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A Usage-Based Analysis of Indirect Directives in English (2): *I'd appreciate it if you*

Hidemitsu TAKAHASHI

1. Introduction

This paper reports on a portion of my long-term research project, which I term *A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of Indirect Directives in English* (or the CLAID project).¹ It deals with one specific construction, *I'd appreciate it if you*. This lengthy directive construction and the imperative, the shortest directive, can be said to stand at the two extreme ends of the English directive strategy continuum. In between lie more than a dozen different directive constructions, which vary not only in phonological size but in formality and/or politeness as well.

No one would disagree that *I'd appreciate it if you* is a more formal and tentative directive than any other directive construction available in English and that this strategy is primarily used between speakers involving social distance of one kind or another. Given this shared knowledge, one might wonder what remains to be clarified. Why do I bother to write this paper? The reason is because the following questions need to be

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addressed if one wants to obtain a deeper and broader understanding of this construction and its cognitive as well as discourse-functional basis. To begin with, what types of verbs occur more frequently with this directive construction? Another way of putting this question is, what kinds of requests does *I'd appreciate it if you?* make frequently or infrequently? Second, how does this construction distinguish itself from other directive constructions as to such factors as the relative power between communicants, the cost of request, the degree of responsibility, benefits, — those factors intimately associated with any directive speech act?

The present paper has the following three aims. The first is to define the nature of request made with *I'd appreciate it if you* from the perspective of verb types that frequently appear. The second aim is to characterize this construction within the framework of the 6-parameter analysis of FORCE EXERTION introduced in Takahashi 2012, a theory originally designed to characterize the English imperative in context in terms of DESIRE, CAPABILITY, POWER, COST, BENEFIT, OBLIGATION with numerical values. The third aim is to clarify the ways in which this construction behaves and interacts with other directive constructions in actual discourse. Unfortunately, these research questions have not received much attention in previous literature, despite their importance.

The next section (section 2) briefly provides an overview of the CLAID project and its initial quantitative findings made in Takahashi 2014. Section 3 presents a list of frequent verbs as well as all the verbs that appear with *I'd appreciate it if you* in COCA. In so doing, we compare this directive construction with the imperative (based on Takahashi 2012) as well as *I wonder if you*, a somewhat similar but far less formal construction (based on Takahashi, in preparation). Section 4 analyzes a total of 11 tokens of *I'd appreciate it if you* and one variant

taken from my fiction data from the perspective of the six-parameter approach to Force Exertion developed in Takahashi 2012. This section also looks at the ways in which this construction functions, and interacts with other directive constructions, in conversation. It is argued that *I'd appreciate it if you* distinguishes itself (from both the imperative and *I wonder if you*) not only in formality and tentativeness but also in verb types, the nature of request (or propositional content) and discourse function.

2. A brief overview of the CLAID project.

The CLAID project aims to offer the first comprehensive study of Indirect Directive constructions in English. Two features particularly distinguish this research project. First, CLAID clarifies the ways in which different ID constructions differ from one another in terms of frequent verbs and the nature of propositional contents conveyed. Second, it attempts to characterize each and every ID construction regarding the theory of 6-parameter analysis of FORCE EXERTION introduced in Takahashi 2012.

In my first article on this research project (Takahashi 2014), I identified 15 different ID constructions in English. There I collected all the tokens of these 15 directive constructions from a total of 27 fictional stories written in American English, coming up with a total of 901 tokens of 15 ID constructions. In the next step, I provided several tables listing a set of more frequent verbs used in five frequently-occurring constructions in my database, *can you* (197 tokens), *could you* (50), *will you* (106), *why don't you* (170), and *I want you to* (148) constructions.

It was found that *I'd appreciate it if you* is among a group of ID constructions that occur least frequently in English, as Table 1 below

illustrates.

Table 1. Token frequencies of 15 types of Indirect Directives in 27 fictional stories (from Table 4 in Takahashi 2014)

(i) Interrogative

INDIRECT DIRECT- IVES interrogat-ive	<i>can you</i>	<i>could you</i>	<i>will you</i>	<i>would you</i>	<i>would you mind</i>	<i>can't you</i>	<i>won't you</i>	<i>why not</i>	<i>why don't you</i>
TOTAL 901 (413+488)	197 21.9%	50 5.4%	106 11.8%	93 10.5%	13 1.0%	26 2.9%	5 0.5%	14 1.6%	170 18.9%

(ii) Declarative+Conditional

INDIRECT DIRECT- IVES declarative+ conditional	<i>I want you to</i>	<i>I need you to</i>	<i>I'd (would) like you to</i>	<i>I wonder if you can/ could/ would</i>	<i>I'd (would) appreciate it if you could/ would</i>	<i>If you 'll/will 'd/would</i>
TOTAL 901 (413+488)	148 16.2%	29 3.2%	12 1.3%	12 1.3%	12 1.3%	14 1.6%

It would be fair to say that *I'd appreciate it if you* faithfully observes the principle of iconicity “the shorter a sign the more frequent” proposed in Haspelmath 2008, since the directive construction is the longest of all the directive constructions on the one hand and extremely rare in occurrence on the other.

