

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG



ISO 9001 : 2008

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH: NGOẠI NGỮ

HẢI PHÒNG - 2009

**HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVESITY
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**

GRADUATION PAFER

Indirectness in English conversation

By:

Đoàn Thị Hương

Class:

NA902

Supervisor:

Đào Thị Lan Hương

HAI PHONG - 2009

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

Sinh viên:Mã

số:.....

Lớp:Ngành:.....

...

Tên

đề

tài:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Nhiệm vụ đề tài

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

(về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

.....
.....
.....

CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên:.....
Học hàm, học vị:.....
Cơ quan công tác:.....
Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:

Họ và tên:.....

Học hàm, học vị:.....

Cơ quan công tác:.....

Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày.....thángnăm 200

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày.....tháng.....năm 200

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Đã giao

nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Người

hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày tháng.....năm 200

HIỆU TRƯỞNG

GS.TS. NGUYỄN Trần Hữu Nghị

PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN

1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Đánh giá chất lượng của khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...):

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Cho điểm của cán bộ hướng dẫn (ghi bằng cả số và chữ):

.....
.....
.....

Hải Phòng, ngày tháng

năm 2009

Cán bộ hướng dẫn

(họ tên và chữ ký)

**NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ
CỦA NGƯỜI CHĂM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản biện :

(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)

Ngày..... tháng..... năm 2009

Người chấm phản biện

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the process of doing the graduation paper, I have received a lot of help, assistance, guidance and encouragement from my teachers, family and friends.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisor Mrs. Dao Thi Lan Huong who has always been most willing and ready to give me valuable advice, inspiration and supervision to finish this study.

My sincere thanks are also sent to all the teachers of Foreign Language Department at Hai Phong Private University for their precious and useful lessons during my four-year study which have been then the foundation of this research paper.

Last but not least, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to my family, my friends who always encourage and inspire me to complete this graduation paper.

Hai Phong, June, 2009

Doan Thi Huong

Table of contents

		Page
Acknowledge		1
PART ONE	INTRODUCTION	4
1	Rationale	4
2	Aims of the study	4
3	Scope of the study	5
4	Methods of the study	5
5	Design of the study	5
PART TWO	DEVELOPMENT	
Chapter 1:	Theoretical background	
I	Culture	
1	The concept of culture	7
2	Functions of culture	7
3	Characteristics of culture	8
II	Language and culture	
1	What is language?	10
2	The relation between language and culture	11
III	Conversation	
1	Definition	13
2	Classification	16

3	Functions	17
IV	Indirectness	
1	Definition	18
2	Strategies of indirectness	20
2.1	Bald on record	20
2.2	Negative indirectness	20
2.3	Positive indirectness	20
2.4	Off-record indirectness	21
2.5	Conventional indirectness	23
2.6	Non-conventional indirectness	24
Chapter II:	Indirectness in English conversations	
	Making requests	25
1	Indirect ways	26
2	Tag structures	36
Chapter III:	Findings and Implication	
1	Findings	43
2	Implication	43
PART THREE	CONCLUSION	
1	Summary of the study	47
2	Suggestion for futher study	48
REFERENCES		49

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In today's scenario of public relations, verbal contact of different cultures becomes a necessity and the medium by which these communities communicate therefore is of great importance.

Frankly speaking, it is highly essential to know the language for communication. There can be no doubt that English is one of the world's most widely used languages. In this computer age, English is the only language that any one can understand. To catch up with the rate of development progress of the whole society, everyone is studying English. However, English is also one of the most sensitive languages, and in order to speak and use English properly, it is not easy at all especially when the grammar rules are comparative. Since, studying English the writer has strong interest in the indirectness phenomenon in English as it helps people understand clearly how to speak and act indirectly

There have been many studies about this aspect before. What the writer want to present in the graduation paper is just the indirectness in English conversation especially when making requests.

This study is unavoidably not edequate but the writer hope it can be a useful material and interest readers somehow and they would find it helpful.

2. Aims of the study

Indirectness in English is a complicated and difficult phenomenon. Therefore, the writer concentrates on studying the indirectness in English

conversation especially the ways of using and understanding this phenomenon properly.

Following this trend, the study will serve these purposes:

- To present the usage of indirectness in English conversation.
- To provide some expressions on indirectness in English conversation
- To express how to make requests indirectly.

3. Scope of the study

In English, there are a lots of interesting aspects to study. Being the author of this study, indirectness in English conversation is the most fantastic field that I have tried to study.

Due to the limited time and knowledge of an un-experienced writer, the author of this study only introduces nearly adequate classes of indirectness, usage of indirectness and some indirect expression.

When doing the reseach, the writer has paid much attension to studying indirectness in making request in order to figure out how to understand and use it properly in conversations as well as for other learning purposes.

4. Methods of the study

To study successfully and effectively, in the study process, the methods used are:

- Information collection and analysis
- Personal observation and assessment.

5. Design of the study

The graduation paper is divided in to three parts and the second, naturally, is the most important part.

Part I: Introduction includes Rationale of the study, Aims of the study, Scope of the study, Design of the study.

Part II: Development that states three chapters:

Chapter I: Theoretical background dealing with theory of indirectness.

Chapter II: Indirectness in English conversation.

Chapter III: refers to some Findings and Implication that the writer has found out during the study.

Part III: Conclusion in which the writer summarize the study, experiences acquired and state the orientation for further study.

PART II: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter I: Theoretical Background

I. Culture

1. The concept of culture

In the social sciences, the term *culture* refers to all knowledge, beliefs, customs and skills that are available to all members of the society. It is notable that of all man alone has culture because only he is capable of creating symbols. Without symbols there could be social life as there is among other animals, but it would be rudimentary. Culture is created by all members of a society and it serves them all. So, it not only deals with intelligence, morality, and art but also with the way of thinking behaving, feeling, etc... of members of a society. It also includes their custom, tradition and language. In short, culture refers to social heritage. The British anthropologist Sir Burnett Tylor (1973:53) defined culture as follow:

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and only other capabilities and habits aquired by men as a member of a society.

2. Functions of culture

Culture carries with it a framework of meaning and interpretation that enables participants to integrate themselves and their activities into a meaningful whole.

Culture provides reasons for participants to be willing to devote energy

and loyalty to the organization. It provides reasons for sacrifice and investment in the future of the organization

Culture legitimates the structure of authority and organization that control activities within the organization. Myth, ritual, and symbol provide explanations for activities and thus help to reconcile differences between ideals and actual behavior.

