**A Contrastive Move Analysis in Chinese and Thai Request Emails**

**and Pedagogical Implications**

**Chia-Ling Hsieh**

*Graduate Institute of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan, clhsieh@ntnu.edu.tw*

**Kankanit Potikit**

*Graduate Institute of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan, kankanit.potikit@gmail.com*

**Abstract**

*Contrastive move analysis dealing with rhetorical conventions in writing is valuable for language teaching. While this approach has often been adopted to analyze research articles, comparatively little work has focused on email, an essential form of communication for contemporary language learners. In that vein, this study compares move structures employed in Chinese and Thai-language request emails from a cross-cultural perspective. A total of 200 request emails were collected from native speakers of each language and analyzed using Swales’ model of genre analysis. The results reveal that both languages share a common three-fold move structure composed of salutation, request, and closing. The request move also involves similar obligatory steps in emails of both languages (e.g. introducing oneself, explaining reasons, making requests, providing further explanations, and expressing gratitude). Furthermore, emails in both languages sent to recipients of higher status require more steps overall than those sent to recipients of equal status. Despite these similarities, noticeable cross-language differences can be observed in terms of the strategies deployed under each step. For example, while Chinese senders preferred the use of addressing and greeting in their opening salutation and the expression of good wishes in their closing, Thai senders exhibit more formal wordings in these moves. Variations are also found in the form and distribution of optional steps such as apologizing, affirming the contribution of the recipient, expressing expectation, offering something in return, and summarizing the purposes of the email. Based on the identified similarities and differences, this study concludes with suggestions as to the development of appropriate email writing pedagogical material for Thai learners of Chinese as a foreign language.*

**Keywords**

email, request, move structure, discourse analysis, writing instruction