3. A quantitative analysis of *I'd appreciate it if you*

Since only 12 tokens of *I'd appreciate it if you* occurred in my fiction data, we need to resort to large corpus data for a quantitative survey of verb types and their token frequencies. For this reason, I consulted COCA, a 45 million words corpus of American English (Davies 2014). In

my survey (as of June 28, 2014) of *I'd appreciate it if you*, a total of 111 tokens were found in this corpus. Table 2 lists all the 56 verb types that appear with this construction.

Table 2. Alist of verbs that appear with *I'd (would) appreciate it if you*: 56 types (COCA, as of 2014, June 28)

address 2, allow 2, answer, arrange, be (more careful), (not) bother, call, calm, come 6, concentrate, contact, continue, design, (not) distract, do 3, drop, educate, examine, explain, fill, forget, get 5, give, go 3, issue, join, keep 3, kill, laugh, leave 4, let 2, log, look, (not) mention, point (out), refrain (from), respect, respond, shoot, show, sign, sit, stand, stay 6, stop 3, take, talk, tell 9, try, type, understand, use 2, visit, pull, put, wait
--

Table 3 below lists top 10 most frequent verbs.

Table 3. A list of most frequent verbs with *I'd appreciate it if you*: 111 tokens (COCA, as of 2014, June 28)

(1) *tell 9 (me 2, us 1., 3)	(6) keep 3
(2) stay 6	(6) stop 3
(2) come 6	(10) *address 2
(4) get 5	(10) allow 2
(5) leave 4	(10) give 2
(6) go 3	(10) let 2
(6) do 3	(10) use 2

Compared with the imperative, *I'd (would) appreciate it if you* obtains the following features concerning the verbs that appear. First, just like the imperative, *tell*, *come*, *get*, *go* and *do* are somewhat more frequent than other verbs. Second, *let* is not very frequent with *I'd (would) appreciate it if you*, though this verb is among the most frequent with the imperative. Third, *stay*, *leave*, *keep* and *stop* are relatively frequent, though none of these occur very frequently with the imperative.

Compared with other directive constructions, we can observe the following. First, no verb is predominantly frequent with *I'd (would) appreciate it if you*; even the most frequent verb *tell* accounts for only 8.1% of all the tokens. In stark contrast, *tell* is significantly more frequent in two other directive constructions, accounting for 17.2% (23 out of 134 tokens) with *I wonder if you* (Takahashi, in preparation), as Table 4 indicates, and 14.5% of the data with *can you* (Takahashi 2014), as Table 5 indicates.

Table 4. A list of most frequent verbs with *I wonder if you* in COCA: 134 tokens (2014.6.28)

(1) *tell 23 (me 10, us 12, 1)	(8) take 5
(2) give 12 (me 6, us 5, 1)	(10) be 4
(2) help 12 (me 8, us 3, 1)	(10) *describe 4
(4) *read 12	(10) *respond 4
(5) *explain 9	(13) *address 3
(6) *talk 8	(13) *answer 3
(7) do 6	(13) *speak 3
(8) *comment 5	(* = verbs of communication)

Table 5. A list of most frequent verbs with *can you* in fiction data: 197 tokens (Takahashi 2014)

(1) *tell 29 (14.5%)	(6) give 9 (4.5%)
(2) help 14 (7.0%)	(7) be 8 (4.0%)
(3) get 13 (6.5%)	(8) *explain 6 (3.0%)
(4) come 11 (5.5%)	(8) find
(4) do 11 (5.5%)	(10) *talk 5 (2.5%) d* 6 (3.0%)

Next, another related contrast merits attention. While verbs of communication predominantly occur with *I wonder if you* (e.g. *tell*, *read*, *explain*, *talk* and *comment* as well as *describe*, *respond*), it is only two types of communicative verbs (e.g. *tell* and *address*) that are relatively

frequent with *I'd (would) appreciate it if you*. With *I wonder if you*, verbs of communication account for nearly 60% of all the tokens, with the most frequent verb *tell* constituting over 17% of the data (23 out of 134 tokens). Moreover, though *give*, second-most frequent (12 tokens), is not inherently a verb of communication, it is frequently used as such with *I wonder if you*, as exemplified in “I wonder if you can give us just some sense of what went into gathering that ...” (2005, CNN_Intl) or “I wonder if you can give us any insight as to what kind of security US ...” (2004, SPOK.NPR_Saturday).