Culture refers to the pattern of human activity and the symbols that give significance to these activities. Culture manifests itself in terms of the art, literature, costumes, customs, language, religion and religious rituals. The people and their pattern of life make up the culture of a region. Cultures vary in the different parts of the world. They are different across the land boundaries and the diversity in cultures results in the diversity in people around the world. Culture also consists of the system of beliefs held by the people of the region, their principles of life and their moral values. The patterns of behavior of the people of a particular region also form a part of the region's culture. The word 'culture' that hails from the Latin word, 'culture' derived from 'colure', means, 'to cultivate'. Hence the way in which the minds of the masses inhabiting a particular region are cultivated, in some way determines the culture of a region.

3. Characteristics of culture

Cultures around the world share four common characteristics: culture is shared, it is learned, it is based on symbols, and it is integrated. (Havilland, 2002, pp. 34 - 42)

a. Culture is shared, by which we mean that every culture is shared by a group of people. Depending on the region they live in, the climatic conditions they thrive in and their historical heritage, they form a set of values and beliefs. This set of their principles of life shapes their culture. No culture belongs to an individual. It is rather shared among many people of a certain part of the world. It belongs to a single community and not to any single human being.

The members of a culture share a set of "ideals, values, and standards of behavior," and this set of shared ideals is what give meaning to their lives, and what bonds them together as a culture. (p. 34).

b. Culture is learned. The members of a culture share certain ideals, which shape their lives. Generations learn to follow these ideals and principles. Culture propagates through generations, which adopt their old customs and traditions as a part of their culture. The ideals they base their lives on is a part of their culture. Cultural values are imparted from one generation to another, thus resulting in a continual of traditions that are a part of culture. The language, the literature and the art forms pass across generations. Culture is learned, understood and adopted by the younger generations of society. No individual is born with a sense of his/her culture. He/she has to learn it.

Culture is not an innate sensibility, but a learned characteristic. Children begin learning about their culture at home with their immediate family and how they interact with each other, how they dress, and the rituals they perform. When the children are older and venture out into the community, their cultural education is advanced by watching social interactions, taking

part in cultural activities and rituals in the community, and forming their own relationships and taking their place in the culture. (pp. 40-41).

c. In order for the culture to be transmitted successfully from one person to the next, and from one generation to the next, a system of symbols needs to be created that translates the ideals of the culture to its members. This is accomplished through language, art, religion, and money. (p. 41).

d. Finally, in order to keep the culture function all aspects of the culture must be integrated. (pp. 41-42). For example the language must be able to describe all the functions within the culture in order for ideas and ideals to be transmitted from one person to another. Without the integration of language into the fabric of the culture, confusion and dysfunction would reign and the culture would fail.

These four characteristics of culture are present in every culture, no matter where the culture is located in the world.

(<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/characteristics-of-culture.ht>)

II. Language and culture

1. What is language?

Language is a part of culture and culture is a part of language, the two are inter-woven. It is different to separate one from the other. It is desirable to separate the two; the significance of either language or culture would be lost.

Language has a setting – the people that speak it belong to a race or a number or a race that is group that is set off by physical characteristic from other groups. Again language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and belief that determines the

texture of our lives (Edward Spir, 1963:207).

2.The relation between language and culture

Language is the heritage and reflection of a culture, culture is the heritage of a society. No culture can come into being and develop in an empty space. It is created by all members of a society. It is stored and transferred from generation to generation. It has developed ceaselessly. In the shared community, men have to communicate, all the time, with one another. The main and most helpful way to communicate is language. Through language we can leave our culture heritage to future generations. One of the chief means of communicating is language, the key component of any culture of any society in the world. Language, on the other hand, may spread far beyond their original home, invading the territory of new races and of new culture spheres. When a person knows native language, he has the key to his cultural treasure.

Language is a key component of culture. It is primary and most helpful medium for transmitting much of culture. Children progressing in language learning are also make progress in cultural understanding. Learning their own language they also learn their own culture. With the knowledge of language one can communicate with others. But, without the culture knowledge communication is not always successful because cross-culture misunderstanding may occur. This happens when words are used with different meanings. For example, in Vietnamese – English, what is called an omelette in fact, in British – English is called a fried egg, and what is called a

fried egg in Vietnamese – English is called an omelette in British – English. So, it is humorous to hear that when a Vietnamese visitor went to an English restaurant and order an omelette, he was surprised and somewhat annoyed when the waiter brought him some fried eggs. Differences in culture meanings across languages cause a communication problem for people of different cultures. The word "mother", for instance, may have strong emotional overtones in one culture but these overtones may be incomprehensive in a culture where children are regarded as belong to the tribe, or clan rather than their individual parents. Language does not develop without culture. It is chief way by which the members of a culture communicate. They are very closely related to each other. They help each other to exist and develop. Edward Spir (1963:215) point out:

A common language can not definitely set the seal on a common culture when the geographical, political and economic determinants of the culture are no longer the same throughout its area.

Spir also wondered whether language and culture are in any true sense casually related. He believed that culture is "what" a society does and thinks, and language is the means of expressing thought. He also said that language and culture are not necessarily correlated, but the content of language is intimately related to culture. When a new thing is introduced to a culture which has not got any name for it, a word for the newly introduced thing must be invented or borrowed. For example, before the bicycle was introduced to Vietnam, there was naturally no word to express it. But, when the Vietnamese made acquaintance with it, they borrowed the word "bicycle" and either borrowed or invented words to describe the bicycle parts. Most of

Vietnamese words for the bicycle parts are French - borrowed. So, in the sense that the vocabulary of a language more or less reflects the culture whose purpose it serves. It is true that the history of language and the history of culture move along parallel lines.

III. Conversation

1. Definition.

A *conversation* is communication between multiple people. It is a social skill that is not difficult for most individuals. Conversations are the ideal form of communication in some respects, since they allow people with different views on a topic to learn from each other. A speech, on the other hand, is an oral presentation by one person directed at a group.

For a successful conversation, the partners must achieve a workable balance of contributions. A successful conversation includes mutually interesting connections between the speakers or things that the speakers know. For this to happen, those engaging in conversation must find a topic on which they both can relate to in some sense. Those engaging in conversation naturally tend to relate the other speaker's statements to themselves. They may insert aspects of their lives into their replies, to relate to the other person's opinions or points of conversation.

Conversation analysis is a branch of sociology which studies the structure and organization of human interaction, with a more specific focus on conversational interaction.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversation>)

Conversation consists of spoken language. Not only do the features of spoken language differ from the features of written language, but the methods used to analyse conversation have to consider that conversation exists within a social context which determines the purpose of the conversation and shapes its structure and features. Though we are largely unaware of the rules that govern conversation, we operate daily using them.

