

# MANAGING CRITICISMS IN US-BASED AND TAIWAN-BASED REALITY TALENT CONTESTS: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON

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## Abstract

This research studied how English and Chinese speakers encode their criticisms in the media discourse, aiming to explore the correlation between the speakers' applications of pragmalinguistic strategies and their sociocultural orientations. Criticisms analyzed in the present study were collected from evaluative communications elicited from the US-based talent competition *Project Runway* and the Taiwan-based talent competition *Super Designer*. The current analysis of the face attack act referred to Brown and Levinson's politeness framework and face notion. The results showed different frequencies of criticizing strategies and redressive devices in the English and Chinese sub-corpora. In addition, the findings also manifested some cross-language variations in pragmalinguistic representation of the same criticizing strategy. The discrepancies were discussed from the perspective of context orientation of the American and Taiwanese societies, evidencing the strong linkage between the speakers' communication patterns and the cultural norms of their social networks.

**Keywords:** Media discourse; Criticism; English-Chinese comparison; Cultural context.

## 1. Introduction

Speech act, also known as linguistic act or linguistic behavior, is the basic unit that speakers employ to perform verbal actions during communications, such as complimenting, requesting, warning, etc. In the literature, a number of scholars have maintained that speech act is a universal logic of communication and all linguistic acts in human languages are operated by a set of universal principles (Austin 1962; Searle 1979). However, some other researchers have argued against such contention and claimed that people's communications are not only governed by the linguistic systems but also involve operations of various non-linguistic mechanisms that are associated with the cultural orientation of their speech communities. On this account, speakers of different sociocultural backgrounds may have different linguistic choices while performing the same linguistic act (Chen et al. 2011; Itakura & Tsui 2011; Li 2008). Very frequently, the linguistic manifestations of a speech act in a particular language are reflections of the sociocultural conventions of that particular speech community

(Bardovi-Harlig & Griffin 2005). For example, Salager-Meyer and Alcaraz Ariza (2004) in their cross-linguistic analysis of criticisms in book reviews reported that French reviewers prefer to make evident their authority and expertise in their critical remarks, Spanish reviewers tend to express their negative commentaries in a more sarcastic manner, while English reviewers incline to attribute their criticisms as their personal opinions. Obviously, the pragmatic strategies for performing the same linguistic act are culturally bound rather than cross-linguistically universal. In view of the interwoven relationship between language and culture, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) strongly emphasized the need to conduct speech act investigations with empirical studies based on naturally-occurring languages produced by native speakers in explicitly defined situational contexts.

Within the realm of empirical studies in pragmatics, a wealth of researches has evidenced that people's illocutionary choices are not simply constrained by their linguistic knowledge but are regulated by a set of sociocultural pragmalinguistic principles. A bulk of comparative studies has been done to illustrate the linkage between language and culture, specifically based on English and Chinese. In Yu's (2005) investigation into the speech act of compliment, it was reported that American speakers often pay their compliments with explicit expressions, whereas Chinese speakers tend to encode their remarks without overt positive semantic carrier. The differences between Chinese and American styles of communication have also been noticed in people's responses to compliments. While there is a tendency that Americans often directly accept others' praises by expressing their grateful emotions, Chinese speakers often evade or reject other's positive evaluations in order to demonstrate their modesty (Shih 1988; Yu 2005). In Park and Guan's (2009) study, how Americans and Chinese apologize were examined and compared. Results showed that compared with Chinese participants, American informants use more explicit strategies to express their apologies, no matter whether they are familiar with their addressees or not. In addition to the speech acts reviewed above, the pragmatic rules for encoding positive face-threatening linguistic behaviors have also been proved to be culturally sensitive. Liang and Han (2005) conducted a cross-linguistic research, focusing particularly on English and Chinese speakers' rhetorical approaches to disagreement. Their results indicated that while expressing disagreements to addressees with greater social power, Chinese participants use more linguistic politeness mechanisms, compared with their English-speaking counterparts. In her investigation into the face attack acts of requesting and refusing, Li (2008) reported that both American and Chinese participants use more direct strategies than indirect strategies. Yet, Chinese informants prefer the indirect strategy of hint but the American participants incline to utilize conventionalized indirect strategies to encode the same communication intent.

From the investigations reviewed above, it is evident that Chinese and English speakers hold different communicative styles while performing various linguistic acts. However, it is not surprising that people who speak different languages have different illocutionary choices, since their linguistic performances are greatly influenced by the sociocultural norms and values of their communities. Since Chinese culture is higher-context oriented, speakers incline to create and maintain a harmonious relationship with their interlocutors. Therefore, speakers generally do not encode their communications with specific linguistic codes and prefer indirect languages in most

situational contexts. On the contrary, since American culture is lower-context oriented, speakers tend to look for precise and brief linguistic representations of facts. On this account, people often convey their intentions with explicit unambiguous expressions, which are widely believed as the foundation for effective and successful communications. Due to the different cultural orientations of different speech communities, to fully understand one's motivation of articulation, we not only have to know the decontextualized knowledge of speech intonation, phonology, syntax, and semantics but we also need to recognize the implications embedded in the context of every speech discourse (Hall 1976, 1983; Hall & Hall 1990; Hofstede 1980, 1983, 1997, 2001).

While the positive relationship between people's communication patterns and their cultural identities has been widely acknowledged in a wealth of literature on pragmatics, there is no empirical research set out to explore how Chinese and English speakers pragmalinguistically approach to criticism in naturally-occurring communications. To supplement the knowledge gap, this study illuminates how American and Taiwanese judges pragmalinguistically encode their criticisms while doing evaluations in talent contests on TV. With the linguistic variations observed in this research, we would be able to go beyond the surface structure of the language to explicate how and why people's cultural orientations have impacts on their rhetorical management of criticisms, especially in the media discourse.

