

# Directness & Gender

*A corpus analysis of aDCT Request scenarios*

# Directness and Gender

Hypothesis:

Females speakers favor non-conventionally indirect strategies in making requests

# Directness background

- direct speech acts - those where the speaker directly says what they mean
- indirect speech acts - the speaker's intended meaning is something other than that which they have stated.

B&L's 3 pylons of politeness, setting, medium, & type of request

# Directness background

- (1) Direct Strategies - speaker's meaning corresponds succinctly to the utterance's meaning
- (2) Conventionally Indirect Strategies - conventional language use aides the interpretation of the utterance
- (3) Non-Conventionally Indirect Strategies (I) - meaning depends heavily on the context of the utterance

# Politeness?

Some previous research connects Directness and Politeness, Blum-Kulka (1987) & Felix-Brasdefer (2005):

- Conventional Indirectness is the most common request form in situations involving power or social distance differences.
- **Non-conventionally Indirect strategies have no relation to politeness**

# The Data

*NS and NNS*

# D, CI, I - Openings

NNS-P12: PromptB - Student-Instructor “Group Work” (+SD, +P)

**(line 2) P:** ...I [ ] fee:l [1] kind of [1] unfai:r to getting [ ] gra:de for  
other student not for Bob... so I need some advice from you:?  
[breath] and also [ ] I don't wanna get unfair gra:de [ ] be hone:st?

...[dialogue]...



Non-Conventional I

**(line 12) P:** you know [1] just treating un [ ] equally: will be: if you  
can do tha::t? [ ] graded individual wor::::k?



Conventional I

# NS Directness

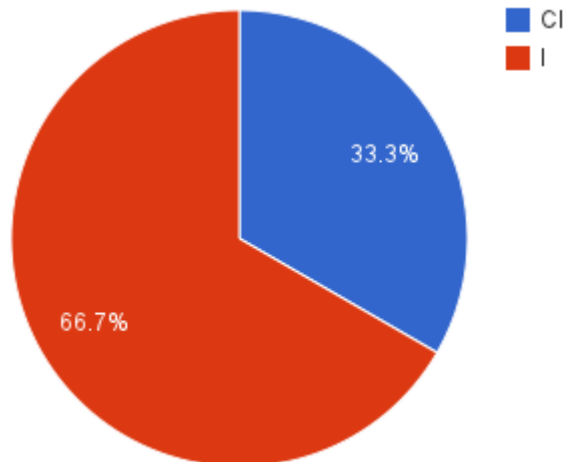
	Gender	Age	Profic	PromptA +SD +P	PromptB +SD +P	PromptC -SD +P	PromptD -SD -P
P101	M	40	NS	I	CI	CI	I
P102	M	50	NS	I	I	CI	I
P105	M	20	NS	I	CI	D	
P103	F	20	NS	I	I	CI	I
P104	F	20	NS	I	CI	I	
P106	F	?	NS	I	I	CI	
P107	?	?	NS	I	I	CI	I



	Gender	Age	Proficiency	PromptA +SD +P	PromptB +SD +P	PromptC -SD +P	PromptD -SD -P
P1	M	20	advanced	D	D	D	
P2	M	30	near-native	I	I	CI	
P9	M	30	med-high	I	I	I	CI
P10	M	20	high	CI	CI	CI	CI
P11	M	20	advanced	I	I	I	CI
P13	M	30	advanced	D	D	D	I
P3	F	20	advanced	CI	CI	CI	D
P4	F	30	Completed BA	CI	CI	CI	
P5	F	20	Finishing BA	I	I	CI	I
P6	F	20	advanced	I	CI	CI	I
P7	F	20	intermediate	CI	CI	CI	CI
P8	F	20	medium-high	I	I	I	CI
P12	F	20		I?	I	CI	I
P14	F	20	high	I	I	CI	I

