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More on Dutch English ... please?

A study of request performance by Dutch native speakers,
English native speakers and Dutch learners of English

een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Letteren

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen,
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volgens besluit van het College van Decanen
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Voor mijn ouders

Voorwoord

Omdat dit het enige stukje proefschrift is dat niet draait om Engelse verzoeken, maar om een heel ander type taalhandeling, schrijf ik dit in het Nederlands. Hier wil ik de mensen die de afgelopen jaren hebben meegewerkt, meegedacht en meegeleefd bedanken.

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Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
1 <i>Understanding requests</i>	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 Interlanguage pragmatics	6
1.2.1 Pragmatic comprehension and perception	7
1.2.2 Production of speech acts	10
1.2.3 Pragmatic transfer	11
1.2.4 Transferability	14
1.2.5 Conclusion	18
1.3 Indirectness and politeness	20
1.3.1 Speech act theory	20
1.3.1.1 Classification of speech acts	20
1.3.1.2 Indirect speech acts	23
1.3.1.3 Conclusion	25
1.3.2 Leech	26
1.3.2.1 General pragmatics	26
1.3.2.2 Leech's notion of indirectness	28
1.3.2.3 The Politeness Principle (PP)	29
1.3.2.4 Cost-benefit, optionality and indirectness	29
1.3.2.5 Conclusion	32
1.3.3 Brown and Levinson	32
1.3.3.1 Face	32
1.3.3.2 Face-saving strategies	33
1.3.4 Conclusion	36
1.4 Indirectness and politeness in psycholinguistics	38
1.4.1 The literal-first model	39
1.4.2 The multiple-meaning model	40
1.4.3 The conventional-meaning model	43
1.4.4 Evaluating competing processing models	46
1.4.5 Explanations of politeness	47
1.4.6 Conclusion	50
1.5 Indirectness and politeness in ILP request studies	50
1.5.1 Early studies	51
1.5.2 CCSARP-related studies	54
1.5.3 Combined approach	59
1.5.4 Evaluating different taxonomies	63
1.6 Conclusion	65

Contents

2	<i>Analysing requests</i>	69
2.1	Introduction	69
2.2	Request modification in ILP studies	69
2.2.1	Request utterances	69
2.2.2	Internal and external modifiers	70
2.2.3	Categories of modifiers	71
2.2.4	Analysis of request modification	73
2.2.5	Modifiers as face-saving strategies	74
2.2.6	Analysing indirectness and politeness	76
2.3	Felicity conditions for requests	79
2.3.1	Essential condition	79
2.3.2	Propositional content condition	80
2.3.3	Sincerity condition	80
2.3.4	Preconditions	80
2.4	Request strategies	83
2.4.1	Seven main request strategies	83
2.4.2	Classification of request strategies	88
2.5	Analysing request modification	89
2.6	Factors affecting the linguistic realization of requests	90
3	<i>Data collection methods in interlanguage pragmatics</i>	93
3.1	Introduction	93
3.2	Data collection methods in ILP studies	93
3.2.1	Comprehension and perception studies	93
3.2.2	Production studies	94
3.3	Assessing the validity of the DCT	95
3.3.1	Oral vs. written DCT data	95
3.3.2	Effect of hearer response	97
3.4	DCT vs. Multiple Choice questionnaires	99
3.5	DCT vs. natural data	100
3.6	Conclusion	103
4	<i>Design of the study</i>	105
4.1	Aim and scope of the study	105
4.1.1	Research questions	106
4.1.2	Dependent variables	106
4.1.3	Independent variables	107
4.2	Method	108
4.2.1	Respondents	108
4.2.2	Materials	109
4.2.2.1	Proficiency test	109
4.2.2.2	Production task	109
4.2.2.3	Request situations	110
4.2.2.4	The judgement task	114
4.2.3	Procedure	115
4.3	Coding and preparation of data	116