## **2. Theoretical background**

Sometimes, people's utterances are direct representations of their communication intents. Yet, more frequently, speakers' illocutionary acts do not explicitly correspond to their illocutionary force, especially when they are performing linguistic behaviors that are highly offensive or potentially destructive to their interlocutors' face, such as warning, complaining, criticizing, etc. Therefore, there is no consistent one-to-one correspondence between one's linguistic form and function. In the literature, utterances with inconsistent propositional and inferred contents are referred to as indirect speeches (Brown & Levinson 1987; Leech 1983; Searle 1975). Very often, the major incentive for people to diverge from direct utterances is to maintain their interlocutors' face (Man 2006). In Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, the notion of face was classified into positive face and negative face, where the former represents people's need to be admired and to maintain a positive social image, while the latter indicates people's desire to be respected and free from imposition. In line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) perspective, the speech act of criticism jeopardizes the positive face of its recipient because it deprives their need to be appreciated. Due to the face-threatening nature of criticisms, speakers should estimate the degree of the adverse consequence incurred by their utterances before selecting the linguistic expressions to encode their communicative force. In the literature, it has been well acknowledged that the imposition of a face attack act is mainly determined by the social distance between interlocutors, the relative power of the speaker, and the weight of the destructive effect in the particular situational context where the speech act is performed (Brown & Levinson 1987). The significance of the three variables, however, varies in different sociocultural

contexts, thereby resulting in the various linguistic representations of the same linguistic behavior in different speech communities (Hiraga & Turner 1996; Sanchez-Burks et al. 2003; Wang 2010; Zhu 2007).

A very small number of earlier investigations based on data collected from discourse completion tasks have explored the similarities and differences between Chinese and English speakers' linguistic representations of criticism in different circumstances. Wu and Fan (2004) examined Chinese and American college students' use of pragmatic strategies for encoding criticism. Results indicated that the pragmatic strategies that their participants employed are almost identical; however, American informants prefer to encode their criticisms as folk wisdoms, while Chinese informants utilize hint most frequently. The authors later concluded that American speakers are more direct than their Chinese counterparts while expressing negative commentaries. Similar argumentations were noted in Wang's (2010) investigation. It was shown that Chinese speakers incline to frame their criticisms with indirect strategies, whereas English speakers often express their negative commentaries in a relatively more direct manner. Such discrepancy was attributed to that the Chinese society is community-centered and emphasizes group harmony, while the American society is individual-centered and accentuates social equality. In another study, Zhu and Zhou (2004) examined how Chinese native speakers and Chinese learners (including two Americans, one Australian, two Frenchmen, and one Japanese) encoded Chinese criticisms in various discourses. Findings showed that the Chinese and Japanese participants' communicative styles are rather similar, which, however, are very different from the communication patterns of the participants from the West. Specifically, the easterners employ more indirect strategies and utilize more mitigating devices to soften their utterances, whereas the westerners tend to express their negative opinions explicitly and utilize fewer devices to moderate their languages. The discrepancies between the communication patterns of the participants from the East and those from the West were argued to stem from their different cultural backgrounds. Instead of exploring the pragmatics of criticisms, Wu (2003) analyzed how American and Chinese speakers use downgraders and upgraders while criticizing addressees of various degrees of social power and distance. Results showed that the number of downgraders utilized by the Chinese informants is in proportion with the relative social power of their addressees; however, the frequency of upgraders in the Chinese criticisms decreases when the social distance between the interlocutors increases. The American participants' application of downgraders and upgraders, nevertheless, is not positively correlated to the social power and distance between interlocutors, indicating that these social variables do not critically govern the American speakers' pragmalinguistic approach to negative appraisals.

Building on the earlier investigations, this research aims to explore the differences in American and Chinese criticizing illocutionary acts for the reasons below. First, criticism is a highly complicated speech act. Unlike many other linguistic behaviors, such as paying compliments, giving apologies, doing invitations etc., there is no formulaic expression for encoding criticisms. Most criticisms draw on a large number of lexical items and a wide range of syntactic patterns (Holmes 1995; Zhu & Zhou 2004). Despite its lexical complexity and grammatical variability, the speech act of criticism, however, remains relatively under-investigated in the realm of empirical studies (Ellis

1994; Nguyen 2005). Furthermore, although a couple of studies have compared how Chinese and English speakers pragmatically frame their criticizing illocutions, all of the data analyzed in the prior studies were obtained from discourse completion tests, which, however, are not without any limitation. To implement discourse completion tests for data collection, researchers should place participants into different roles that they may not be familiar with. It is, therefore, very likely that the utterances collected from the simulated discourses are unnatural speech productions (Yuan 2001). Moreover, the face-threatening effect of criticisms could be more destructive when criticisms are delivered to their recipients in face-to-face communications than in non-face-to-face written discourses (Mallen et al. 2003). Therefore, the strategies that people use to frame their negative commentaries in face-to-face speech context may be different from those they use in written communications. Thus, the present investigation into criticisms based on speeches collected from talent contests on TV better captures the characteristics of interpersonal communications in real-life situations.

### **3. The study**

#### **3.1. Source of data**

This investigation set out to explore if American and Taiwanese speakers' cultural backgrounds have any impact on their pragmatics of criticisms. To conduct this comparative analysis, a bilingual database was built. To increase the comparability of the English and Chinese data, criticisms in the US-based talent show *Project Runway* and the Taiwan-based talent show *Super Designer* were targeted for analysis. These reality contests are characterized as tailoring competitions, both of which contain a judges' panel to evaluate the contestants' performances and/or works. In each episode of the shows, every participant must demonstrate their tailoring skills within an allotted time and design a garment based on a designated topic. Subsequently, the judges are invited to evaluate the outcomes and express their opinions, either positive or negative, to the contest participants in a face-to-face manner. The current research focused specifically on the judges' selections of pragmatic strategies and redressive devices while encoding their negative remarks. The present bilingual database involves all competitions from *Project Runway* and *Super Designer* which were aired in 2010, specifically including 14 episodes of competitions from *Project Runway* and 19 episodes of competitions from *Super Designer*. The present study made no attempt to manipulate the judges and the participants' social class, educational backgrounds, race, gender and/or age.

#### **3.2. Data elicitation**

To compare the pragmatics of English and Chinese criticisms, evaluative communications in the collected tailoring competitions were transcribed for analysis. After the transcriptions were done, the utterances were read and scanned manually to

locate the criticizing illocutions in the texts. Identifications of criticisms were primarily based on Nguyen's (2008) definition of criticism and pragmatic features of the collected data. Meanwhile, the contextual and cultural characteristics of the communications were also taken into consideration during the processes of data elicitation. According to Nguyen, the illocutionary act of criticism refers to the utterance that expresses

“negative evaluation of the hearer's (H) actions, choice, words, and products for which he or she may be held responsible. This act is performed in the hope of influencing H's future actions for H's betterment as viewed by the speaker (S) or to communicate S's dissatisfaction with or dislike regarding what H has done but without the implicature that what H has done brings undesirable consequences to S” (Nguyen 2008: 770).

