

# **Extracting *criterial* features from requests produced by Japanese low-proficiency learners of English**

TOKYO UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN STUDIES

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# 1. The Purpose of the Study

- ◆ To identify **critical features** of pragmalinguistic competence of the CEFR A1 -and A2-level learners in the NICT JLE (Japanese Learner English) Corpus
- ◆ **Critical Features** - those which are characteristic and indicative of L2 proficiency at each of the levels and which distinguish one level from the next (Hawkins & Filipović, 2012).

80% of Japanese learners belong to A-levels.

(Negishi, Takada & Tono, 2012)

## 2. Research Questions

- ◆ RQ1. What types of **request strategies** (and what **linguistic features**) are observed at each level?
- ◆ RQ2. What **linguistic functions** do the identified requestive speech acts occur in at each level?
- ◆ RQ3. What linguistic features characterise **successful and erroneous** requestive speech acts at each level?

# 3. The NICT JLE Corpus

- 1,281 Japanese learners of English
- The Standard Speaking Test (SST) – 15-minute oral interview transcripts
- Holistically graded into nine proficiency levels (Level 1 – Level 9)
- Totalling approximately 2 million tokens
  
- Shopping Role-Play (Beginner and Intermediate Tasks):  
Interlocutor - shop assistant & Learner - customer  
The customer purchasing an item

## 3.1 The Analyzed Data

SST Level	CEFR Level	Difficulty of Task	The Number of Subjects
Level 3	A1	Beginner/Intermediate	68 (11+57)
Level 4	A2	Intermediate	114
Level 5			

Izumi, Uchimoto and Isahara (2004); Tschirner and Bärenfänger (2012)

# 4. The Annotation Scheme

- ❖ Multi-layered annotation schemes

- i. Requestive speech acts (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989; Leech 2014)
- ii. Transaction: Functions of requestive speech acts in shopping role-plays & Naturalness (The Author's Original)

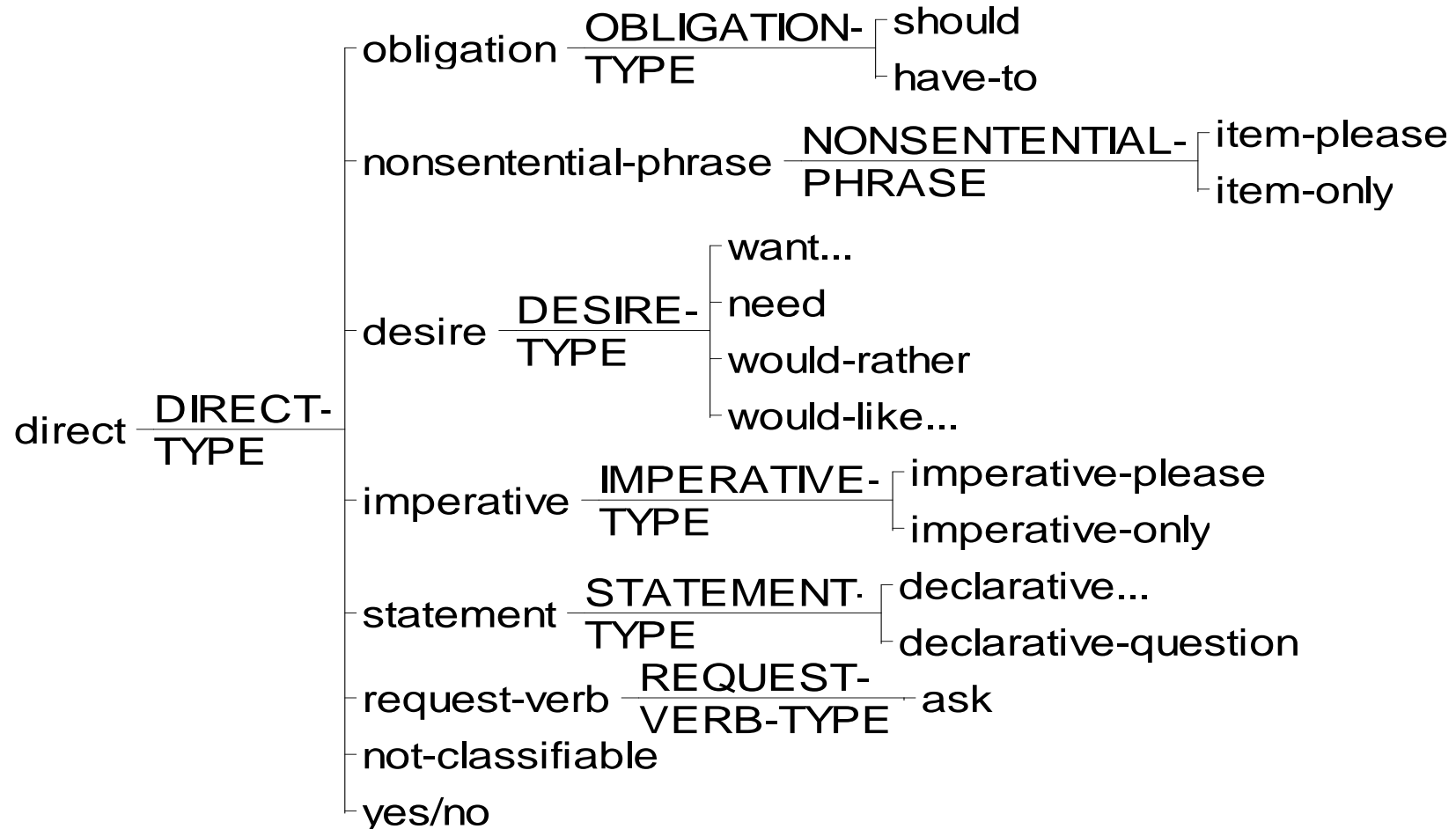
- ❖ Tool: UAM Corpus Tool 3.2h (O'Donnell, 2015)

- ❖ Only learner data were manually annotated.