Contents

5	<i>Requests: a quantitative analysis</i>	117
5.1	Introduction	117
5.2	Overview	119
5.3	Situational variation in request behaviour	123
5.3.1	Power	124
5.3.2	Social distance	127
5.3.3	Context	130
5.3.4	Cross-cultural differences at the level of individual request strategies	132
5.3.5	Conclusion	133
5.4	Internal and external modification of requests	134
5.4.1	Overall use of modifiers	135
5.4.2	A closer look at internal and external modification	138
5.5	Request modification in relation to request strategy	143
5.5.1	Syntactic, lexical/phrasal and external modifiers in relation to request strategy	144
5.5.2	Modification of request strategies in relation to PSC	146
5.6	Summary and conclusion	149
6	<i>Requests: a qualitative analysis</i>	151
6.1	Introduction	151
6.2	Direct strategies	151
6.2.1	Imperatives	153
6.2.2	Performatives	154
6.2.3	Obligation statements	155
6.2.4	Want statements	155
6.2.5	Suggestions	157
6.3	Indirect strategies	158
6.3.1	Strategies referring to the non-obviousness condition	159
6.3.2	Strategies referring to the willingness condition	160
6.3.3	Strategies referring to the ability condition	163
6.3.4	Hints	164
6.4	Syntactic modification	165
6.4.1	Tag question and negation	167
6.4.2	Tense and aspect	168
6.4.3	Interrogative and conditional clauses	169
6.4.4	Conclusion	170
6.5	Lexical/phrasal modification	170
6.5.1	Politeness markers: please and <i>alsjeblieft/alstublieft</i>	172
6.5.2	Downtoners	174
6.5.3	Understaters	175
6.5.4	Subjectivizers	176
6.5.5	Conclusion	177
6.6	External modification	178
6.6.1	Precommitment and preparators	179
6.6.2	Grounders	180
6.6.3	Disarmers, rewards, appreciation	180
6.6.4	Cost minimizers	182
6.7	Discussion and conclusion	183

Contents

7	<i>The judgement task</i>	189
7.1	Introduction	189
7.2	Authority, familiarity and formality	190
7.2.1	Reliability of authority, familiarity and formality	190
7.2.2	Power vs. authority	191
7.2.3	Social distance vs. familiarity	193
7.2.4	Context vs. formality	195
7.3	Assessments of difficulty, rights & obligations and likelihood of compliance	197
7.3.1	Determining situation types	197
7.3.2	Reliability for difficulty, right, obligation and likelihood	200
7.3.3	Difficulty, right, obligation and likelihood of compliance	201
7.4	A closer look at situations and dimensions	204
7.4.1	Authority, familiarity and formality	206
7.4.2	Rights and obligations	209
7.5	Situational variation in relation to request production	213
8	<i>Discussion and Conclusion</i>	217
8.1	Introduction	217
8.2	Indirectness and politeness in interlanguage pragmatics	217
8.3	Design of the study	218
8.4	Pragmatic competence of Dutch learners of English	219
8.4.1	Request strategies	220
8.4.2	Request modification	222
8.4.3	Situational variation	226
8.4.4	Sociopragmatic perceptions	228
8.4.5	Concluding the findings	229
8.5	Limitations of the study & suggestions for further research	230
8.6	Implications for teaching	232
	References	235
	Appendix A: DCT situations and judgement task	247
	Appendix B: Chi-square analyses request strategies	255
	Appendix C: Chi-square analyses request strategies * design factors	261
	Appendix D: Repeated measures analyses request modification	264
	Appendix E: Unianova analyses situations judgement task	267
	Nederlandse Samenvatting	271
	Curriculum Vitae	278

Introduction

More on Dutch English

Many people are quite impressed with the Dutch ability to speak English, but native speakers of English should realise that Dutch English is seldom 100% perfect. ... Linguistic misunderstandings may easily strengthen the native English speaker's impression that the Dutch are blunt or arrogant

An example: in Amsterdam tram conductors often have to urge the public, entering at the back of the tram, to move forward to allow more passengers to board. As a courtesy to tourists they repeat themselves in 'English'. Now in Dutch one may omit the word 'please' without sounding too rude. But a harsh 'Move to the front, everybody!' through the microphone may come as a bit of a shock to the non-Dutch. (Vossestein, 2001: 68-69)

This passage on 'Dutch English' is from a recent publication called *Dealing with the Dutch*, a book aimed at helping the 'non-Dutch' come to grips with the peculiarities of the Dutch way of life. The passage serves as an illustrative example of Thomas's (1983) claim that because "... pragmatic failure reflects badly on [the nonnative speaker] as a person" (1983: 97), it constitutes an important source of cross-cultural miscommunication. The passage also serves to introduce the topic of this study, the use of politeness and indirectness by Dutch learners of English in making requests.