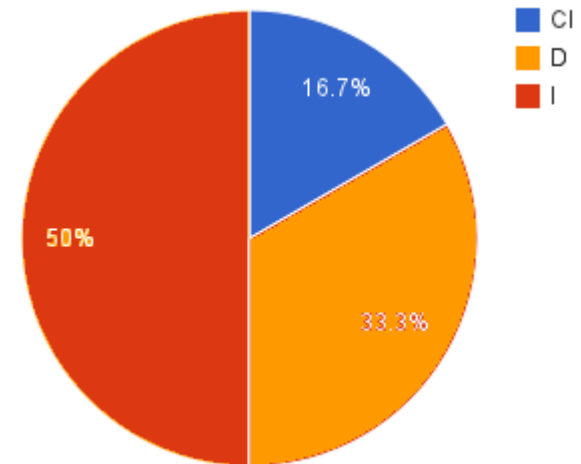
# Analysis - Male Speakers

NS

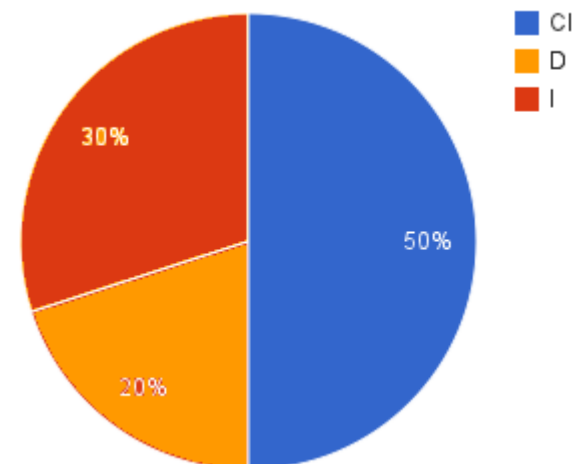
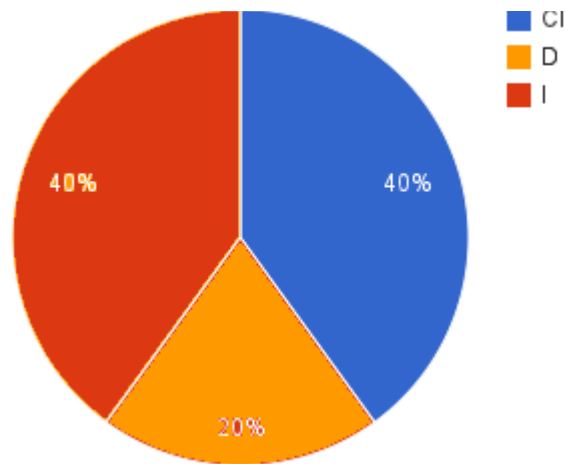


[+SD]

NNS

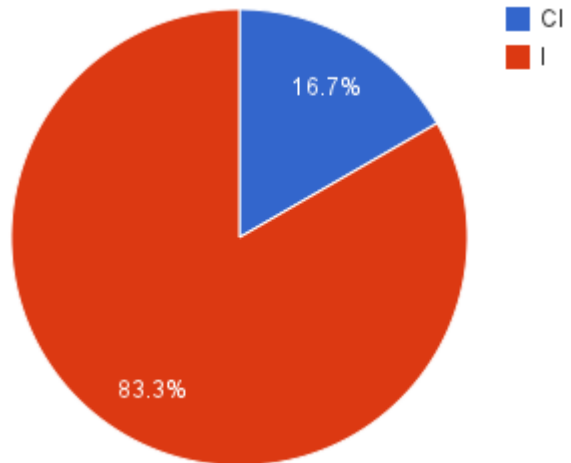


[-SD]



