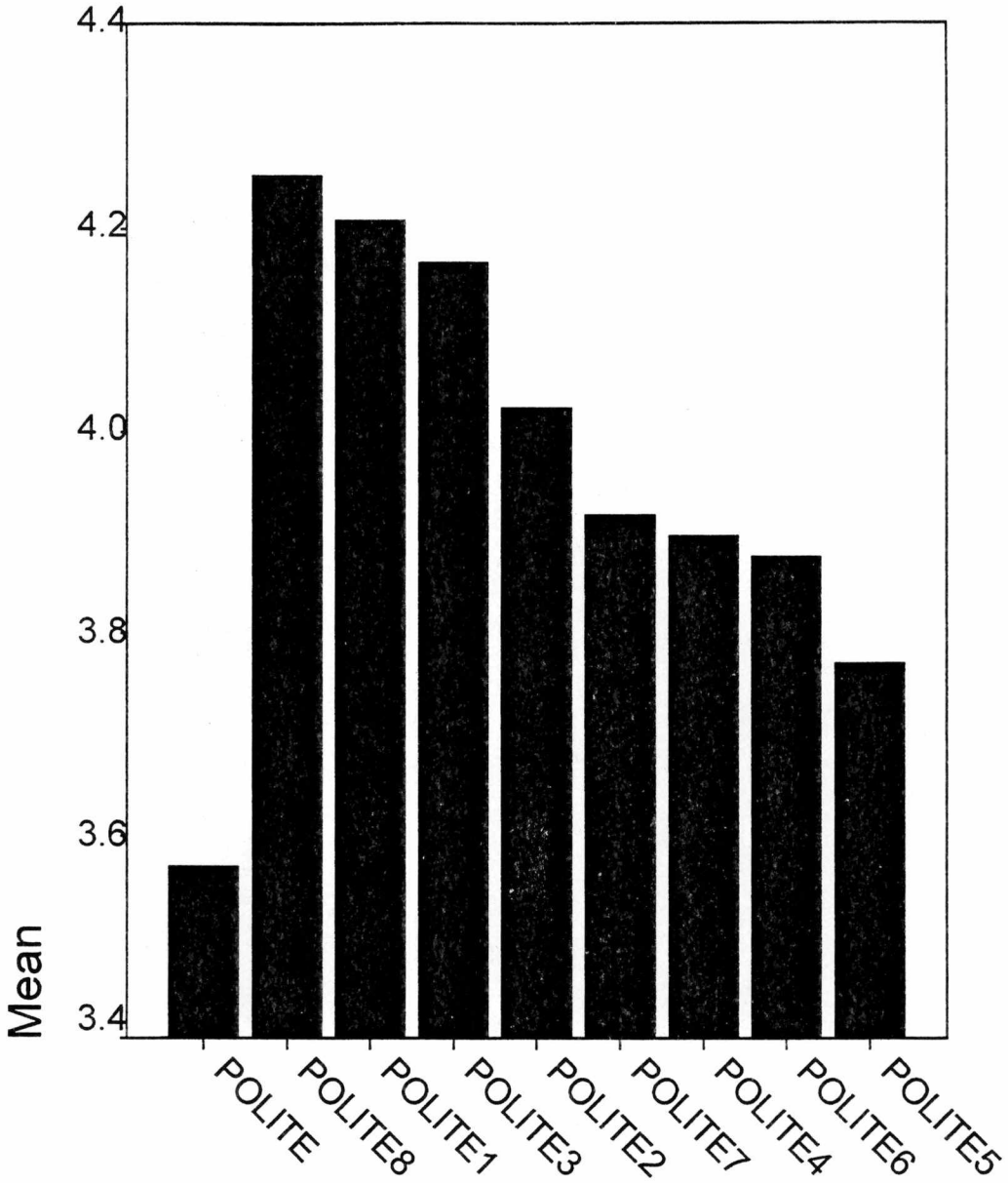


Figure 15. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Politeness in Eight Compliment Situations

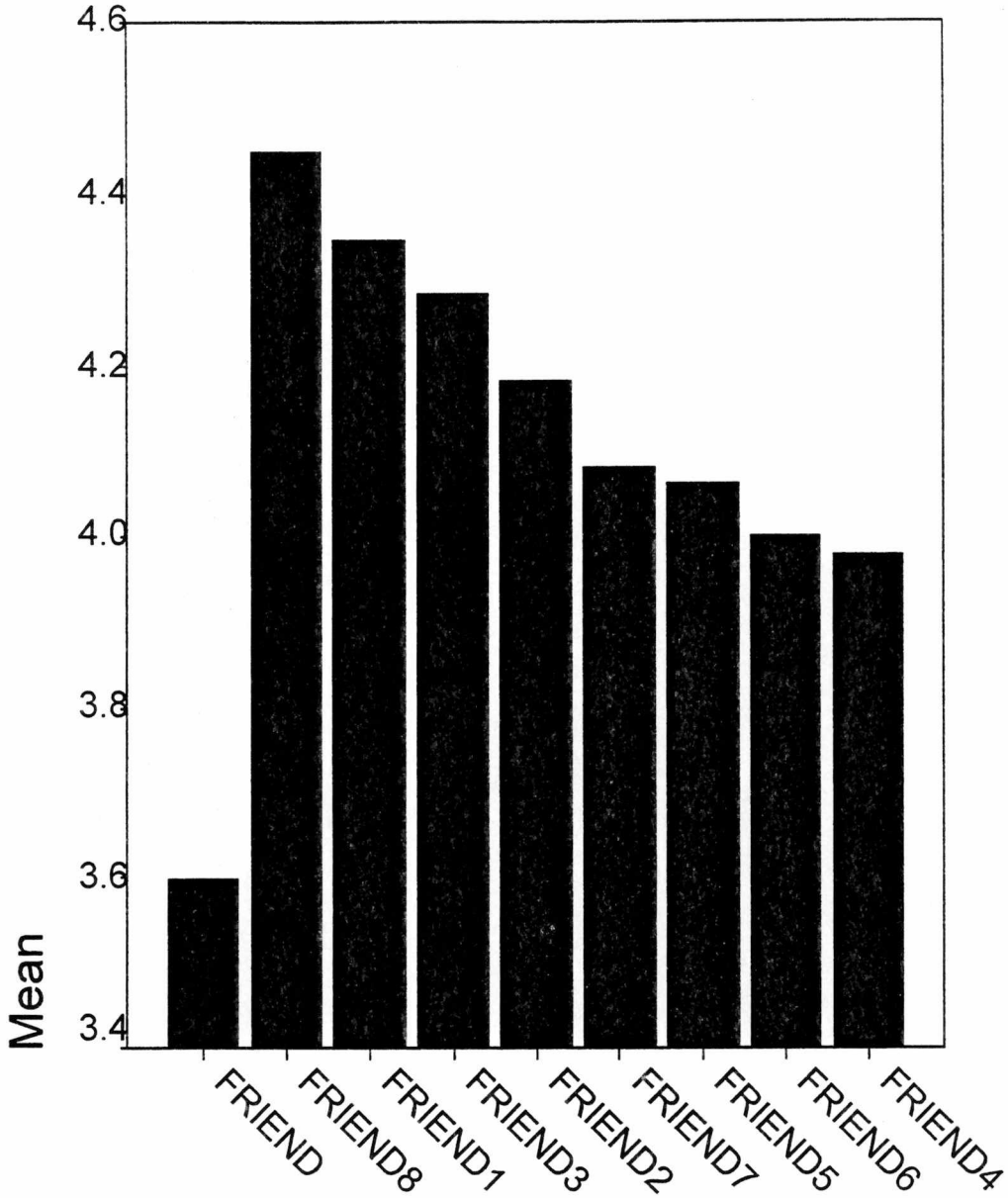


Figure 16. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Friendliness in Eight Compliment Situations

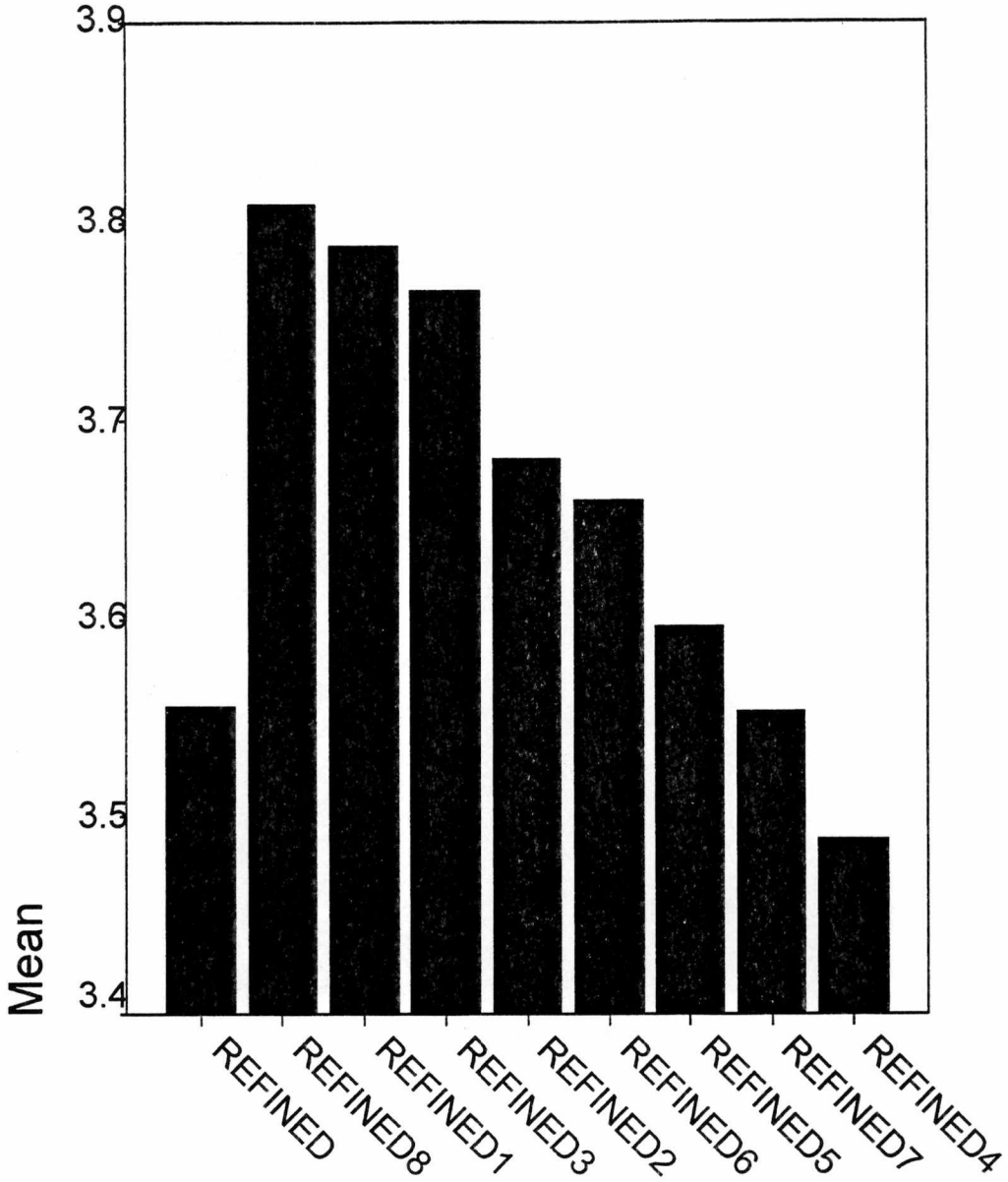


Figure 17. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Refinement in Eight Compliment Situations

