ATU PRESS

ISSUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING (ILT)
VOL. 11, NO. 2, 1-32, December 2022
https://doi.org/10.22054/ilt.2022.68389.704 Document Type: Research Paper

Does Interlanguage Pragmatic Measure Enhancement Change the Data Pattern? A Mixed-Methods Approach

Rasoul Mohammad Hosseinpur*
Associate Professor of TEFL, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

Abdolreza Lowni
PhD Candidate of TEFL, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Maryam Lowni
PhD Candidate of TEFL, Islamic Azad University of Najafabad, Isfahan, Iran

Received: June 13, 2022**; Accepted:** October 27, 2022

Abstract

The field of interlanguage pragmatics has always reflected on its methodology and the validity of the collected data through various data collection methods. Moreover, whether they approximate the authentic data has always been a serious concern in the field. Drawing upon Schauer's (2009) taxonomy of the request speech act and its internal and external modification devices, the present study was an attempt to investigate the effects of enhancing Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs). To this end, the requests of 30 EFL students, produced via non-modified and modified DCTs, were compared with their authentic requests recorded in the institutional classroom context. The findings revealed that the modified Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) and the Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT) approximated the Natural Methodology in terms of the request head act and internal modification devices but not external modifiers. To investigate the deeper layers of the respondents' thoughts on DCTs, unstructured interviews were also conducted. Although the artificiality of the DCTs and their test-like nature, in general, were regarded as the weak points of the DCTs by the interviewees, they asserted that the modified DCTs improved their self-confidence and understanding of the scenarios. The findings cautiously suggest that the modified version of DCTs enjoys the positive features of both non-modified DCTs, tapping pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic knowledge of the respondents, and partly, the Natural Methodology, eliciting the respondents' sociopragmatic knowledge.

***Keywords*:** Discourse Completion Task (DCT), Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), Modified DCT, Natural Methodology, Non-modified DCT

***Corresponding author's email:** rmhosseinpour@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic assessment lies at the heart of L2 pragmatic studies. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2018, p. 13), Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) "is a field of inquiry that has always reflected on its methodology." Therefore, the data collection instrument and procedure have been among serious concerns of researchers in ILP studies. One well-known methodology for gathering real-life talks is the Natural Methodology. Manes and Wolfson (1981) state that spontaneous interactions gathered by ethnographic observations comprise the most authentic data. By employing this method, the researchers either observe or record natural interactions in an authentic setting. However, the time-consuming nature of this methodology, difficulties associated with observation, and data quantification problems of the Natural Methodology compelled researchers to seek more economical methods of data collection. This necessity led the researchers to try to devise various methods with the potential ability to elicit the closest data to natural talks and enjoy the feature of being economical.

This ended up in the advent of the discourse completion tasks (DCTs) including Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), and Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT), as the most popular methods of eliciting talks in simulated fashions. Their relative ease of conducting and eliciting bulk of data quickly convinced a lot of researchers to take advantage of them in their studies (e.g., Alemi & Rezanejad, 2014; Malmir, 2020; Mohammad Hosseinpur & Bagheri Nevisi, 2020). However, these tasks have been called into question on the ground that they lack acceptable construct validity and fail to reflect language learners' pragmatic abilities as manifested in their natural language use (Labben, 2016).

To compensate for the shortcomings mentioned above, the researchers shifted their attention to making elicitation techniques more efficient and invested in their natural elicitation power. McNamara and Roever (2006, p. 253), for example, urged the need for "more research on testing of sociopragmatic knowledge and design of discourse completion

tests for testing purposes." Considering the tests' intentions and characteristics, the researchers have tried to determine if manipulation of the current tests can lead to different results, as is the case with the WDCT (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000).

It is clear that in natural settings, the presence of more contextual factors can have an important impact on the formation of real-life talks. Therefore, in enriching DCTs, the researchers have tried to elicit real-life talks by including more contextual information in the prompts. Through the purposeful manipulation of prompts in the interlanguage pragmatic measures, the researchers look forward to seeing any probable variations in the elicited data. The present study was also an attempt to pursue this line of inquiry in an EFL institutional context and aimed to see whether adding more contextual information in WDCT and ODCT prompts would yield different production patterns from non-modified WDCT and ODCT.

Institutional talks, as the prevalent genre in the educational context, comprised the source of data generation in the present study. Institutional talks are defined as "talk that occurs in the course of carrying out an institution's business, usually between an institutional representative and a client" (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005, pp. 8-9). This genre was picked up in this study due to devoting the vast majority of interactions in people's lives, and the fact that this genre contains three outstanding features that make them more worthwhile to study. Comparability (favoring provision of control over involved variables in the study), interactivity (interaction oriented), and consequentiality (goal-oriented) are three pivotal qualities of institutional talks (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005), which make it invaluable. Therefore, by taking advantage of institutional talks in this study, the researchers are pursuing if the manipulation of the WDCT and ODCT prompts can lead to closer data pattern to natural talks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Measures of Pragmatic Knowledge

Different instruments are used by researchers to evaluate language learners' pragmatic awareness and production. As the most reliable and recommended method of data collection, the Natural Methodology was used in this study to gather real-life data. In the Natural Methodology, the researcher either observes or records natural interactions for later analysis (Taguchi, 2018). Although this method is popular for capturing authentic interactions, it suffers from a lack of control over involved variables in the study (Bardovi-Harlig, 2018). One more drawback of this method is related to the intentional or unintentional effect of the experimenter on the interactants in the course of interactions which Labov (1972) calls 'observer's paradox' and it can cause deviation from natural talk features.

DCTs, as another method of pragmatic data elicitation, are the most popular and economical data collection method in pragmatic studies which are widely used to tap pragmatic competence. They include a description of the speech act context along with the provided space for respondents to complete the task. DCTs are in two forms of open-ended and structured, which feature the prompts either along an incomplete discourse sequence or a rejoinder in the form of a hearer response. They are popular because of favoring time-saving quality and easy administration (Bardovi-Harlig, 2018).