Third, there was no token of *help* that occurred with *I'd (would) appreciate it if you* in my survey, though this is the second-most frequent verb in both *I wonder if you* and *can you* directives.

These findings imply that *I'd (would) appreciate it if you* generally imposes a more costly request on the addressee, as we turn to this issue shortly. At the same time, *tell* remains the most frequent verb that combines with *I'd (would) appreciate it if you* as well as *I wonder if you*. This finding supports my initial hypothesis made in Takahashi (2014) that this is a verb most frequently used throughout the wide range of directive constructions in English.

4. A qualitative analysis: A six-parameter analysis of Force Exertion

This section begins by recapitulating the theory of six-parameter analysis of Force Exertion, originally proposed as the primary criterion for determining the degree of imperative prototype (Takahashi 2012).

This table is designed to measure the strength of imperative force as a collection of traits or tendencies, without relying on such elusive, pragmatic notions as order, request, suggestion, advice, command, among

Table 6. Six Parameters for Force Exertion

FORCE EXERTION:	HIGH	LOW	ZERO	MINUS LOW	M. HIGH
i. DESIRE	[+2]	[+1]	[0]	[-1]	[-2]
ii. CAPABILITY	/	[+1]	[0]	/	/
iii. POWER	/	[+1]	[0]	[-1]	/
iv. COST	[+2]	[+1]	[0]	/	/
v. BENEFIT	[+2]	[+1]	[0]	[-1]	[-2]
vi. OBLIGATION	[+2]	[+1]	[0]	[-1]	[-2]
Total Score: [+10] ~~~~~~ [-7]					

(Based on Table 3-1 in Takahashi 2012: 77)

others. The basic hypothesis is that the complex notion of Force Exertion involved in an imperative utterance is decomposable into (at least) six separate parameters in much the same way Hopper and Thompson (1980) treated the notion of Transitivity in terms of component parts, although H and T did not integrated numerical analysis, though pace limitations preclude me from discussing the way in which each parameter is calculated on this formula (see Takahashi 2012 for detailed accounts and applications).

It was argued in Takahashi 2012 that the decomposition of Force Exertion of the imperative offers several important benefits over previous accounts. Most of all, this analysis characterizes each imperative utterance more specifically and accurately. In particular, this approach captures the ways in which one and the same imperative (e.g. *Tell me about it.*) can vary regarding the specific aspects of illocutionary force in different contexts. Furthermore, this type of analysis defines how exceptional or less prototypical instances can be related to more prototypical uses. Included (but not limited to) are ironies, acceptances, dares or threats as well as conditional (or pseudo) imperatives.

The success of the analytical attempt to bring together component

parts into a prototypically structured construct of imperative force establishes the basic point I set out to explore in the next step. In what follows, we show the extent to which this formula for Force Exertion characterizes the *I'd appreciate it if you* construction.

4.1 How *I'd appreciate it if you* is similar to and different from the imperative

Let us discuss the ways in which *I'd appreciate it if you* is similar to the imperative first. One may say that this indirect directive construction shares at least one central feature of the most prototypical imperative. Most notably, DESIRE is invariably strong. In fact, unlike the imperative as a whole, no such thing as the use of “mild directive” was available with this construction, in which the speaker is most seriously committed to the realization of propositional content in its all tokens. Given below is one such typical usage:

(1) S: Kristen Canton, a 25 years old female teacher taking care of the gifted program. A: Rose McKenna, a lunch mom who volunteers to help out at the school cafeteria, mainly to keep watch on her daughter Melly, a third-grader who is the target of two bully girls in her class. [Context: one day, a powerful explosion went off in the cafeteria kitchen, killed three school employees and left several pupils seriously injured. A (Rose) visits S's (Kristen) apartment room]

“I'm sorry, I'm leaving. I can't take it anymore. I quit.”

“But the kids love you. Melly loves.”

“I have your number, I'll call her.” Kristen placed a quilted toiletries case into the suitcase. ... “I have to live my own life.”

“Kristen, please stay. Please.”

“... It's best for her if I go.”

“No. I emailed Mr. Rodriguez my resignation. I said to tell people I had a family emergency. It’s a done deal.”

“You’re really leaving now?” Rose asked, incredulous.