It should be noted that the analytical domain of criticizing illocutions is not restricted to individual isolated sentences in this study. The reason is that linguistic acts can be in a variety of grammatical units or linguistic lengths in naturally-occurring communications (Blum-Kulka 1990; Lewin et al. 2001). For example, the criticism in excerpt (1) is smaller than a sentence because the complement of the verb is missing on the surface representation of the speech. Its criticizing communicative force, however, can be inferred from the contextual information of the discourse. In contrast, the criticism in excerpt (2) is encoded with multiple interrogatives, which, however, is analyzed as one instance of criticizing speech act because the three different questions are associated to the same object rather than three different items. Therefore, in this study, speech sequence rather than individual sentence is the domain for criticism analysis.

(1) And then the ankle boot, I mean it's...

(2) Is it hot? Is it fashion-forward? What is it?

After all of the criticizing illocutions in the present database were identified, the first 300 instances in the English and Mandarin Chinese sub-corpora, were selected for comparison.

### **3.3. Data analysis**

In this research, the pragmatics of criticizing illocutions were analyzed with reference to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework where communication strategies for encoding face-threatening acts are suggested, including on-record strategy with or without redressive action(s) and off-record strategies. What follows are analyses of English and Chinese criticisms on the basis of Brown and Levinson's schema.

To encode criticism with on-record strategy, the speaker's illocutionary act closely corresponds to their communicative force. Excerpts (3) and (4) are on-record criticisms without any redressive action. The illocutionary force of the criticisms was manifested through the expressions of *nothing cool* in example (3) and *liti tai yuan le* 'has gone too

far' in example (4).<sup>1</sup>

(3) There is nothing cool about this outfit.

(4) ni yijing wanquan biancheng wutaizhuang, yijing liti  
 you already entirely become stage clothes already digress  
 tai yuan le.  
 too far PFV

'Your design turned out to be a piece of stage clothes, which has gone too far.'

Due to their face-threatening nature, most on-record criticisms in this database are moderated with redressive devices, all of which are negative face-oriented. The collected face-saving strategies include *point-of-view distancing*, *imposition minimizer*, and *hedge*, which are illustrated in examples below.<sup>2</sup>

The first person plural pronouns *we* in example (5) and *women* 'we' in example (6) are redressive devices of *point-of-view distancing*. With the first personal plural pronouns, the judges' subjective opinions in their criticizing communications appeared to be the objective beliefs of the judges' panel, thereby weakening the illocutionary force of their criticisms.

(5) We don't think that you had a clear concept.

(6) moteer zai zou de shihou, women hui juede you  
 model DUR walk NOM moment we would feel have  
 dian guaiguai de.  
 a bit strange NOM

'When the model was walking, we felt (the garment was) a bit strange.'

*A little* in excerpt (7) and *yidian* 'a little bit' in excerpt (8) are *imposition minimizers*. The adverse impact of the criticisms was moderated since *imposition minimizers* literally minimized the seriousness of the problems indicated by the utterances. In this database, English imposition minimizers are *a little*, *a little bit*, *a bit*, *a few*, *only*, and *just*, while Chinese imposition minimizers are *yidian* 'a bit', *yidiandian* 'a bit', *weiyi* 'only', *yixie* 'some', *shaowei yidiandian* 'slightly', and *shaowei you dian* 'slightly'.

(7) Perhaps the proportion of the skirt is a little too long for the boot.

(8) wo juede zhe tao yifu shi you ba chuangyi fang  
 I feel this CL garment EMP have BA creativity put  
 jinqu, dan wo juede tai duo le yidian.  
 Into but I feel too much PFV a little bit

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the appendix for the full terms of the abbreviations in the glosses of the Chinese examples.

<sup>2</sup> The discussed face-saving strategies in examples (5) to (18) are underlined.

‘I felt this garment was creative but I felt it has gone a little bit too far.’

On the basis of Brown and Levinson’s framework, *hedges* can be of different categories, including *conditional hedge*, *hedge addressed to politeness strategies* and *hedges addressed to Grice’s Maxims*. Criticisms in example (9) and (10) were modified with *conditional hedges*, with which the speakers successfully suspended the felicity conditions of their utterances, thus diminishing the impingement of their negative remarks.

(9) What happens is if it’s all short decorated clothes, they start to all look the same.

(10) ruguo yi ge hao de chuanyi xuyao jingguo name duo  
 if one CL good NOM creativity need pass so many  
jieshi dehua, keneng jiu shao le jingxi o.  
 explanation if maybe then lack PFV surprise P  
 ‘If a good creation requires so many explanations, perhaps, it may lack of surprise.’

Criticisms (11) and (12) were attenuated with *hedges to politeness strategies*, namely *I have to say* and *wo ye bixu shuo* ‘I also have to say’ respectively. These hedges pragmatically revealed the judges’ consciousness of the adverse effect in their forthcoming speeches, implicating what the judges were about to say could deprive the addressees of their face need and would be better left unsaid. Because the judges straightforwardly revealed their hesitancy to articulate their negative critical opinions, the illocutionary force of their utterances was attenuated. In this database, the observed English hedges to politeness strategies include *I have to say*, *quite frankly*, *actually*, and *to be honest with you*, while the Chinese hedges to politeness strategies are *qishi* ‘in fact’, *ruguo jiang bijiao zhijie yidian dehua* ‘if to say it more directly’, *wo bixu shuo* ‘I must say’, *wo bixu yao shuo* ‘I need to say’, and *tanbai shuo* ‘frankly speaking’.

(11) I have to say there’s nothing interesting about the materials.

(12) wo ye bixu shuo ni ji le henduo Rei Kawakubo  
 I also must say you collect PFV many (proper name)  
 de yuansu jinlai, keshi haoxiang shao le yidiandian  
 GEN element in but seem lack PFV a little bit  
 shuyu ni yinggai gei women de jingxi.  
 belong you should give we NOM surprise  
 ‘I also have to say that you did collect many elements from Rei Kawakubo, but there seemed to be a lack of surprise that you should show us.’