WDCTs, as one prominent form of DCTs, are typically used in ILP investigations. They need respondents' written responses to the provided scenarios. Participants' roles, setting descriptions, and social status of participants are included along the provided blank for providing an answer which sometimes contains hearer response. In this method, some limitations of the Natural Methodology were supposed to be taken care of. Lack of the control over variables in the Natural Methodology (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2013) was tried to be alleviated in this method by manipulating the desired variables. The easy administration of this method also outweighs the Natural

Methodology which has convinced a lot of researchers to employ them in conducting their studies. However, not all these benefits compensate for the main disadvantage of WDCT, which is its inefficacy in eliciting natural data (Bardovi-Harlig, 2018; Yuan, 2001). They are criticized due to their highly controlled nature which under-represent the construct that they are measuring (Grabowski, 2008)

ODCTs, as another and more developed version of DCTs, are used to collect pragmatic data as well. The hallmark difference of this method with WDCT is that the respondents should provide their responses to the scenario orally. In this version of pragmatic measure, the scenarios are played for the respondents, and the respondents are needed to say aloud their responses (Brown, 2001). Answering orally can be an improvement over written responses in WDCTs, but the same limitations are evident in ODCTs, nor can they elicit natural talks due to suffering from the same drawbacks as WDCTs.

Pragmatic Measures

Comparing and contrasting different measures of pragmatic knowledge is one of the most common ways of studying them. For example, in a study carried out in Japan by Sasaki (1998) on requests and refusal responses, she tried to compare WDCTs and role-plays. The final findings showed that the respondents employed more strategies and longer responses in role-plays.

In a comprehensive investigation conducted by Yuan (2001), she focused on contrasting ODCT, WDCT, field notes, and recorded conversations. The dependent variable was the name that she picked up for some criteria including response length, the number of exclamation particles, the number of omissions, the number of repetitions, and the number of inversions for comparing the employed devices. Compliments and compliment responses were targeted as speech acts to be elicited and gathered by these devices. The final results were indicative of the superiority of ODCT over WDCT in eliciting more natural data.

Golato (2003) also worked in this area by investigating compliment speech acts. She contrasted naturally occurring data and DCTs, which were designed based on authentic interactions. After gathering and eliciting data through these measures, she asserted that elicited data did not match with natural talks. She found that DCTs could elicit metapragmatic data, and the Natural Methodology deems to allow researchers to study language organization.

Eslami-Rasekh and Mirzaei (2014) did an investigation in an Iranian non-western context on pragmatic measures, namely WDCT and ODCT. They employed a set of criteria for comparing and contrasting these measures such as response length, range and context of expression, formality level, spoken genres, and written genres. They found the superiority of ODCTs in eliciting longer, more elaborated, and more linguistic forms. They also found that when it comes to languages with stylistic variation, WDCTs cannot elicit appropriate data.

Mohammad Hosseinpur, Bagheri Nevisi, and Lowni (2021) also conducted an investigation in an institutional EFL context to manifest the variations among pragmatic measures and determine the efficacy of three pragmatic measures, namely WDCT, ODCT, and role-play in comparison with natural talks. Request speech acts were employed to gather and elicit data, and the data were compared in terms of Schauer's (2009) taxonomy. The ultimate findings made it obvious that none of the elicitation measures could approximate natural-like data.

Another wave of studies on pragmatic knowledge measures has focused on the manipulation of prompts in DCTs. Rose (1992) compared the inclusion and exclusion of hearer responses followed after prompts, and no significant difference was found in the elicited data. However, he concluded that this study did not delve into the effect of hearer response in "hearer-based interaction" (p. 60) languages, and this study suffers from being culturally biased.

Rose (1994) set out to compare DCTs. He studied the cultural appropriateness of this effort and found out that the level of the directness of

requests depends on the employed method. When it came to multiple-choice questionnaires, both the Japanese and Americans used more indirect request strategies. When DCTs were employed, direct request strategies were more popular among the Japanese.

In another study conducted by Billmyer and Varghese (2000), they targeted two groups of native and non-native speakers of English and investigated the modification to DCT prompts. They found internal modifications and request strategies were exempted from any change due to this modification in prompts. Nevertheless, enhancement led to longer and more elaborated requests.

Request Speech Act

Requests as subcomponents of the speech acts are the most common speech acts in interactions which are employed in this study. The requesters make requests in the hope of engaging requestees in action in tune with their goals, and this usually needs propitious request strategies (Ellis, 2008; Nassaji & Fotos, 2007; Norris & Ortega, 2000).

Different taxonomies have been proposed for the classification of requests and their modifiers. Schauer's (2009) taxonomy of the request speech act and its internal and external modification devices was picked up to compare the collected data through the Natural Methodology and both versions of WDCTs and ODCTs. Schauer (2009) offered three categories for request strategies including direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect requests. Direct requests, which are the most transparent form of requesting by carrying requestee's intention in the surface structure, are further subcategorized as imperatives, performatives, want statements, and locution derivables. In conventionally indirect requests, the requesters use some linguistics devices for intensifying or softening the degree of illocutionary forces. There are also some categories in conventionally indirect requests including suggestory formula, availability, prediction, permission, willingness and ability. Non-

conventionally indirect request strategy by having hints as its only subcategory is the last item in the taxonomy of Schauer (2009). It is the most indirect form of requesting, needing requestee's interpretation of the request because the requests are a little opaque in terms of getting the internal meaning and requestee's cooperation is in demand. Modification devices are usually used by requesters to either intensify or soften the illocutionary force of the requests. Internal and external modifiers with some subcomponents are two modification devices which can serve these purposes (Schauer, 2009).

Drawing upon the request speech act and its internal and external modification devices, the present study was an attempt to see whether manipulation of contextual information in WDCT and ODCT prompts would yield different results from non-modified WDCT and ODCT. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does non-modified WDCT elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies, and external and internal modification devices?
2. Does non-modified ODCT elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies, and external and internal modification devices?
3. Does modified WDCT elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies, and external and internal modification devices?
4. Does modified ODCT elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies, and external and internal modification devices?
5. What are the respondents' perceptions toward modified and non-modified DCTs?