# 5. Research Question 1: What types of request strategies (and what linguistic features) are observed at each level?

- head-act  $\frac{\text{HEAD-}}{\text{ACT-TYPE}}$   $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{direct...} \\ \text{conventionally-indirect...} \end{array} \right.$

# 5.1 Direct Strategy

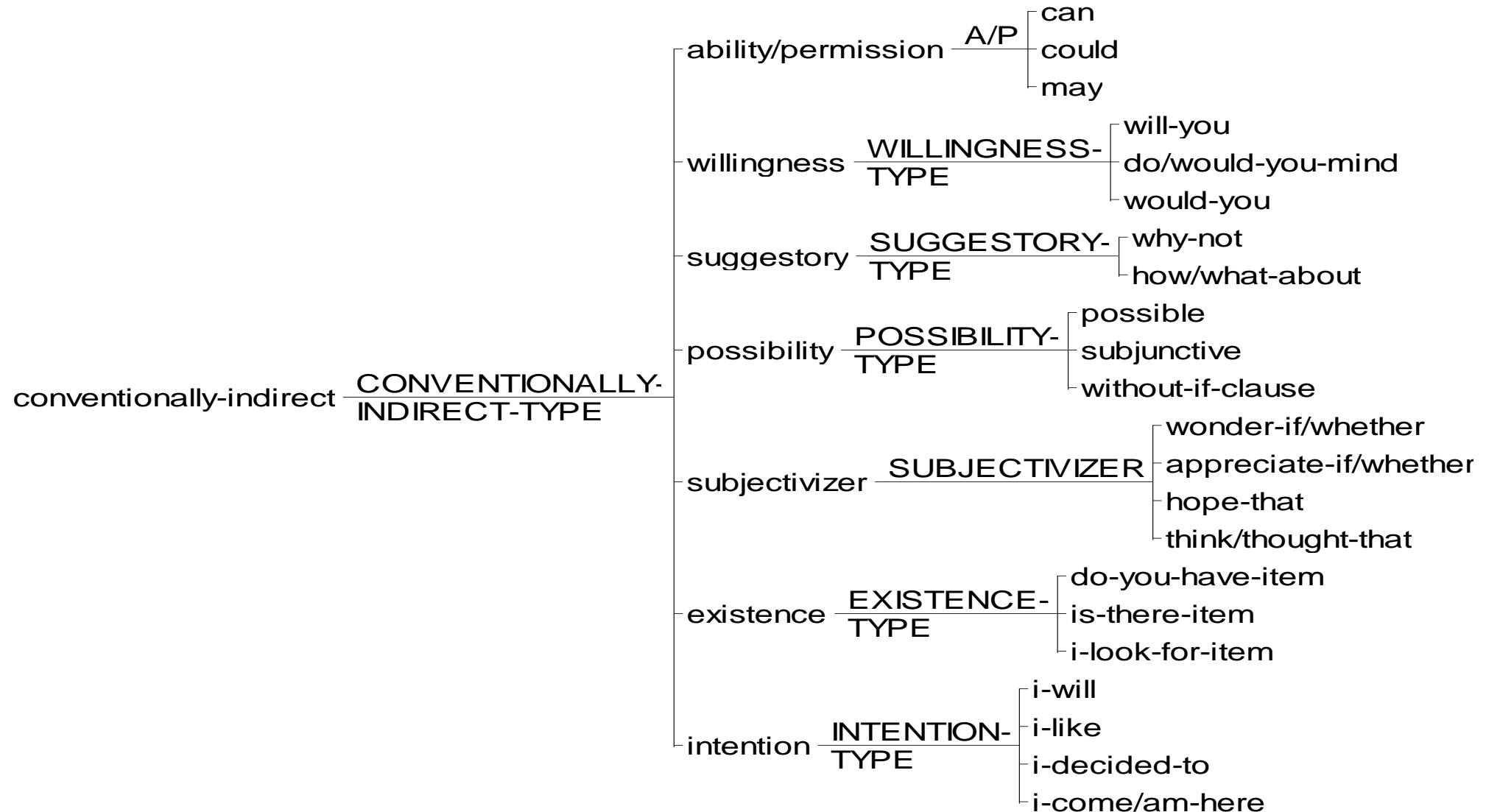




## 5.2 Examples of Direct Patterns

Patterns	Examples
Obligation	Umm but I have to now buy this color shirts. (A2)
Non-sentential Phrase*	No, brown, mmm, gray, gray one. (A1) And er ear phone, please. (A1)
Desire	I want I want to buy long sleeve dress. (A1) Urr I'd like to buy it err by this card. (A1) So I need the short short si short length. (A2)
Imperative	So please show me green color. (A1); A a a let me see er for a few minutes. (A2)
Statement*	And its color is black. (A1); So I buy this one. (A2)
Not-classifiable*	Buy it. (A1); Pay cards (A2); Ah I'm present for my friend. (A2)
Yes/No*	No? (A1); Yes. Yes. (A2); Yes, please. (A2)

# 5.3 Conventionally Indirect Strategy



# 5.4 Examples of Conventionally Indirect Patterns

Patterns	Examples
Ability/Permission	Can I can I try it? (A1) And uhh now, uhh could could you umm discount more? (A2) Eh May I try to ss this shoes? (A1)
Willingness	Would you show me one? (A1)
Suggestory	So, how about er ten percent off? (A2)
Possibility*	Ahh Is it possible to take back this notebook computer today? (A1)
Subjectivizer	But er I hope i it's cheaper. (A2)
Existence*	Do you have do you have any jacket? (A1), Er mm i is there a walking shoes? (A1) I'm looking for some clothes. (A2)
Intention*	I will have it. (A1); I will buy it. (A1), Er I like black color. (A1), Uum I decided that one. (A2)