“Yes. I’m going to my parents’, and **I’d appreciate it if you’d keep it confidential**. I don’t want any of these crazy parents emailing me or posting any more crap on my Facebook wall. No more reporters, either.” (*Save Me*, p. 115, No. 1815)

Example (1)	
DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+1] or [+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[0] or [+1]
TOTAL:	[+6]~[+8]

The speaker seems to choose *I’d appreciate it if you* here to psychologically distance herself from the addressee while expressing her firm attitude toward this particular request. In my analysis of all the 12 tokens, the average FE value for *I’d appreciate it if you* was [+7.8], which is quite high on the scale of Force Exertion. No noticeable difference was found with CAPABILITY and POWER, however. Just like standard imperatives, the addressee is conceived as being capable of carrying out the requested action whereas there is no significant social or power gap between communicants in most tokens — 8 out of 12 tokens obtained the [0] value, though two tokens obtained [+1] and one token [−1].

Next, we look at the ways in which *I’d appreciate it if you* differs from the imperative. The most striking contrast can be observed concerning the relative values of COST and OBLIGATION. Quite unlike

the imperative, a large gap was consistently discerned between COST and OBLIGATION. On the one hand, the COST involved in the request made with *I'd appreciate it if you* is always high — in all the 12 tokens, the value was calculated in terms of [+2].

On the other hand, the addressee's OBLIGATION is far less straightforward. At least three major patterns were identifiable regarding this parameter. That is, the addressee's OBLIGATION is (i) simply nonexistent; (ii) existent but social and/or ethical in nature (rather than work-related), or (iii) existent and work-related but more or less outside the realm of ordinary or mutually agreed-upon duty. As a result, the OBLIGATION of *I'd appreciate it you* is generally low in degree or sometimes nonexistent. Only one token obtained the value [+2] while 6 tokens were calculated in terms of [+1], 3 in terms of [0], 2 somewhat ambivalent being [+1] or [0].

The next example serves as a straightforward illustration of pattern (i). Here the speaker knows for certain that she cannot expect the addressee to readily comply and go on to provide her with the piece of information she wants:

(2) S: Dana Evans (interviewer) A: Walter Calkin (lawyer, interviewee)
[Dana Evans (TV anchorwoman) is privately investigating the real cause of the death of a wealthy man. She is interviewing his attorney.]
“It's incredible to me what happened to that wonderful family. Incredible.”

“I understand that you handled their legal and financial affairs,” Dana said.

“Yes.” ...

“The estate must be worth many billions of dollars. **I would very much appreciate it if you could tell me who stands to receive that**

money.”

... “Miss Evans, we never discuss our clients’ affairs.”

(*The Sky is Falling*, p. 83)

Example (2)	
DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[0]
TOTAL:	[+7]

The degree of COST imposed by this request is quite high, pertaining to the confidential information of the addressee’s client, whereas in contrast there is literally no OBLIGATION to comply on the part of the addressee. See that the use of the imperative form is totally infelicitous:

(3) (in the context of example (2))

... “I understand that you handled their legal and financial affairs,” Dana said. “Yes.” “The estate must be worth many billions of dollars. **#Tell me who stands to receive that money.”**

... “Miss Evans, we never discuss our clients’ affairs.”

Given that the COST of this request is quite high, for the imperative to be felicitous, there must be a strong OBLIGATION to comply, though it is in fact nonexistent in this context.

Next, the use of *I’d appreciate it you* in example (1) above can be classified as pattern (ii). This kind of request normally puts the addressee under some OBLIGATION but it is more *social* and/or *ethical* in nature, not strictly work-related. Just like example (2) above, the use

of the imperative form *keep it confidential* would be inappropriate, as the example below illustrates:

(4) (=in the context of example (1))

... “You’re really leaving now?” Rose asked, incredulous.

“Yes. I’m going to my parents’, and **#keep it confidential**. I don’t want any of these crazy parents emailing me or posting any more crap on my Facebook wall. No more reporters, either.”

The use of the imperative implies that there is little gap between the COST and OBLIGATION involved. The imperative utterance here would sound impolite unless the two communicators are in an extremely close relationship and/or there is some prior agreement between the two parties concerning this particular request.²

Example (5) below illustrates pattern (iii). In this context, the request made by this hospital administrator is not totally unrelated to work. However, it goes way beyond the ordinary professional duties of doctors and nurses working in a hospital, since what is being required to

² Consider the following piece of advice from Annie’s Mailbox (2014, June 25).

Dear Annie: Please print my pet peeve. I am a senior citizen and dislike the terms used by waitresses, waiters and others serving the public. I feel that I’m being patronized when they call me, “Sweetie,” “Honey,” “Darlin’,” “Angel,” etc. These words are not endearing and make me want to decrease my tip.

“May I take your order, please?” is all that is necessary. If you know my name, use it. Otherwise, please stop speaking to me as if I were 5 years old. — B.