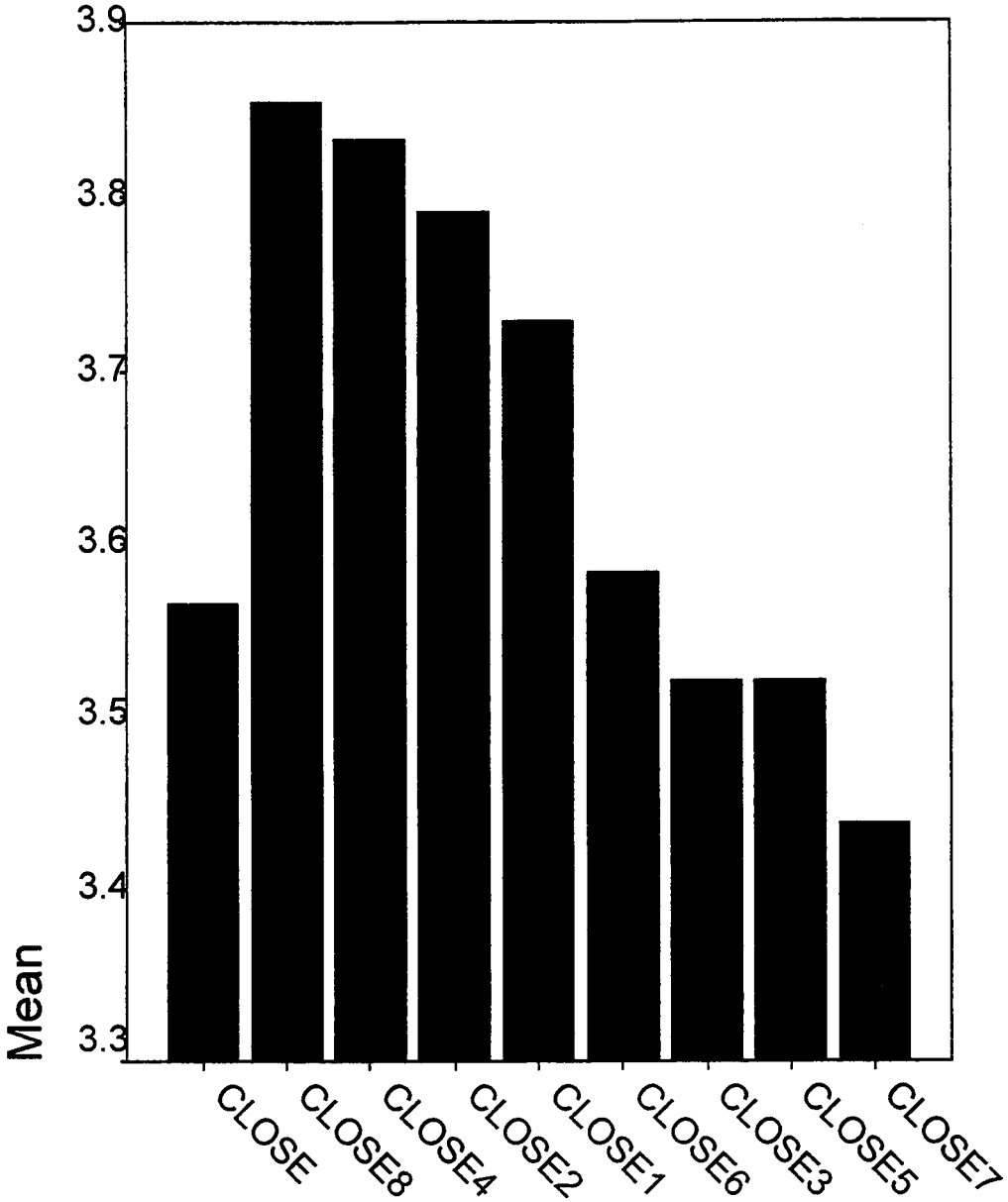


Figure 18. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Closeness in Eight Compliment Situations

(approp4, i.e. the appropriateness of the compliment in Situation 4) to 4.10 (approp2, i.e. the appropriateness of the compliment in Situation 2) (Figure 13). On perceptions of tactfulness, the overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.59 (represented by the variable, "tactful"). The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of tactfulness range from 3.69 (tactful4, i.e. the tactfulness of the compliment in Situation 4) to 3.96 (tactful6, i.e. the tactfulness of the compliment in Situation 6) (Figure 14). On perceptions of politeness, the overall mean of the eight situations is 3.60 (represented by the variable, "polite"). The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of politeness range from 3.80 (polite5, i.e. the politeness of the compliment in Situation 5) to 4.26 (polite8, i.e. the politeness of the compliment in Situation 8) (Figure 15). On perceptions of friendliness, the overall mean of the eight situations is 3.60 (represented by the variable, "friend"). The individual means for the eight situations on the scale of friendliness range from 3.98 (friend4, i.e. the friendliness of the compliment in Situation 4) to 4.44 (Friend8, i.e. the friendliness of the compliment in Situation 8) (Figure 16). On perceptions of refinement, the overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.59 (represented by the variable, "refined"). The individual means for the eight situations on the scale of refinement range from 3.51 (refined 4, i.e. the refinement of the compliment in Situation 4) to 3.84 (refined 8, i.e. the refinement of the compliment in Situation 8) (Figure 17). On perceptions of closeness, the overall mean value for the eight situations is 3.59. The individual mean values for the eight situations on the scale of closeness range from 3.45 (close 7, i.e. the closeness of the compliment in Situation 7) to 3.86 (close8, i.e. the closeness of the compliment in Situation 8) (Figure 18).

Research Question 2

Question

How do Mainland Chinese students perceive the various discourse functions of American English compliments given in various situations?

Results of Descriptive Statistics

Figure 19 to 22 show the means of respondents' perceptions on the following four scales: formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and judgmentalness, in the eight situations.

Perceptions of formality

The overall mean value of the eight situations is 3.59 (represented by the variable, "formal"). The individual mean values of the eight formality variables (represented by variables "formal1" to "formal8") range from 2.82 (formal4) to 3.86 (formal5) (Figure 19).

Perceptions of seriousness

The overall mean value of all eight situations is 3.58 (represented by the variable, "serious"). The individual mean values of the eight seriousness variables (represented by variables "serious1" to "serious8") range from 2.16 (serious4) to 3.47 (serious5) (Figure 20).

Perceptions of evaluativeness

The overall mean value of all eight situations is 3.58 (represented by the variable, "evaluat"). The individual mean values on the scale of evaluativeness (represented by variables "evaluat1"to "evalua8") range from 2.86 ("evaluat1" and "evaluat2" have the same mean scores to 4.18 (evaluat5) (Figure 21).

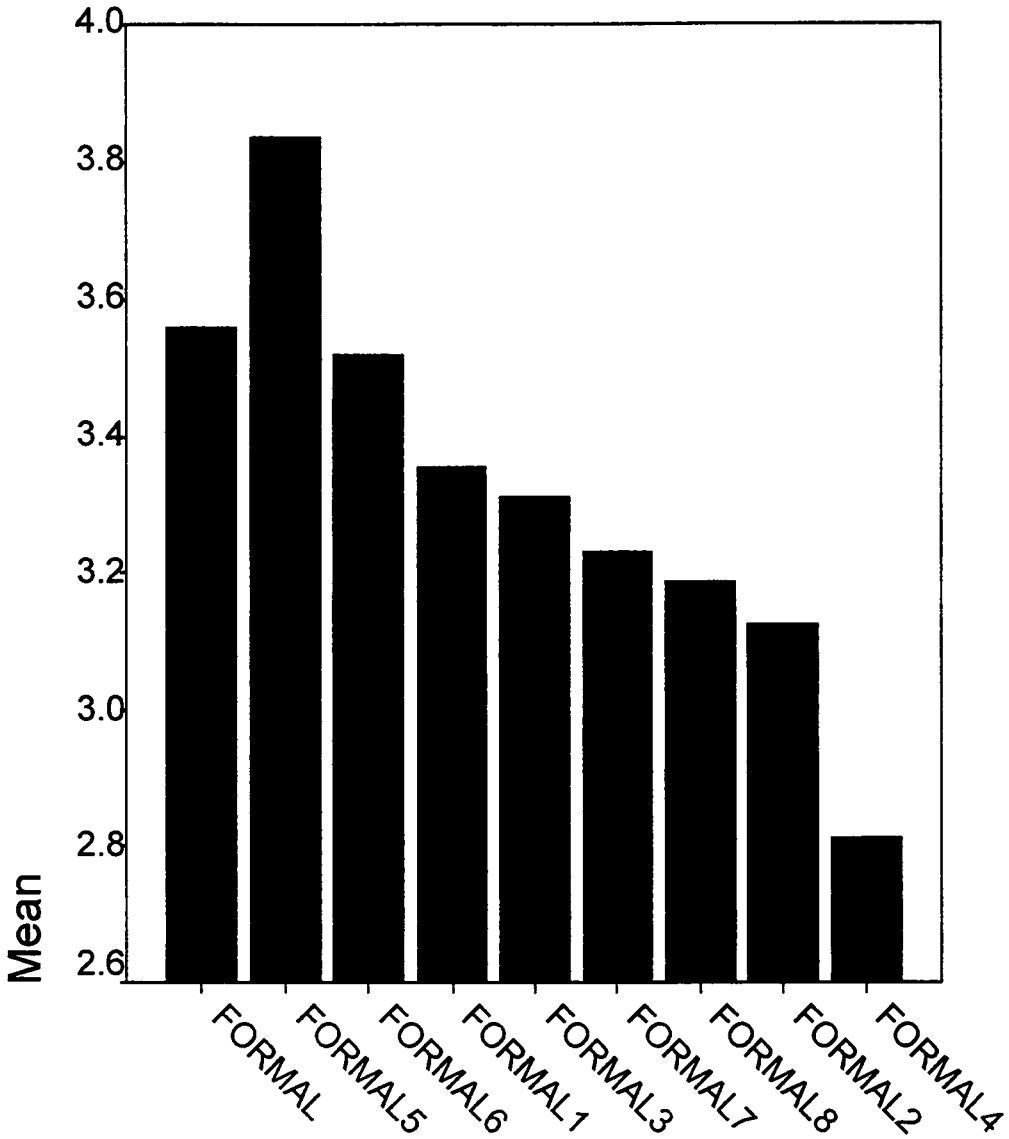


Figure 19. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Formality in Eight Compliment Situations