# 6. RQ2. What linguistic functions do the identified requestive speech acts occur in at each level?

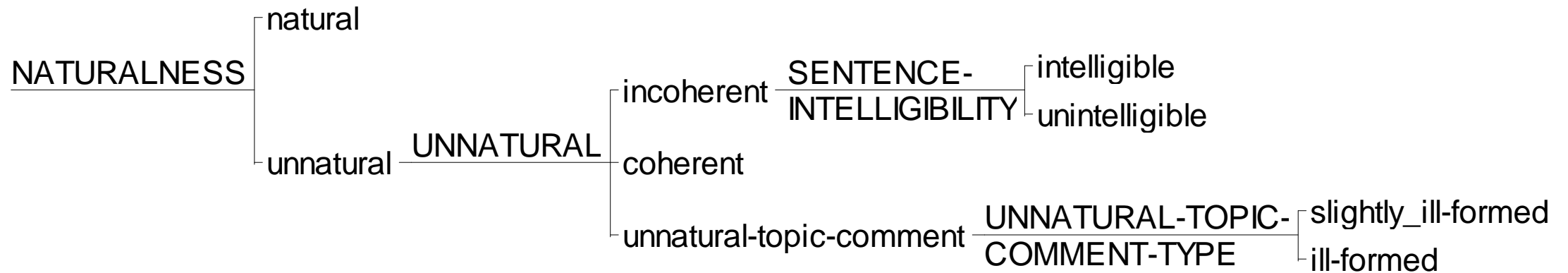
dealing-with-transaction — TRANSACTION-2-TYPE — expressing-intention-to-buy...  
— expressing-or-asking-about-item...

requesting-an-action — REQUESTING — negotiating-for-discount  
— asking-for-alternative-item  
— asking-for-recommendation  
— asking-someone-to-show  
— asking-for-permission-to-test  
— negotiating-for-exchange-or-return  
— asking-for-help  
— asking-for-refund  
— suggesting  
— asking-someone-to-perform

# 6.1 Examples of Typical Functions

Functions	Direct	Conventionally Indirect
Expressing intention to buy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Er mm this please. (A1)</li><li>• Umm I'd like to buy this expensive one. (A2)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I will I will buy it. (A1)</li><li>• I'm looking for some clothes. (A2)</li></ul>
Expressing or asking about item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I want metallic silver. (A1)</li><li>• Ah I'd like to buy cash here. (A2)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• So I'm searching um um very comfortable dress. (A1)</li><li>• Do you have the size of this shoes? (A2)</li></ul>
Negotiating for discount	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More cheap please more cheap. (A1)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If possible, could you discount, please? (A2)</li></ul>
Asking for permission to test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Umm I want to try red color. (A1)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can I try it on? (A2)</li></ul>

# 7. RQ3. What linguistic features characterise successful and erroneous requestive speech acts at each level?



# 7.1 Unnatural Examples: Coherent

## ◆ Direct (A1)

<A>May I help you, sir?</A>

**<B>Yeah. Urr I'd like to I'd like to find I'd like to find a suit.**

<A> Interlocutor

<B> Learner

## ◆ Conventionally Indirect (A2)

<A>Oh sorry. We don't have ur stock. Only<A>

<B>Urr.<B>

<A>only this one is available now.</A>

**<B>Urrr I want buy a new. Then would you please send to my house a new one?<B>**

## 7.2 Unnatural Examples: Incoherent and intelligible

### ◆ Intelligible (A1)

<A>May I help you?</A>

<B>Oh I want D V D recorder.</B>

<A>Uh-huh. Erm we have two types of D V D recorder.</B>

<B>Oh.</B>

<A>What kind do you want?</A>

<B>**How much? Both**</B>

<A>OK, this one is, let's say sixty thousand yen. And this one is fifty thousand yen.</A>



## 7.3 Unnatural Examples: Incoherent and Unintelligible

### ◆ Unintelligible (A1)

<A>Uh-uhu. O. K. What kind of shoes do you like?</A>

<B>Ee cheap price and black shoes.</B>

<A>O K.

<B>My shoe's size is twenty seven centimeters.</B>

<A>O K. We have many here.

**<B>I am I want I wanted I want the um I wanted not many buying shoes. Minor shoes.</B>**

<A>O K.</A>

**<B>I er don't like sh shoes is same, other people.</B>**

## 7.4 Unnatural Examples: Unnatural Topic Comment

### ◆ Slightly ill-formed (A1)

<B> Do you have do you have any jacket?</B>

<A>Yeah. We have many kinds of jackets.</A>

<B>**Er color is mm brown. Do you have?**</B>

### ◆ Ill-formed (A1)

<A>This is twenty five thousand yen.</A>

<B>Er expensive.

<A>Do you think so?