The realization that pragmatic failure may be an important impediment to successful cross-cultural communication has resulted in an increasing amount of research by second language researchers in the field of what has become known as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), a subdiscipline of second language acquisition research concerned with the investigation of how learners develop pragmatic competence in a foreign or second language. Broadly speaking, ILP research has aimed to investigate how learners encode pragmatic intent in a second language and how they vary their language relative to situational variation. One specific area of pragmatic competence that has been investigated extensively is the ability of learners to understand and use indirect and polite language in performing speech acts, such as requests, apologies or refusals (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989a; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993a; Gass & Neu, 1996; Planken, 2002). Although ILP studies have amply documented learners' ability to understand and use speech acts in the target language, they have also demonstrated that even advanced learners' speech act performance is still different from that of native speakers in a number of respects (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993; Trosborg, 1995).

Learners have, for example, been found to differ from native speakers in their perception of indirectness and politeness levels of speech act strategies (e.g., Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Tanaka & Kawade, 1982), in their assessments of sociopragmatic factors (e.g., Olshtain, 1983), and with respect to both patterns of distribution and form of speech act strategies (e.g., House & Kasper, 1981, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). In addition to the investigation of learners' use of pragmatic

knowledge, ILP research has increasingly been concerned with the investigation of factors that facilitate or impede learners' development of pragmatic competence, such as the role of the learners' native language (e.g., Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Takahashi, 1992, 1995, 1996; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993) or the effect of level of proficiency on the development of pragmatic competence (e.g., Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper & Ross, 1996; Trosborg, 1995).

Learners' ability to make requests, in particular, has received considerable attention in ILP research. As requests are intrinsic face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 65-65), they can be regarded as potential areas of pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication.

Although many studies have investigated learners' ability to vary request strategies (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1983; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Rose, 1992, 1994), few studies have provided detailed accounts of learners' ability to modify requests (notably Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1981, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). In addition, only few studies have looked at the effect of linguistic proficiency on learners' ability to make requests (e.g., Trosborg, 1995; Van der Wijst, 1996). Fewer still have investigated learners' perceptions of sociopragmatic factors in combination with learners' production of requests (e.g., Le Pair, 1997). However, studies in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics have shown that assessments of sociopragmatic factors can be found to vary considerably cross-culturally (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). In addition, evidence reported by studies investigating apologies, complaints or refusals have demonstrated that learners often perceive sociopragmatic factors as differently from native speakers (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; House, 1988; Olshtain, 1983; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Robinson, 1992). Consequently, there is a clear need for studies investigating learners' ability to produce requests in relation to their sociopragmatic perceptions.

The purpose of the present study is to gain more insights in the production of requests in relation to perceptions of situational factors by Dutch learners of English as compared to native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch. As little is known about how learners at different levels of proficiency differ in their perceptions of sociopragmatic factors, it was decided to include learners at two different levels of proficiency. In order to investigate similarities and differences with respect to the production of requests between Dutch learners of English, native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch, two tasks were constructed: a production task and a judgement task. Respondents were asked to formulate (oral) requests in response to situations that varied along three dimensions: power distance, social distance and context. In order to examine whether observed differences and similarities in request performance might be attributable to differences in respondents' assessments of sociopragmatic factors, respondents were also asked to complete a judgement questionnaire in which they were asked to give their judgements on seven dimensions that have been found to determine linguistic variation in requests: the authority relationship between speaker-hearer, degree of familiarity between speaker-hearer, right and obligation of speaker and hearer, difficulty of the request and estimated likelihood of compliance with the request (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989).

By combining the investigation of learners' production and the investigation of learners' sociopragmatic perceptions, the study hopes to gain more insights into possible causes for differences in request behaviour between native speakers of English and Dutch learners of English. This should ultimately point to those areas of request behaviour that might constitute cross-cultural pitfalls for Dutch learners of English in communicating in English.