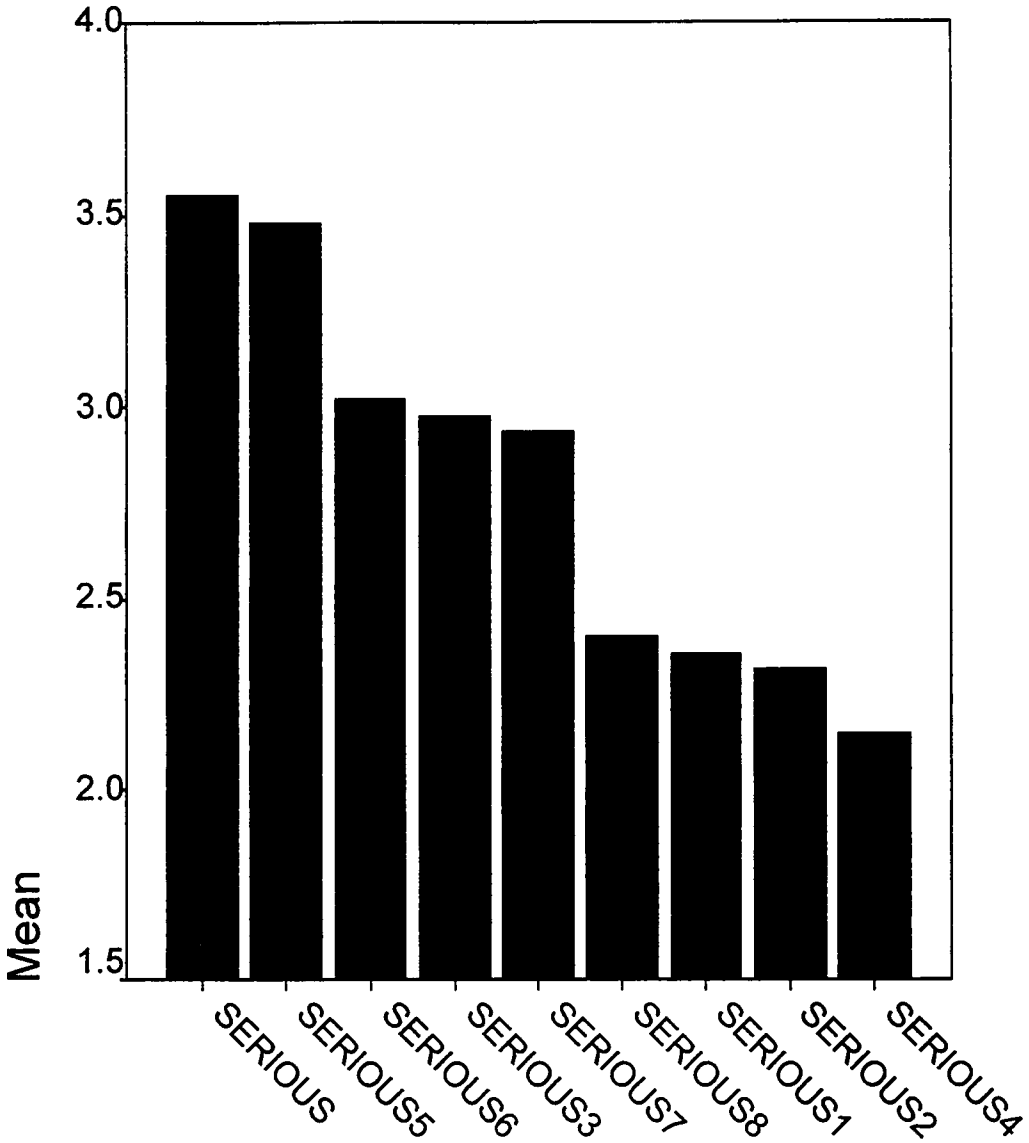


Figure 20. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Seriousness in Eight Compliment Situations

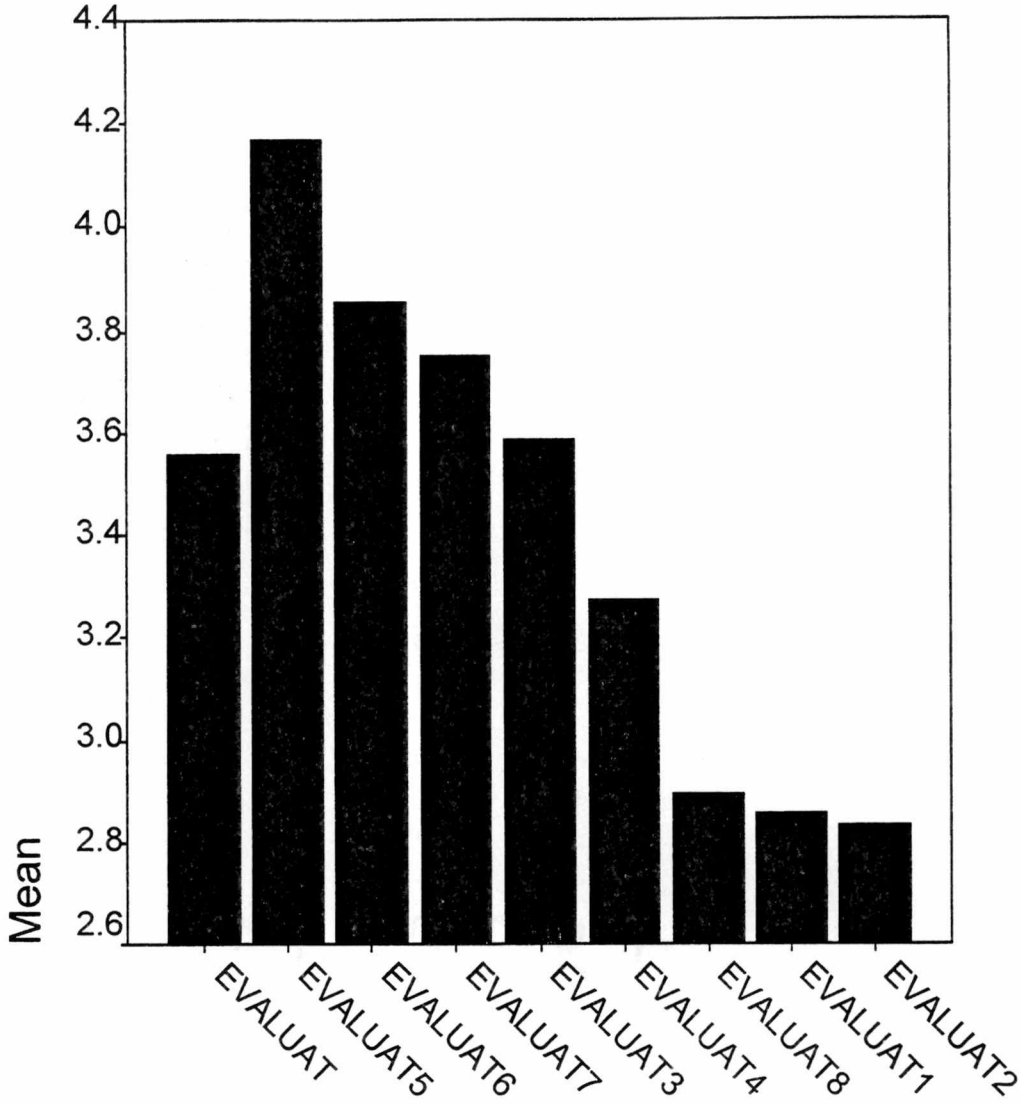


Figure 21. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Evaluativeness in Eight Compliment Situations

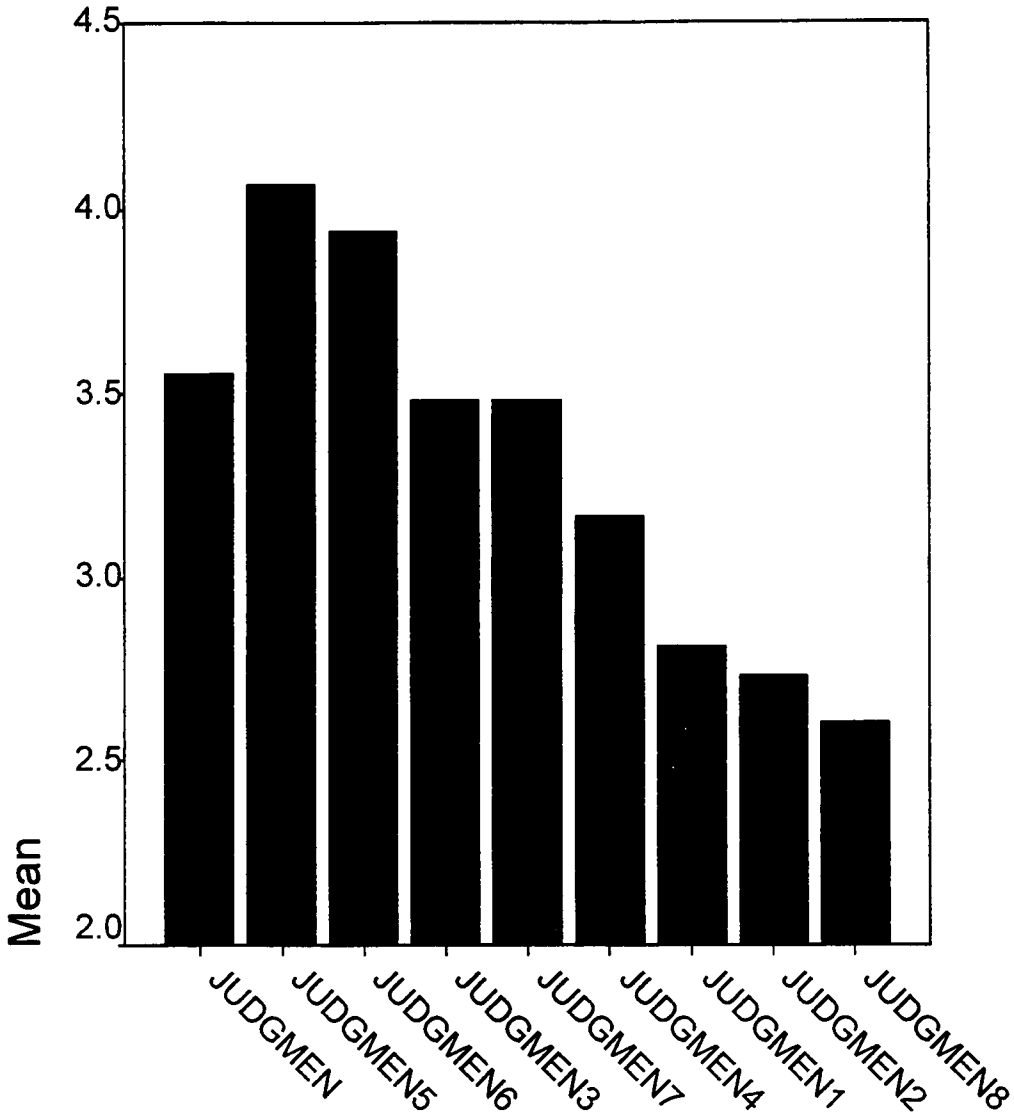


Figure 22. Ranking Order of Means of Perceptions of Judgmentalness in Eight Compliment Situations

Perceptions of judgmentalness

The overall man value of all eight situations is 3.58 (represented by the variable, "judgmen"). The individual mean values of the eight judgmentalness variables (represented by variable "judgment1" to "judgmen8) range from 2.86 (judgmen8) to 4.06 (judgmen5) (Figure 22).

Research Question 3

Question

Are there any relationships between Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of politeness and their perceptions of particular politeness-related functions of American English compliments given in various situations?

Results of Correlation Tests

The Pearson correlation tests were conducted to explore the relationships between respondents' perceptions of politeness and their perceptions of eight politeness-related variables respectively. Perceptions of friendliness, appropriateness, tactfulness, and refinement were found to be positively correlated with perceptions of politeness in all eight situations (See Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8). Perceptions of sincerity and closeness were positively correlated with perceptions of politeness in all situations except Situation 5 (See Table 9 and Table 10). Perceptions of respectfulness were positively correlated with perceptions of politeness in Situations 3 to 8, but not in Situation 1 and Situation 2 (See Table 11). Perceptions of truthfulness were positively correlated with perceptions of politeness only in Situation 4 and Situation 7) (See Table 12).