Excerpts (13) to (16) are qualified with *hedges addressed to Grice’s Maxims*. In the present database, *quality*, *quantity* and *manner hedge* were observed, whereas *relevance hedge* was not noticed in both the English and Chinese sub-corpora. Criticisms in examples (13) and (14) were modified with *quality hedges*, namely *perhaps* and *haoxiang* ‘seem’, which diminished the certainty of the propositional contents of the



utterances, thereby minimizing the face-threatening effect of the criticisms. In this database, English quality hedges are *I think*, *I don't think*, *to me*, *kind of*, *questionable*, *look*, *like*, *look like*, *seem*, *perhaps*, *feel*, *feel like*, *probably*, *somehow*, *might*, and *maybe*, while Chinese quality hedges are *wo juede* 'I feel', *haoxiang* 'seem', *keneng* 'maybe', *ganjue* 'feel', *wo xiang* 'I think', *yinggai* 'should', *huaiyi* 'doubt', *sihu* 'seem', *kanqilai* 'look like', and *dui wo lai jiang* 'to me', and *dui wo lai shuo* 'to me'.<sup>3</sup>

(13) Perhaps, the proportion of the skirt is a little too long for the boot.

(14) haoxiang zhe yifu bu shihe ta.  
 seem this garment not suit her  
 'It seemed that this garment was not suitable for her.'

*All I can tell you* in example (15) and *wo zhi neng shuo* 'all I can say' in example (16) are *quantity hedges*, which pragmatically indicated that the expressed messages were less informative than they should be. Due to the paucity of the information provided, the adverse consequences of the criticisms were minimized. *Basically*, *all in all*, *all I can tell you*, and *almost* are collected English quantity hedges, while Chinese quantity hedges in this database include *bijiao* 'relatively', *jibenshang* 'basically', *wo haishi zhi neng shuo* 'all I can say is that...', and *jiandan shuo* 'to say it briefly'.

(15) All I can tell you is the top and the whole outfit just has no personality.

(16) wo zhi neng shuo ni zai suoyou de xijie chuli shang  
 I only can say you at all ASSOC detail handle above  
 dou tai cucao.  
 all too crude  
 'All I can say is that all of the details were crudely made.'

In the following two instances, the criticisms were not conveyed in a clear and lucid manner due to the *manner hedges* of *I mean* in example (17) and *wo de yisi jiushishuo* 'what I was trying to say is that...' in example (18). Because the face-threatening messages in these criticizing communications were not stated forthrightly, the judges successfully moderated the destructive impact of their negative remarks.

(17) But the hair and the makeup are not helping your clothes; I mean, I really question your taste with this.

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<sup>3</sup> The hedges of *I think*, *I don't think*, *to me*, *wo juede* 'I feel', *wo xiang* 'I think', *dui wo lai jiang* 'to me', and *dui wo lai shuo* 'to me' are classified as quality hedges in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework because these hedges literally signify that the speakers' utterances are their personal remarks rather than objective statements. In other words, these hedges modify the quality of the speakers' arguments, which, therefore, reducing the certainty and impingement of the speeches.

- (18) haoxiang ta chuan le jiejie de yifu; wo de  
 seem she wear PFV big sister GEN clothes I GEN  
yisi jiushishuo zhe yang shaowei guoyu chengshu le  
 meaning namely this way a little bit too mature PFV  
 yidian.  
 a bit

‘It seemed that she was wearing her sister’s clothes. I meant, (she appeared) a bit too mature.’

In addition to the face-saving devices as illustrated in the examples above, the judges may use off-record strategies to moderate their criticisms that are highly offensive in nature. The off-record criticizing strategies observed in this corpus include *ellipsis*, *metaphorical expression*, *rhetorical question*, *understatement*, and *hint*. To frame criticisms with elliptical constructions, as examples (19) and (20) show, the judges intentionally left their utterances incomplete. Owing to the incomplete communications, the destructive inferences of the criticisms were mollified.

- (19) And then the ankle boot, I mean it’s...

- (20) ta yaoshi zhijie jiu zheyang chuan, keneng hai...  
 she suppose directly just such wear might even  
 ‘Suppose she wore this directly, probably, it might be even...’

Metaphorical expressions are culturally sensitive. Speakers of different cultural backgrounds may select different linguistic expressions to encode ideas associated to the same source domain (Zoltán 2007). Criticisms in examples (21) and (22) were encoded as *metaphorical expressions*. In example (21), the judge compared the participant’s design to a hairdressing cape, implicating the poor quality of the outcome. In example (22), the judge drew an analogy between the addressee’s design and a leg of a serpent sketch, implying its redundancy and insignificance. The fuzziness of the metaphorical expressions softened the imposition of the judges’ negative commentaries.

- (21) This, to me, looks exactly like my hairdressing cape I was wearing when I had my haircut.

- (22) nage xin, ni keneng shuo yao qu qingzhu qingrenjie,  
 that heart you may say want to celebrate Valentine’s Day  
 yexu you ta de xiju xiaoguo de yiyi, keshi  
 perhaps have it GEN drama effect ASSOC significance but  
 shishishang wo zhende juede ye shi hua she tian zu.  
 in fact I really feel also EMP draw serpent add leg  
 ‘That heart, you may say it was for celebrating Valentine’s Day. Perhaps, it had its theatrical effects. But, in fact, I really felt it was like adding legs to the sketch of a serpent.’

The judges’ negative evaluations were encoded as *rhetorical questions* in excerpts

(23) and (24). To encode assertions as interrogatives, the judges left their real communication intents hanging in the air, thereby reducing the destructive impact of their unwelcoming utterances.

(23) Are you happy with the way that it fits your model?

(24) ni jinli le ma?  
 you try your best PFV Q  
 'Did you try your best?'

Excerpts (25) and (26) are examples of *understatements* where the judges hedged on the higher points of the scalar predicates, i.e. *too athletic* in example (25) and *name haokan* 'so good-looking' in example (26), to create implications of the lower points of the actual situations. Due to their prevention of serious condemnations, the judges avoided the highly destructive consequence of their critical remarks.

(25) Some of the pieces don't look too athletic to me.

(26) ta de bili jiu xiande meiyou name haokan.  
 it GEN proportion then appear not so good-looking  
 'Its proportion appeared not so good-looking.'

*Hint* is another off-record strategy often utilized for criticism construction. In this database, six sub-hinting strategies were identified, including *expressing self-deficiency*, *giving suggestion*, *expressing expectation*, *sidetracking*, *showing indifference*, and *showing worry*. Examples (27) and (28) were constructed with the strategy of expressing self-deficiency, with which the judges attributed the problems of the participants to their own insufficient abilities to appreciate the designs. These two examples pragmatically signified the judges' dissatisfactions with the participants' concepts without directly damaging their positive face in public.