It is obvious, therefore, that learning to speak also means learning to talk. Those who produce written text such as novelists, poets and journalists are often given great respect for their ability to craft texts. Perhaps, because in conversation so much has to be taken on trust and is dependent on the speaker's sensitivity to both language and cultural expectations we should give more respect to those who craft and use oral texts well.

This conversation below is an example.

He: What would you like for your birthday?

She: I don't care, anything is OK

He: No, really, what do you want? I'd like to get you something nice.

She: You don't have to get me anything, besides we can't afford much right now.

He: Well, how about if we go out for dinner together then?

She: Sure, that's fine. I don't really want anything. You always give me whatever I want anyway.

Both the man and the woman in this conversation feel frustrated by this

situation. He really wants to give her something nice, unusual something she would not otherwise buy for herself because they don't usually spend much money on special things for each other or for themselves. But from this conversation he is not able to figure out what she would like, and he gives up and settle for just going out for dinner-something they have always done and which carries no special meaning for either of them. What has frustrate him is that while he has asked quite clearly and specially what she wants, she has told him nothing. He is confirmed in his belief that this woman and perhaps all women are wishy-washy, indefinite, unable to say clearly what they want or just passive.

The woman in this conversation is also frustrated. She would very much appreciate a special and unusual gift as a symbol of the strength of their relationship. What gift would be is not the consideration for her at all, what is important to her is that he should know her well enough to be able to tell what would be just the right gift to symbolize this. The fact that he has asked outringt indicates to her that he, like all men, is observant, is unable to interpret her feelings, or in the worst case doesn't really care for her as much as he says.

She feels what he has said is just an exercise in pretending to care and that he is really quite satisfied to get out of the situation with nothing but having to go for dinner.

The result is that even though he has had the best of intentions in her mind and has sincerely wanted to express his feelings for her, what the man has communicated to this woman is quite the opposite. She feels he doesn't care for her very much at all.

For her part, the woman has wanted to give him a chance to demonstrate his feelings for her, and so she has been careful not to point this by being explicit. For her it is important not to be explicit, and so she carefully disguises any clue that she is really hoping for the nice gift he has suggested. She hopes that in spite of this conversation he will go out and buy something for her and so is disappointed to find that he has taken her quite. Literally and they have only had a dinner together again. The man and the woman in this example have approached the same situation with very different interpretive frames, and so even though they have succeeded in producing a complete coherent, fluent discourse from the point of view of such matters as syntax, turn exchange, and the rest, they have not really understood each other at all. This, then, is the first issue to be considered: man and woman approach communication with different interpretive frames where one may expect direct explicit statement, the other may be explicating indirect expression. It is important to say that men are direct and women are indirect. No such statement can be really meaningful what we mean to say is that when one expects directness and the other uses indirectness, wrong interpretations and miscommunication will be the result. The point is difference in expectation, not absolute differences in style or behavior.

2. Classification of conversation

The majority of conversations can be divided into four categories according to their major subject content:

- **Conversations about subjective ideas**, which often serve to extend understanding and awareness.
- **Conversations about objective facts**, which may serve to consolidate a widely-held view.
- **Conversations about other people** (usually absent), which may be critical, competitive, or supportive. This includes gossip.
- **Conversations about oneself**, which sometimes indicate attention-seeking behaviors.

3. Functions

Each type of conversation has its own cluster of purposes and expectations attached.

- **Functional conversation** is designed to convey information in order to help achieve an individual or group goal.
- Small talk is a type of conversation where the topic is less important than the social purpose of achieving bonding between people or managing personal distance.
- **Banter** is non-serious conversation, usually between friends, which may rely on humour or in-jokes at the expense of those taking part. The purpose of banter may at first appear to be an offensive affront to the other person's face. However, people engaging in such a conversation are often

signaling that they are comfortable enough in each others' company to be able to say such things without causing offense. Banter is particularly difficult for those on the autism spectrum, or those with semantic pragmatic disorder.

III. Indirectness

1. Definition

Indirect speech acts are commonly used to reject proposals and to make requests. For example, a speaker asks, "Would you like to meet me for coffee?" and another replies, "I have class." The second speaker used an indirect speech act to reject the proposal. This is indirect because the literal meaning of "I have class" does not entail any sort of rejection.

In the course of performing speech acts we ordinarily communicate with each other. The content of communication may be identical, or almost identical, with the content intended to be communicated, as when a stranger asks, "What is your name?"

However, the meaning of the linguistic means used (if ever there are linguistic means, for at least some so-called "speech acts" can be performed non-verbally) may also be different from the content intended to be communicated. One may, in appropriate circumstances, request Peter to do the dishes by just saying, "Peter ...!", or one can promise to do the dishes by saying, "Me!" One common way of performing speech acts is to use an expression which indicates one speech act, and indeed performs this act, but also performs a further speech act, which is indirect. One may, for instance,

say, "Peter, can you open the window?" thereby asking Peter whether he will be able to open the window, but also requesting that he do so. Since the request is performed indirectly, by means of (directly) performing a question, it counts as an indirect speech act.

In indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer.

In short, *Indirectness is cultural insofar as it relies on conversationist's shared knowledge of how to properly interpret indirect speech acts such as "can you reach the salt?" to mean "pass the salt"* (Duranti:1997).

In everyday conversation, there are ways to go about getting the things you want. Indirectness preferred for two main reasons: to save face if a conversational contribution is not well received, and to achieve the sense of rapport that comes from being understood without saying what means.

2. Strategies of indirectness

Many of the strategies speakers use to achieve their goals in communication are indirect, that is we do not always say directly what we mean, but approach matters in a roundabout way.

2.1 Bald on record strategy.

The first superstrategy (bald-on-record) is ranked as the most direct strategy. Bald-on-record covers strategies usually using the imperative form without any redress, and is employed when face threat is minimal.

2.2 Negative strategy.

Probably the most common way to perform a request is on-record with negative face redress (negative politeness). Negative politeness addresses recipient's negative face or desire to not be imposed on. Any form that decreases the imposition on the hearer (primarily imposed by giving the hearer options) functions as a negative polite strategy. A common way to do this is to question or assert any preconditions underlying the performance of a request (Gordon and Lakoff, 1975, Searle.1975). For example, to comply with a request a recipient must have the ability and willingness to do so. Thus, a speaker can perform a negatively polite request by questioning the hearer's ability or willingness to comply with the requested act (eg. Can you shut the door? and Would you shut the door?)

2.3 Positive strategy.

A second broad strategy is to perform the act on-record with positive face redress. Positive face work is achieved through the use of mechanisms that implicate solidarity with the hearer. For example, the use of ingroup identify makers (eg. Slang, familiar address forms), jokes and presumptuous optimism (eg. You will lend me your notes, won't you) all implicate a speaker view that although a hearer is being imposed on the relationship is relatively close (or else the speaker would not be imposing in this way).