Table 5. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Friendliness

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Friend1	**.582****							
Friend2		**.419****						
Friend3			**.527****					
Friend4				**.624****				
Friend5					**.436****			
Friend6						**.552****		
Friend7							**.624****	
Friend8								**.676****

Note. *Friend1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the friendliness of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
**$p < 0.01$

Table 6. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Appropriateness

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Approp1	.553**							
Approp2		.582**						
Approp3			.560**					
Approp4				.654**				
Approp5					.398**			
Approp6						.392**		
Approp7							.568**	
Approp8								.659**

Note. *Approp1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the Appropriateness of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
**$p < 0.01$

Table 7. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Tactfulness

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Tactful1	**.659****							
Tactful2		**.639****						
Tactful3			**.507****					
Tactful4				**.743****				
Tactful5					**.429****			
Tactful6						**.445****		
Tactful7							**.534****	
Tactful8								**.581****

Note. *Tactful1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the tactfulness of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
**$p < 0.01$

Table 8. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Refinement

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Refined1	**.481****							
Refined2		**.478****						
Refined3			**.331****					
Refined4				**.629****				
Refined5					**.399****			
Refined6						**.475****		
Refined7							**.452****	
Refined8								**.442****

Note. *Refined1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the refinement of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
**$p < 0.01$

Table 9. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Sincerity

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Sincere1	**.357***							
Sincere2		**.389****						
Sincere3			**.454****					
Sincere4				**.433****				
Sincere5					**.215**			
Sincere6						**.308***		
Sincere7							**.375****	
Sincere8								**.395****

Note. *Sincere1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the sincerity of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
*$p < 0.05$
**$p < 0.01$

Table 10. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Closeness

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Close1	**.306***							
Close2		**.466****						
Close3			**.368***					
Close4				**.559****				
Close5					**.276**			
Close6						**.399****		
Close7							**.469****	
Close8								**.328***

Note. *Close1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the closeness of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
*$p < 0.05$
**$p < 0.01$

Table 11. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Respectfulness

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Respect1	**.195**							
Respect2		**.122**						
Respect3			**.337***					
Respect4				**.424****				
Respect5					**.352***			
Respect6						**.317***		
Respect7							**.345***	
Respect8								**.440****

Note. *Respect1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the respectfulness of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.
*$p < 0.05$
**$p < 0.01$

Table 12. Correlations between Perceptions of Politeness and Perceptions of Truthfulness

	Polite1	*Polite2*	*Polite3*	*Polite4*	*Polite5*	*Polite6*	*Polite7*	*Polite8*
Truth1	**.271**							
Truth2		**.253**						
Truth3			**.252**					
Truth4				**.479****				
Truth5					**.234**			
Truth6						**.027**		
Truth7							**.437****	
Truth8								**.188**

Note. *Truth1* represents Chinese students' perceptions of the truthfulness of the compliment given in Situation 1. *Polite1* represents their perceptions of the politeness of the compliment in Situation 1. The eight numbers represent the eight compliment situations.

*$p < 0.05$

**$p < 0.01$

Research Question 4

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the formality of American English compliments given in various situations?

Results of Multivariate Tests

Figure 23, 24, and 25 show the interactive effects of status, topic, and gender on respondents' perceptions of the formality of American English compliments.

Figure 23 shows that, in general, the compliments given by high-status people, on both appearance or performance, were perceived by the respondents to be more formal than compliments given by equal-status people. Specifically, when given by high-status people, performance compliments were perceived to be approximately 4 units more formal than appearance compliments. However, when given by equal-status people, performance compliments were perceived to be approximately 1 unit more formal than appearance compliments.

Figure 24 shows that, in general, performance compliments were perceives to be more formal than appearance compliments, regardless of speaker status and gender. Specifically, when the topic was appearance, compliments given by people of the opposite sex were perceived to be approximately 3 units more formal than compliments given by people of the same sex. When the topic was performance, compliments given by people of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 1 unit more formal than compliments given by people of the opposite sex.

Figure 25 shows that, when given by people of the same sex, compliments given

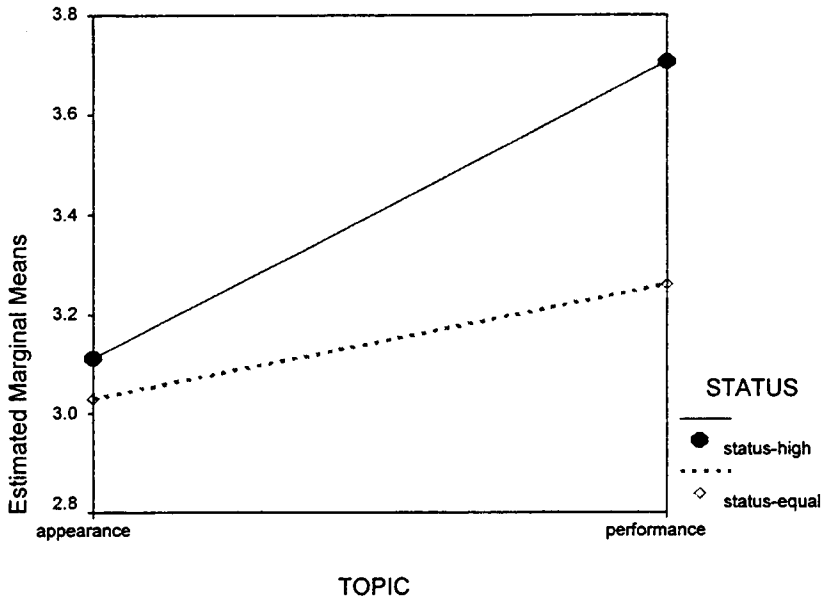


Figure 23. Interactions of Topic and Status on Perceptions of Formality
$p < 0.05$

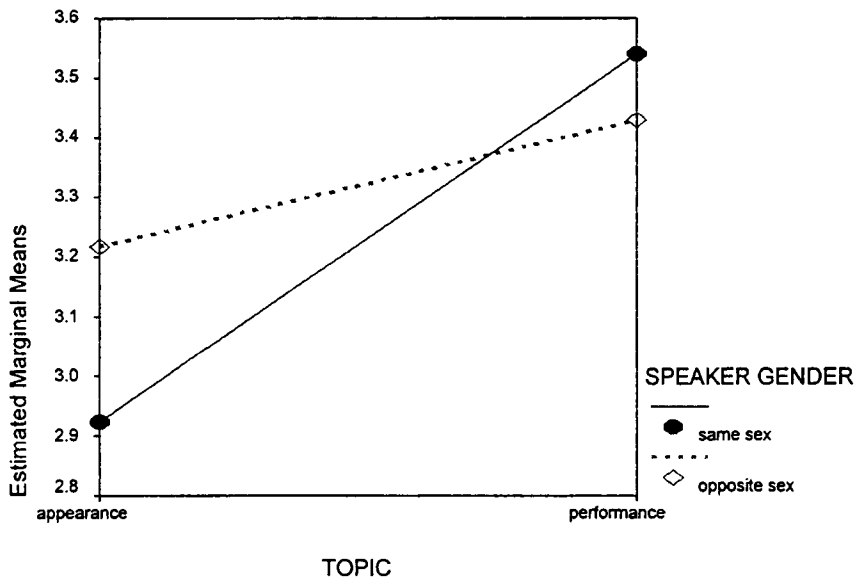


Figure 24. Interactions of Topic and Speaker Gender on Perceptions of Formality
$p < 0.05$

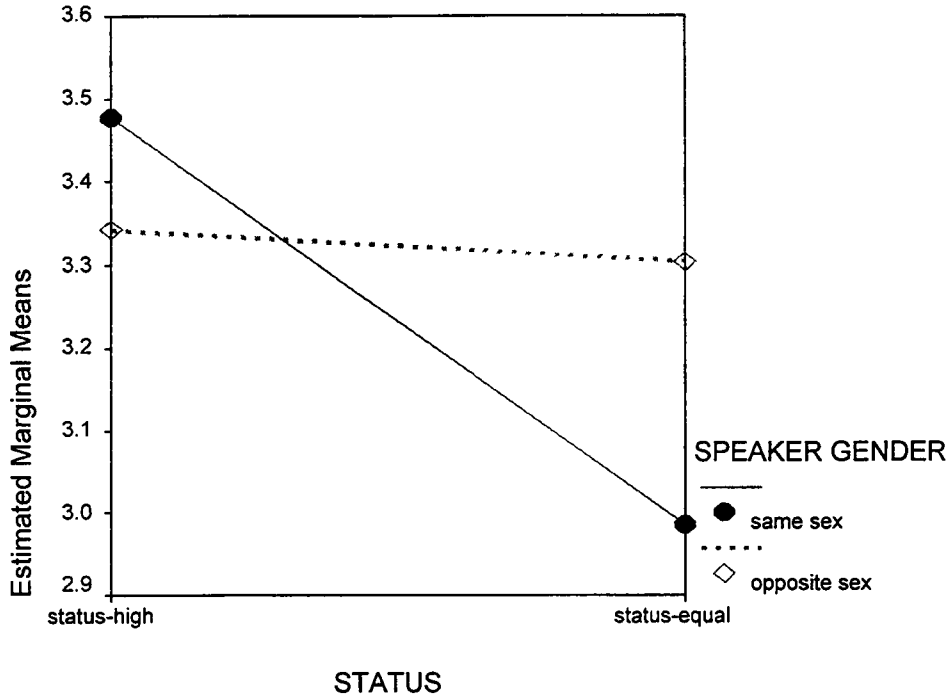


Figure 25. Interactions of Status and Speaker Gender on Perceptions of Formality

$p < 0.05$

by high-status people were perceived to be approximately 1 unit more formal than compliments given by equal-status people. When given by people of the opposite sex, the compliments from high-status people were perceived to be having the same degree of formality as the compliments from equal-status people. When given by equal-status people, the compliments given by those of the opposite sex were perceived to be approximately 3 units more formal than by those of the same sex. When given by high-status people, compliments given by those of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 1 unit more formal than by those of the opposite sex.

Research Question 5

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the seriousness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Results of Multivariate Tests

Figure 26 shows that, in general, performance compliments were perceived to be more serious than appearance compliments, regardless of speaker status and gender. Specifically, when the topic was performance, compliments given by people of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 2 units more serious than compliments given by people of the opposite sex. When the topic was appearance, compliments given by people of the opposite sex were perceived to be approximately 1 unit more serious than compliments given by people of the same sex.

Figure 27 shows that, when given by high-status persons, the compliments that were given by people of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 2 units more

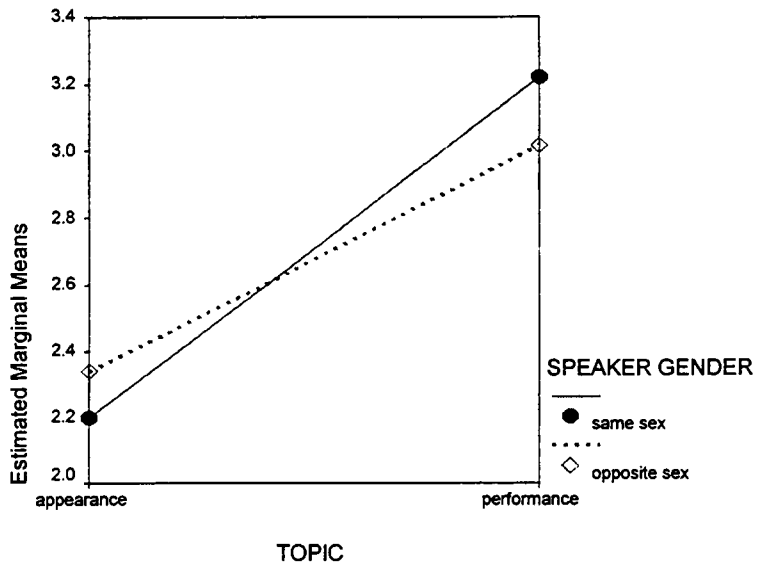


Figure 26. Interactions of Topic and Speaker Gender on Perceptions of Seriousness $p < 0.05$

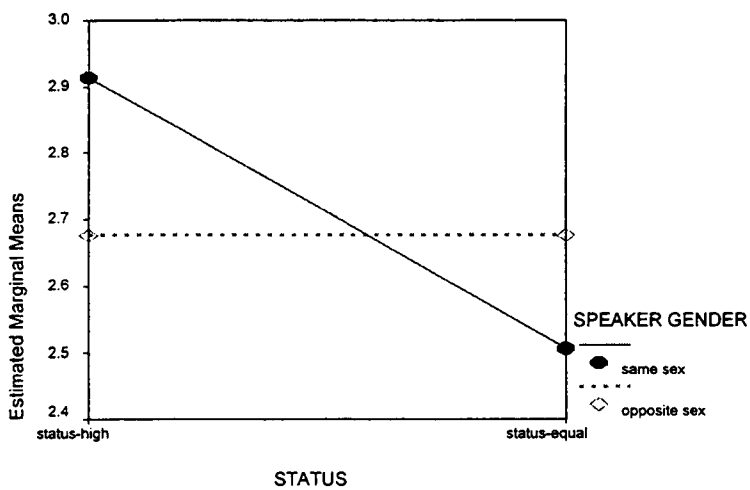


Figure 27. Interactions of Status and Speaker Gender on Perceptions of Seriousness $p < 0.05$

serious than those given by people of the opposite sex. When given by equal-status people, the compliments which were given by people of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 2 units more serious than those given by people of the same sex. When given by people of the same sex, compliments given by high-status people were perceived to be approximately 4 units more serious than those given by equal-status people. When given by people of the opposite sex, the compliments given by high-status people were perceived to have the same degree of seriousness as those given by equal-status people.