(27) I don't know why you would go so matchy-matchy and literal with this.

(28) wo zhende bu tai dong weishime hounian shi yao  
 I really not too understand why back EMP want  
 zheyang de yi ge sheji.  
 such ASSOC one CL design  
 'I really do not understand why the back (of the dress) has such a design.'

In examples (29) and (30), the negative commentaries were encoded with the strategy of giving suggestion. Specifically, the suggestion on styling in example (29) and the suggestion on creativity and workmanship in example (30) implicated the addressees' poor abilities.

(29) I think you have to choose either boobs or legs because now it's like I don't know

where to look.

- (30) danshi ta de chuanyixing gen ta de zuogong de  
 but it GEN creativity and it GEN workmanship ASSOC  
 jiqiao shang keneng ye shi yao zai jiaqiang.  
 technique above maybe also EMP need further enhance  
 ‘But, with regard to its creativity and its workmanship, perhaps, they should be further enhanced.’

The judges’ discontent with the participants’ performances in examples (31) and (32) were conveyed through their expressions of what they would like to see on the clothes made by the participants. Similar to the strategy of giving suggestion, to express criticisms by showing their expectations, the judges pragmatically implicated the deficiencies of the designs without stating the problems explicitly.

- (31) I would’ve liked to have seen a little bit more of an idea for an adult.

- (32) wo geng qidai ni ba piyingxi henduo guanjie  
 I more expect you take shadow play many joint  
 de zuhe fazhan zai yifu shangmian,  
 ASSOC combination develop at garment above  
 erbushi zhishi yi ge yinhua zai buliao shangmian.  
 rather than only one CL print at clothing above  
 ‘I wished the various combinational joints of the shallow puppets had been developed on your garment. I’d rather not see a print of the joints on the clothing.’

In examples (33) and (34), the negative appraisals were constructed with the strategy of sidetracking, with which the judges avoided referring to the shortcomings of the designs and talked about something they rather appreciated. In example (33), the praise given to the original color of the design implicated the judge’s dissatisfaction with its current color, while in example (34) the judge’s compliment given to the model’s style without wearing the coat implied her poor appearance while she was having the coat on.

- (33) And I think the original color was actually great on you.

- (34) wo faxian ni ba moteer ba picao naxialai yihou wo jiu  
 I find you BA model BA fur take off later I then  
 juede ni de zhengti de look haokan hen duo.  
 feel you GEN total NOM good-looking very much  
 ‘I found that after you took away the fur coat from the model, I felt the total look of your model was much better.’

The criticism in example (35) was encoded with the sub-strategy of showing indifference. The judge’s negative evaluation towards the design could be inferred from his disinterest in the evaluated item. It should be noted that showing indifference was

confined to the English sub-corpus; namely, no Chinese example was found in the current database.

(35) I don't want to know why her panty has a big black zipper in the back.

The criticism in example (36) was constructed with the sub-strategy of showing worry where the judge's anxiousness pragmatically indicated the poor tailoring skill of the addressee. Different from showing indifference, showing worry was only found in the Chinese sub-corpus; that is, no English example was collected.

(36) women   hui     danxin   ni   zheyang   de     yi   ge   sheji   ta   ke  
       we     would worry   you such     NOM one CL design it can  
   bu   keyi   jixu     dapin   dao   houmian   suoyou   de   zhege  
   not can continue fight to   subsequent all     NOM this  
   bisai   de            jingzheng.  
   contest ASSOC     competition  
   'We would worry whether such a design (of yours) could compete (with the designs  
   of other participants) in all the subsequent contests.'

In the following section, the distributions of the criticizing strategies and redressive devices are analyzed to provide a general overview of how the criticizing strategies and redressive devices were used by the American and Taiwanese judges in the evaluation discourse on TV. Whether the judges' illocutionary choices were influenced by their sociocultural conventions are discussed.

## 4. Results and discussions

### 4.1. Distribution of on-record criticisms and redressive devices

The results of this study, as shown in Table 1, indicated that both the American and Taiwanese judges often went on record to encode their criticisms. The judges' preference for direct criticisms could be attributed to their roles in the talent contests. In the reality talent shows, the judges had the responsibilities to decide whether the participants could continue to participate in the subsequent competitions or not. Therefore, while giving commentaries, they were obliged to have their utterances unmistakably interpreted by their addressees. Compared with indirect utterances, direct speeches better ensure the judges' communication intents to be correctly inferred, thereby contributing to the higher percentage of on-record criticisms in both the English and Chinese sub-corpora. Yet, due to the highly destructive consequence of on-record criticisms, a variety of redressive devices were employed by the judges to attenuate their communications. The distributions of the collected redressive devices were shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Distribution of criticisms in the English and Chinese sub-corpora

	English	Chinese
On-record criticism		
Number	226	188
Percentage	75.33%	62.67%
Off record criticism		
Number	74	112
Percentage	24.67%	37.33%
Total		
Number	300	300
Percentage	100%	100%

Although both the American and Taiwanese judges' favored on-record criticisms over off-record criticisms, the frequencies of on-record criticism in the two sub-corpora were rather asymmetrical. Namely, the percentage of English on-record criticism (N=226; 75.33%) was higher than that of Chinese on-record criticism (N=188, 62.67%). Moreover, the redressive devices in the English and Chinese criticisms were unevenly distributed. More specifically, each English on-record criticism was modified with 0.75 token of redressive device (SD=0.86), whereas each Chinese on-record criticism was modified with 1.38 tokens of mitigation (SD=1.29). The variations between the American and Taiwanese judges' employments of direct criticism and face-saving device manifested the inextricable correlation between people's communication patterns and their sociocultural orientations. As indicated by substantial earlier studies, the merit of being independent is highly advocated in the lower-context societies, which include much of the Western Europe and North America, such as the United States, German, and the Great Britain (Hall & Hall 1990; Onkvisit & Shaw 1993). Due to their social independence resulting from infrequent contacts with in-group members, people of the lower-context cultures seldom rely on the contextual information of their communications while encoding their messages. Instead, they often utilize explicit codes to maximize their speech clarity. Yet, higher-context communications are the polar opposite of lower-context communications. Since people in the higher-context cultures, which include much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America, such as India, Taiwan, Iraq, and Brazil, greatly emphasize group harmony and interpersonal relationships, they prefer not to verbalize their communicative force with specific linguistic expressions in order to maintain rapport with members of the same social network. Owing to the lower-context orientation of the American society and the higher-context orientation of the Taiwanese society, indirect criticisms were more frequently found in the Chinese sub-corpus than in the English sub-corpus; in addition, Chinese direct criticisms were more heavily redressed than English direct criticisms.