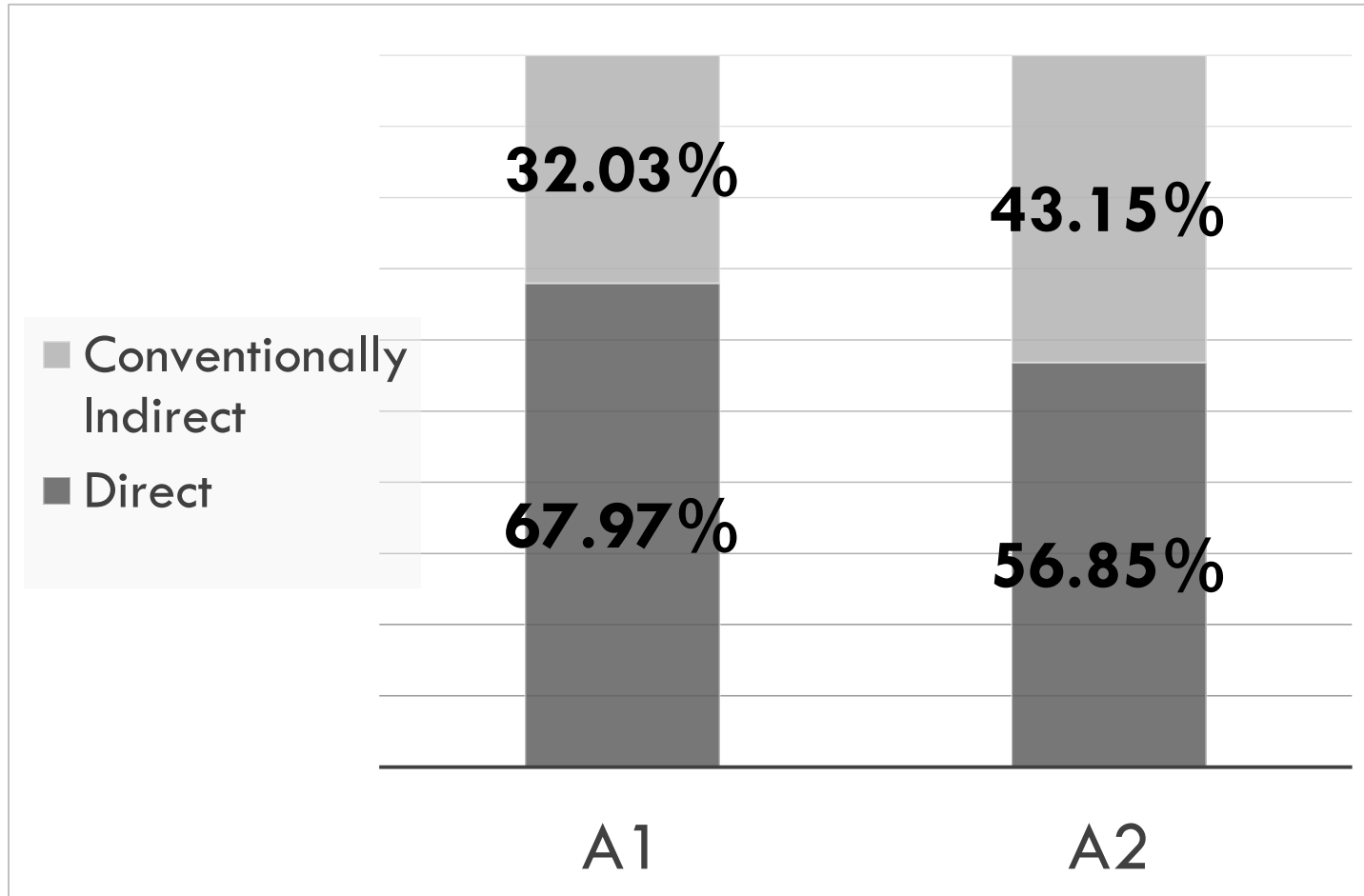
<B>And er ear phone , please.</B>

<A>Ahh O K. Is this one O K?</A>

<B>**Er I'm white color wants**</B>

<A>Ahh. Sorry, we have no white color.</A>

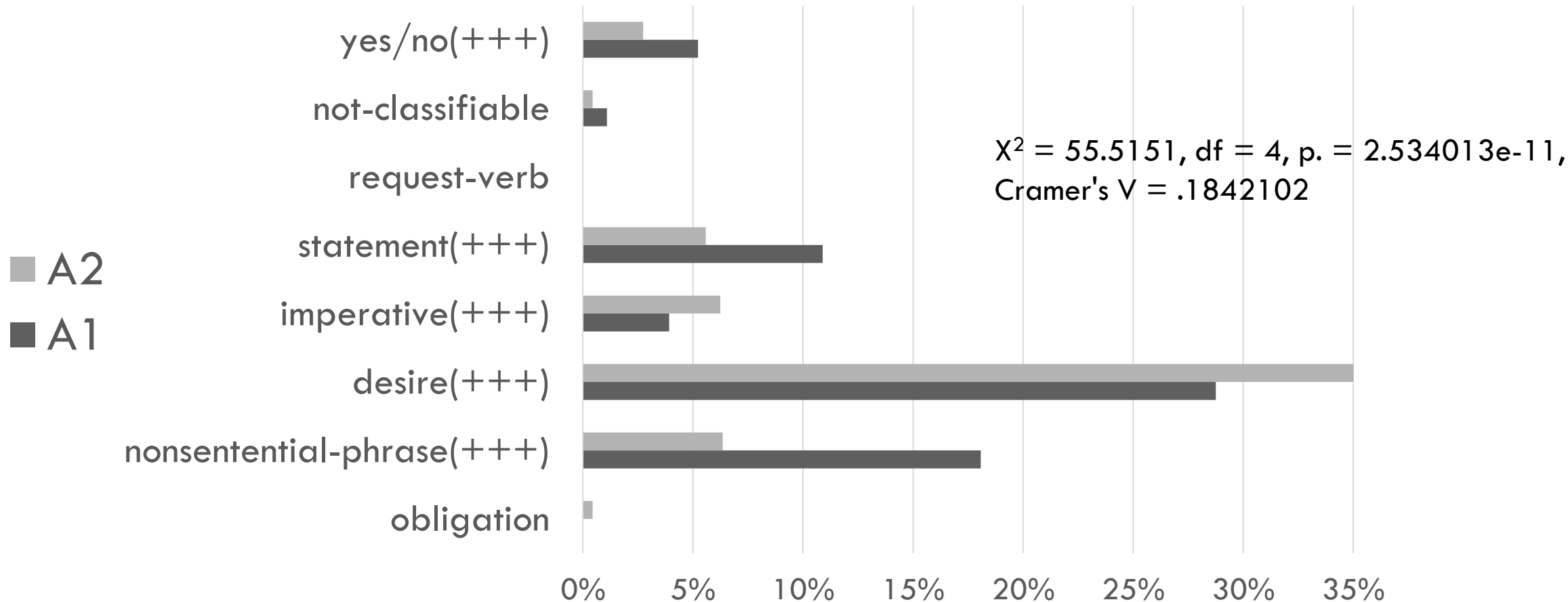
# 8. Research Question 1: Request Strategies