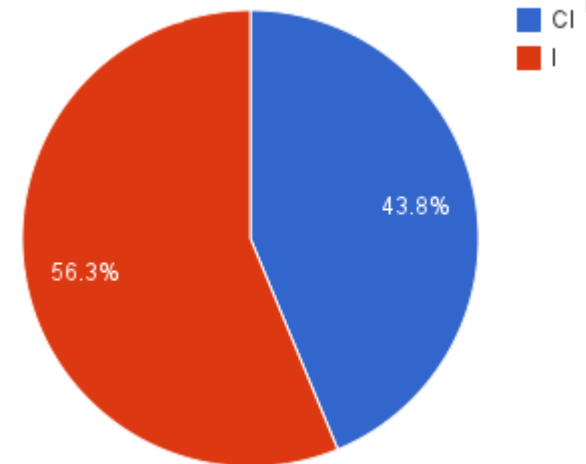
# Analysis - Female Speakers

NS

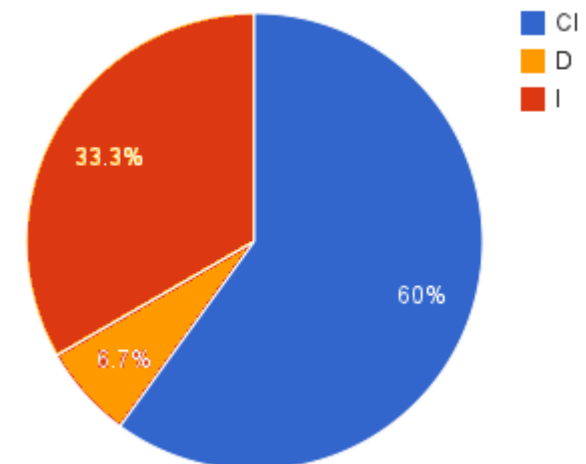
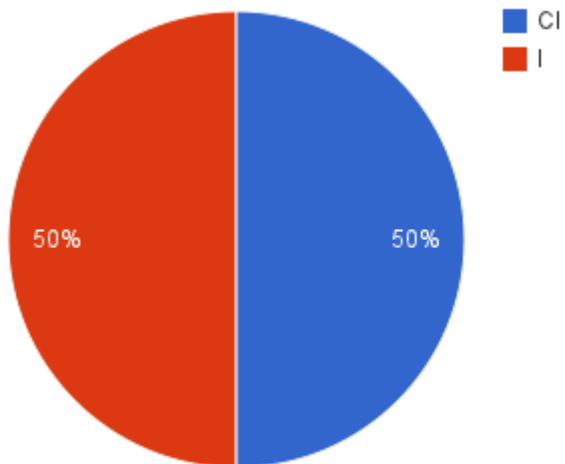


[+SD]

NNS

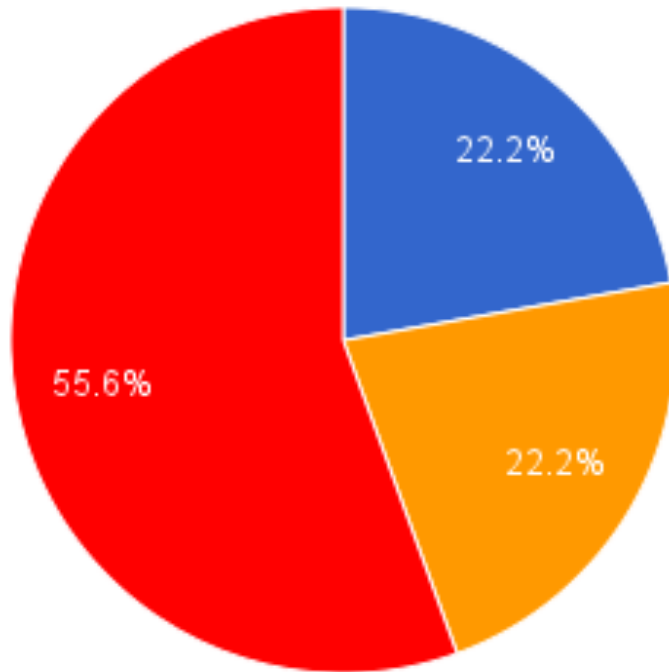


[-SD]



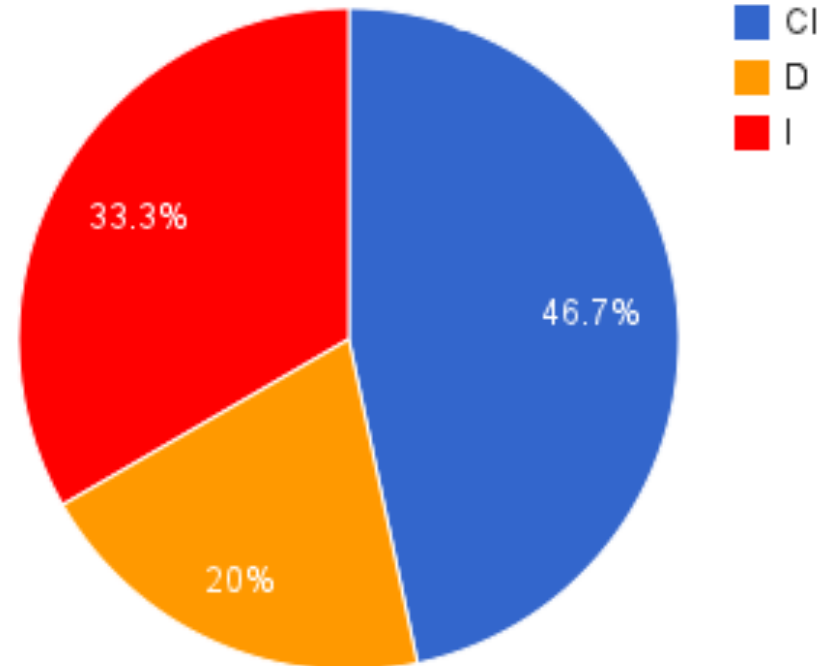
# Analysis - Total Male Speakers

[+SD]