Overview of the study

The study is organised in the following way. Chapter 1 reviews literature in the field of interlanguage pragmatics and discusses the concepts of indirectness and politeness in relation to the investigation of speech acts and requests in particular. Chapter 2 discusses the analytical framework for the analysis of requests. Chapter 3 presents a review of data collection methods used in ILP research. The design of the study is presented in Chapter 4. Chapters 5 and 6 provide detailed discussions of the results of the production task. Chapter 7 presents the results of the judgement task. Chapter 8 discusses and concludes the findings of the study, and discusses implications of the findings for future investigations and implications for teaching.

Chapter 1

Understanding requests

1.1 Introduction

This introduction will serve to outline how the literature reviewed in this chapter is related to the purpose of this study, an analysis of request performance of Dutch learners of English. In this introduction some key concepts that will play a central role in the analysis of requests will briefly be introduced, as these concepts will act as a guiding principle in the discussion of the literature. The literature review will lead up to a proposal for the analysis of requests, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Interlanguage pragmatics

The present study is one of many in what has become known as the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). In very general terms, ILP is concerned with the acquisition of pragmatic competence by nonnative speakers of a language, or in even more general terms, the study of how nonnative speakers manage to say what they mean in a foreign language. ILP research studies are most concerned with how nonnative speakers learn the rules of language use, rather than with how nonnative speakers learn the rules of the language itself.

The literature review will start with an outline of issues that have occupied a prominent place in ILP research to date and will thus serve to sketch out the background against which the present study was undertaken (section 1.2). An aspect of language use that has consistently received a great deal of attention in ILP is the study of how nonnative speakers perform speech acts such as apologies, refusals, and requests. Generally speaking, nonnative speakers have been found to differ from native speakers, in varying degrees, in both the comprehension and the production of speech acts. The majority of these differences have been found to involve the use of 'polite' language. Results from individual studies have shown that nonnative speakers are not always successful in what might be called 'striking the right note' in a foreign language in communicating their intentions. They have been found to use impolite, but also overly polite language, and they have been found to be too direct, but also not direct enough in communicating their intentions. In addition, they have been found to use different strategies compared to native speakers in communicating their intentions.

Results from these ILP studies have provided important insights with respect to the nature of the findings that might be expected in the analysis of request performance in the present study. More importantly, however, findings from ILP request studies have also raised a number of questions with respect to the analysis of request performance. Essentially, the questions that need to be answered are what it means if we say that a request is 'too direct' or 'impolite', and how notions such as indirectness and politeness can be incorporated in an analytical framework for requests. As will be discussed towards

the end of this chapter (section 1.5), the analysis of request performance has not always been carried out consistently across ILP studies, because studies have taken different approaches to interpreting indirectness and politeness in requests. Therefore, the discussion and evaluation of approaches adopted in ILP studies will be preceded by a review of interpretations of the notions of indirectness and politeness.

Indirectness and politeness

Subsequently, the literature review will turn into a different direction in order to clarify some concepts that have figured prominently in the analysis of nonnative speakers' strategies, such as speech acts, and speech act strategies in particular, indirectness and politeness. The second section of the literature review will look at how insights from speech act theory and politeness theory can be applied in constructing a framework of analysis to be used in the analysis of requests in the present study. Issues that will be covered in this section include the problem of defining speech acts and speech act strategies, problems involving the interpretation of indirect speech acts and, finally, problems related to defining the notions of politeness and indirectness in relation to speech act strategies. This section will conclude with a proposal for the interpretation of indirectness and politeness to be used in this study.

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 will review some evidence and findings on the role of politeness and indirectness in interpreting indirect speech acts from the field of psycholinguistics and interlanguage pragmatics. The first of these two sections discusses evidence from psycholinguistics with respect to the role of indirectness and politeness in the interpretation of speech acts. The second section discusses the role of indirectness and politeness in interlanguage pragmatics. The purpose of this section is to discuss and evaluate the approaches to analysing indirectness and politeness in ILP to date.