Research Question 6

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the judgmentalness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Figure 28 and Figure 29 show the interactive effects of speaker status, compliment topic, and respondent gender on Chinese students' perceptions of the judgmentalness of American English compliments.

Figure 28 shows that, in general, performance compliments were perceived to be more judgmental than appearance compliments, whether they were given by high-status people or by equal-status people. Specifically, when the compliment topic was appearance, the compliments given by equal-status people were perceived to be 5 units more judgmental than the compliments given by high-status people. However, when the topic was performance, the compliments given by high-status people were perceived to be approximately 6 units more judgmental than the compliments given by equal-status

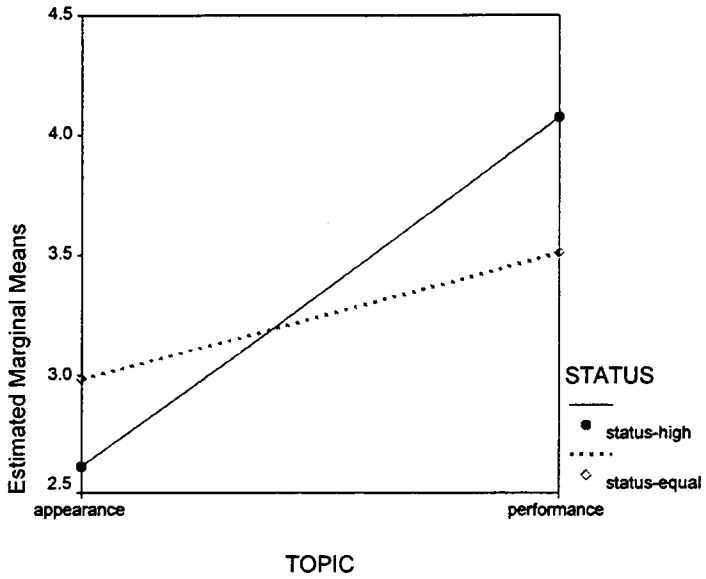


Figure 28. Interactions of Topic and Status on Perceptions of Judgmentalness
$p < 0.05$

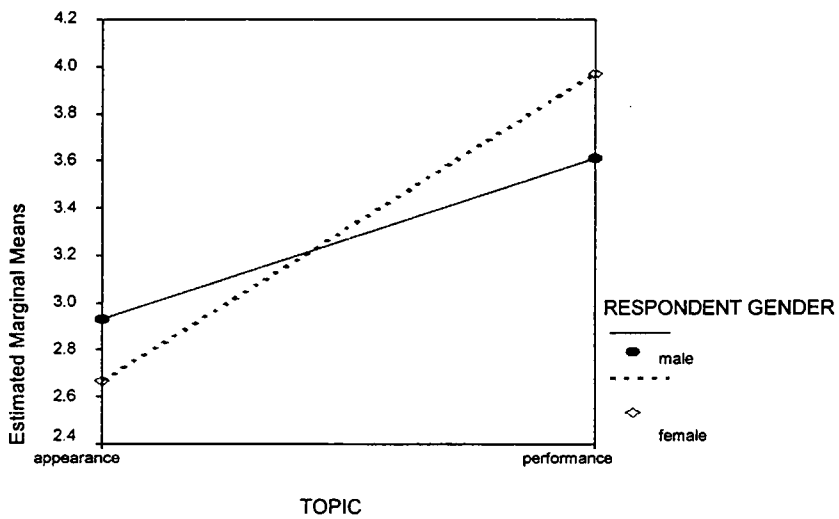


Figure 29. Interactions of Topic and Respondent Gender on Perceptions of Judgmentalness
$p < 0.05$

people.

Figure 29 shows that, in general, both male and female respondents viewed performance compliments as being judgmental (i.e. the means for both variables were over 3.5), but they viewed appearance compliments as being non-judgmental (i.e. the means were below 3.0), regardless of the status of the compliment givers. Female respondents viewed performance compliments as being more judgmental than male respondents did. Male respondents, nonetheless, viewed appearance compliments as being more judgmental than female respondents did.

Research Question 7

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the evaluativeness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Results of Multivariate Tests

Figures 30, 31, and 32 show the interactive effects of status, topic, and respondent gender on perceptions of the evaluativeness of American English compliments.

Figure 30 shows similar interactive effects of topic and respondent gender on respondents' perceptions of evaluativeness as on their perceptions of judgmentalness (see Figure 29).

Figure 31 shows that, in general, performance compliments given by people of the same sex were perceived to be more evaluative than appearance compliments given by people of the same sex, whether the compliment givers were higher or equal in status than or to the respondents. Specifically, when the topic was performance, the compliments

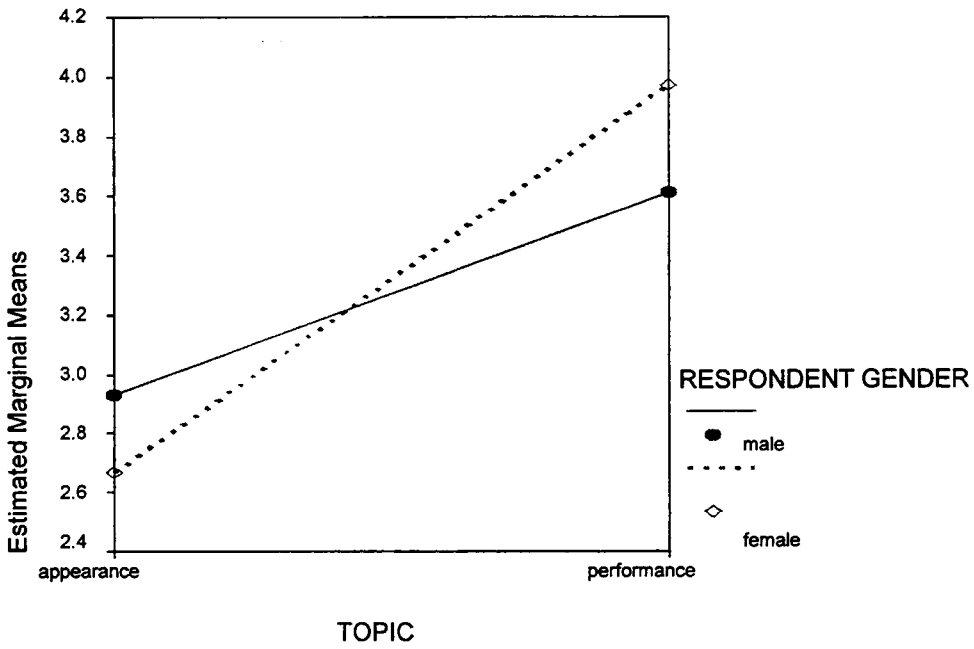


Figure 30. Interactions of Topic and Respondent Gender on Perceptions of Evaluativeness

$p < 0.05$

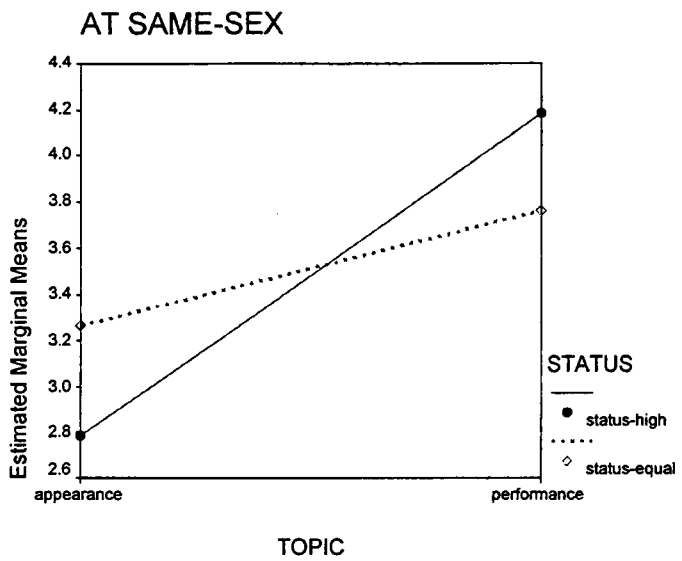


Figure 31. Interactions of Same-Sex, Topic, and Status on Perceptions of Evaluativeness

$p < 0.05$

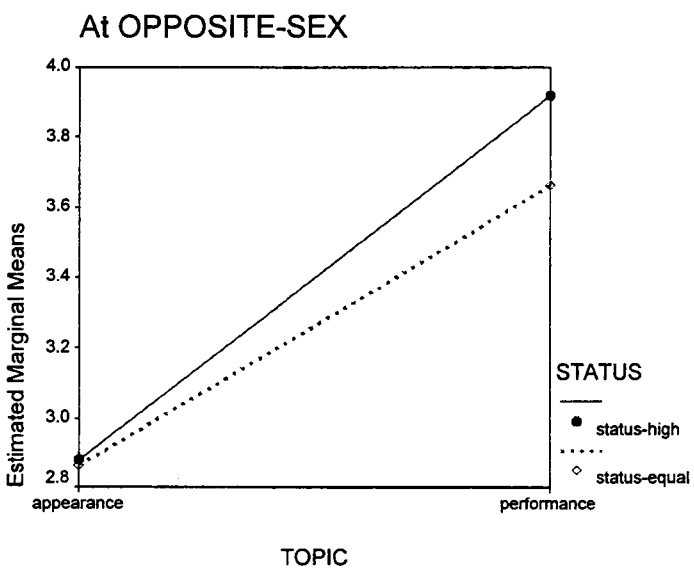


Figure 32. Interactions of Opposite-Sex, Topic, and Status on Perceptions of Evaluativeness

$p < 0.05$

which were given by high-status people of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 5 units more evaluative than the compliments given by equal-status people of the same sex. However, when the topic was appearance, the compliments given by equal-status people of the same sex were perceived to be approximately 5 units more evaluative than compliments given by high-status people of the same sex.

Figure 32 shows that, in general, performance compliments given by people of the opposite sex were perceived to be more evaluative (i.e. mean scores were over 3.6) than appearance compliments given by people of the opposite sex (i.e. mean scores were below 2.5), whether the complimenters were higher than or equal in status to the respondents. Specifically, when the compliment topic was performance, the compliments given by high-status people of the opposite sex were perceived to be approximately 3 units more evaluative than those given by equal-status people. When the topic was appearance, status had litter effect on respondents' perceptions of the evaluativeness of the compliments given by people of the opposite sex.

Research Question 8

Question

What response strategies do Mainland Chinese students are likely to use in response to American English compliments given in various situations?

Results of Written Responses

This section presents descriptive data obtained from the open-ended questions of Section I of the questionnaire. Responses to the compliment in each situation were categorized according to their discourse functions. Frequencies and percentages of the

response types in each situation are described in the following sections and tabulated in Tables 13 to 20.

Responses to Situation 1

Six percent of the 50 responses given by the respondents to the compliment in this situation were non-verbal responses, such as smile, nod, and silence. Eighty-two percent responses were ritual acceptance, such as "Thank you," "Thanks," without further elaboration. Two percent were acceptances of the compliment such as "Thank you" and then a return of the compliment with a compliment (e.g. "You look nice, too"). Six percent were positive elaboration or accounts of the complimented item (e.g. "Thank you. My sister knitted this for me"). Four percent questioned the compliment with "Really?"