Favor **Non-Conventional Indirect**

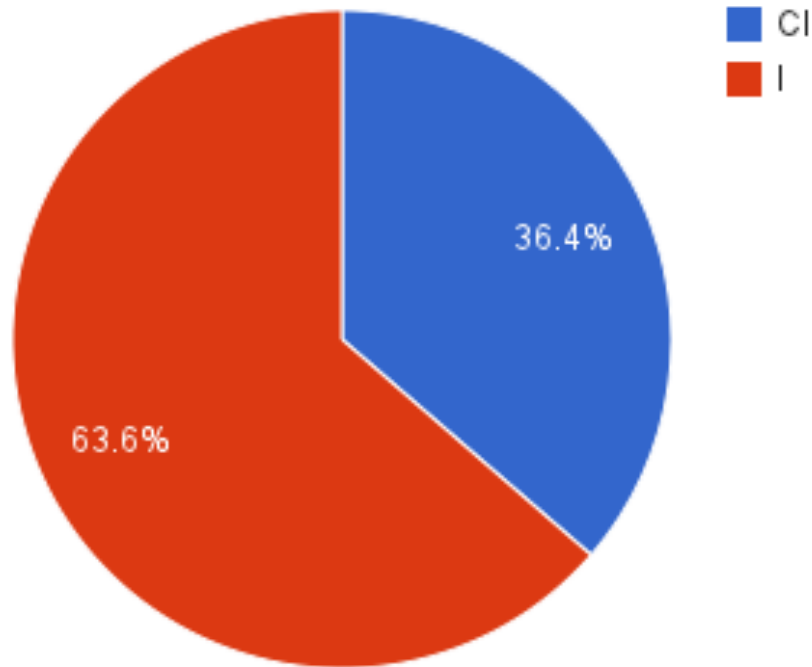
[-SD]



Favor **Conventional Indirect**

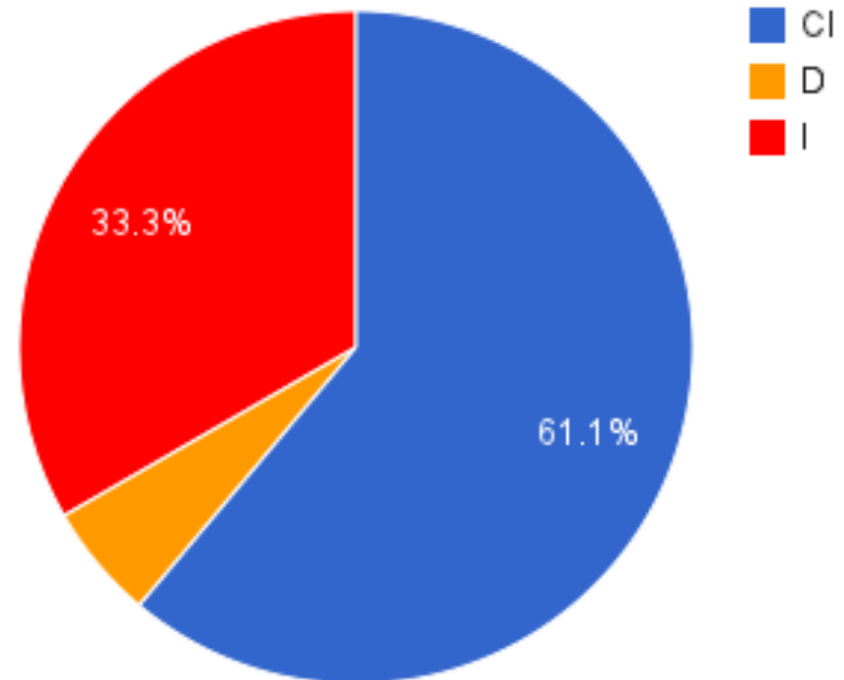
# Analysis - Total Female Speakers

[+SD]



Favor **Non-Conventional Indirect**

[-SD]



Favor **Conventional Indirect**

# Analysis - Summary

- All groups favor indirect (conventionally and non-conventionally) strategies
- In -SD situations, both groups favor CI, with equal probability of Non-Conventional Indirect
- **Female speakers have a higher probability (+4%) of using Non-Conventionally Indirect strategies, *especially* in situations that exhibit +SD**

# Fin

## Questions?

### References

- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & G. Kasper. (1989). Investigating cross-cultural pragmatics: An introductory overview. In Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 1-34). Norwood, NJ: Ablex, p. 1-34.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11, p. 131-146.
- Felix-Brasdefer, J. (2005). Indirectness and politeness in Mexican requests. *Selected proceedings of the 7th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, ed. David Eddington. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, p. 66-78.