Summary

The chapter concludes with a section on how insights from these different disciplines could be applied in constructing a framework for the analysis of requests incorporating the dimensions of indirectness and politeness. This proposal will outline the criteria that will be applied in the construction of a taxonomy to be used in the present study.

1.2 Interlanguage pragmatics

The purpose of this section on interlanguage pragmatics is to present an overview of topics and issues in interlanguage pragmatics research relevant to the present study and to discuss findings from request studies in particular. Issues that will be discussed, some of which are directly relevant to the present study, include aspects of transfer of pragmatic knowledge and factors that have been found to influence transfer of pragmatic knowledge, such as linguistic proficiency, length of stay in the target speech community and language learning environment.

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has been characterized as a 'second-generation hybrid' (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993b: 3), in that it combines theoretical frameworks and

research methodologies from two different subdisciplines, second language acquisition research and pragmatics research, which are in themselves interdisciplinary. Since ILP research is concerned with developmental aspects of second language acquisition, it is tied in with other interlanguage research focussed on the acquisition of linguistic competence, such as interlanguage phonology or semantics. As the focus in ILP is on the acquisition of pragmatic competence, the main concern of ILP research has been to look at how learners develop the ability to understand and use language in context.

Initially, interlanguage pragmatics developed as a spin-off from cross-cultural studies such as, for example, the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a), the primary focus of which was the investigation of language use in context in different speech communities in an attempt to establish universal speech act strategy sets. Against this, mainly cross-cultural perspective gradually an area of research developed in which the acquisition of pragmatic competence by learners of a foreign language became more important.

Initially, the majority of ILP studies were focussed on examining how learners use L2 pragmatic knowledge rather than on examining how learners acquire L2 knowledge. In recent years, the debate among ILP researchers has increasingly been directed at defining the scope and domains of ILP in an attempt to stimulate research on more acquisition-related issues. ILP research agendas have called for more research on, among other things, developmental stages of pragmatic competence, the role of learner characteristics, the role of input and instruction such as research on routes of development, aspects of transferability and methodological issues such as the validity of data collection methods and methods to assess pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992, 1995; Kasper, 1996a, 1996b, 2000, 2001; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Takahashi, 1996). The remainder of this section will be devoted to a brief overview of research areas in ILP that are most relevant to the present study.

1.2.1 Pragmatic comprehension and perception

A number of ILP studies have, either exclusively or as part of their design, investigated the degree to which learners are successful in understanding (indirect) speech acts and/or are sensitive to differences in politeness levels. Roughly speaking, three types of comprehension/perception studies can be distinguished (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993b).

One type of studies has been aimed at investigating whether and how learners understand indirect speech acts in a foreign language. For example, Koike (1989) investigated the ability of learners of Spanish to understand and produce three different types of speech acts (requests, apologies and commands). The learners in this study were asked to listen to situations of a person telling a message to someone else. The messages involved three different speech acts, requests, apologies and commands. The learners were then asked to identify which speech act was involved, and to identify those elements had helped them understand the speech act. Results showed that the learners had no problems in identifying the different speech acts and that, in understanding speech acts,

they tended to rely on formulaic expressions such as 'por favor' (for requests), 'lo siento' (for apologies) and 'rapido' (for commands). Different results, however, were found in a later study by Koike (1996) in which she examined whether English learners of Spanish at different levels of proficiency understood the intent of Spanish suggestions. This time, she found that the low-proficiency learners had more problems understanding the suggestions than the more advanced students. The latter group performed particularly well with respect to their understanding of those suggestions containing formulaic expressions that were similar to English expressions used for suggestions, such as '¿Por qué?' (*Why don't you?*). Likewise, House (1993) found that her German learners of English often phrased inappropriate responses to speech acts because, among other things, they had not yet fully come to grips with the way English indirect speech acts are formulated. Consequently they sometimes based their responses on the literal surface meaning of utterances. In general, then, learners have few problems in understanding indirect speech acts, although less advanced learners have been found better at comprehending indirect speech acts than more proficient learners.