Responses to Situation 2

Ten percent responses were non-verbal responses (smile, nod, and silence). Twelve percent were ritual acceptances. Forty percent were ritual acceptances and replies to the question asked by the speaker, "How's the vacation," for example, "Thank you. The vacation was great!" Twenty-four percent ignored the compliment but replied to the question with positive remarks, such as, "It's great!" Four percent not only replied to the question but also returned the compliment with a similar appearance compliment, such as, "It was wonderful! You look good too." Ten percent were replies to the question with positive responses, and the a greeting to the speaker, "How are you?"

Responses to Situation 3

Six percent responses were non-verbal responses. Seventy-eight percent were ritual acceptances. Eight percent were ritual acceptances and appearance compliments

Table 13. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 1

Situation 1 **"That's a nice sweater you're wearing!"** Event: Friday evening party Speaker: friend, opposite sex Topic: sweater Act: single compliment			
Response Category	**Example**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
non-verbal responses	smile, nod, silence	3	6
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!"	41	82
ritual acceptance & return of compliment	"Thanks. You look nice too."	1	2
ritual acceptance & positive account	"Thank you. My sister knitted this for me."	3	6
question	"Really?"	2	4

Table 14. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 2

Situation 2 **"How's the vacation? You look great!"** Event: talk at work Speaker: boss, same sex Topic: look Act: question-compliment			
Response Category	**Example**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
non-verbal responses	smile, nod, silence	5	10
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!"	6	12
ritual acceptance & reply to question	"Thank you. The vacation was great!"	20	40
reply to question	"It's great."	2	4
reply to question & return of compliment	"It was wonderful! You look good too."	2	4
reply & greeting	"Wonderful! How are you?"	5	10

Table 15. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 3

Situation 3 **"I like your presentation. You did a good job!"** Event: talk after class Speaker: classmate, opposite sex Topic: presentation Act: compliment-compliment			
Response Category	**Example**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
non-verbal response	smile, nod, silence	3	6
ritual acceptance	"Thank you! I'm glad you like it."	39	78
ritual acceptance &	"Thank you. You did too."	4	8
ritual acceptance & negative account	"Thank you. I was a little nervous."	2	4
question & ritual acceptance	"Oh, really? Thanks!"	2	4

Table 16. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 4

Situation 4 **"Hey, what's the occasion? You look very nice today!"** Event: talk in office Speaker: colleague, same sex Topic: appearance Act: question-compliment			
Response Category	**Example**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
non-verbal response	smile, nod, silence	8	16
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!"	20	40
ritual acceptance & reply to question	"Thank you. I'm just trying to make myself presentable."	2	4
positive account	"I was in a good mood."	4	8
negative account	"Nothing."	5	10
question & ritual acceptance	"Oh, really? Thank you."	6	12
comprehension errors	"Very good. Thank you."	5	10

Table 17. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 5

Situation 5

"I love it. It's great!"

Event: student-teacher conference

Speaker: academic advisor, same sex

Topic: research proposal

Act: compliment-compliment

Response Category	Example	Frequency	Percentage
non-verbal response	smile, nod, silence	6	12
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!""I'm glad to hear that."	27	54
question & ritual acceptance	"You do? Thank you very much."	6	12
need for improvement	"I still think something needs to be improved."	7	14
ritual acceptance & agreement	"Thank you. I'm glad this version is much better."	3	6
ritual acceptance & transfer of credit	"Thank you, Dr. Smith. You have helped me a lot with this."	1	2

Table 18. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 6

Situation 6 **"You did great!"** Event: returning homework Speaker: instructor, opposite sex Topic: homework Act: single compliment			
Response Category	**Example**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
non-verbal response	smile, nod, silence	6	12
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!"	33	66
showing appreciation	"I appreciate your advise."	4	8
question & ritual acceptance	"Really? Thanks."	2	4
ritual acceptance & negative account	"Thank you. I spent too much time repairing it."	2	4
ritual acceptance & positive account	"Well, thanks! I tried my best."	1	2
ritual acceptance & transfer of credit	"Thank you, I have made good progress in your class."	1	2
upgrading praise	"As always!" and laughed.	1	2

Table 19. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 7

Situation 7

"Excellent point! I've never thought it that way."

Event: discussion in class

Speaker: classmate, same sex

Topic: opinion

Act: compliment-expansion

Response Category	Example	Frequency	Percentage
non-verbal response	smile, nod, silence	22	44
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!" "I'm glad you agree with me."	18	36
negative account	"It's just my immaturely random thinking."	6	12
question	"Really? I thought you won't agree with me on this."	3	6
teasing	"Because I'm always smarter than you." and laughed.	1	2

Table 20. Response Categories, Frequencies, Percentages, and Examples for Situation 8

Situation 8 **"How are you! You look fantastic tonight!"** Event: dinner at professor's home Speaker: professor, opposite sex Topic: appearance Act: greeting-compliment			
Response Category	**Example**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
non-verbal response	smile, nod, silence	5	10
ritual acceptance	"Thank you!"	13	26
reply to greeting	"Fine. Thank you."	17	34
exchange greeting	"I'm fine. Thank you! How are you?"	5	10
reply to greeting & express appreciation	"I'm fine. Thank you for your kind invitation."	2	4
ritual acceptance & return of compliment	"Thank you. You look great also."	5	10
ritual acceptance & complimenting others	"I really enjoyed your class and I learn a lot from you"	1	2
	"Thank you. Yeah, everybody looks fantastic."	1	2
humor	"Because I can enjoy your dinner. I'm waiting for a year."	1	2

in return. Four percent ritually accepted the compliment but gave negative accounts of what was being complimented, saying, for example, "Thank you. I was a little nervous." Four percent expressed doubts about the complimenting comment in addition to the ritual acceptances.

Responses to Situation 4

Out of 50 responses, 16 percent were non-verbal responses. Forty percent were ritual acceptances. Twelve percent were ritual acceptances and positive explanations in response to speaker's comment on his or her "fantastic" appearance (e.g. "Thank you. I'm just trying to make myself presentable for the afternoon's report," or "I'm in good mood"). Ten percent were negative responses to the comment (e.g. "Nothing," "Nothing special"). Twelve percent were ritual acceptances and expresssons of doubts (e.g. "Really?"). Ten percent responses indicated misunderstandings of the respondents to the speaker's remark, "Hey, what's the occasion?" Hence they gave confusing replies suh as, "Very good. Thank you."

Responses to Situation 5

Twelve percent of the responses were non-verbal responses (e.g. smile, nod, silence). Fifty percent were expressions of ritual acceptance (e.g. "Thank you," "I'm glad to hear that"). Twelve percent were ritual acceptances and expressed doubts about the compliment with "Really?" Fourteen percent indicated a need for improvement of what was being complimented (i.e. good performance), with such replies as, "I'm so glad you like it. But I still think something needs to be improved." Six percent not only indicated acceptance of the compliment but showed a tendency to agree with or upgrade the

compliment, such as, "Thank you. I'm glad this version is much better." Two percent ritually accepted the compliment but shifted the credit to the speaker. For example, one respondent said, "Thank you, Dr. Smith. You have helped me a lot with this."

Responses to Situation 6

Twelve percent responses to this compliment were non-verbal responses (e.g. smile, nod, silence). Seventy-four percent were ritual acceptances or appreciation to the speaker (e.g. "I appreciate your advice"). Four percent questioned the compliment. Four percent indicated acceptance but gave negative accounts such as, "I spent too much time repairing it." Two percent ritually accepted the compliment but gave the credit to the speaker. There was one response (2%) ungrading the compliment with a bragging: "As always!"

Responses to Situation 7

As many as 44 percent responses to the compliment in this situation were non-verbal responses. Thiry-six percent were ritual acceptances. Twelve percent were negative accounts, such as, "It is Ok, just my immaturely random thinking." Six percent expressed doubts about the compliment. There was one response (2%) upgraded the compliment by putting the speaker down: "Because I'm always smarter than you."

Responses to Situation 8

Ten percent responses were non-verbal responses (smile, nod, and silence). Twenty-six percent were ritual acceptances without elaboration. Thirty-four percent ignored the compliment but responded to the greeting with, "Fine, thank you". Ten percent responded to the greeting and then greeted the speaker back, saying, "I'm fine.

Thank you. How are you?" Four percent were replies to the greeting and showed appreciation for the speaker's invitation. Ten percent were ritual acceptances and returns of the compliment with a compliment. One respondent returned the speaker's compliment with a compliment to the speaker directly: "Thank you very much. I bring a gift to you. I really enjoy your class and I learn a lot from you." Another respondent extended the speaker's compliment to others: "Thank you. Yeah, everybody looks fantastic. The semester is finally over." One respondent gave a response as an explanation to the speaker's compliment on his or her "fantastic appearance": "Because I can enjoy your dinner. I'm waiting for a year," which may be understood as a Chinese-style humor.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1

Question

How do Chinese students perceive the various politeness functions of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

In general, the Chinese students in this study perceived the compliments in all eight situations as being polite, friendly, refined, respectful, appropriate, tactful, close, sincere, and truthful. All performance compliments (Situations 5, 7, 6, and 3) were perceived as more sincere and truthful, but less close than all appearance compliments (Situations 2, 8, 1, 4). Three appearance compliments (Situations 1, 2, and 8) and one performance compliment given by an equal-status and opposite-sex classmate (Situation 3) were perceived as being more polite, friendly, and refined than other performance

compliments (Situations 5, 6, and 7). The compliment in Situation 4, which was given by a same-sex, equal-status person on the topic of appearance, was perceived as the least sincere, respectful, tactful, refined, friendly, and appropriate, but the closest in all situations. The compliment in Situation 8, which was given by an opposite-sex, high-status person on the topic of appearance, was perceived to be the most polite, friendly, refined, and close, but the least truthful of all.

The findings indicate that Mainland Chinese students may perceive appearance compliments as being more socially polite than performance compliments. Their perceptions of the politeness of appearance compliments did not seem to depend on the truthfulness of the message content itself, but rather, the friendliness and refinement of the utterance expressed by the speaker. Therefore, although appearance compliments were perceived as less truthful than performance compliments, they were perceived as more friendly, refined, and polite than performance compliments.

The consistently lower ratings of the compliment in Situation 4 on almost all scales indicate that Mainland Chinese students may not perceive this type of American English compliments (given by equal-status and same-sex people on the topic of appearance) as pleasing as the compliments in other situations. Although the compliment in Situation 4 was perceived to be very "close," it was perceived to be the least polite, friendly, appropriate, and respectful of the compliments in all situations.

Research Question 2

Question

How do Chinese students perceive the formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and

judgmentalness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

The Chinese students in this study perceived the compliments in seven of the eight situations to be formal. They perceived the compliment in Situation 4 (given by a same-sex, equal-status classmate on appearance) to be informal. They perceived performance compliments (Situations 5, 6, 3, and 7) as being more serious than appearance compliments (Situations 8, 1, 2 and 4). They perceived all four performance compliments as being judgmental and evaluative, but three of the four appearance compliments as being non-evaluative and non-judgmental. As an exception, the appearance compliment in Situation 4 was perceived to be evaluative and judgmental.

The findings above provided further supports to the findings for Research Question 1. They suggest that Mainland Chinese students may not perceive performance compliments as being polite and friendly as appearance compliments, for they considered performance compliments as being evaluative and judgmental. Though the compliment in Situation 4 was on appearance, it was perceived as being evaluative and judgmental, which may explain why it was not perceived as being polite as the other compliments.

Research Question 3

Question

Are there any relationships between Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the politeness and their perceptions of other politeness-related functions of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

Results of the correlation tests showed that the Chinese respondents' perceptions of the politeness were positively correlated with their perceptions of friendliness, refinement, appropriateness, tactfulness in all eight situations. It corresponds to the results of Research Question 1: Chinese students seemed to associate politeness more closely with friendliness, refinement, appropriateness, and tactfulness in all situations than with other politeness traits, such as closeness, truthfulness, and sincerity.