Regarding the distribution of redressive devices, the percentage of imposition minimizer in the English sub-corpus is much lower than that in the Chinese sub-corpus (English 13.02%, Chinese 23.94%). Why the Taiwanese judges used imposition minimizers much more frequently than the American judges did should be attributed to that speakers in the higher-context societies tend to rely on contextual information to

convey their communication intents, especially if their illocutionary acts are highly offensive or potentially face-threatening. Although the Taiwanese judges sacrificed the precision of their critical remarks while redressing their criticisms with imposition minimizers, their addressees with the same cultural background were believed to have the ability to read between the lines and recognize the judges' real communication intents with nonverbal cues, such as stumbling repetitions, hesitancy, facial expressions, eye contacts etc. (Hall 1976, 1983; Shim et al. 2008; Triandis 1995). That is because countries of higher-context cultures are characterized with extensive social networks, where people tend to be interdependent and have frequent interactions with members of the same community. More specifically, relatives, friends, colleagues, and even clients are highly connected to a shared social network. Because of their constant frequent contacts with other in-group members, people in the higher-context cultural societies are rather conscious of the social practices hidden in their societies and are sensitive to the messages given in the physical contexts of the communications. Therefore, they are skillful at employing contextual information to access the real communication intents of their interlocutors. In comparison, people in the lower-context cultural societies are less committed to their interpersonal relationships and tend to keep a certain distance with others in the same social network because space is compartmentalized and privacy is highly valued. As a result of people's distant connections with one another, scarcely do they depend on non-verbal elements to express themselves or utilize physical messages to recognize or infer their interlocutor's communication intents. Instead, in the lower-context cultural environments, a great proportion of people's illocutionary force is conveyed through explicit linguistic codes in order to maximize their speech clarity, for which is well acknowledged as the foundation for effective communication and precise and brief representation of fact (Gudykunst & Kim 1995; Kim & Wilson 1994). While imposition minimizers were used to redress seriousness of the criticisms, the judges have to take the risk of having their utterances be mistakenly interpreted. Therefore, to ensure their communication intents to be accurately perceived and avoid potential misunderstanding, the American judges used imposition minimizers much less frequently than did the Taiwanese judges.

Table 2. Frequency of redressive devices in on-record criticisms

	English	Chinese
Point-of-view distancing		
Number	3	8
Mean	0.01	0.04
SD	0.11	0.20
Percentage	1.78%	3.09%
Imposition minimizer		
Number	22	62
Mean	0.10	0.33
SD	0.34	0.56
Percentage	13.02%	23.94%
Conditional hedge		

Number	3	9
Mean	0.01	0.05
SD	0.11	0.21
Percentage	1.78%	3.47%
Hedge addressed to politeness strategies		
Number	10	41
Mean	0.04	0.22
SD	0.21	0.52
Percentage	5.92%	15.83%
Hedge addressed to quality maxim		
Number	110	126
Mean	0.49	0.67
SD	0.68	0.82
Percentage	65.09%	48.65%
Hedge addressed to quantity maxim		
Number	10	12
Mean	0.04	0.06
SD	0.21	0.25
Percentage	5.92%	4.63%
Hedge addressed to manner maxim		
Number	11	1
Mean	0.05	0.01
SD	0.24	0.07
Percentage	6.51%	0.39%
<hr/>		
Total		
Number	169	259
Mean	0.75	1.38
SD	0.86	1.29
Percentage	100%	100%
<hr/>		

Hedges addressed to politeness strategies literally signify the speakers' reluctance to perform face attack acts, pragmatically indicating the speakers' consciousness of their addressees' face needs. As Table 2 showed, the Taiwanese judges used hedges addressed to politeness strategies much more frequently than did the American judges (English 5.92%, Chinese 15.83%). Such substantial variation could be attributed to the different interpersonal relationships between interlocutors in the American and Taiwanese societies. In the higher-context cultures, members of the same community are more psychologically supportive to one another than those in lower-context cultures where people tend to be more self-centered and socially independent (Hall 1976, 1983; Hofstede 2001; Hsu 1981; Pye 1985). Due to the higher-context orientation of the Taiwanese society, the Taiwanese judges should experience a stronger need to demonstrate their awareness of the offensive nature of their criticisms and exhibit their attentiveness to the psychological feelings of their addressees, compared with the American judges. Consequently, hedges addressed to politeness strategies were more frequently utilized by the Taiwanese judges than their American counterparts.



Despite the uneven distributions of imposition minimizers and hedge addressed to politeness strategies in the English and Chinese sub-corpora, hedges addressed to the maxim of quality take the majority of the overall English and Chinese face-saving devices (English 65.09%, Chinese 48.65%). The very great proportion of this hedging mechanism in both sub-corpora should be due largely to its wider pragmatic function in the discourse (Hana 2012). On one hand, hedges addressed to the maxim of quality enable the judges to successfully express their dissatisfactions with the participants' performances and relieve the judges from taking full responsibilities for the truth of the propositions of their criticisms. On the other hand, the quality hedges of *I think, I don't think, to me, wo juede* 'I feel', *wo xiang* 'I think', *dui wo lai jiang* 'to me', and *dui wo lai shuo* 'to me' semantically indicate that the judges' negative commentaries are their personal remarks, thus preventing them from being challenged by others holding different opinions. To put it differently, hedges addressed to the maxim of quality signify that the speakers' utterances are their subjective points of view rather than objective opinions of the other judges in the panel. The subjective orientation of the speakers' communications reduced the force of the criticisms, thereby minimizing the unwelcome imposition of the face-threatening acts on the recipients.

As mentioned in Section 3, hedge addressed to the Grice's maxim of relevance was not found in both the English and the Chinese sub-corpora, which should be attributed to the responsibilities of the judges in this particular discourse. In the talent contests, the judges were having an obligation to express their opinions, either positive or negative, towards the performances of the contest participants. Moreover, the topic of the judges' communications should be relevant to the discussed items. It is, therefore, improbable for the judges to utilize relevance hedges to wander off into another topic in order to avoid imposing on their addressees while doing evaluations. To put it simply, due to the judges' responsibilities for giving commentaries in the talent shows, relevance hedge in this particular situational context was not used to prevent the adverse face-threatening effects incurred by criticisms.