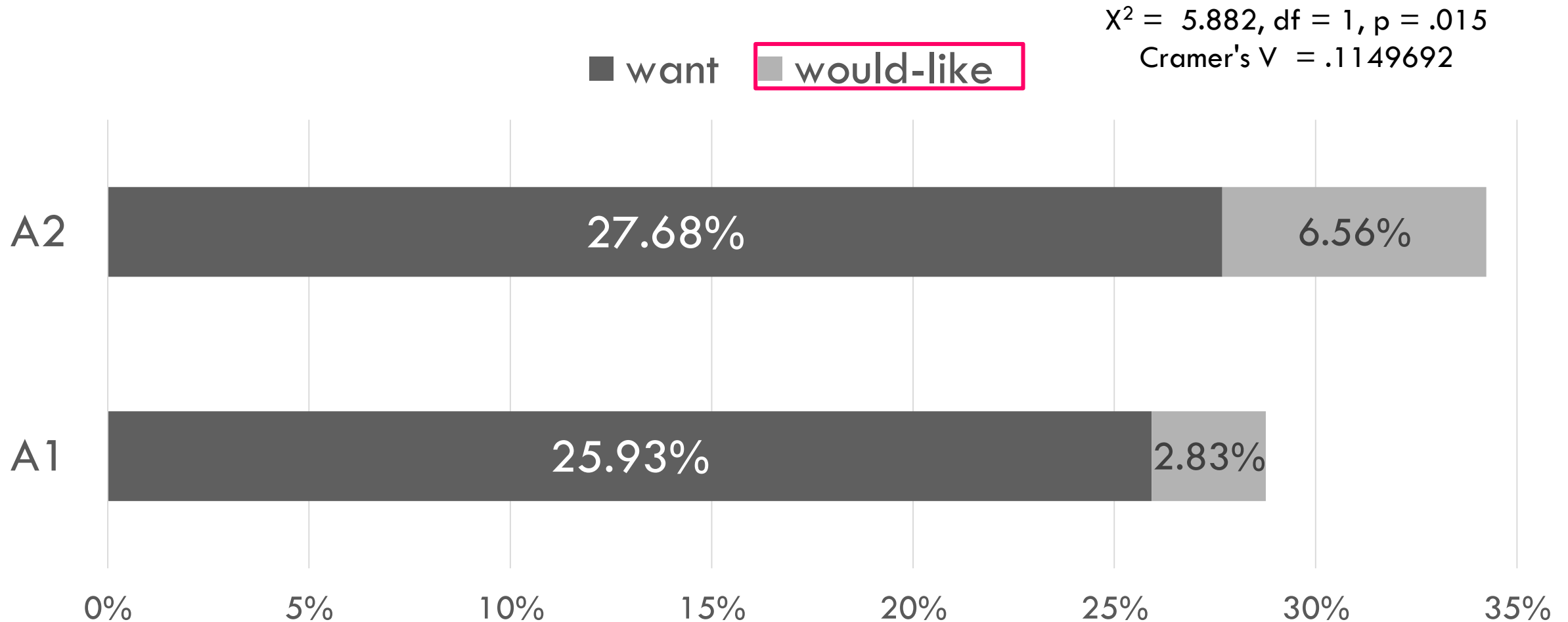
	A1	A2
Conv. Indirect	147	394
Direct	312	519
Total	459	913

$\chi^2 = 15.8379$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .000069$ ,  
Cramer's V = .1074413

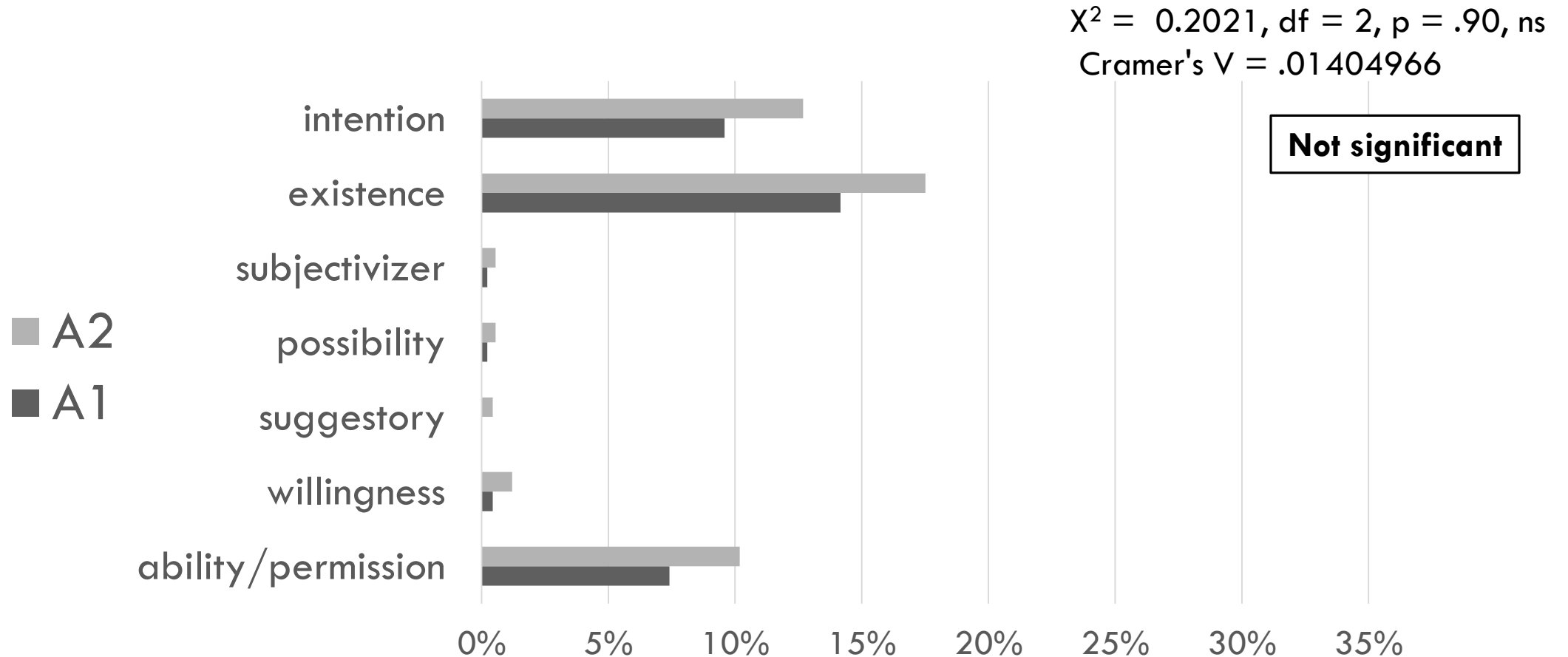
# 8.1 The Distribution of Direct Strategies