2.4 Off-record strategy.

The third strategy in the P. Brown and Levison (1987) model is to perform the request off-record. Off-record strategies are clear instances of indirectness. They are inherently ambiguous and favor of another. There are

an infinite number of off-record forms and there has been little systematic research on the specific mechanism that might be used to perform them.

Leech (1983) proposed scales of politeness (e.g. cost-benefit scale) in order to determine politeness. One of them is the indirectness scale. Leech (1983: 108) claims that, when propositional content is kept constant, the use of more and more indirect illocutions will generally result in more politeness.

One reason for this is, according to him, the increase of optionality given to the hearer. The other reason is “the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be” (Leech, 1983: 108). The indirectness scale is illustrated below

Answer the phone

I want you to answer the phone

Will you answer the phone?

Can you answer the phone?

Would you mind answering the phone?

Could you possibly answer the phone?

According to Blum - Kuaka and Olssten (1984), three major levels of directness for requests can be identified that seem to apply on theoretical grounds cross-linguistically:

- ✓ impositives,
- ✓ conventionally indirect requests
- ✓ non-conventionally indirect requests

A finer scale of nine directness categories based on the three major levels. The starting point for the development of the Blumka and Olshtain (1984) scale:

1. Mood derivable	1. Clean up the kitchen.
2. Explicit performative	2. I'm asking you to move your car.
3. Hedged performative	3. I would like to ask you to move your car.
4. Locution derivable	4. You'll have to move your car.
5. Want statement	5. I would like you to clean the kitchen.
6. Suggest formula	6. How about cleaning up?
7. Preparatory	7. Could you clean up the mess in the kitchen?
8. Strong hint	8. You have left the kitchen in a right mess.
9. Mild hint	9. We don't want any crowding (as a request to move the car).

The author finds two types of indirectness: one uses conventionally indirect strategies and the other makes uses of non-conventionally indirect

2.5 Conventionally indirectness strategies:

Searle (1975) states in relation to conventionally indirectness:

... there can be conventions of usage ... I am suggesting that Can you, Could you, I want you to and numerous other forms are conventional ways of making requests... but at the same time they don't have an imperative meaning (Searle.1975:76)

H Clark (1979) distinguishes between two types of conventional indirectness: convention of means, conventions of form which comprise what Searle (1975) call conventions of usage. Convention of means determine the semantic device by which an indirect request can be made. For example, a convention of means is used when a speaker makes a request indirectly by questioning the hearer's ability, such as in "Can you close the door?". Conventions of form specify the exact wording used for a particular indirect request. For instance, Can you close the door or Could you close the door. Note here that "Are you able to close the door" is not conventional indirectness. For conventional indirectness both types of convention shape what the speaker can do to signal requestive force.

In addition, there is another typical feature of conventional indirectness. Blum-kulka (1989) labels it pragmatic duality conventionally indirect strategies can always be interpreted on at least 2 levels, the literal or the request. By using conventionally indirect strategies, the speaker can convey either an information seeking question or a request as both as in "Can you help me with my housework?". The speaker's inquiry about the hearer's ability is an initial step toward an ulterior goal and is, therefore, part of the request (Kulka.1989, Leech.1983..). another example of this is seen in a teacher's being unable to hear a student and saying "Can you speak more loudly". The student may answer "Sorry I can't I have a cold" while the teacher was most likely making a request, the student responded to it as a question. Thus, a hearer can interpret an utterance on either one of the 2 levels or on both, and vary the response according to his/her interpretation.

2.6 Non-conventional indirectness strategies:

Kulka (1989) defines non-conventional indirectness as follows:

For conventional indirectness, conventions of propositional content (means) and linguistic form combine to signal requestive force. Non-conventional indirectness, on the other hand is in principle open ended, both in term of propositional content and linguistic form as well as pragmatic force. Thus, there are no formal limitation (Kulka:1989:42). One of the benefits of this strategy is taht a speaker can avoid the responsibility for making a request (Brown and Levison.1978:1987). A hint has more thanone possible interpretation and the addressee is obliged to make an inference to recover what the speaker actually intended. The speaker can thus avoid reponsibility for having committed him or herself to a particular act. According to Brown and Levison, a speaker “ can satisfy negative face to a degree greater than that afforded by the negative politeness strategy”. Hints called an “ off-record ” strategy by Brown and Levison (1987:71-5) are regarded as more polite than “ on record” strategies.

Chapter II: Indirectness in English conversation

Indirectness is very important in English conversation. Infact, indirectness is expressed in many aspects but, because of time and knowledge the writer only focus on indirectness on making requests.

1. Making requests

In every day interactions, communicators oftens need other people's help therefore it is really important to know the correct way to ask for it. Making a request properly will not only determine whether they actually obtain the help they need, but more importantly, it will affect the attitude that people have toward others.

Making requests, in other words, involves an understanding of etiquette. In making requests in English, it is necessary to learn not only certain words and expressions, but also how to use them appropriately. First of all, the way of asking will depend on the social distance among communicators. For instance, when asking teacher for help, a pupil will probably use more indirect and more formal words than if he is asking a closefriend or relative. Second, the language people use will depend on the weight of favor. If people are making a special request from even a closefriend, say to borrow several thousand dollars, people will probably use more polite and indirect language than if they are merely asking to borrow a pen.

With these guidelines, it can sometimes be hard to know how to make a request, especially in "sticky" situations. For example, if you want a stranger to keep quiet in a movie theater, you might want to give him a direct command rather than make a request in order to show how annoyed you are. However, even in this case, you will probably get better results if you ask him to down in a politeness and indirectness.

Request refers to inclusively to an utterance that is intended to indicate the speaker's desire to regulate the behavior of the listener that is, to get the listener to do something (Backer,1982:1)

2.1 Indirect ways

In English, people can make requests by many ways such as using modal auxiliaries and indirect speech. Indirect speech acts are certainly the most significant form of conventional indirectness and have received a good deal of attention from linguist, so you shall consider them at some length here.

Indirect speech acts are the kinds of things that can be done by means of utterances are strictly limited, and that sentence carries in their structure indications of their paradigmatic use or “illocutionary force”.

Gordon and Lakoff (1971) drew attention to a systematic way of making indirect speech acts in English: by stating or questioning a felicity condition. A felicity condition (Searle 1960, After Austin 1962) is one of the real-world conditions that must be met by aspects of the communicative event in order for a particular speech act to come off as intended. For instance, for a request to be felicitous (successful), the addressee must be thought potentially able to comply with the request. Now, what Gordon and Lakoff noticed was that by questioning whether you shut the door “can you shut the door” or by questioning that the writer wants you to shut it “I’d like you to shut the door” and so on, one can construct readily understandable indirect speech acts.