To this the advisors suggest that the writer speak up, politely, and tell the server, “**I’d appreciate it if you didn’t call me ‘honey.’**” This usage seems to illustrate pattern (ii), where the speaker expects the addressee to feel obliged to comply on a more social and/or ethical basis.

do is searching for “any changes in personality” among the hospital staff:

(5) S: Dr. Benjamin Wallace, the administrator of Embarcadero County Hospital. A: Dr. Paige Taylor and Dr. Kate Hunter, two female doctors working in this hospital

[Context: One nurse reported to Ben Wallace that fentanyl, a highly addictive narcotic and anesthetic drug is missing on a regular basis in the hospital, so he needs to take care of this problem. In his office]

Ben Wallace was not sure whom he could trust to help him find the culprit. He had to be careful. He was certain that neither Dr. Taylor nor Dr. Hunter was involved, and after a great deal of thought, he decided to use them.

He sent for the two of them. “I have a favor to ask of you,” he told them. He explained about the missing fentanyl. “I want you to keep your eyes open. If any of the doctors you work with have to step out of the OR for a moment, I want you to let me know. Look for any changes in personality — depression or mood swings — or tardiness, or missed appointments. **I would appreciate it if you would keep this strictly confidential.**”

When they left the office, Kat said, “This is a big hospital. We’re going to need Sherlock Holmes.” (*Nothing Lasts Forever*, p. 156, No. 1722)

Example (5)	
DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[+1]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[+1] or [+2]
TOTAL:	[+8]~[+10]

The following example is of some interest in that it describes how speakers of English can adjust their directive strategy in addressing one and the same addressee to make their request more effective. In this piece of dialogue, the speaker dramatically shifts his request strategy from the most direct and rudest (in the beginning) to the most indirect and polite (in the final part):

- (6) S: Lou Dinetto, a man who is believed to be the head of the “West Coast mob,” though he describes himself as a “restaurant owner and businessman.” A: Kate (Kat) Hunter, a black female doctor in charge of an emergency hospital ward

[Context: in trying to avoid a dog, Dinetto’s limousine (driven by one of his bodyguards) crashed into a lamppost and Rhino’s (the other body-guard) forehead flew forward into the windshield. Seeing blood pouring from a large cut in his forehead, the three men rushed to the emergency ward of a nearby hospital]

Dinetto called out to Kat, “Hey, you!”

Kat looked up, “Are you talking to me?”

“Who the hell do you think I’m talking to? This man is bleeding. Get him fixed up right away.”

“There are half a dozen others ahead of him,” Kat said quietly. “He’ll have to wait his turn.”

“He’s not waiting for anything.” Dinetto told her. “You’ll take care of him now.”

Kat stepped over to Rhino and examined him. She took a piece of cotton and pressed it against the cut. “Hold it there. I’ll be back.”

“I said to take care of him now,” Dinetto snapped.

Kat turned to Dinetto. “This is an emergency hospital ward. I’m the doctor in charge. So either keep quiet or get out.”

The Shadow said, “Lady, you don’t know who you’re talking to... This is Mr. Lou Dinetto.”... “Take care of my man.”

“You have a hearing problem,” Kat said. “I’ll tell you once more. Keep quiet or get out of here. I have work to do.”

Rhino said, “You can’t talk to —”

Dinetto turned to him. “Shut up!” He looked at Kat again, and his tone changed. **“I would appreciate it if you could get to him as soon as possible.”**

“I’ll do my best.” Kat sat Rhino down on a cot. “Lie down. I’ll be back in a few minutes.” She looked at Dinetto. “There are some chairs over there in the corner.” (*Nothing Lasts Forever*, p. 94, No. 1060)

Example (6)	
DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[+1]
TOTAL:	[+8]

In this dialogue, this speaker utters the imperative sentence twice (i. e. “Get him fixed up right away” and “Take care of my man”), in an attempt to force the doctor in charge to immediately treat his bodyguard. Seeing that his intimidating tactics does not work, he suddenly shifts to the most indirect, tentative directive form. The speaker’s implicit message seems to be that “I know you are extremely busy and are unable to treat my man before several other people waiting, which would be too costly a request, so please treat him at the earliest possible time.” In other words, the speaker finally acknowledges or pretends to acknowledge that neither his POWER nor the “urgency” of the conceived situation

licenses his use of the imperative, a construction that normally assumes a strong OBLIGATION to comply on the part of the addressee.

In summary, there is a large gap between COST and OBLIGATION every time *I'd appreciate it if you* occurs. This configuration is fully compatible with, or conforms to, the principle on the avoidance of the imperative. That is, “Avoid using a plain imperative for your benefit when the required action involves a high COST and a low OBLIGATION at once — unless the situation is urgent” (Takahashi 2012: 111).