Sincerity and closeness showed positive correlations with politeness in all but Situation 5. It should be noted that in Situation 5, the speaker was a high-status professor who was advising the student's academic work. Perhaps, Mainland Chinese students do not view sincerity and closeness as important politeness indicators when it is people of high social status that speak to people of low status.

Truthfulness was positively correlated with politeness in Situation 4 and Situation 7. It indicated that only when the compliments were exchanged between same-sex status-equals, would truthfulness be likely to affect their perceptions of politeness.

Research Question 4

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the formality of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

Data analysis showed that speaker status, speaker gender, and compliment topic interacted to affect Chinese respondents' perceptions of the formality of American

English compliments. Status interacted more with the topic of performance than with the topic of appearance on perceptions of formality. Status interacted more with the same-sex variable than with the opposite-sex variable on perceptions of formality. Status seemed to have greater effects than gender and topic on the Chinese respondents' perceptions of the formality of a compliment. The topic became important once status distance between the speaker and the listener was certain (i.e. either between status-equals or status-non-equals). Gender became important when the compliments were about the same topic.

Research Question 5

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the seriousness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

Data analysis showed that speaker status, speaker gender, and compliment topic interacted to affect Chinese students' perceptions of the seriousness of American English compliments. The topic seemed to have greater effects on their perceptions of the seriousness than status and gender. Status became important when the compliments were given by people of the same sex. Status only interacted with the same-sex variable to affect respondents' perceptions of the seriousness.

Research Question 6

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the judgmentalness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

Data analysis showed that status and topic interacted to affect Chinese students' perceptions of the judgmentalness of the American English compliments given in the questionnaire. It appeared that they considered compliments given by high-status persons and compliments given on performances to be evaluative and judgmental in nature other than being polite. Respondent gender was also found to affect respondents' perceptions of the judgmentalness. Overall, of the three factors, the topic seemed to be a more decisive factor than status and gender in respondents' perceptions of judgmentalness.

Research Question 7

Question

How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the evaluativeness of American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

Data analysis showed that speaker status, speaker gender, respondent gender, and compliment topic interacted to affect Chinese respondents' perceptions of the evaluativeness of the American English compliments given in the questionnaire. Speaker gender seemed to override both status and topic to affect their perceptions of the evaluativeness of a compliment. Status and topic also interacted to affect compliments given by people of the same sex in the opposite ways to how they affected those given by people of the opposite sex. Similarly to how it was perceived on the scale of judgmentalness, the respondent gender also interacted with topic to affect respondents' perceptions of the evaluativeness of the compliments.

Research Question 8

Question

What types of response strategies do Mainland Chinese students are likely to use in response to American English compliments given in various situations?

Discussion of Findings

In general, the Chinese students responded to all compliments given in the questionnaire by using American politeness response strategies. "Thank you" was the most frequent response used for all eight situations. However, the responses other than "Thank you" did indicate a cultural transfer of response strategies. Although the respondents did not deny appearance compliments, they tended to reject or scale down performance compliments given by both high-status people and equal-status people by using Chinese response formulas. Seven main response strategies were identified and discussed in the following sections.

Ritual acceptance

An overwhelming majority of written responses to the compliments in all of the eight situations was "Thank you." It indicated that the Chinese students in this study somehow sensed or learned the "correctness" and "politeness" of saying "Thank you" in response to English compliments regardless of situations. Their indiscriminate use of "Thank you" seemed to match with their perceptions of the formal polite functions of American English compliments. Data analysis presented in previous sections showed that the Chinese respondents described all compliments as being formal and polite. It is not surprising, then, that they responded to all compliments with similar formal politeness

formulas; that is, they chose to use either American formulas or Chinese formulas.

Giving credit to the complimenter

Besides saying "Thank you" to a complimenter, the Chinese respondents showed a tendency to credit the high-status complimenter for their performance, which was not very common among native American English speaker responses. For example, in Situation 5, when the advisor complimented the student's research proposal, a respondent wrote this response, "Thank you, Dr. Smith, you have helped me a lot with this." In Situation 6, when the instructor complimented the student's homework, another respondent gave this response, "Thank you! I have made good progress in your class." This response strategy may be related to the following Chinese concept of individual achievements. Modern Mainland Chinese society emphasizes collective effort and wisdom and opposes individualism. Consequently, the good behaviors of a child is often credited to his or her parents; the successes of a student is often credited to his or her teachers and schools; and the achievements of a worker is often credited to the leadership of his or her superiors.

Returning compliments with compliments

The Chinese students also showed a tendency to return a compliment with a compliment. For example, in Situation 3, when an American classmate complimented another's presentation, one Chinese respondent gave this response, "Thank you. You did too," but then added in parenthesis, "if he really did well." This additional comment is especially worthy of notice because it may be related to a common Chinese view as to when a compliment should be appropriately given. Yang (1987) summarized the Chinese

view as, "only when one had done an extremely good job will he or she win a compliment." (P. 26)

According to previous studies of American responses to compliments, it is common that Americans return a compliment by saying the same thing back. However, examples of returns of compliments in American studies were mostly between status-equals, but rarely between status unequals. It is interesting that the Chinese students in this study returned many compliments of appearances to high-status persons. For example, in Situation 2, when a boss complimented an employee who returned from vacation on his/her appearance, two Chinese respondents returned the compliment, saying, "You look good too." In Situation 8, when a professor complimented the "fantastic" appearance of a student guest, five respondents returned the compliment by saying, "You look great/good also."

Indicating needs for improvement

Seven respondents used unique Chinese strategies to respond to the compliment in Situation 5, which was given by a high-status professor/advisor. When the professor gave an initial comment after the first look at the student's research proposal, "I love it. It's great, " the Chinese respondents insisted that the advisor give "advice," "comments," or "suggestions" so that they could improve their work. Typical responses were, "I'm glad you like it, but I still think something needs to be improved," or "Thank you very much. Please point out what I can do better further." Previous Chinese studies found similar responses from Mainland Chinese students. This response strategy may be reflective of three Chinese ideologies: perfectionism, modesty, and respect for authority. First,

perfectionism in modern Chinese society means that one should always try to be better than others. However, when compared with others, one can always find someone better than him/herself. Therefore, to be modest, one should always be ready to say, "What I did is far from perfect." Secondly, modesty is the most important virtue in the Chinese culture. It is often expressed through self-depreciation. Therefore, when being complimented by others, one should make conscientious effort to decrease the value of self by rejecting the compliment. Thirdly, Chinese society encourages respect for authorities. Respect is shown when one allows, acknowledges, and accepts others' authority to judge and evaluate.

Downgrading compliments

Wolfson (1989b) found that non-native speakers' downgrading responses were qualitatively different from those found from native speakers of English. The former tended to depreciate the person, the latter, the object. Chiang and Pochtrager (1993) also found that Americans tended to elaborate with positive comments about what was being complimented even if they did not agree with the compliment, while Chinese tended to give negative elaboration to belittle themselves. The downgrading responses given by the Chinese students in this study showed similar characteristics. For example, one respondent gave this response to the compliment in Situation 7, which was given by an American classmate about the opinion he or she shared with the group: "It's OK, just my immature random thinking." Another respondent had this response, "Well, sometime(s) my viewpoint is quite strange, isn't it." The Chinese student seemed to use downgrading strategies for equal-status people, but upgrading strategies for high-status people. When

the complimenter was a high-status person, they tended to use elevating strategies to raise him or her, but when the complimenter was an equal-status person, they tended to lower themselves to show modesty.

Showing intimacy

Only three responses were exceptional to the overall formal politeness mode of Chinese responses to American English compliments. In Situation 6, when the instructor returned the student's homework, saying, "You did a good job," a respondent wrote this response, "As always" (and laughed). In Situation 7, when an American classmate made a complimentary comment on another student's opinion, saying, "That's an excellent point! I've never thought it that way," a respondent had this response, "Because I am always smarter than you" (and laughed). In Situation 8, when an American professor greeted the respondent at the door, saying, "How are you? You look fantastic tonight," a respondent responded, "Because I can enjoy your dinner. I'm waiting for a year." Perhaps, the respondents who gave such informal responses recognized the speaker's intention to establish intimacy, so they tried to do it accordingly.

Non-verbal responses

The majority of non-verbal responses the Chinese students used were smiling, often accompanied by nodding. There were a few silent responses. Situation 7 received 22 non-verbal responses. As this study focused on verbal responses, non-verbal responses will not be discussed in detail in this study.

Summary of Chapter IV

This chapter presented the results and findings of the data analysis for this study.

Eight research questions were answered based on the findings from three types of statistical tests. The results of descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation tests provided answers to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. The results of multivariate tests provided answers to Research Questions 4, 5, 6, and 7. The results of the qualitative analysis of written responses provided answers for Research Question 8.

The summary, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research of this study will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is organized into four sections. The first section summarizes the purpose and research procedures of this study. The second section summarizes the conclusions drawn from the findings presented in Chapter IV. The third section presents the implications of this study. The last section suggests recommendations for future studies.

Summary

This study sought to explore how communicative contexts may affect university Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of and responses to American English compliments. 50 Mainland Chinese students who were enrolled in The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the spring semester of 1998, participated in this study. An original questionnaire was designed by the researcher for this study.

The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section presents eight hypothetical situations. In each situation, a compliment is given by an American to a Chinese listener (i.e. the respondent) on the topic of either personal appearance or individual performance. The American speaker who gives the compliment in each situation is either higher than or equal in status to the listener, and who is of the same sex as or the opposite sex to the listener. The respondents are asked to write down their replies to the compliment in each situation, and then indicate their perceptions of the compliment in each situation on the 14 descriptive scales. The second section gathers

demographic data of the respondents.

Thirty males and 19 females, including one respondent who did not indicate gender, responded to the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents were between 24 and 49 years old. Their length of stay in the United States ranges from less than one year to 10 years.

The following eight research questions were addressed and answered in this study:

1. How do Mainland Chinese students perceive the various politeness functions of American English compliments given in various situations?
2. How do Mainland Chinese students perceive the various discourse functions of American English compliments given in various situations?
3. Are there any relationships between Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the politeness of American English compliments and their perceptions of particular politeness-related functions of American English compliments given in various situations?
4. How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the formality of American English compliments given in various situations?
5. How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the seriousness of American English compliments given in various situations?
6. How do status, gender, and topic affect Chinese students' perceptions of the evaluativeness of American English compliments given in various situations?
7. How do status, gender, and topic affect Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of

the judgmentalness of American English compliments given in various situations?

8. What response strategies do Mainland Chinese students are likely to use in response to American English compliments given in various situations?

Data obtained from the Chinese students' responses to the 14 compliment perception scales were analyzed to answer the first seven research questions. The responses to the superiority scale were excluded in data analysis due to the negative connotation of the term "superiority" when translated into Chinese. The written responses to the compliment in each situation were analyzed to answer the last research question. Three types of statistical tests were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) computer program with assistance provided by the Statistical and Computational Consulting Center of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Results of the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation tests identified general perceptions of the various functions of American English compliments. Multivariate tests were used to explore the interactive effects of four independent variables (i.e. speaker status, speaker gender, respondent gender, and compliment topic) on four dependent variables (i.e. perceptions of formality, seriousness, evaluativeness, and judgmentalness). The written responses to the compliments in the eight situations were categorized and analyzed qualitatively.

Conclusions

This study reached the following conclusions in response to the eight research questions.

First of all, the Mainland Chinese students in this study indicated a positive

attitude toward American English compliments. In general, they described the compliments given in all eight situations as being polite, friendly, sincere, truthful, appropriate, tactful, refined, and close. However, their perceptions of the individual complimenting situations varied in ways that suggested the following two patterns. First, the respondents appeared to perceive all appearance compliments, except the compliment in Situation 4, to be more friendly, polite, refined, and closer than performance compliments. Secondly, they appeared to perceive all performance compliments to be more serious, evaluative, and judgmental than all appearance compliments. It can be concluded, therefore, that Mainland Chinese students may perceive American English compliments in general as positive politeness acts. Specifically, they may take the meanings of performance compliments more literally (passing on judgments) than they may do with the meanings of the appearance compliments (pleasing others).