In the following, please examine some alternative ways of performing indirect request:

a. One way to do this is to ask a question about the consequent of the implication. In fact, a question presupposes that the asker does not know whether the asked proposition holds. In particular, speaker may perform are a request and show that he does not believe the consequent of the implication

by exploiting a question about hearer's willingness to do act.

Eg: Do you want to give me a lift?

From speaker's lack of knowledge, hearer can infer that speaker does not believe neither that hearer intends, or that he does not intend to do act.

b. Another way is to ask the hearer if he is committed to performing the action: in fact, also in the case, the speaker shows that he has no knowledge about the hearer's intentions.

For example: Do you pass me the salt?

c. Yes another possibility is to perform a question about a condition necessary for hearer to intend to act. One necessary condition is that he can perform the requested action; in fact, an agent adopts an intention only if he considers it feasible. When speaker asks hearer whether hearer can do action, speaker displays that he does not believe that hearer intends to do act.

d. Besides, a request can be expressed by a question. An indirect question is usually more polite than its direct version, because the speaker prevents the application of the default conclusion that would threaten the hearer's freedom to answer. In particular, a request can be expressed as a question by the speaker to be told information; so polite indirect request can be exploited to perform questions.

For example: Could you tell me who is the author of "Hamlet"?

There's more than one way to ask a question. Indirect questions are more polite and don't need changes in word order in the main question.

Indirectness is dictated by social conventions and can vary from culture to culture. In British English, for example, unless we are angry or in an emergency situation, we would very rarely address someone with a direct

command such as "Get out of my way!" or "Give me an apple". We are much more likely, if we want to succeed in our objectives, to approach the matter indirectly, e.g. "I wonder if I could just squeeze past you" or "Could I have an apple?" or even "Do you fancy an apple?" The less well we know someone, the less direct we are likely to be.

In a safe and trusting communicative culture, like one you might have with a significant other, using indirect communication can become almost a code language between the participants. Communicating with mere declarations and relying on conversational implicature can enhance the feeling of "s/he can totally read my mind!"

"We're out of milk." (Indirect request/command)

"I'm going out to the post office in just a moment." (Indirect response to request)

"I'm baking bread this evening." (Indirect request)

"Great, then I'll bring some yeast, too, just in case." (Indirect response)

Indirect Questions & Direct questions are often considered rude when speaking to strangers. To be more polite people often use INDIRECT QUESTION FORMS. Indirect questions serve the same purpose as direct questions, but are considered more formal

If directness was defined as matching the speech act with structure, indirectness would then be e.g. using an interrogative structure ("*Are you wearing that to the party?*") to convey a non-question speech act, like a statement ("*I don't think you should wear that to the party*") or even a command ("*Go put on something else.*")

As already noted, indirectness is very useful in socially distant situations. People have varied levels of directness tolerance, and until they know where the limit is, it's wise to stay well on the polite side.

The interplay of directness and indirectness is also an interesting factor in social situations where some people know each other better and some are new acquaintances. Using direct speech to the old friends and indirect speech to the newcomers is an efficient way to keep the two groups separate.

On the other hand, addressing the new friends very directly in front of old friends can have a few effects. It can serve as an invitation to join the group, especially if the directness is matched.

Or it can seem like a form of namedropping, especially if the new friends are somehow higher in social hierarchy.

For example: Michael acted out this kind of dialogue:

“ Person 1: Why don't you do a Lunch and Learn?

Person 2: Well, I don't really have time.

Person 1: We could make some time by freeing up your schedule.

Person 2: But I don't have a topic

Person 1: We have a list of topics you could pick from.

Person 2: But there are people more qualified than me.

.... ”

What Person 2 has not directly said is "I'm painfully shy", but if that is information that influencing the nature of the conversation, it may seem strange to Person 1. The entire conversation seems to be "suggestion" followed by "reason the suggestion can't be taken".

Here are some interesting snippets of the conversation the author find. In one example, a girl told how her mother-in-law would come over to her house, look at the window, and say, "My, what a nice, fresh breeze!" It took her a long time to realize that what the mother-in-law meant was "It's very cold in here." Further, if she would say something like "would you like me to close the window?" Her mother-in-law would say "I certainly wouldn't want to tell you what to do in your own house!"

This is a pretty clear (albeit polarizing) example of indirect communication. When this example was first brought up, there was a lot of outcry from the direct communicators who lamented, "How could this woman possibly be understood?" (Direct communicators often have the "mind reader" complaint about indirect communicators: "you expect me to be a mind reader; you never just say things plainly.")

This example started a huge debate that was initially very judgmental about indirect communication. The conversation used phrases like "passive-aggressive trap-laying".

Contrary to what direct communicators think, when indirect communicators communicate with each other their communication is very information rich and unambiguous.

Another important element of conversational style is indirectness- conveying meaning without saying it explicitly. It is not possible to articulate every thing we mean in every utterance. Some of the meaning must always be "read between the lines" based on past conversations and expectations about what will be said, and from culturally agreed upon meanings that are associated with particular expressions. Cultures differ in how much

indirectness is expected, when it is expected, and what form it will take. For example, Americans who travel to Japan, even though they speak Japanese well, find it difficult to interpret what Japanese speakers mean, because Japanese culture places great value on indirectness.

Indirectness in conversation is a way of conveying desired messages by means of an interrelationship of social variables and linguistic content. Indirectness is mainly expressed by means of lexical choice, syntactic structure, conversational implicature and discourse structure

Indirect communications are veiled, ambiguous, excessively diplomatic, or conveyed to people other than the actual target. We often use indirectness to avoid confrontation or to avoid dealing with conflict.

For example, two American college roommates were frustrated by a third who habitually left her dirty dishes in the sink. Reluctant to tell her outright that she should wash her dishes, the two neatniks put up a sign “ we love a clean sink”. In another case, a student was annoyed that one of her roommate habitually left her hair dryer in the bathroom. Rather than telling her to please keep her hairdryer in her room, she asked “ Is that your hairdryer?”. In both instances the indirect communications were effective: the dirty dishes disappeared from the kitchen sink, and the hairdryer disappeared from bathroom. These indirect request honored the roommates’ need not to be imposed on.

People on occasion do not use words to say what they mean. They insinuate and hint at what they mean. They try to get an idea of what the other person might think of what they might mean, and ready to adjust or take back what they might have mean. Indirectness according to Dascal (1983), costly

and risky. Indirectness is costly as it usually takes longer for a speaker to produce an indirect utterance and for the listener to process the expressed meaning to understand the implied meaning. It is risky as the speaker risks being understood. As Thomas (1995) states, indirectness is rational behavior, through which the speaker obtains some social or communicative advantage or avoid some negative consequence.