4.2 How *I'd appreciate it if you* is similar to and different from *I wonder if you*

It is well established and hardly controversial that the directive form *I'd appreciate it if you* generally implies a great deal more formality, distance and tentativeness than any other directive construction available in English. This section first discusses what the 6-parameter approach reveals about the commonalities and differences between *I'd appreciate it if you* and *I wonder if you*, a construction involving far more tentativeness and far less formality. It also addresses what the 6-parameter approach does NOT reveal: the relative location and function of *I'd appreciate it if you* in a stretch of directive discourse.

It was found that *I'd appreciate it if you* involves the average FE value (i.e. [+7.8]), which is around 2 points higher than *I wonder if you*. This result arises primarily from a fairly consistent difference in OBLIGATION and BENEFIT. In 10 out of 12 tokens of *I wonder if you*, OBLIGATION was calculable in terms of [0], which means that it is nonexistent. Recall (section 3) that with *I'd appreciate it if you* the average value of OBLIGATION was around [+1], somewhere between high and nonexistent. The following example serves as a good illustration:

(7) S: Betty Lou Taft (nickednamed Honey), a high school student

A: Mr. Janson (her math teacher)

[Context: Attempting to get a good grade in mathematics, Honey (high school student) visits her math teacher to ask for help]

Honey had always had poor grades in mathematics, and she knew she had failed badly on her final test. Her mathematics teacher, Mr. Janson, was a bachelor and lived near the school. Honey paid him a visit one evening. He opened the door and looked at her in surprise.

“Honey! What are you doing here?”

“I need your help,” Honey said. “My father will kill me if I fail your course. I brought some math problems, and **I wonder if you would mind going over them with me.**”

He hesitated a moment. “This is unusual, but ... very well.”

Mr. Janson liked Honey. She was not like the other girls in his class. They were raucous and indifferent, while Honey was sensitive and caring, always eager to please. He wished that she had more of an aptitude for mathematics. (*Nothing Lasts Forever*, p. 112, No. 1259)

Example (7)	
DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[-1]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[0]
TOTAL:	[+6]

Moreover, *I wonder if you* allows BENEFIT to obtain some minus value in Force Exertion, because this construction can be used to convey invitation. Note that invitation or offer typically brings about some benefit for the addressee so no compelling force is involved. In my

analysis, this configuration is treated as a case involving some minus force, in which the potential compelling force is greatly reduced.

Look at the following example:

(8) S: Dr. Joel Hirschberg with the Children’s Foundation

A: Dana Evans, who is raising an adopted son and desperately looking for an institution that accommodates him.

“... This foundation has been set up to help children from a war-torn country. ... From what Mr. Cromwell told me, your son certainly comes under that heading. **I wonder if you would like to bring him in to see me?**” (*The Sky is Falling*, p. 142)

Example (8)	
DESIRE:	[+1]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[−1] or [−2]
OBLIGATION:	[0]
TOTAL:	[+2]~[+3]

The directive utterance with *I wonder if you* conveys an invitation or offer rather than a request, since the addressee’s action brings about her own benefit rather than the speaker’s. This usage is unavailable with *I’d appreciate it if you*, whose FE is strictly restricted to a higher and narrower range.

Next, we look at the discourse features of *I’d appreciate it if you* that the 6-parameter analysis fails to capture. A careful observation reveals that the fundamental role *I’d appreciate it you* plays in directive discourse resides in offering a “heavy” and/or conclusive message, as far as my data are concerned. It is interesting to note that in 4 (out of 12) tokens,

this directive construction is preceded by such an introductory utterance as “I have a favor to ask of you” (example 5), “I wonder if you could help me” (example 9) or “I hate to impose, but I need a favor” (example 10).

Observe:

(9) S: Dr. Page Taylor A: state pharmaceutical board

[Context: Being convinced that Ben Mallory (Kate’s boyfriend) used a sedative and murdered Kate, Page Taylor is desperately trying to find evidence of that. She suspects that Ben had a prescription filled at a pharmacy in San Francisco on Sunday when he much have free time for that.]

Paige picked up the telephone and called the state pharmaceutical board.

“This is Dr. Taylor,” Paige said. “Last Sunday, a friend of mine left a prescription at a pharmacy. She asked me to pick it up for her, but I can’t remember the name of the pharmacy. I wonder if you could help me.”

“Well, I don’t see how, doctor. If you don’t know ...”

“Most drugstores are closed on Sunday, aren’t they?”

“Yes, but ...”

“I’d appreciate it if you could give me a list of those that were open.”

There was a pause. “Well, if it’s important ...”

“It’s very important,” Paige assured her.