Secondly, it was found that the Chinese respondents' perceptions of compliment politeness were positively correlated with their perceptions of compliment friendliness, appropriateness, tactfulness, and refinement, in all situations, and that they were positively correlated with their perceptions of the sincerity and closeness in all but one situation (i.e. Situation 5 where the speaker was student academic advisor). The correlations were, however, subject to two interpretations. One is that, the high correlations between politeness and other politeness characteristics such as friendliness, appropriateness, and refinement, may have only indicated that the respondents simply did not view these terms as being truly distinctive. Another possible interpretation is that, the Chinese respondents were able to detect the distinctions of these characteristics and,

therefore, they viewed these characteristics as politeness indicators.

Thirdly, the correlations between the perceptions of politeness and perceptions of truthfulness were especially noted. It was found that, the Chinese respondents' perceptions of the politeness were positively correlated with their perceptions of truthfulness only in Situations 4 and 7, where the speaker in either situation was equal in status to the respondent and also of the same sex as the respondent. The conclusion may be reached, therefore, that the truthfulness of a compliment content could become important if it were exchanged between two persons who were equal in social status and if it were exchanged between two persons of the same sex.

Fourthly, the results of the multivariate tests appeared to indicate that status, gender, and topic were important contextual factors affecting Mainland Chinese students' perceptions of the communicative functions of American English compliments. That is to say, the Mainland Chinese students in this study might have depended, to a certain degree, on who the speaker was (e.g. speaker's status and gender) and what was being complimented about (i.e. compliment topic) to determine the discourse function of a compliment. In addition, the respondent gender may also have affected their perceptions of the discourse functions, such as the evaluativeness and judgmentalness of a compliment. It can be further concluded, therefore, that Mainland Chinese students appeared to base their interpretations of the communicative functions of American English compliments on such contextual factors as the speaker's status and gender, the formality, seriousness, evaluativeness and judgmentalness of the compliment content in a particular event, and also on the gender of the respondent. It should be noted also that the

Chinese respondents seemed to be concerned less with the speaker gender than they were concerned with the speaker status and the compliment topic.

Finally, findings of the Chinese students' compliment response strategies seemed to indicate that Mainland Chinese students were willing to accept American English discourse rules in general. However, cultural influence was proved to be existent in the usage of certain response formulas. On the other hand, the indiscriminate use of "Thank you" by the Chinese students in this study to all compliments in all situations provided the empirical evidence for Wolfson's (1989) observation regarding non-native English speakers' problems in responding to American English compliments:

> the great majority of learners of English are not aware of the strong tendency of status-equal Americans to negotiate their roles through opening speech sequences involving such behavior as complimenting, and that they therefore do not know how to interpret or respond to native speaker compliments in a way that would lead to the formation of closer relationships. (Wolfson, 1989b, p. 227)

Implications

The major implication of this study is that the Chinese students are sociolinguistically sensitive to American English compliments. They are especially very sensitive to status and particular topics. Therefore, the language strategies they use when communicating with Americans depend, to a large degree, on who they perceive the speaker is by status and gender, and on what is being complimented about, as well as how they perceive the formality, seriousness, and evaluativeness or judgmentalness of an ongoing speech event. It is very important that ESL teachers be aware of and understand

such cultural differences.

The second implication of this study is that instructing learners of American English learners to just say "Thank you" to accept compliments is not sufficient. Rather, teachers should teach to ESL students the various compliment and response strategies that are commonly used by native English speakers in order to engage them in more elaborate English interactions. This doesn't mean, however, that teachers of English should enforce certain cultural standards or behaviors to people from other cultures. The responsibility of a language teacher should be to point out the likely consequences of using certain types of linguistic expressions, thus equippingg language learners to express themselves in exactly the way they choose to do, whether friendly, tactfully, or in an elaborately polite manner. Great care should be taken that the learner be not mistakenly viewed as intentionally rude or subservient.

Recommendations

The researcher of this study suggested the following recommendations for future research.

1. Replications of this study should be conducted by using larger samples so that a more systematic examination (e.g. triangulation) of data sources be made. A larger sample would allow for more variables to be included in the data analysis, such as the respondents' age and length of stay in the United States, which were left out in this study due to the limited size of the population.
2. Findings of this study appeared to indicate that Chinese students were likely to use different compliment response strategies to status-equal and status-unequal

speakers. Previous studies of American speech behavior (Wolfson & Manes, 1980) suggested that Americans tended to obscure status differences to increase interpersonal solidarity by using less formal and intimate language forms. Therefore, future studies should be conducted to highlight and examine what differences status could make in the choice of linguistic expressions and sociolinguistic strategies made by people from the two cultures.

3. Previous studies of Chinese responses to compliments, including this study, suggested that cultural values may influence the way in which learners of English as a second or foreign language communicate with speakers of other languages. This study recommended that a comprehensive and systematic study of Chinese complimenting behavior be conducted in the Chinese language communities wherever Mandarin Chinese is spoken. Replications of the ethnographic studies of American English compliments, as conducted by Wolfson and Manes (1980), and of the contrastive studies of compliments across cultures, as conducted by Herbert (1989; Herbert & Strait, 1989), were also recommended.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Approval from Human Subject Committee

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
PHONE: (423) 974-3466
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06/27/96

IRB # : 5079 A

Title : "Thank you," or "No, No!" -- A preliminary study of Chinese responses to formulaic American English compliments

Yanxia, Lang
Language, Communication &
1611 Laurel Ave., Apt. 410
Knoxville, TN 37916

Wiley-Davis, Dr. Patricia
Language, Communication &
1620 Melrose Ave.
Campus

The project listed above has been reviewed and has been certified as EXEMPT from review by the Institutional Review Board.

Unless there are major changes in the experimental methods or project design, no further reporting to this office is required. The responsibility for oversight of this project becomes that of the Principal Investigator, Student Advisor (if any), and the Departmental Review Committee.

We wish you success in your research endeavors.

Sincerely,

Steven B. Pulik
Coordinator of Compliances

cc: Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley

Attachment: Form A

Appendix B. Cover Letter to Potential Participants

致参加者信
COVER LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

尊敬的中国大陆同学：
Dear Chinese student:

I am a doctoral student in Second Language Education at College of Education.

我是田纳西大学教育学院第二语言教育博士生，现为博士论文做一项
I'm conducting a research for my dissertation. The purpose of this study is to discover
英文语用研究。此研究目的是从中美文化差别角度发现在美中国大陆学生在
difficulties that Chinese students may have when communicating with Americans in order
理解和运用美国英语特别用语的过程中会出现的困难，为改进中国学生英文
to provide instructional basis for Chinese students. Your cooperation will be greatly
教学提供基础。谢谢您的热心协助。请务必如实准确地填写所附调查表。
appreciate. Please complete the attached questionnaire honestly and accurately.

参加此次调查全凭自愿。您可以任何理由拒绝参加。然而，作为田纳
Participation of this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. However,
西大学中国大陆学生一员，您的意见会对此项调查有重要价值。填写此表大
as an important member of the Chinese students, your participation will be valuable. It'll
约将占用您十到十五分钟的时间。请完成后一周内交回给发此表给您的同
take 10-15 minutes. Please give it back to the person who gave it to you within a week.
学。填充及交回调查表即表明您同意参加此次调查。
Your return of the questionnaire will constitute your consent to participate in this study.

您对此调查所提供的所有情况将予以严格保密。信封上的标号只用来
All information you provide will be confidential. The number on the envelope is
记录回收结果及其后的联系。请不必在表上注写姓名。如您对此研究结果有
only used for recording the return rate and for a follow-up study. Please do not write your
兴趣，可于本人电话联系（673-0655）索取调查结果。
name on it. If you are interested in the results, please contact the researcher at 673-0655.

再次感谢您的帮助！
Thank you for your help!

致
Sincerely yours

礼

郎艳霞
LANG YANXIA

一九九八年一月
January, 1998

Appendix C. Questionnaire

英语语用调查表

第一部分

说明：请根据您与美国人的交往经历，对以下八种假设对话表明您的看法及答语。请先仔细阅读谈话内容，然后在下面写出您的答语，并划圈表明您的看法。

情形1	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
星期五晚上。您穿一件新毛衣去参加晚会。晚会上，您的一位美国朋友（与您异性别）对您说："That's a nice sweater you're wearing!" 听到后，您会如何答复（请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形2	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
您暑假回来后来上班。 老板（与您同性别）对您说："How's the vacation? You look great!" 听到后，您会如何答复 （请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形3	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
您在课堂上做完期末论文报告，一位美国同学（与您异性别）对您说："I like your presentaton. You did a good job!" 听到后，您会如何答复 （请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形4	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
您穿一件新衣服来办公室上班，一位美国同事（与您同性别）对您说： "Hey, what's the occasion? You look nice today!" 听到后，您会如何答复 （请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形5 您来指导老师（与您同性别）办公室请教论文内容方面的问题。老师读了你的论文提纲后，对你说： "I love it. It's great!" 听到后，您会如何答复 （请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法： 5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形6	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
下课后，任课的美国老师（与您异性别）发回你的论文报告，对你说： “You did great!” 听到后，您会如何答复 （请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形7	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
您在课堂小组讨论会上谈了你的一点看法，坐在你旁边的美国同学（与您同性别）对你说： "Excellent point! I've never thought it that way." 听到后，您会如何答复（请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

情形8	请划圈表明您对说话人对您说此话的看法：
学期末一门课结束后，美国教授（与您异性别）邀请全班同学来自己家聚会吃晚餐。教授在门口迎接你时对你说： "How are you? You look fantastic tonight!" 听到后，您会如何答复 （请写出英文答语及非言语表情及动作反应） 您会说：_____ _____ _____ _____	5 4 3 2 1 formal正规----------informal不正规 5 4 3 2 1 sincere真诚----------insincere不真诚 5 4 3 2 1 disrespectful轻视----------respectful敬重 5 4 3 2 1 friendly友好----------unfriendly不友好 5 4 3 2 1 casual随便----------serious严肃 5 4 3 2 1 refined文雅----------rude粗鲁 5 4 3 2 1 truthful如实----------untruthful虚假 5 4 3 2 1 inappropriate不恰当--------appropriate恰当 5 4 3 2 1 superior高人一等----------inferior低人一等 5 4 3 2 1 evaluative评价----------non-evaluative非评价 5 4 3 2 1 tactful得体----------untactful不得体 5 4 3 2 1 close亲近----------distant疏远 5 4 3 2 1 polite有礼貌----------impolite没礼貌 5 4 3 2 1 judgmental评判--------non-judgmental非评判

第二部分：请划圈或填写以下项目

1. 性别： 男 女
2. 您在美国总共待了多久？（例：2年6个月） _____年 _____个月
3. 年龄： 18 -24 25 -34 35-49 50+

VITA

Lang Yanxia was born in Xi'an city, Shanxi province, the People's Republic of China, on January 16, 1964. She attended elementary and high schools in Sanyuan County, Shanxi Province, and Penglai city, Shandong Province. In 1984, she earned a Bachelor of Art Degree in British and American English Language and Literature from Shandong Teachers' University at Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province. In 1990, she came to Carson-Newman college in Jefferson City, Tennessee as an exchange scholar, and received a Master of Art Degree in Education from this college in 1992. After that, she came to Knoxville, Tennessee and earned her Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Education from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Before she came to the United States, she had taught English at Shandong Agriculture University and Yantai University in Shandong Province. At Carson-Newman college, she taught the Chinese Cultural History course for the college and served for the Cross-Cultural Institute as a guest speaker. While a student at The University of Tennessee, she received teaching assistantship from the Federal Veterans Program in the College of Education as an English Tutor, and from the Department of Asian Studies, as Chinese Drill Instructor. She is currently teaching Chinese for the Department of Modern Foreign Languages at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.