METHOD

Participants

The study initially started with 67 male and female Iranian EFL learners who agreed to accompany the researchers in different phases of this study. The participants, whose ages ranged from 22 to 36, studied in an English institute and shared similar demographic features. The results of the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) showed that they were at an upper-intermediate level. The analysis of the participants' recorded interactions in the institutional classroom context revealed that 30 students out of 67 had produced at least four requests with the contextual features of low status, low imposition; low status, high imposition; high status, low imposition; and high status, high imposition. Therefore, these 30 participants including 16 females and 14 males met the required conditions to continue the study in phases two and three, that is, to answer modified and non-modified versions of ODCT and WDCT.

Non-modified and Modified DCTs

Two versions of DCTs were used in this study. Version 1 or non-modified DCTs were borrowed from Rose (1992) and featured contextual information of participants' roles, setting descriptions, and social status of participants in their prompts very briefly. There were four requests in the WDCT, and like the requests produced by the participants in their natural interactions in the classroom context, they shared the same contextual features of low status, low imposition; low status, high imposition; high status, low imposition; and high status, high imposition. Version 2 or modified DCTs were the same as DCTs in version 1 and shared the same contextual features of status and imposition, but they had been enhanced by Billmyer and Varghese (2000). The contextual information of prompts had been enhanced by the inclusion of some components such as describing physical context, the participants and their status, purpose, and goal. This enhancement was done

in the hope of providing a fuller picture of the context to respondents and looking forward to seeing if these modifications can stimulate any significant data elicitation pattern. The prompt enhancement can remove the burden of imagination from respondents as Schauer (2009) asserted that different imagination power of respondents might be the source of difference in elicitation patterns. This is what Hymes (1972) also cautioned against that without providing an adequate 'scene' respondents are left to themselves to invent an individually specific context for themselves.

Data Collection Procedure

The participants' natural interactions with their peers and teachers were recorded for 15 sessions which lasted one hour and a half in the institutional classroom context. The flow of the natural interactions of the participants was transcribed and analyzed based on interlocutors' social status and request imposition for analysis based on Schauer's (2009) request speech act taxonomy. Social status is the social power of interactants, and imposition is the heaviness of requests on the requestee. From among 67 participants, 30 students met the required condition to accompany the researchers in other phases of the study. They had managed to produce at least four requests with the contextual features of low status, low imposition; low status, high imposition; high status, low imposition; and high status, high imposition in natural interactions in the institutional classroom context.

In the second phase, a non-native English speaker with a good command of pronunciation and an intelligible accent was requested to accompany the researchers. He has studied English in English language institutes for 15 years, and his IELTS band score was 7.5. He was asked to read aloud the non-modified and modified prompts of the WDCT into a recorder, which shared the same contextual features of status and imposition as the respondents' requests in the natural interaction, and the recorded prompts were used as non-modified and modified ODCTs for data elicitation. During the 16th session, the respondents were invited to a quiet room one by one. The non-modified and modified scenarios were played,

and the respondents were asked to make their requests orally after listening to the scenarios. Their responses were recorded and transcribed manually for analysis.

After two weeks and in the third phase of the study, the same participants were presented first with the non-modified and then the modified WDCTs. They were invited to read the prompts and produce their requests in the blanks. The scenarios in this phase were the same as phase two and shared the same contextual features as the ODCT and natural data gathered in the participants' interactions in the classroom. Therefore, each individual participant produced 20 requests during the three phases of this study (4 requests in phase 1 in natural interactions, 8 requests in phase 2 through non-modified and modified ODCTs, and 8 requests through non-modified and modified WDCTs).

To obtain a full appreciation of the respondents' impressions regarding the non-modified and modified DCTs and the differences between them and natural interactions, the researchers of the study conducted an interview. To achieve this purpose, 10 respondents were randomly invited to express their opinions on the non-modified and modified DCTs and natural interactions immediately after the third phase of the study. The interviewees met the researchers one by one in a room, and their responses were recorded and transcribed to explore their opinions on the elicitation measures and natural interactions.

Data Analysis

Schauer's (2009) taxonomy of the request head act and its internal and external modifiers was employed to specify the instances of request strategies and internal and external modification devices in the transcribed data obtained through natural interactions, the non-modified and modified ODCTs as well as the data collected through the non-modified and modified WDCTs. Having specified the frequency of instances of the request head act and its internal and external modification devices in natural data and the non-modified and modified ODCTs and WDCTs, the researchers took

advantage of chi-square tests to provide answers to the research questions of the study.

RESULTS

In her taxonomy, Schauer (2009) divides a request into request head act and its optional internal and external modification devices. She further classifies a request head act into direct (Imperatives, performatives, want statements, and locution derivables), conventionally indirect (suggestory formula, availability, prediction, permission, willingness and ability), and non-conventionally indirect requests. Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage of request strategies in non-modified WDCT and ODCT, modified WDCT and ODCT, and natural interaction.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Request Strategies

		Request Strategies			Total
		Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-conventionally Indirect	
WDCT 1	Count	26	80	2	108
	% within test	24.1%	74.1%	1.9%	100.0%
ODCT 1	Count	22	82	4	108
	% within test	20.4%	75.9%	3.7%	100.0%
WDCT 2	Count	42	53	13	108
	% within test	38.9%	49.1%	12.0%	100.0%
ODCT 2	Count	50	43	15	108
	% within test	46.3%	39.8%	13.9%	100.0%
Natural	Count	48	38	22	108
	% within test	44.4%	35.2%	20.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	188	296	56	540
	% within test	34.8%	54.8%	10.4%	100.0%

WDCT1: non-modified WDCT; ODCT 1: non-modified ODCT; WDCT2: modified WDCT; ODCT2: modified ODCT

The information presented in the above table, employment of request strategies in different tests, is shown graphically in the following figure (Figure 1).