“Hold on, please.” (*Nothing Lasts Forever*, p. 354, No. 3878)

(10) S: a young anchorwoman A: a male senate in his fifties

S and A met before but they know each other relatively well:

(Telephone conversation)

“Roger, I hate to impose, but I need a favor.”

“If there’s something I can do . . .”

“I’m leaving for Moscow, and I want to talk to Edward Hardy, the American ambassador there. I was hoping that you might know him.”

“As a matter of fact, I do.”

“I’m in Paris. **If you could fax me a letter of introduction, I would really appreciate it.**”

“I can do better than that. I’ll give him a call and tell him to expect you.”

“Thank you, Roger. I’m very grateful.” (*The Sky is Falling*, p. 269)

There was not a single token of *I’d appreciate it if you* in my fiction and corpus data used as a prelude to the core directive speech act that follows. This makes a sharp contrast with *I wonder if you*, a construction that can be used to convey not only a serious request or the core part of request but also a casual request and/or introductory part of a directive discourse.

5. Conclusions

The present paper was written with the following three aims: (i) to identify the nature of request when *I’d appreciate it if you* occurs; (ii) to show the ways in which this directive construction can be characterized within the framework of the 6-parameter approach to FORCE EXERTION; and (iii) to explain the behaviors of this directive construction in actual discourse.

The main findings can be summarized as follows:

- (i) *I’d appreciate it if you* invariably communicates what the speaker

construes as a serious, heavy, costly request typically toward the addressee with some social distance. Quite unlike other directive constructions such as *can you* and particularly *I wonder if you* that center around information-based requests, *I'd appreciate it if you* varies a great deal more with respect to the types of request, as evident from that fact that verbs of communication occur far less frequently.

- (ii) Viewed from the perspective of the theory of 6-parameter approach, *I'd appreciate it if you* is restricted to a higher and narrower range on the scale of FORCE EXERTION. Moreover, there is a consistent large gap between COST and OBLIGATION; the request involves a high COST and a low OBLIGATION at once. As for OBLIGATION, at least three subclasses were identified: (a) simply nonexistent; (b) existent but social and/or ethical in nature rather than work-related, or (c) existent and work-related but not strictly within the realm of ordinary or mutually agreed-upon duty.
- (iii) Finally, *I'd appreciate it if you* is strictly restricted to the core or conclusive part of the directive discourse rather than an initial or introductory message.

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Appendix

Tokens of *I'd appreciate it if you* in full contexts that did not appear in the main text

S: Inspector Burns (from San Francisco police department)

A: Dr. Ken Mallory

[Context: Dr. Kate Hunter, a black female doctor in charge of an emergency hospital ward, was found dead in the bathroom of her apartment, with her body mutilated and hemorrhaged from her womb. Learning from Kate's roommate Paige that she had a date with Ken Mallory that evening, Inspector Burns from San Francisco police department visits Dr. Mallory's residence late at night. In the hall of Dr. Mallory's residence]

The inspector was watching him closely. “Your fault?”

“Yes. I ... Dr. Hunter and I were going to be married. I told her I didn't think it was a good idea for her to have a baby now. I wanted to wait, and she agreed. I suggested she go to the hospital and have them take care of it, but she must have decided to ... I ... I can't believe it.”

“What time did you leave Dr. Hunter?”

“It must have been about ten o'clock. I dropped her off at her apartment and left.”

“You didn’t go into the apartment.”

“No.”

“Did Dr. Hunter talk about what she planned to do?”

“You mean about the ...? No. Not a word.”

Inspector Burns pulled out a card. “If you think of anything else that might be helpful, doctor, **I’d appreciate it if you gave me a call.**”

“Certainly. I ... you have no idea what a shock this is.”

Paige and Honey stayed up all night, talking about what had happened to Kat, going over it and over it, and shocked disbelief. (*Nothing Lasts Forever*, P. 348, No. 3807)

DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+1] or [+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[0] or [+1]
TOTAL:	[+6]~[+8]

S: Inspector Liu, who is investigating the murder of Miles Baring, who was a rich and powerful elderly man)

A: John Crowley, the attorney of Lisa Baring (the young beautiful wife of Miles Baring)

“Has Mrs. Baring been charged?”

“Not yet. She’s here to answer some question. There are discrepancies, serious discrepancies, between Mrs. Baring’s account of what happened on the night in question and her staff’s.”

John Crowley turned to Lisa. “When were you arrested? What time?”

“This morning, around ten o’clock, I think. I’m not sure, I was asleep when they broke in.” ...

Inspector Liu glowered at the lawyer. He suspected that Danny McGuire from Interpol was involved in this somehow. That instead of returning his, Liu’s call, McGuire had taken matters into his own hands and contacted the U.S. embassy, preferring to deal with expats than with the local Chinese police. Interpol was supposed to be impartial, but McGuire, Crowley, Lisa Baring, and Matt Daley were all Americans. American had a way of sticking together.