In the following sub-section, distributions of the off-record strategies in the English and Chinese sub-corpora are discussed.

#### 4.2. Distribution of off-record strategies

Table 3. Frequency of off-record strategies in the English and Chinese sub-corpora

	English	Chinese
Ellipsis		
Number	1	1
Percentage	1.35%	0.89%
Metaphor		
Number	15	4
Percentage	20.27%	3.57%
Rhetorical question		
Number	4	12

Percentage	5.41%	10.71%
Understatement		
Number	1	35
Percentage	1.35%	31.25%
Hint		
Expressing self-deficiency		
Number	18	28
Percentage	24.32%	25%
Giving suggestion		
Number	14	25
Percentage	18.92%	22.32%
Expressing expectation		
Number	9	3
Percentage	12.16%	2.68%
Sidetracking		
Number	3	3
Percentage	4.05%	2.68%
Showing indifference		
Number	9	0
Percentage	12.16%	0%
Showing worry		
Number	0	1
Percentage	0%	0.89%
Total		
Number	74	112
Percentage	100%	100%

In this study, the major strategies for encoding English and Chinese indirect criticisms were found to be identical, including *ellipsis*, *metaphorical expression*, *rhetorical question*, *understatement*, and *hint*. However, because the conditions of pragmatic appropriateness vary across cultures, the strategy of hint has different pragmalinguistic manifestations in the English and Chinese sub-corpora. Moreover, the American and Taiwanese judges demonstrated different preferences for the off-record strategies, as Table 3 showed.

As shown in Table 3, the sub-strategies of showing indifference and showing worry were in complementary distribution in the English and Chinese sub-corpora. Namely, the Taiwanese judges sometimes used the strategy of showing worry to encode their dissatisfactions but they never employed the strategy of showing indifference to reveal their discontent like American judges did. The complementary distribution of the two sub-strategies should be attributed to the pragmatic orientation of the strategies themselves and the sociocultural conventions of the American and Taiwanese societies. As explicated in the literature, people of lower-context societies tend to avoid

establishing long-term interpersonal relationships with members of the same social network (Hall 1976, 1983; Hofstede 1983, 1997, 2001; Okabe 1983; Spencer-Oatey 1997). In other words, people with lower-context cultural backgrounds are rather socially independent and are less committed to create solidarity ties with others in the same community. Owing to their independent self-construal, people's communication pattern inclines to be speaker-centered and content-oriented. That is to say, while doing communications, people tend to focus primarily on reporting information but seldom attend to the psychological feelings of their addressees (de Mooij 2010; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey 1988; Yum 1988). To the contrary, in the higher-context societies, members of the same speech community prefer to establish camaraderie with one another and accentuate the cohesion and harmony of the community they belong to (Hall 1976, 1983; Hofstede 2001; House et al. 2004; Hsu 1981). Owing to their interdependent self-construal, people's communications are often hearer-centered and affection-oriented, implicating that language is not only a tool to express messages but also a medium to deliver psychological affections. Because of the lower-context orientation of the American culture, it is scarcely surprising that the American judges would use the strategy of showing indifference to encode their negative commentaries. The reason is because showing indifference pragmatically signifies the judges' disappointment at the participants' performances without exhibiting much of their concerns towards the addressees. In contrast, due to the higher-context orientation of the Taiwanese society, the judges would sometimes use the strategy of showing worry to encode their negative appraisals. With the strategy of showing worry, the judges not only softened the illocutionary force of their negative remarks, but they also demonstrated their benevolence and considerations of their addressees' future wellbeing. Had the American judges had applied the hearer-centered and affection-oriented strategy of showing worry to frame their critical remarks, the judges' dissatisfactions with the participants' performances might not be effectively and accurately interpreted. The reason is that the speakers' communication intent in the criticism framed with the strategy of showing worry is rather weak and could only be inferred very indirectly, which, possibly, may result in miscommunication. On the other hand, had the Taiwanese judges had applied the speaker-centered and content-oriented strategy of showing indifference to encode negative appraisals, the destructive effect of their speeches would not have been ameliorated during communication. That is because criticisms framed with the strategy of showing indifference could implicate a breakdown of the in-group relationship between interlocutors, thereby reinforcing the destructive effect of the judges' illocutionary force.

The influence of the judges' cultural orientations on their style of communication was also reflected on the distributions of giving suggestion and showing expectation in the English and Chinese sub-corpora. These two sub-strategies of hint both implicate the judges' dissatisfactions with the participants' performances by providing some ideas for the participants to refer to. Despite their similar pragmalinguistic function in the discourse, the pragmatic orientation of giving suggestion is in opposition to that of showing expectation. Giving suggestion is hearer-centered or affection-oriented because the ideas provided in the criticisms pragmatically signified the judges' concerns towards the participants' future performances. On the contrary, showing expectation is