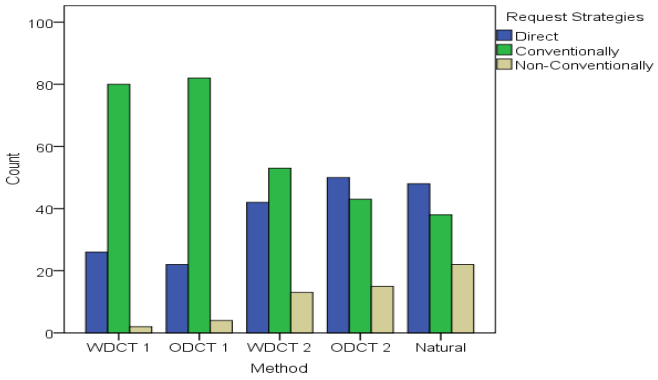

Figure 1: Employment of request strategies in different tests

Schauer (2009) classified external modifiers into alerters, preparators, grounders, disarmers, imposition minimizers, sweeteners, a promise of reward, small talks, appreciators, and considerators. Table 2 illustrates the frequency and percentage of the most common external modifiers used by the participants in this study.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for External Modification Devices

		External Modification Devices				Total
		Alerter	Grounder	Appreciator	Considerator	
WDCT 1	Count	72	82	65	6	225
	% within test	32.0%	36.4%	28.9%	2.7%	100.0%
ODCT 1	Count	75	85	58	4	222
	% within test	33.8%	38.3%	26.1%	1.8%	100.0%
WDCT 2	Count	46	77	26	21	170
	% within test	27.1%	45.3%	15.3%	12.4%	100.0%
ODCT 2	Count	26	63	15	26	130
	% within test	20.0%	48.5%	11.5%	20.0%	100.0%
Natural	Count	6	40	13	29	88
	% within test	6.8%	45.5%	14.8%	33.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	225	347	177	86	835
	% within test	26.9%	41.6%	21.2%	10.3%	100.0%

WDCT1: non-modified WDCT; ODCT 1: non-modified ODCT; WDCT2: modified WDCT; ODCT2: modified ODCT

Figure 2 below demonstrates the employment of external modification devices in non-modified WDCT and ODCT, modified WDCT and ODCT, and natural interaction.

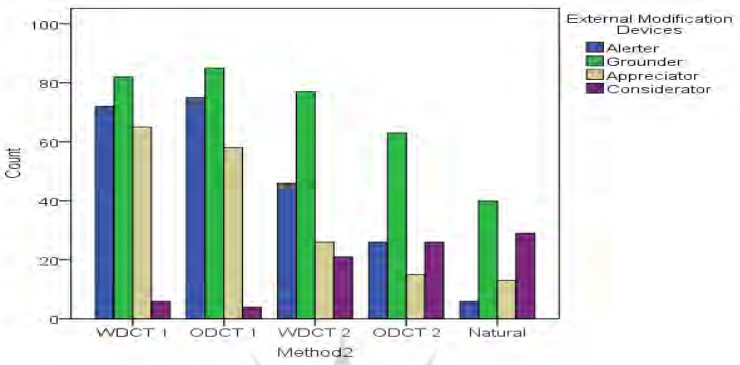

Figure 2: Employment of external modification devices in different tests

Schauer (2009) further subcategorized internal modifiers into lexical and syntactic modification devices. As Table 3 indicates, downtoner, politeness marker, and past tense modal, were the main lexical modifiers that were employed by the participants in the current study.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Internal Modification Devices

		Internal Modification Devices			Total
		Downtoner	Politeness Marker	Past Tense Modals	
WDCT 1	Count	66	38	29	133
	% within test	49.6%	28.6%	21.8%	100.0%
ODCT 1	Count	70	32	22	124
	% within test	56.5%	25.8%	17.7%	100.0%
WDCT 2	Count	65	61	26	152
	% within test	42.8%	40.1%	17.1%	100.0%
ODCT 2	Count	57	52	22	131
	% within test	43.5%	39.7%	16.8%	100.0%
Natural	Count	16	10	6	32
	% within test	50.0%	31.3%	18.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	274	193	105	572
	% within test	47.9%	33.7%	18.4%	100.0%

WDCT1: non-modified WDCT; ODCT 1: non-modified ODCT; WDCT2: modified WDCT; ODCT2: modified ODCT

Figure 3 demonstrates the employment of internal modification devices in different tests, non-modified WDCT and ODCT, modified WDCT and ODCT, and natural interaction.

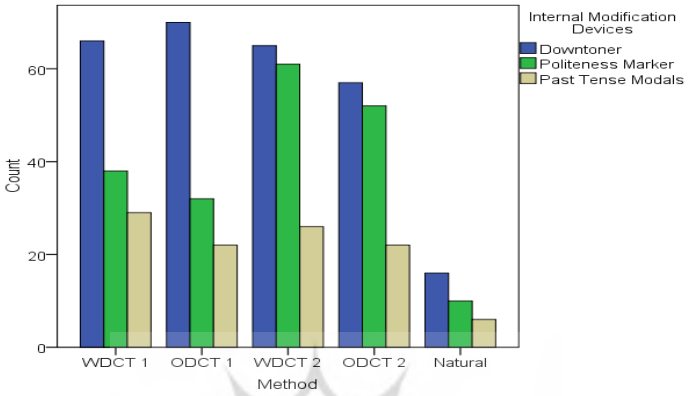

Figure 3: Employment of internal modification devices in different tests

Research Question One

This research question was an attempt to see whether non-modified WDCT elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies as well as external and internal modification devices. To this end, as Table 4 indicates, some chi-square tests were conducted.

Table 4: Chi-Square Tests for Request Strategies and External and Internal Modification Devices of Non-modified WDCT

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Request Strategies	Pearson Chi-Square	38.15	2	.00
	Likelihood Ratio	41.42	2	.00
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.04	1	.83
	N of Valid Cases	216		
External Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	74.36	3	.00
	Likelihood Ratio	72.83	3	.00
	Linear-by-Linear Association	36.13	1	.00
	N of Valid Cases	313		
Internal Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	.17	2	.91
	Likelihood Ratio	.18	2	.91
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.04	1	.82
	N of Valid Cases	165		

The results of the chi-square test reveal that non-modified WDCT does not elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies (x^2 (2) = 38.15, n = 216, p = .000, p< .05) and external modifiers (x^2 (3) = 74.36, n = 313, p = .000, p< .05). However, the findings show that non-modified WDCT elicits the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of internal modification devices (x^2 (2) = 18, n = 165, p = .91, p> .05).

Research Question Two

The researchers of the study investigated whether non-modified ODCT elicits the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of the request speech act strategies and its external and internal modification devices. Chi-square tests were run to provide an answer to this research question (Table 5).