Indirectness in conversation is very much caused by cultural differences in the importance people assign to values such as rapport and harmony versus independence, as well as clarity and topics in conversation. Greeks, for instance, are considered highly indirect; the Israelis are highly direct; and the Anglo-Americans are in the middle.

Thus indirectness represents for pragmatics the decisive move towards describing politeness in the field of tension between a conversational framework and spontaneous language usage, i.e., between constitutive, regulative, and individual mechanisms, and is thus a plausible basis for model-theoretic abstraction. By postulating an inverse proportion between indirectness and conflict potential (Leech's formal and substantive explanation of the optionality scale; 1983; 123f) and Brown and Levinson's four types of indirectness (1987;60), it becomes easier to operationalise politeness: it can be graded between a negative and a positive pole, and seen in this way, it is a product of the utterance and the situation, which can be derived from a reduction in the level of conflict and the degree of success in communication. The politeness of indirectness is therefore founded on the following points, which lead researchers back to basic features of interaction such as the mutual assumption of unspoken common knowledge, contextual

binding and an increased dependence on the partner's cooperation:

✧ Indirectness lowers the obligations of both partners in interaction and thus relieves them of direct responsibility. For the speaker this means that he/she may take over the “waiting” position and has the freedom to indulge in further conversational turns; for the hearer it means freedom of decision, the free opportunity of making a counter move, and a chance to continue according to her/his personal preferences.

✧ By appearing to put all the cards in the addressee's hand, indirectness gives rise to continuity with a greater readiness on the part of the hearer to cooperate, encourages the hearer's willingness to accept and produces conflict-free agreement.

✧ Because of its prophylactic flexibility, which enables both partners to adjust, to retract, or to adapt gradually to communicate developments at any time, indirectness is an explanatory “technique for maintaining face”. Face-threatening, embarrassing mistakes and possible sanctions are thereby avoided.

The use of indirectness can hardly be understood without the cross-cultural perspective. Many Americans find it self-evident that directness is logical and aligned with power whereas indirectness is akin to dishonesty as well as subservience. But for speakers raised in most of the world's cultures, varieties of indirectness are the norm in communication. In Japanese interaction, for example, it is well known that saying “no” is considered too face-threatening to risk, so negative responses are phrased as positive ones: one never say “no”, but listeners understand from the form of the “yes” whether it is truly a “yes” or a polite “no”.

Indirectness, then, is not in itself a strategy of subordination. Rather, it can be used either by the powerful or the powerless. The interpretation of a given utterance, and the likely response to it, depends on the setting, on individuals' status and their relationship to each other, and also on the linguistic conventions that are ritualized in the culture context.

Another situation: a Japanese-American girl once told a story about business conversation in Japan. She has to take a day off on Monday to take her kid to the dentist. One way of handling this situation is to say to her manager, "I'm not going to be here on Monday; I have a family obligation." That works simple, direct communication. But she used indirect way as follow:

“ Employee: I hope things aren't too busy on Monday.

Manager: Why do you hope that?

Employee: I think I might not be here on Monday.

Manager: Oh, why? What's happening?

Employee: Well, my daughter needs to see the dentist.

Manager: Oh, I hope it's just a routine visit. ”

And this was an interesting reversal of the judgment. In this example, direct communicators are seen as brash and impolite.

Some of my friends who come from southern U.S. states also talk about the politeness requirements of conversation as well. For them, conveying facts is far less important than being polite and ensuring that the person you're speaking to is comfortable. For direct communicators, this sounds very foreign.

The only way out of this conflict is to recognize that these different communication styles exist, and people believe in them for legitimate reasons, and neither is an objectively better style than the other (although there are contexts where it might be useful to use one form over the other).

So it's with some annoyance that I see a pretty clear example of indirect communication being described as "information the speaker chooses not to share" and that this whole example is used to describe a "facade" that people have.

Maybe some of this is lost in translation: perhaps if I heard the original speakers, I wouldn't find these terms as troubling

(http://i-proving.ca/space/BC+Holmes/blog/2006-07-21_1)

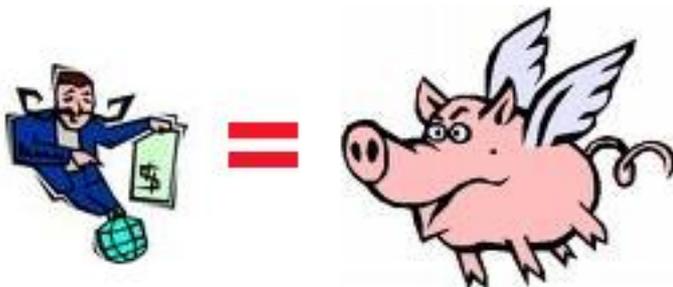
More fun with speaking indirectly

The previous post on indirect speech acts illustrated that one is allowed to violate the Gricean maxims to get your point across. Here are some more examples:

Example 1:

C: I promise to pay you back next week.

D: Sure, and pigs will fly.



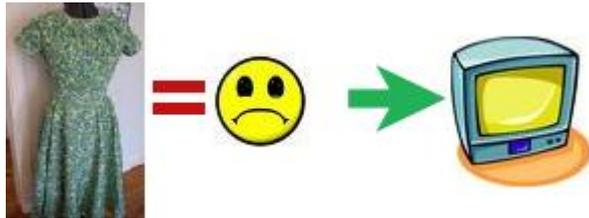
In this case, the maxims of relevance and quality are violated. D has just uttered a seemingly unrelated response, and it is obviously a falsity. However,

the point here is to "match" what D thinks is a falsity uttered by C. This is a bit more polite than responding with "No, you won't."

Example 2:

E: How do you like my new dress?

F: Hmm, [pause] ... Anything good on TV tonight?



Here, relevance is violated. F probably didn't like E's dress and thus F is attempting to shift the conversation to another topic, rather than give a dispreferred response (which is a topic that will be covered in future posts).

Example 3:

G: So, Sarah thinks you're cute, right?

H: Is Rome in Spain?

Similar to the first example, this illustrates responding to a question with a question. Keep in mind that one of the requirements for indirect speech acts to work is that both participants have shared knowledge about the context of the situation, and of the world in general. G will recognize that H responded indirectly, but whether H can interpret that response will depend on H's knowledge of geography.

Example 4:

One more, I'm sure you've all heard this one:

I: Name 3 things that are important in real estate.

J: Location, location, and location.