speaker-centered and content-oriented. Although the judges did provide some ideas for the participants to refer to while framing criticisms with the strategy of showing expectation, the ideas provided were mainly out of the judges' self-interests. Hardly could the judges' care and concerns towards the participants' betterment be inferred. From Table 3, we can see that the percentage of giving suggestion was higher in the Chinese sub-corpus than that in the English sub-corpus (English 18.92%; Chinese 22.32%). On the other hand, the percentage of giving expectation was higher in the English sub-corpus than that in the Chinese sub-corpus (English 12.16%, Chinese 2.68%). Such discrepancies were results of different cultural orientations of the Taiwanese and American cultures. Due to the great influence from the Confucian philosophy, the higher-context societies are non-egalitarian and are status sensitive. People of different roles are assigned different positions in the same institution and are conscious of their hierarchical differences in the social strata (Hofstede 1980, 1983, 1987, 2001). The authoritative figures of a community are expected to demonstrate their benevolence, thoughtfulness, and supportiveness while interacting with their subordinates (Bond & Hwang 1986; Cheng 2005; Pye 1985; Shih 1988; Singh 2012; Smith & Bond 1993; Spencer-Oatey 1997; Wetzel 1993; Yum 1988). Consequently, in the higher-context hierarchical societies, the communications of the superiors often involve consideration contents and are often hearer-oriented. On the contrary, in the lower-context societies, the power distance between members of different identities is relatively small because social equality is highly advocated and the values of each individual and their autonomy are accentuated (Hofstede 1980, 1983, 1987, 2001; Spencer-Oatey 1997). Moreover, rarely are the powerful figures expected to demonstrate their authority to their subordinates (Cheng 2005; Gudykunst et al. 1987; Hofstede 1980, 1983, 1987, 2001; Wetzel 1993). Due to the higher-context orientation of the Taiwanese society and the lower-context orientation of the American society, the Taiwanese judges used the strategy of giving suggestion more frequently than did the American judges, while the American judges employed the strategy of showing expectation more often than did the Taiwanese judges. In the Taiwanese society where power distance between the judges and the participants is relatively high, had the judges had greatly utilized the speaker-centered strategy of showing expectation more frequently than showing suggestion, they would have been considered unsupportive and incompetent. That is because the judges failed to demonstrate the expected paternalistic leadership behaviors and appeared apathetic to the contestants' immature performances while doing evaluations. If so, the judges' respect from the participants and audience of the television program would be rather difficult to maintain. By contrast, in the American cultural context, the power distance between the judges and the participants is relatively low. The judges, therefore, would be more expected to adopt consultative or participative leadership behaviors. Namely, the judges should listen to the participants' problems, provide consultations, show respect for their ideas and feelings, instead of assigning tasks or giving orders directly (Dickson et al. 2003; Dorfman et al. 1997; Gibson et al. 1973; House & Mitchell 1987, Johnston et al. 1990; Teas 1981, 1983). Had the judges had the participants to improve their performances by providing abundant suggestions while doing evaluations, the judges could be regarded as domineering, autocratic and irrespective of the merit of the participants' autonomy.

From Table 3, we can also notice that the Taiwanese judges used the rhetorical

strategy of understatement much more frequently than did the American judges (English 1.35%; Chinese 31.25%). The uneven distribution of the strategy of understatement in the English and Chinese sub-corpora should also be attributed to the same reason that accounted for the inequitable distribution of imposition minimizer in the English and Chinese database. Like direct criticisms redressed with imposition minimizers, indirect criticisms encoded as understatements also violated Grice's (1975) conversational maxims of quantity because the judges downplayed the seriousness of the participants' problems by hedging on the higher points of the scalar predicates to implicate the lower points of the actual states. Because the judges' communication intents were not precisely reflected on the linguistic manifestations of the criticisms encoded as understatements, the addressees should reply on the nonverbal cues in the discourse to recognize the judges' real intentions due to the paucity of the information provided. However, it is more difficult for people with the lower-context cultural backgrounds to interpret criticisms encoded as understatements than those with the higher-context cultural backgrounds, since the interpretation of lower-context communications is primarily based on the literal meaning of the utterances, while the inference of higher-context communications is based on the verbal and contextual messages of the speeches. Consequently, in order to avoid their addressees' imprecise interpretations of their illocutionary force, the American judges employed much less understatements than did the Taiwanese judges while doing evaluations.

## **5. Conclusion**

This research studied how American and Taiwanese speakers rhetorically manage their criticisms, aiming to explore whether people's pragmatic knowledge is affected by their sociocultural orientations. In this investigation, criticisms in the media discourse were targeted for analysis. The results manifested that the pragmalinguistic strategies and redressive devices that Taiwanese and American speakers used to encode and attenuate their negative appraisals were categorically identical. The categorical similarity between the English and Chinese face-saving strategies corresponded to Brown and Levinson's (1987) contention that cultural variability does not affect the constituents of linguistic politeness, since people's face need is a cross-cultural phenomenon.

Despite the universality of face need across cultures, people's pragmatic knowledge for performing linguistic politeness is determined by their sociocultural values, norms, and beliefs. Consequently, the American and Taiwanese speakers of different cultural backgrounds demonstrated different preferences in terms of pragmalinguistic strategy for criticism construction and mitigation. Specifically, American speakers favored the strategies that are speaker-centered and content-oriented, while Chinese speakers preferred the strategies that are hearer-centered and affection-oriented. This phenomenon found in the present corpus are perfect reflections of the lower-context orientation of the American society, where self-autonomy and individuality are strongly emphasized, and the higher-context orientation of the Taiwanese society, where interpersonal relationships are carefully taken care of. Obviously, such inclination further reinforced Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin's (2005)

perspective that one's cultural values are frequently manifested through the content carried by a certain pragmatic strategy. Moreover, the results of the study also showed that the same indirect strategy could vary in their pragmatic representation across languages, corresponding to the findings of prior studies in pragmatics of other linguistic behaviors, such as giving complaint and responding to compliment (Chen et al. 2011; Yu 2003). More specifically, although American and Taiwanese judges both utilized the same macro strategy of hint to frame their negative appraisals, the micro strategies of showing worry and showing indifference were in complementary distribution in the two sub-corpora. This outcome empirically evidenced that there is no one-to-one correspondence of linguistic form and function. The same illocutionary force can be framed with various pragmatic strategies, since the same speech act may vary in its conceptualization in different languages.

The present investigation, however, is not without any limitation. Although the Taiwanese and American societies are great representations of the higher-context culture and lower-context culture respectively, generalizing the current results to cultures of the same context orientation should be restricted to some degree. The reason is because the idea of context is a relative rather than an absolute standard of culture. There are no two cultures in the world that are at the same point of the low-high-context continuum (Hall & Hall 1990; Hofstede 2001). Therefore, it is not unlikely that people from two societies that have a similar sociocultural orientation vary in their selection of pragmatic strategy while performing the same linguistic behavior (Salager-Meyer & Alcaraz Ariza 2004). Moreover, the data analyzed in this research were collected from evaluative communications in the media discourse. Generalization of the current findings to other situational contexts is also limited to a certain degree. In fact, people's linguistic behaviors can be affected by the social relationship between interlocutors and the contextual factors of the speaking environment (Brown & Levinson 1987; Gudykunst et al. 1987; Hiraga & Turner 1996; Triandis 1995; Zhu 2007). Thus, how people pragmatolinguistically manage their criticisms in different situational environments requires further investigations for a better understanding of this particular linguistic behavior.

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## Appendix (Abbreviations in the glosses)

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Full term</i>
ASSOC	Associative
BA	BA
CL	Classifier
DUR	Durative aspect marker
EMP	Emphatic
GEN	Genitive
NOM	Nominalizer
PFV	Perfective aspect marker
P	Particle
Q	Interrogative marker