Table 5: Chi-Square Tests for Request Strategies and External and Internal Modification Devices of Non-modified ODCT

		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Request Strategies	Pearson Chi-Square	38.25	2	.00
	Likelihood Ratio	40.12	2	.00
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.73	1	.39
	N of Valid Cases	216		
External Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	79.34	3	.00
	Likelihood Ratio	78.40	3	.00
	Linear-by-Linear Association	43.16	1	.00
	N of Valid Cases	310		
Internal Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	.485	2	.784
	Likelihood Ratio	.481	2	.786
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.237	1	.626
	N of Valid Cases	156		

Based on Table 5 above, the results of the chi-square tests show that non-modified ODCT does not elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies (x^2 (2) = 38.25, n = 216, p = .000, p< .05) and external modifiers (x^2 (2) = 79.34, n = 310, p = .000, p< .05). On the other hand, the results revealed that, in terms of internal

modifiers, non-modified ODCT elicits the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology (x^2 (2) = .48, n = 156, p = .78, p> .05).

Research Question Three

This research question explored whether modified WDCT elicits the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of the request speech act strategies and its external and internal modification devices.

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests for Request Strategies and External and Internal Modification Devices of modified WDCT

		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Request Strategies	Pearson Chi-Square	5.18	2	.075
	Likelihood Ratio	5.22	2	.073
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.08	1	.77
	N of Valid Cases	216		
External Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	24.49	3	.00
	Likelihood Ratio	25.98	3	.00
	Linear-by-Linear Association	21.13	1	.00
	N of Valid Cases	258		
Internal Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	.89	2	.63
	Likelihood Ratio	.91	2	.63
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.15	1	.69
	N of Valid Cases	184		

As Table 6 reveals, the results of the chi-square tests indicate that modified WDCT elicits the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies (x^2 (2) = 5.18, n = 216, p = .07, p> .05) and internal modifiers (x^2 (2) = .89, n = 184, p = .64, p> .05). However, it came to light that modified WDCT does not elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of external modification devices (x^2 (3) = 24.49, n = 258, p = .000, p< .05).

Research Question Four

The last quantitative research question intended to examine whether modified ODCT elicited the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology

in terms of request strategies, and internal and external modifiers. Some chi-square tests were performed to answer this research question (Table 7).

Table 7: Chi-Square Tests for Request Strategies and External and Internal Modification Devices of modified ODCT

		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Request Strategies	Pearson Chi-Square	1.67	2	.433
	Likelihood Ratio	1.68	2	.431
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.68	1	.40
	N of Valid Cases	216		
External Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	10.23	3	.015
	Likelihood Ratio	10.82	3	.013
	Linear-by-Linear Association	8.92	1	.003
	N of Valid Cases	218		
Internal Modification Devices	Pearson Chi-Square	.78	2	.67
	Likelihood Ratio	.79	2	.67
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.09	1	.75
	N of Valid Cases	163		

As depicted in Table 7, the results of the chi-square tests indicate that modified ODCT elicits the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of request strategies (x^2 (2) = 1.67, n = 216, p = .43, p> .05) and internal modifiers (x^2 (2) = .78, n = 163, p = .68, p> .05). However, the results revealed that modified ODCT does not elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology in terms of external modification devices (x^2 (3) = 10.23, n = 218, p = .01, p< .05).

Research Question Five

To investigate the deeper layers of respondents' thoughts on DCTs and natural interactions, 10 respondents, including five females and five males, were randomly selected to make a presence in unstructured interviews after the third phase of the study. Pseudonyms were used for the interviewees to preserve their anonymity. The following parts go through major motifs of the interviews.

1. Artificiality of the DCTs

The respondents mostly referred to the artificiality of both modified and non-modified DCTs in general and deemed this method of making requests unrealistic.

> *"What we do here is different from what we do in real requesting. Making request here is mainly like acting." (Payam)*
>
> *" I may say something different in a personal touch that I cannot on this test." (Nasim)*
>
> *"When it comes to paper and pencil tests, it is different from talking." (Mansour)*

2. Test-like nature of DCTs

Most of the respondents believed that both modified and non-modified DCTs are mainly like a test and are completely different from natural interactions.

> *"Taking a test is a different experience from communicating." (Mansour)*
>
> *"I had the stress of a test when I was answering the DCTs. Natural requesting is not like this." (Kimia)*
>
> *"In natural interaction, you simply make a request to do something, but here you should be careful to make an accurate request like a test." (Ali)*

3. Lack of scenario understanding

The respondents generally were dissatisfied with having difficulty in understanding the right purpose of the scenarios. They believed that they could not grasp the intention of the scenarios, which created confusion for respondents to do the tasks, and this was a serious problem in poor scenarios.

> *" I couldn't understand the purpose of this test." (Nassim/Non-modified scenario)*
>
> *"I was totally confused during answering the test and I did not*

know what to provide for this test." (Mona/Non-modified scenario)
"How come one can give an answer to the questions with these vague instructions." (Golrokh/Non-modified scenario)

However, this problem was not a recurring problem to be mentioned by the interviewees who took enriched scenarios. This is evident in the following quotes.

"The second group of tests (Modified scenarios) were much clearer than the first ones, and one could easily get what they wanted from us." (Elaheh)
"The first tests (Non-modified scenarios) were not standard, I think. How can you answer a test without understanding what it means?" (Reza)
"Getting the intention of the tests was not easy except for some parts." (Golrokh)

4. Modified scenarios and Increased Self-confidence

Some of the respondents stated that full appreciation of the scenarios culminated in increased self-confidence in modified scenarios. They believed that the enriched prompts in the modified DCTs had enhanced their self-confidence and helped them answer the questions without a shadow of a doubt.

"In the first tests (Non-modified scenarios) doubts surrounded me from the beginning and I did not know if I were on the right track. This really decreased my self-confidence. Due to the clarity of the second group (Modified scenarios), I answered them confidently." (Payam)
"The fact that you are not told exactly what to do would undermine your self-confidence." (Elaheh) (Referring to Non-modified scenarios)

DISCUSSION

Drawing upon Schauer's (2009) taxonomy of the request speech act and its internal and external modification devices, the present study was an attempt to investigate the effects of enhancing DCTs. To this end, the requests of the participants produced through the non-modified and modified WDCT and ODCT were compared with their requests produced in natural interaction. The results revealed that, in terms of request strategies, non-modified WDCT and ODCT do not elicit the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology. However, modified WDCT and ODCT approximated the Natural Methodology. As with the internal modifiers, it came to light that both non-modified and modified WDCT and ODCT elicited the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology. Finally, regarding the external modification devices, the results showed that neither non-modified nor modified WDCT and ODCT can approximate the Natural Methodology.

