MAKING REQUESTS: HOW CANTONESE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH DEMONSTRATE POLI TENESS

HO CHUNG KWONG, VICTOR
STUDENT NO. 01404903

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore the request realization patterns and politeness behaviour of Cantonese speakers of English when they make requests in Cantonese and English. The request realization patterns reveal the way Cantonese speakers phrase their requests – both the request head acts and their peripheral elements. The request strategies employed in the head acts determine the directness (and thus politeness) of the requests; while the peripheral elements determine the politeness. Politeness of the requests is firstly analysed from the Western perspective followed by the Chinese perspective. It aims to show first of all that Cantonese speakers of English appear to sound more polite while making requests using English than they are while using Cantonese from the Western perspective. Then, I will try to argue that they, while using Cantonese in making requests, are at least, actually as polite as they are while using English when viewed from the Chinese perspective.
摘要

這個研究嘗試探索能操廣東話和英文的人在以廣東話和英文作要求時的模式和禮貌程度。要求的模式會顯示操廣東話的人怎樣作出要求—要求主體和其周邊成份。應用於要求主體內的要求策略決定要求的直接程度（及禮貌）；而周邊成份就決定禮貌程度。要求的禮貌程度會首先從西方觀點分析，之後從中國的觀點再作分析。分析此舉旨在首先說明，從西方觀點看，能操廣東話和英文的人在以英文作要求時表面上較以廣東話作要求時有禮貌。然後，我會嘗試辯說當從中國的觀點看時，他們在以廣東話作要求時，是起碼跟以英文作要求時有相同的禮貌程度的。
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