# 8.1.1 Direct Linguistic Features: Desire Verbs

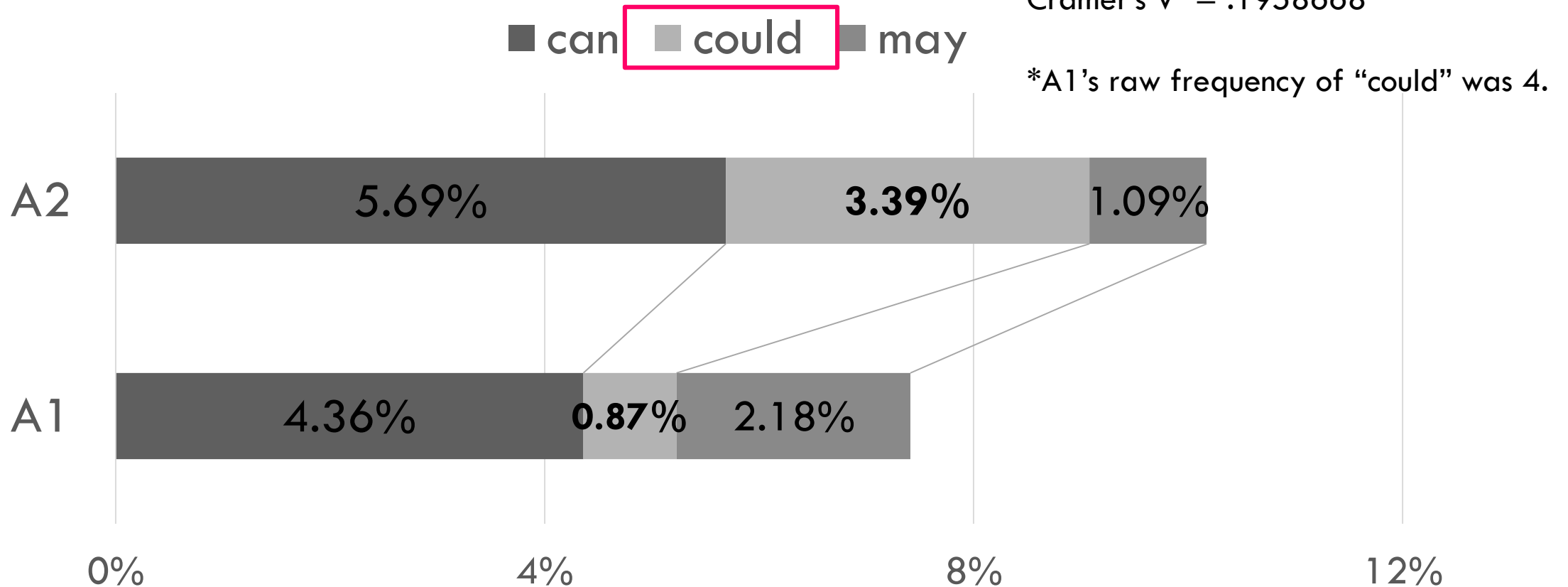


# 8.2 The Distribution of Conventionally Indirect Strategies



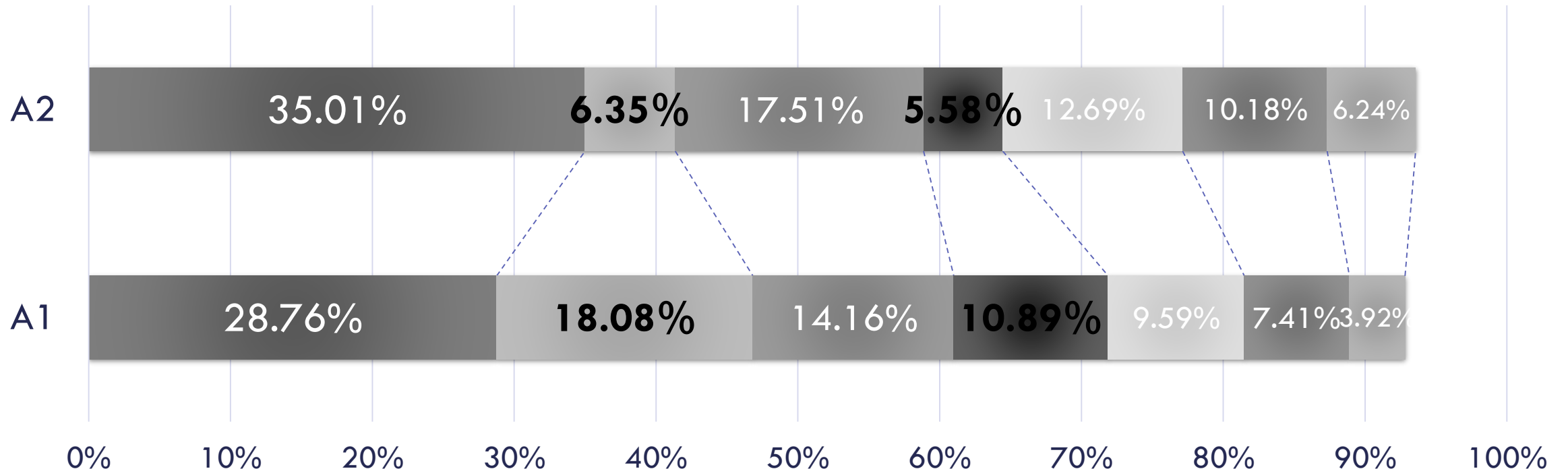
# 8.2.1 Conventionally Indirect Linguistic Features: Ability/Permission

$\chi^2 = 9.7444$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = .007656$   
Cramer's  $V = .1958668$