In line with the findings of other studies (e.g., Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2013; Golato, 2003; Mohammad Hosseinpur et al., 2021; Turnbull, 2001; Yuan, 2001), the results of this study also demonstrated that non-modified WDCT and ODCT could not approximate the natural data in terms of direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect request head act strategies. The data indicated that the participants were more inclined toward direct request strategies in natural interactions and preferred to employ more conventionally indirect request strategies in non-modified WDCT and ODCT situations. This might stem from the spontaneous nature of interactions in a natural context. It seems that, due to the velocity of the interactions in the natural context, the participants have heavily relied upon their unconscious and fully-automatized implicit knowledge to take care of the sociopragmatic requirements of the context to produce requests. On the other hand, the participants had enough time in WDCTs and ODCTs to consider the scenarios carefully. It seems that the lack of time pressure might have led the respondents to draw upon their conscious explicit knowledge to produce lengthier requests that represents

mainly their pragmalinguistic knowledge. This justification corroborates Bardovi-Harligh's (2013, p. 74) assertion that "most DCTs are given as untimed tasks, further increasing the likelihood that a respondent might draw on explicit knowledge".

In disagreement with Billmyer and Varghese's (2000) findings, the findings of the current study suggested that the modified WDCT and ODCT could approximate the natural data in terms of the request head act strategies. A serious drawback of elicitation techniques is their disability in providing acceptable context to draw respondents' answers (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2013). It seems that prompt manipulation and enrichment through clarifying and highlighting the key features of request making, such as status, imposition, and distance, can help trigger the respondents' unconscious and automatized sociopragmatic knowledge to produce more real-life request head act strategies.

In terms of internal modifiers, the results revealed that both the non-modified and modified WDCT and ODCT elicited the same data pattern as the Natural Methodology. It seems that the simplicity of internal modifier integration into learners' interlanguage pragmatic system may have allowed them to have access to downtoners, the politeness marker "please", and past tense modals in natural settings and elicitation techniques (Tajeddin & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2014). Apparently, these modifiers have turned into an active operating pragmatic knowledge system of respondents which could be collected consistently through various pragmatic measures. Therefore, from a different perspective, it could be claimed that they may have lost their comparability potential.

Another justification for the similarities between elicitation techniques (both modified and non-modified) and natural data in terms of internal modification devices could be ascribed to the transfer of the learners' L1 strategies to their L2s. In a culture and language like Persian, which is characterized as a culture with a negative politeness orientation, speakers employ downtoners, the politeness marker "please", and past tense modals frequently to show tact and avoid impositions.

Regardless of the similarity of the data pattern between the non-modified and modified DCTs and natural data, the findings indicated that the respondents employed considerably more internal modifiers in the non-modified and modified DCTs compared with the natural data. Contrary to Economidou-Kogetsidis' (2008) findings, the high use of the internal modifiers especially the politeness marker "please" on the part of learners supports previous research (e.g., Barron, 2003; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House, 1989; Safont-Jorda & Alcon-Soler, 2012). This might be due to the fact that the respondents, contrary to the natural interaction, had enough time to ponder upon the DCTs and the responses they intended to provide. It seems that this lack of time-pressure has led the respondents to draw heavily upon their conscious and explicit pragmalinguistic knowledge to produce requests.

The artificiality of the DCTs and their test-like nature, as stipulated in the respondents' interviews, might be another explanation for the overuse of internal modifiers in the non-modified and modified DCTs (Sasaki, 1998). It seems that, in the perception of formality, correctness, and politeness, the respondents were mainly preoccupied with pragmalinguistic correctness rather than sociopragmatic appropriateness when they were responding to the DCTs. Moreover, the lack of required pragmalinguistic knowledge or confidence in their own pragmalinguistic ability might have culminated in the overuse of the internal modification devices in the DCTs (Woodfield, 2012).

Regarding the external modification devices, the results showed that due to the enrichment of the prompts, the pattern of the elicited data through modified DCTs got closer to natural data, but this proximity was not statistically significant. Therefore, it could be claimed that neither non-modified nor modified WDCT and ODCT can approximate the Natural Methodology in terms of external modifiers. This discrepancy might stem from the dynamic and real-life nature of the interactions in natural data. In online interactions, due to time pressure and exigencies of the spontaneous interactions, the requesters have probably drawn upon their implicit,

unconscious, and fully- automatized sociopragmatic knowledge to abide by the illocutionary force of the request by taking advantage of what was at their online disposal. However, upon completion of the DCTs, due to the test-like nature of these tasks/tests (Sasaki, 1998) and the lack of time pressure, the respondents have become inclined toward their learned, conscious, and explicit pragmalinguistic knowledge to show their best.

The findings also revealed that external modifiers, especially grounders and alerters, were overused and over-elicited through the DCTs. This high frequency of grounders and alerters and the requesters' preference for these modifiers have already been documented in the literature (e.g., Achiba, 2003; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2003; Safont-Jorda & Alcon-Soler, 2012; Tajeddin & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2014). Edmondson and House (1991) refer to this as "waffling" phenomenon, as the reason for the verbosity of the responses of non-native speakers when they try to be more informative than native speakers. In addition, the respondents' L1 might have had a bearing on the verbosity of the requests and the high frequency of external modifiers in the DCTs as well. Iranian native speakers usually employ explanations and lengthy utterances, especially in formal contexts, to soften the force of their requests and show their deference to their interlocutors (Tajeddin & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2014). It seems that the formality and test-like nature of the DCTs has driven the respondents to take advantage of external modifiers such as grounders and appreciators to produce longer requests to show their respect and deference or make sure that they have produced accurate and appropriate requests in test-like DCTs (Woodfield, 2012).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

To obviate some of the drawbacks of the Natural Methodology as a time-consuming pragmatic measure, elicitation techniques such as ODCTs and WDCTs are usually used to ease the burden of data collection. However, this relative ease can threaten the credibility of data. The current study

intended to explore the effects of enriching DCTs to see whether through prompt enhancement DCTs can approximate the Natural Methodology.