“As you rightly say, Mr. Crowley, time is limited. So **I’d appreciate it if you stopped wasting it.** Mrs. Baring...” Liu turned on Lisa. “At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital you told me that your husband had no living relatives that you knew of that we needed to contact. In fact, as you well knew, Miles Baring had a daughter by his first marriage. Alice.”
(*Angel of the Dark*, p. 184, No. 2407)

DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+2] or [+1]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[+1]
TOTAL:	[+7]~[+9]

S: Jeff Stevens, a master con man

A: purser

Jeff headed for the purser’s office.

‘Sorry to bother you,’ Jeff apologized, ‘but we’ll be docking in a few hours, and I know how busy you’re going to be, so I wondered whether you’d mind paying me off now?’

‘No trouble at all,’ the purser smiled. ‘Your young lady is really wizard, isn’t she?’

‘She certainly is.’ ...

The purser took two large manila envelopes out of the safe. ‘This is a lot of cash to carry around. Would you like me to give you a cheque for this amount?’

‘No, don’t bother. The cash will be fine,’ Jeff assured him. ‘I wonder if you could do me a favor? The mail boat comes out to meet the ship before it docks, doesn’t it?’

‘Yes, sir. We’re expecting it at six A.M.’

‘I’d appreciate it if you could arrange for me to leave on the mail boat. My mother is seriously ill, and I’d like to get to her before it’s’ — his voice dropped — ‘before it’s too late.’

‘Oh, I’m dreadfully sorry, Mr Stevens. Of course I can handle that for you. I’ll make the arrangements with customs.’

At 6:15 A.M. Jeff Stevens, with the two envelopes carefully stashed away in his suitcase, climbed down the ship’s ladder into the mail boat. He turned to take one last look at the outline of the huge ship towering above him. (*If Tomorrow Comes*, p. 326, No. 425)

DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[0] or [+1]
TOTAL:	[+6]~[+7]

S: Thomas Henry (the principal of her son’s (middle) school)

A: Dana Evans (Mother who has a twelve-year-old son, who is attending

the middle school) [telephone conversation]

“This is Thomas Henry.”

“Yes, Mr. Henry. Is Kemal all right?”

“I really don’t know how to answer that. I’m very sorry to tell you this, but Kemal is being expelled.”

... “Expelled. Why? What has he done?”

“Perhaps we should discuss it in person. **I would appreciate it if you would come and pick him up.**”

“Mr. Henry —”

“I’ll explain when you get here, Miss Evans. Thank you.”

(*The Sky is Falling*, p. 117)

DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[+1]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[+1]
TOTAL:	[+9]

S: Dana Evans

A: commandant Frasier (investigating the “accidental death” of a wealthy woman)

“I don’t suppose there were any witnesses?”

... “One witness. ...”

“I would appreciate it very much if you would give me the witness’s name,” Dana said. “I want to talk to him.”

He nodded. “I see no harm.” He called out, “Alexandre!” and ... (*The*

Sky is Falling, p. 196)

DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+1] or [+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[0] or [+1]
TOTAL:	[+6]~[+8]

S: Omar Noose, a judge presiding over a black man Carl Lee Hailey’s trial. Carl Lee is charged with the capital murders of two white men who raped his ten-year-old daughter.

A: Jake Brigance, the lawyer of Carl Lee Hailey

[Context: Jake Brigance is asking Judge Noose to move the trial from Clanton, in Ford County, Mississippi, as the racial make-up there virtually guarantees an all-white jury.]

“... would you like a drink?”

“No thanks.”

“I just don’t see any reason to move the trial from Clanton. ...”

“Sounds like you’ve already made up your mind, Judge.”

“I have. We’re not changing venue. The trial will be held in Clanton. I’m not comfortable with it, but I see no reason to move the trial. Besides, I like Clanton. It’s close to home and the air conditioning works in the courthouse.”

Noose reached for a file and found an envelop. “Jake, this is an order, dated today, overruling the request to change venue. I’ve sent a copy to Buckley, and there’s a copy for you. The original is in here, and **I would appreciate you filing this with the clerk in Clanton.**”

“I’ll be glad to.”

“I just hope I’m doing the right thing. I’ve really struggled with this.”

“It’s a tough job,” Jake offered, attempting sympathy.

(*A Time to Kill*, p. 284, No. 4995)

DESIRE:	[+2]
CAPABILITY:	[+1]
POWER:	[0]
COST:	[+2]
BENEFIT:	[+2]
OBLIGATION:	[+1]
TOTAL:	[+7]