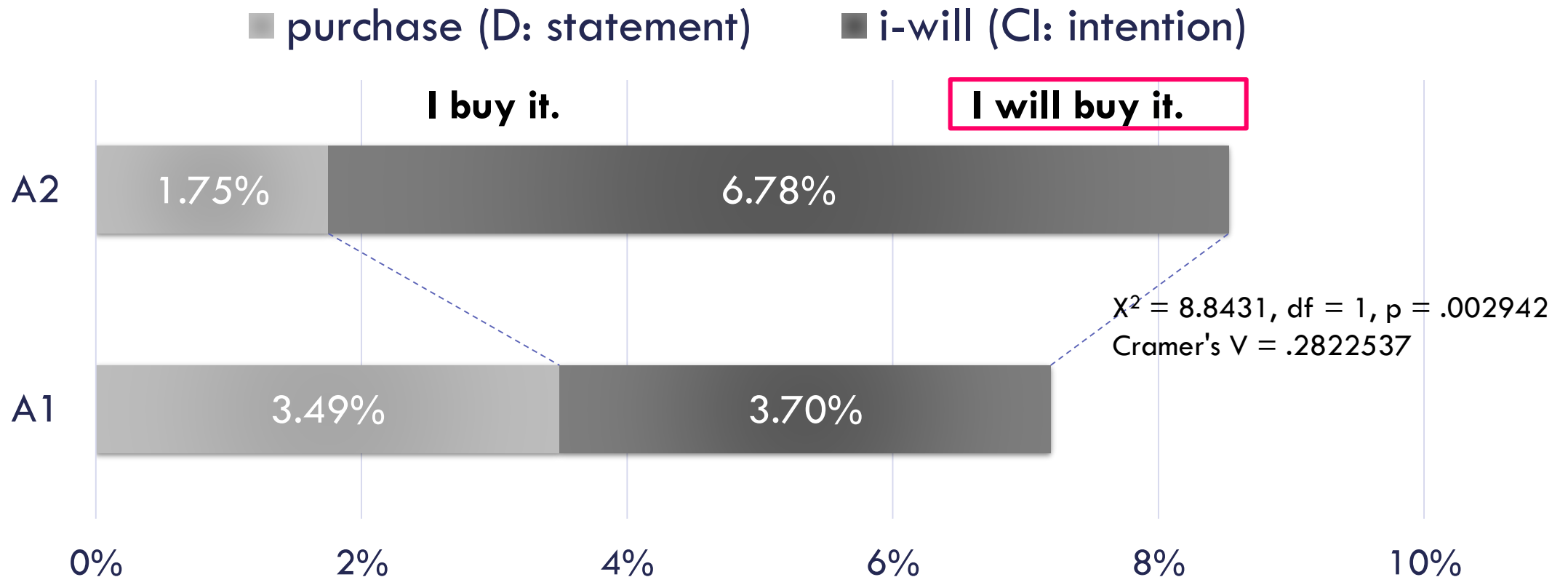
# 8.3 Top Seven Patterns of Direct and Conv. Indirect Strategies

- desire (D)
- nonsentential-phrase (D)
- existence (CI)
- statement (D)
- intention (CI)
- ability/permission (CI)
- imperative (D)