The findings revealed that modified WDCT and ODCT approximated the Natural Methodology in terms of the request head act and internal modification devices. However, enhancing DCT prompts did not lead to the closeness of these elicitation techniques to the Natural Methodology in terms of external modifiers. Therefore, the present study can cautiously recommend and advocate a modified version of DCTs as enjoying the positive features of both non-modified DCTs, tapping pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic knowledge of respondents, and partly the Natural Methodology, eliciting the respondents' sociopragmatic knowledge (House, 2018; Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2011). However, this never implies that closeness to natural data should be an ideal for designing and selecting pragmatic data collection techniques. Rather, as Yuan (2001) put it, various factors such as research questions and researchers' objectives should determine the selection of a pragmatic data collection method.

The findings of this study might be limited to some essential characteristics of this study including the context of the study, the language proficiency level of participants, and the employed request speech act. This investigation was carried out in an institutional EFL context with upper-intermediate level participants, and the request speech act was selected to be gathered and collected through ILP measures. All of these features might have influenced the results of the study, and they might have undermined the generalizability of the present study. One more threat to the generalizability of this study can be the impact of the sequencing effect of various employed ILP measures during this study.

The enrichment of the scenarios by providing a full description of the situations led to the elicitation of different patterns of data in modified measures in comparison with non-modified measures. Therefore, for interested researchers in this area of investigation, one promising line of inquiry can be the enhancement of pragmatic elicitation measures by taking advantage of pictures and video clips to see if this way of enhancement

could lead to different patterns of data elicitation or not. Another possible avenue for delving into this realm can be the exploration of other modified versions of pragmatic measures such as role-plays.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Rasoul Mohammad Hosseinpur http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3718-5948
Abdolreza Lowni http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6402-8676
Maryam Lowni http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2901-2713

References

Achiba, M. (2003). *Learning to request in a second language*. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853596131

Alemi, M., & Rezanejad, A. (2014). Native and non-native English teachers' rating criteria and variation in the assessment of L2 pragmatic production: The speech act of compliment. *Issues in Language Teaching*, *3*(1), 65-88.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2018). Matching modality in L2 pragmatics research design. *System*, *75*, 13-22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.03.007

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2013). Developing L2 pragmatics. *Language Learning*, *63*(1), 68-86. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2012.00738.x

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, B. (2005). Institutional discourse and interlanguage pragmatics research. In K. Bardovi-Harlig & B. Hartford (Eds.), Interlanguage pragmatics: *exploring institutional talk* (pp. *7-36). Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum.* https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410613776

Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.108

Billmyer, K., & Varghese, M., (2000). Investigating instrument-based pragmatic variability: Effects on enhancing discourse completion tests. *Applied Linguistics* ,*21*(4), 517-552. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/21.4.517

Brown, J. D. (2001). Pragmatics test: Different purposes, different tests. In K.

Rose & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Pragmatics in language teaching* (pp. 301-325). Cambridge: Cambridge university press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524797.020

Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2008). Internal and external mitigation in interlanguage request production: The case of Greek learners of English. *Journal of Politeness Research, 4(1),* 111-138. https://doi.org/ 10.1515/PR.2008.005

Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2013). Strategies, modification and perspective in native speakers' requests: A comparison of WDCT and naturally occurring requests. *Journal of Pragmatics, 53,* 21-38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.03.014

Edmondson, W., & J. House. (1991). Do learners talk too much? The waffle phenomenon in interlanguage pragmatics. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood-Smith, & M. Swain (Eds.). *foreign/second language pedagogy research,* (pp. 273-286). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Ellis, R. (2008). *The study of second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eslami-Rasekh, Z., & Mirzaei, A. (2014). Speech act data collection in a non-western context: Oral and written DCTs in the Persian language. *Iranian Journal of Language Testing, 4*(1), 137-154.

Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (1989). Internal and external modification in interlanguage request realization. In Sh. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 221-247). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Golato, A. (2003). Studying compliment responses: A comparison of DCTs and recordings of naturally occurring talk. *Applied Linguistics, 24*(1), 90-121. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/24.1.90

Grabowski, K.C. (2008). Investigating the construct validity of a performance test designed to measure grammatical and pragmatic knowledge. *Spaan Fellow Working Papers in Foreign Language Assessment, 6,* 131-179.

House, J. (1989). Politeness in English and German: The functions of "please" and "bitte". In Sh. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 96-119). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

House, J. (2018). Authentic vs. elicited data and qualitative vs. quantitative research methods in pragmatics: Overcoming two non-fruitful dichotomies.

System, *75*, 4-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.03.014

Hymes, D. (1972). Models of the interactions of language and social life. In J. J. Gumperz, & D. Hymes (Eds.). *Directions in Sociolinguistics: Ethnography of communication* (pp. 37-71).New York: Holt, Reinhart & Winston.

Kobayashi, H., & Rinnert, C. (2003). Coping with high imposition requests: High vs. low proficiency EFL students in Japan. In A. Martinez-Flor, E. Uso-Juan, & A. Fernandez-Guerra (Eds.), *Pragmatic competence and foreign language teaching* (pp. 161-184). Castello:Universitat Jaume 1.

Labben, A. (2016). Reconsidering the development of the discourse completion test in interlanguage pragmatics. *Pragmatics, 26*(1), 69-91. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.26.1.04lab

Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. University of Philadelphia.

Malmir, A. (2020). The effect of interactionist vs. interventionist models of dynamic assessment on L2 learners' pragmatic comprehension, accuracy and speed. *Issues in Language Teaching, 9*(1), 279-320. http://dx.doi.org/10.22054/ilt.2020.53398.515

Manes, J., & Wolfson, N. (1981). The compliment formula. In F. Coulmas (Eds.), *Conversational routine: Explorations in standardized communication situations and prepatterned speech* (pp. 11-132). The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110809145.115

Martínez-Flor, A., & Usó-Juan, E. (2011). Research methodologies in pragmatics: Eliciting refusals to requests. *ELIA*, *11*, 47-87.