The maxim of quantity is violated here. Instead of naming 3 different things, location is repeated to get the point across that it is the most important thing and needs extra emphasis.

Making request properly in English requires knowledge of certain expressions as well as an understanding of etiquette. Requests can range from formal to unformal, from indirect to direct. The type of request you make, and therefore, the type of language you use, will depend on your relationship with the speaker and the weight of favor. To get a better idea of how to make requests in different kinds of situations, you can practice the above dialogues.

You can practice some dialogues:

1. Katherine asks a favor of her uncle, who owns a computer store.

Katherine: Excuse me, Uncle John, can I aks you a favor?

Uncle John: What is it?

Katherine: I know you are busy, but would you mind helping me set up a new program on my computer? I can't figure out how to do it.

Uncle John: Sure, but can you wait until tomorrow evening?

Katherine: Of course.

2. John, a supervisor at Burger King, is talking to the employees:

John: Excuse me, Mark, could you go clean up those tables over there?

Mark: Sure, but would you mind waiting a few minutes? A men just spilled his rink in front of the counter, and I need to mop it up.

John: OK ! No problem.

3. Richard is talking to his classmate Winnie:

Richard: Gee, I don't suppose you could loan me a hundred dollars? I

forgot to bring my wallet to school today.

Winnie: Gosh, I don't have much money myself today. It's the end of the end week, and my mom hasn't given me my allowance yet.

Richard: Could you lend me just 30 dollars then, so I can take the bus home?

Winnie: Sure,. Here you go

Richard: Thanks. I'll pay you back tomorrow.

Winnie: Don't worry about it.

2.2 Tag structures

Consider the following situation: You are talking to a man at a meeting that you have never met. However, you know his name and also that this man knows a colleague named Jack. You turn to him and ask:

Where is Jack?

The man seems a little bothered and says he does not know. He is not very friendly. You wonder why he seems bothered...

It's probably because we didn't introduce ourselves, did not say 'excuse me' AND (most importantly) asked a direct question. Direct questions are often considered rude when speaking to strangers. To be more polite we often use indirect question forms. Indirect questions serve the same purpose as direct questions, but are considered more formal. When using an indirect question, use an introductory phrase followed by the question itself in positive sentence structure. Connect the two phrases with the question word or 'if' in the case the question is a 'yes', 'no' question.

Tag structures:

Introductory phrase + question word (or if) + positive sentence

Examples:

Where is Jack? > I was wondering if you know where Jack is.

When does Alice usually arrive? > Do you know when Alice usually arrives?

Here are some of the most common phrases used for asking indirect questions. Many of these phrases are questions (i.e., *Do you know when the next train leaves?*), while others are statements made to indicate a question (i.e., *I wonder if he will be on time.*).

Some tag structures:

Do you know ...?

I wonder / was wondering

Can you tell me ...?

Do you happen to know...?

I have no idea ...

I'm not sure ...

I'd like to know ...

Have you any idea...

Sometimes we also use these phrases to indicate that we'd like some more information.

I'm not sure...

I don't know...

Examples:

Do you know when the concert begins?

I wonder when he will arrive.

Can you tell me how to check out a book?

I'm not sure what he considers appropriate.

I don't know if he is coming to the party this evening.

*** If we do not begin a question directly, but begin it with something like:**

***Can you tell me...? Do you know...? I wonder if...?* The word order is the same as in an affirmative statement.**

Direct question: What **is he** doing?

Indirect question: Do you know what **he is** doing?

Direct question: Where **have they** been?

Indirect question: I wonder where **they have** been.

Do, does, did

*** If the direct question contains *do, does or did*, we omit it in the indirect question.**

Direct question: What **do you** want?

Indirect question: Can you tell me what **you** want?

Direct question: When **did she** leave?

Indirect question: Do you know when **she** left?

Yes/no questions

*** In yes / no questions, we use *if* or *whether* (the word order is the same as in reported questions).**

Direct question: **Have you** seen my dog?

Indirect question: Could you tell me **if you have seen** my dog?

Here are some samples on making request which you can referent:

Ex 1:

Direct question: *Where's the tourist information office?*

Indirect question: *Could you tell me where the tourist information office is?*

Ex 2:

Direct question: *Do you like flying?*

Indirect question: *Could you tell me if you like flying?*

Ex 3:

Direct question: *When are you going to invite me to go to the USA?*

Indirect question: *Can I ask you when you are going to invite me to go to the USA?*

Ex 4:

Direct question: *What is the purpose of your visit?*

Indirect question: *Would you mind telling me what the purpose of your visit is?*

Ex 5:

Direct question: *How did you get to the airport?*

Indirect question: *Can you tell me how you got to the airport?*

Exercise 1: Start the sentence with the words given in parentheses:

1 "Where's the station?"

"Can you tell me _____?"

2 "Are you coming to the party?"

"Can you let me know if _____?"

3 "How does it work?"

"Can you explain _____?"

4 "What's the matter?"

Please tell me _____."

5 "Where are you from?"

"I'd like to know _____."

6 "How long does it take to get there?"

"Do you know _____?"

7 "Has she reached a decision yet?"

"Has she told you whether _____?"

8 "What time are you leaving?"

"Do you know _____?"

9 "Does Annie know about computers?"

"I wonder whether _____."

10 "Excuse me. How do you get to the post office from here?"

"Could you tell us _____?"

11 "What are you doing?!"

"Do you have any idea _____?!"

12 "Could you lend me 50 Euros?"

"I don't suppose _____."

Answers for given exercises:

1. Can you tell me where the station is?
2. Could you let me know if you are coming to the party?
3. Can you explain how it work?
4. Please tell me what the matter is
5. I'd like to know where you are from.
6. Do you know how long it takes to get there?
7. Has she told you whether she has reached a decision yet?
8. Do you know what time you are leaving?
9. I wonder whether Annie know about computer.
10. Could you tell us how to get the post office from here?
11. Do you have any idea what you are doing?
12. I don't suppose whether you could lend me 50 Euros.

Chapter III: Findings and Implication

1. Findings

During the process of the study of indirectness in English conversation, the writer found out a lot of interesting issues related to the subject, especially that of indirectness in making request.

Firstly, the writer realised that using indirectness in English conversation is very important and necessary because indirectness is indispensable in communication. Imagine that if there is no indirectness in communicating with others, communicators will feel unpleasant and uncomfortable.

Secondly, the writer of this study would like to mention the ways of making request indirectly. There are many ways to make requests but the author only focus on making request in indirect way and tag structures as they are used widely. Furthermore, thanks to using them, a request is made more easily.