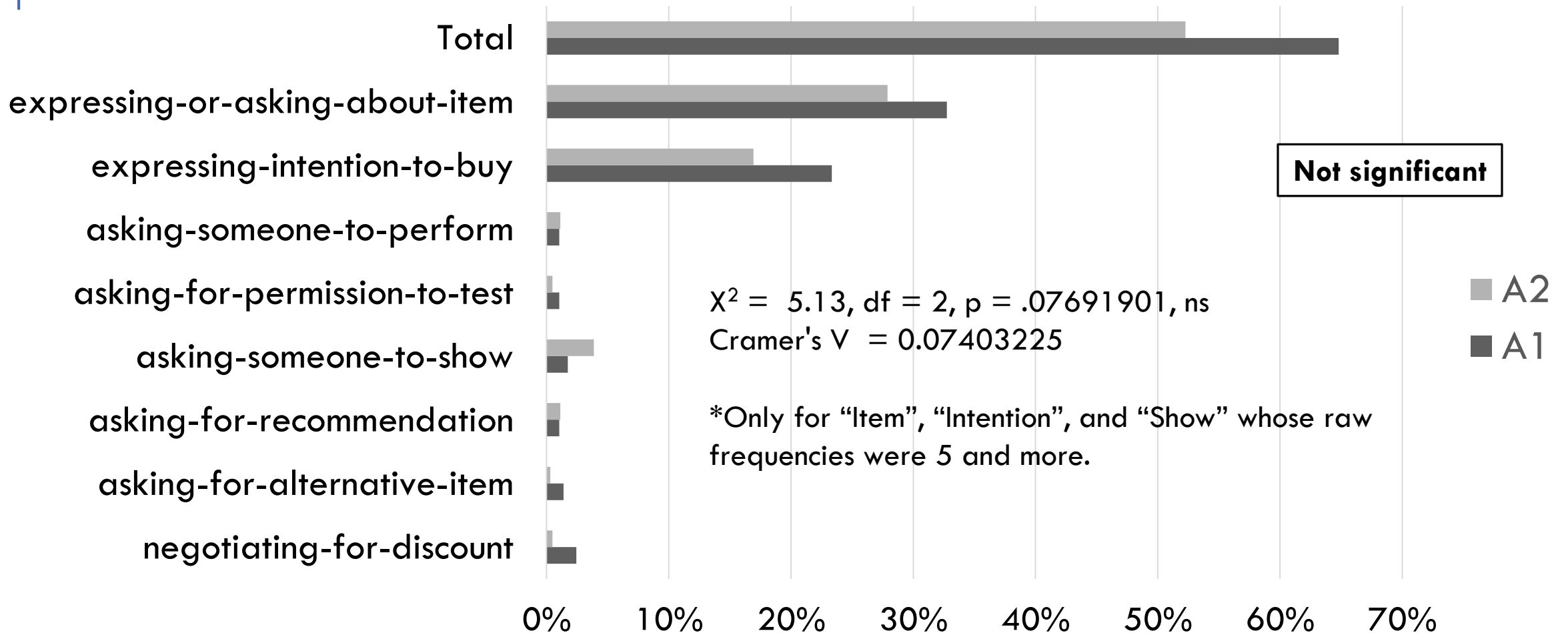




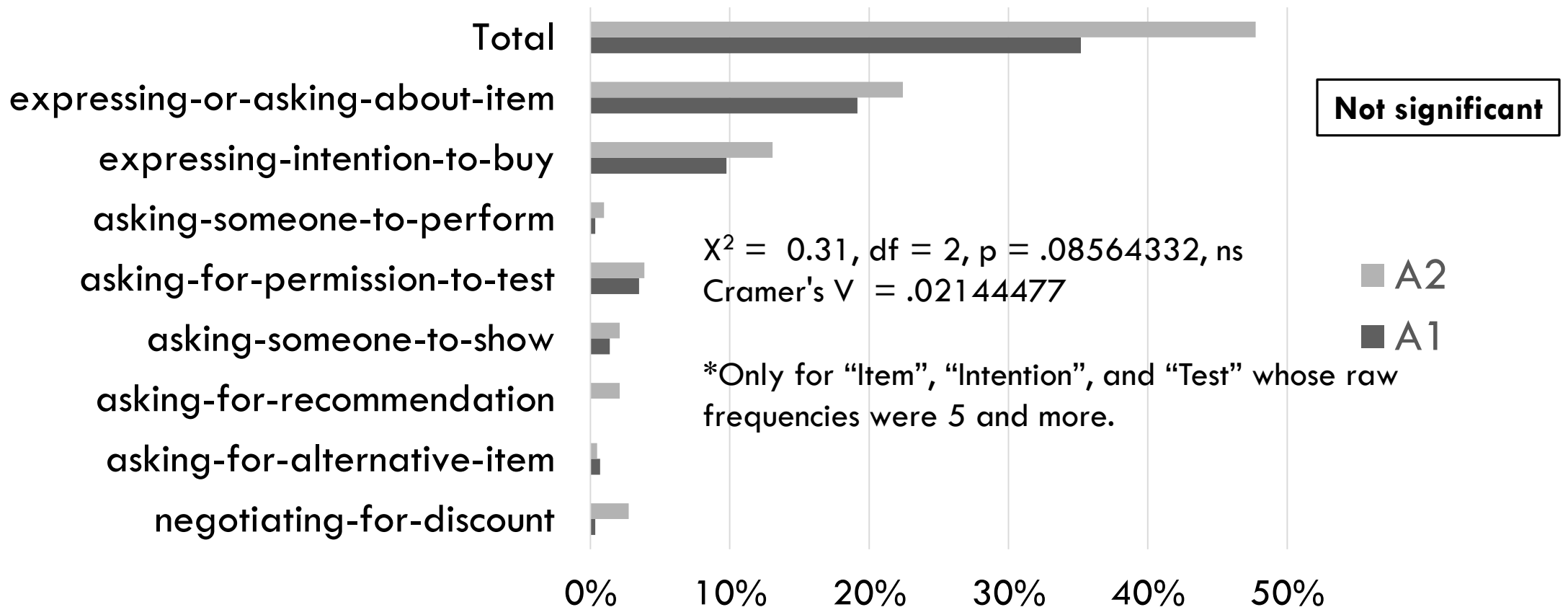
## 8.3.1 Statement (Direct) vs. Intention (Conv. Indirect)



# 9.1 Direct Strategies in Eight Functions



## 9.2 Conventionally Indirect Strategies in Eight Functions

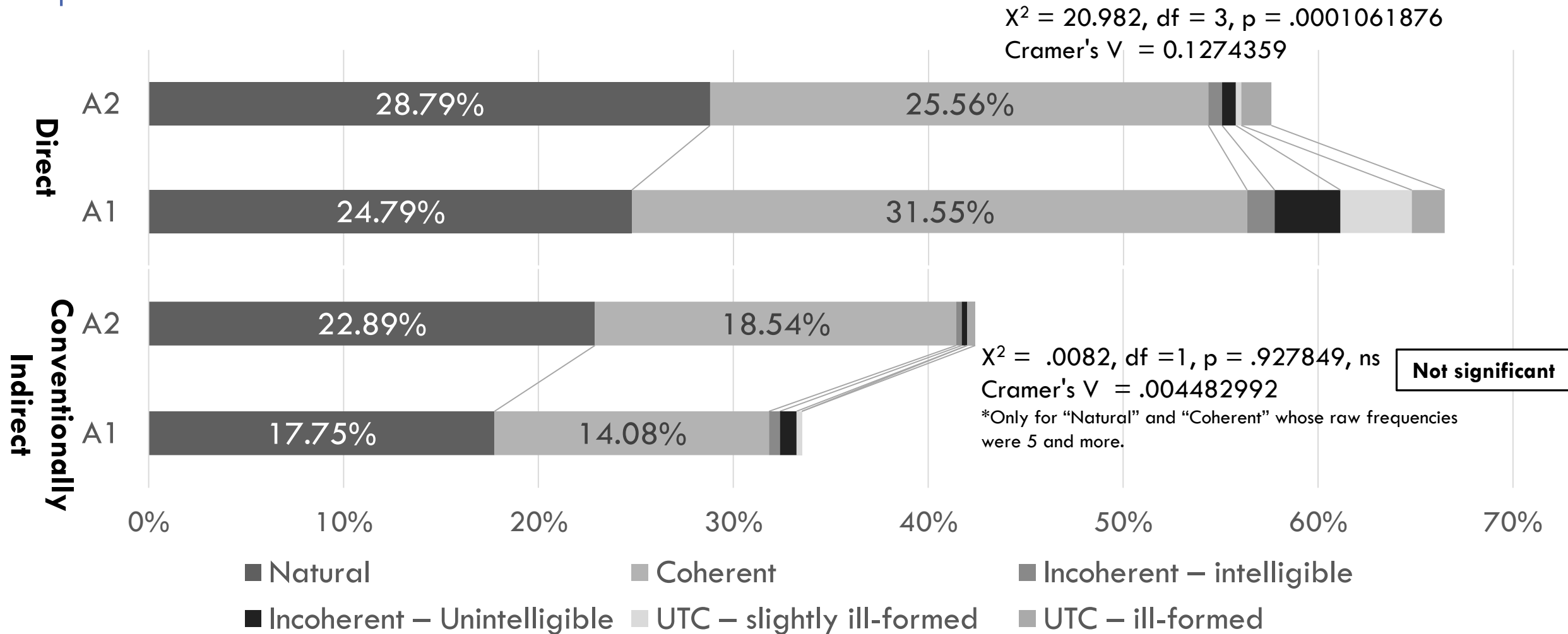


# 10. RESEARCH QUESTION 3: NATURALNESS OF REQUESTS

$\chi^2 = 7.9393$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = .004837$   
Cramer's  $V = .0862601$

Requests	A1	A2
Natural	151 (42.54%)	368 (51.89%)
Unnatural	204 (57.46%)	344 (48.31%)
Total	355	712

# 10.1 The Distribution of Natural vs. Unnatural Segments



# 11. Criterial Features Distinguishing A1 and A2

A1  $\Rightarrow$  A2

Direct  $\Rightarrow$  Conventionally Indirect

Direct

“want”  $\Rightarrow$  “want” & “would like”

Non-sentential Phrase  $\Rightarrow$  Sentence

Direct  $\Rightarrow$  Conv. Indirect

“I buy”  $\Rightarrow$  “I **will** buy”

Conventionally Indirect

“can”  $\Rightarrow$  “can” & “could”

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