McNamara, T. F., & Roever. C. (2006). *Language testing: The social dimension*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Mohammad Hosseinpur, R., & Bagheri Nevisi, R. (2020). The impact of pragmatic consciousness-raising tasks on EFL learners' speech act strategy use. *Pragmatics and Society, 11*(4), 572-593. https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.16066.hos

Mohammad Hosseinpur, R., Bagheri Nevisi, R., & Lowni, A. (2021). A tale of four measures of pragmatic knowledge in an EFL institutional context. *Pragmatics,31*(1), 114-143. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.18052.moh

Nassaji, H., & Fotos, S. (2007). Issues in form-focused instruction and teacher education. In S. Fotos & H. Nassaji (Eds.), *Form-focused instruction and teacher education: Studies in honor of Rod Ellis* (pp. 7-15). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Norris, J., & Ortega, L. (2000). Effectiveness of L2 instruction: A research synthesis and quantitative meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, *50*(3), 417-528. https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00136

Rose, K. (1992). Speech act research and written questionnaires: The effects of hearer response. *Journal of Pragmatics,17*(3), 49-62. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(92)90028-A

Rose, K. R. (1994). On the validity of discourse completion tests in non-Western contexts. *Applied Linguistics*, *15*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/15.1.1

Safont-Jorda, M. P., & Alcon-Soler, E. (2012). Teachability of request act peripheral modification devices in third language learning contexts. In M. Economidou-Kogetsidis & H. Woodfield (Eds.), *Interlanguage request modification* (pp. 275-313). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.217.09saf

Sasaki, M. (1998). Investigating EFL students' production of speech acts: A comparison of production questionnaires and role plays. *Journal of Pragmatics, 30(4),* 457-484. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(98)00013-7

Schauer, G. A. (2009). *Interlanguage pragmatic development: The study abroad context.* London, UK: Continuum.

Taguchi, N. (2018). Data collection and analysis in developmental L2 pragmatics research: Discourse completion test, role play, and naturalistic recording. In A. Gudmestad & A. Edmonds (Eds.), *Critical reflections on data in second language acquisition*, (pp. 7-32). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.51.02tag

Tajeddin, Z., & Mohammad Hosseinpur, R. (2014). The role of consciousness-raising tasks on EFL learners' microgenetic development of request pragmatic knowledge. *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 17*(1), 147-187.

Turnbull, W. (2001). An appraisal of pragmatic elicitation techniques for the social psychological study of talk: The case of request refusals. *Pragmatics, 11*(1), 31-61. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.11.1.03tur

Woodfield, H. (2012). I think maybe I want to lend the notes from you: Development of request modification in graduate learners. In M. Economidou- Kogetsidis & H. Woodfield (Eds.), *Interlanguage request modification* (pp. 9-49). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.

https://doi.org/10.1075/pbns.217.02woo

Yuan, Y. (2001). An inquiry into empirical pragmatics data gathering methods: Written DCTs, oral DCTs, and natural conversations. *Journal of Pragmatics, 33*(2), 271-292. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(00)00031-X

Appendix A

Scenarios for the Non-modified DCTs

1. You are trying to study in your room and hear loud music coming from another student's room down the hall. You don't know the student, but you decide to ask him/her to turn the music down.
What would you say?

2. You missed one of your classes and need to borrow a friend's note. In two weeks, you both have the final exam for your class.
What would you say?

3. You need a ride home from school. You notice an someone who lives down the street from you is also at school, but you haven't spoken to this person before. You think she might have a car.
What would you say?

4. Your term paper is due, but you haven't finished it yet. You want to ask the professor for an extension.
What would you say?

Appendix B

Scenarios for the Modified DCTs

1. It is 10:30 P.M. on a Wednesday night and you have a paper due the next day. You are trying to finish the paper and you can't concentrate because you hear loud music coming from another student's room down the hall. You decide to ask her to turn the music down. The music has been on at this volume for half an hour. You have occasionally seen the student, Lucy Row, in the same dorm during the past six months. She is a student like you, but you have never spoken to her. You have heard other people in the dorm complain about the volume of her music on several

occasions, although you have never encountered this problem before because you usually study in the library. However, today the library closed early. You are only half way through, and you know that the professor for this class is very strict and does not give extensions.

What would you say?

2. You are at the end of a history class and you are sitting next to Tom Yates. You missed last week's class and need to borrow his notes. He has been in the same program as you for one year, and you see him socially about once a month in a group. You will also be taking classes together in the future. He is a good note taker and one of the best students in the class. You have borrowed his notes twice before for the same class and the last time you borrowed them, he was reluctant to give them up. In two weeks, you both have the final exam for your class.

What would you say?

3.It's 5:30 p.m., your last class has just finished and you need a ride home. You realize that a fellow classmate who was supposed to give you a ride is not in class today. You have a lot of books with you tonight, the snow has made walking difficult, and you need a ride home from school. As you come out of class, you see Alice Thomas, an assistant professor in the department who teaches a class that ends at the same time as yours. She lives on the same street as you, and she is standing talking to some other students. She is smiling and laughing. You have never spoken to her before, but you have seen her on occasion in the department in the last few months and have both nodded to each other once or twice in the neighborhood. You know that she has a car and you once saw her give a lift to one of the students.

What would you say?

4. Your term paper is due for a course in your major, but you haven't finished it yet. You want to ask the professor for an extension. You had a lot of difficulty collecting data for the paper, but you think you finally have enough and the paper will be really good if you could have another week to put it together. Your professor is Dr. Robert Smith, senior member of the department and possibly your thesis advisor, if things go as you hope they will. You have done well in this course up to now, and he is aware of the problem with data collection. You took one course with Dr. Smith at the beginning of your studies a year and a half ago and got

an A, but you haven't had much opportunity to interact with him since then. You have an appointment with Dr. Smith a few days before the paper is due. You know he rarely gives extensions on term papers because he is usually very busy, and immediately after this semester is over, he will leave the campus to do field work. However, you think you might have a chance because the paper is on a topic he is interested in. You are in his office now.

What would you say?