2. Implication

Learners of a foreign language are generally interested in studying the culture of the target language. They want to know about the native's way of life, what they are like, what their customs are like. It is not simple curiosity. It is the matter of knowledge. They want to understand more clearly about culture which then can help much in communicating with native speakers

accurately, fluently, naturally and idiomatically. Therefore, Vietnamese who study English should learn English language and its people as well. This is because the ability to react with speakers of another language depends not only on language skills but also on comprehension of cultural habits and expectations. And it also helps Vietnamese communicate with the others indirectly thanks to understanding culture.

One aspect of speech act theory with significant pragmatic implications concerns *indirectness*. Three broad illocutionary categories are normally identified - statement, question and command/request - having typical realizations in declarative, interrogative and imperative verb forms. These agreements between intended function and realized form break down in 'indirect speech acts', in which the outward (illocutionary) form of an utterance does not correspond with the intended illocutionary force of the speech act which it performs (Levinson, 1983, pp. 263ff). Common forms of this are to declare a preference or to use an interrogative form in order to convey an order or request. For example:

Teacher: I'd like to take in your exercise books.

Diner: Can you bring me the wine list?

These are both instances of how speakers frequently accomplish an indirect speech act by stating or questioning one of the felicity conditions (Gordon and Lakoff, 1971). The teacher explicitly *states* his wish to receive the books i.e. that s/he meets the felicity condition to do with speaker sincerity; the diner *questions* the ability of the waiter to provide the list i.e. s/he questions one of the preparatory pre-conditions.

It is possible that some individual and cultural variability in

conversational indirectness is a result of differing perceptions of an interpersonal situation. For example, people who speak more indirectly may, relative to their more direct counterparts, tend to perceive themselves as relatively low in status and more distant from partners. Thus, they may perceive any acts as relatively more face threatening and hence think that greater indirectness is called for. Similarly, people in some cultures may tend to assume greater distance between unacquainted others than do those in other cultures, and these differences can then result in people in the former culture tending to be more indirect than those in the latter culture (Holtgraves and Yang, 1992, Scollon and Scollon, 1981).

People speak indirectly for a reason: as one way of being attentive to each other's face. To do so they must assess the interpersonal situation to determine the appropriate level of indirectness. Thus, a person's view of an interpersonal setting (including his or her own view) is revealed in his or her talk. Hearers, of course, must be attentive to the same features of the interpersonal context and operate with the same conversational rules to recognize a speaker's intended meaning and politeness. In short, people must coordinate to communicate (Clark, 1985) and this coordination extends to the interpersonal level. People perform not only speech acts when they use language, they simultaneously perform interpersonal acts. Although this fact has long been recognized (Watzlawick, Beavin, Jackson, 1967) empirical research on the interpersonal underpinning of language has been somewhat rare. An understanding of language use in general, and indirectness in particular, requires a consideration of the interpersonal foundation of language.

The indirectness may cause communication problems in the following ways:

Indirectness is an effective strategy when there is a great deal of shared background knowledge. In the case of Black children, there is probably less shared background knowledge than teacher assume because in addition to adult-child differences, there are culture differences in communicative background experiences. When shared background knowledge is missing or low, then the child must rely more heavily on contextualization cues to draw inferences about the situated meaning. There also may be cultural and adult-child differences in the selection and use of contextualization cues(Gumperz,1996). In addition, it has been pointed out that indirectness is not very useful when new information is being conveyed, and instruction in school often presumably involves new information (Cook-Gumperz,1996). In everyday conversation, where there is a great deal of indirectness when listener do not understand the meaning of an indirect speech act they can ask the speaker to explain in a more direct way. In the tapes under study, this does not happen very often. It may be that it is not encouraged or accepted in school discourse. If this is the case, then the children are put at a further disadvantage in interpreting indirectness than they would be in everyday conversation because they can not use their normal “repair” strategies when they do not understand something. Finally, indirectness often leads to a series of questions when the first question is not answered correctly. The simple length of the interchange may increase the probability that the children will be distracted from the original task.

PART III: CONCLUSION

I. Summary of the study

There can be no doubt that English is one of the world's most widely used languages. People use a language in one of three ways: as a native language, as a second language, or as a foreign language. English is spoken as a native language by over three hundred million people in the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, some Caribbean countries and South Africa. As a second language, English is often necessary for official business, education, information and other activities in many countries, it is one of the few "working" languages of the United Nations.

It is said that English has become the language of international trade and transport. Most pilots in planes traveling from one country to another use it to talk with airports. All ships sailing on the oceans call for help by radio in it. It has been said that 60 percent of the world's radio broad casts and 70 percent of the world's mail uses English. At international sports meets, and international of scientists English is the language most commonly used and the most widely used.

English has in fact become the language of international cooperation in science and technology. The most advanced results in space, nuclear and

computer research are published in it. A scientist who speaks and writes English is in closer touch with the scientists in other countries than one who does not.

English has acquired the largest vocabulary of the entire world's language, perhaps as many as two million words, and has generated one of the human races. Therefore, indirectness plays an important part in dealing with those store in English especially, in the age of computer, indirectness in communication is dispensable to human beings.

Being aware of the importance of indirectness, the writer have decided to choose studying indirectness in English conversation. This paper includes three parts, of which part II is the focal point, the writer would also like to give as many examples as possible which are best selection from different sources in English so as to help readers have a wide and clear understanding of this study. The writer hope that this study can help learners of English understand indirectness in English conversation more clearly.

Due to the limitation of time and comprehensive knowledge of the writer in this field, the research paper may not satisfy the readers entirely. There will remain some shortcomings and limitation in this paper and some aspects of this subject could not be mentioned. Yet, it might guide readers to other interesting ideas of this subject for further research.

II. Suggestions for further research.

Indirectness in English conversation is a profound and broad subject to researchers. The writer is awfully aware that the study is only a very tiny research on this field. Therefore, the writer of this study would like to give

some suggestions which may be useful for further reseaches:

- Study thothoughly indirectness in making request.
- Explore in specific fields such as: request, conversation

Once again, I would like to send my sincere thanks to the ones who I love for their support and encouragement during this study.

REFERENCES

Books:

1. Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation
2. Brown. P & Levison, S (1987). *Indirectness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
3. Machiko Achiba - 2003 - Language Arts & Disciplines. *Learning to request in a second language*
4. Marcelo Dascal (2003:181): *Interpretation and understanding*. John Benjamins Publishing Company
5. Winnie Cheng (2003:274). *Intercultural Conversation*: John Benjamins Publishing Company,

Websites:

1. <http://usingenglish.com>
2. <http://ngonngu.net>
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/indirectness_theory-26k

4. http://www.geocities.com/wentzao2004/culture/lang_cul.htm
5. <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/characteristics-of-culture.ht>