A second, but related, type of perception studies has been directed at investigating nonnative speakers' ability to understand and perceive different levels of politeness expressed in speech act strategies. The issue here is not so much whether learners understand indirect speech acts, but whether they are sensitive to differences in politeness levels. The majority of these studies have found that, by and large, nonnative speakers do not differ from native speakers in their overall perceptions of politeness. However, nonnative speakers have been found to be oversensitive to politeness distinctions in that they tend to distinguish more levels of politeness than native speakers (Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Fraser, Rintell & Walters, 1980; Tanaka & Kawade, 1982; Walters, 1979). Carrell and Konneker (1981), for example, found that high correlations between native and nonnative judgements of politeness on the eight request strategies in their study. The nonnative speakers recognized seven different politeness levels, whereas the native speakers only recognized five. Tanaka and Kawade (1982), who replicated Carrell and Konneker's study, obtained similar results when they investigated native and nonnative speakers' perceptions of twelve request strategies. The nonnative speakers identified seven different politeness levels, whereas the native speakers identified only six.

Some studies have found that learners' sensitivity to differences in politeness is influenced by their length of stay in the target language country. Both Olshtain & Blum-Kulka (1985) and Kitao (1990) found that learners who had been living in the target language country for a considerable period of time were much more successful in judging the politeness level of different speech acts than those who had just arrived in the target country or had never lived there at all.

A third type of comprehension studies are those that have investigated learners' perception and assessment of contextual variables. These studies have tried to determine whether learners differ in their assessment of sociopragmatic factors such as authority and social distance relations between interlocutors, or weight of imposition of the speech act in question. Olshtain (1983) asked learners of Hebrew whether they thought that speakers

of Hebrew apologized more or less than native speakers of their L1. She found that English learners felt that speakers of Hebrew apologized more than native speakers of English. Bergman and Kasper (1993) asked Thai and American respondents to assess a number of contextual factors of apology situations. The factors included two context-external factors: (social) distance, and dominance and four context-internal factors: severity of offence, obligation (for speaker), likelihood (that apology would be accepted) and face-loss (for speaker). They found that both groups assessed the context-external and context-internal factors as unrelated. In addition, it turned out that judgements of contextual factors were the same across all situations, but that there was a great deal of variation across individual situations and individual contextual variables. The twenty situations under study were never assessed entirely the same by the two groups. Although there was overall agreement between the two groups, respondents were found to differ on at least one variable for each of the situations. Differences occurred most frequently with respect to the perception of the obligation for the speaker to apologize and least frequently with respect to the likelihood that the apology would be accepted. With respect to the judgement of the context-internal factors, Bergman and Kasper found that severity of the offence was the most dominant factor in determining the ratings for the other three context-internal factors, likelihood, face-loss and obligation. Dominance, one of the context-external factors, was found to have no effect at all. With respect to social distance it was found that Thai and American respondents only differed in their assessments of the student-professor relationship. Thais perceived this relationship as more close than Americans.

Robinson (1992), who used a verbal report task with Japanese learners to ask them about the proper way to refuse in English found that beliefs about American English refusals varied with proficiency. Her intermediate learners felt that American English refusals were more direct than Japanese refusals, whereas more advanced learners felt that the directness of refusals depended on the context. Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) found that in making complaints, learners turned out to be particularly sensitive to differences in the social obligation of the speech act involved, i.e., whether the complaint was justified. Le Pair (1997) investigated assessments of sociopragmatic variables in request situations by Dutch learners of Spanish. He found that the learners' assessments were similar to those of the native speakers of Dutch, but different from those of the native speakers of Spanish. This indicates that the learners had not adjusted their assessments, but had judged the situations as if they were Dutch.

It can be concluded that learners seem to assess contextual variables differently from native speakers. Some proficiency effects have been found in that more advanced learners are more successful in assessing foreign language situations than less advanced learners. With respect to comprehension it can be concluded that nonnative speakers are, by and large, quite competent at understanding indirect speech acts. They are also sensitive, albeit at times perhaps oversensitive, to differences in politeness levels and sociopragmatic variables. Consequently, their judgements do not always neatly correspond to those of native speakers.

1.2.2 Production of speech acts

A considerable number of studies have looked at the production of speech acts by native and nonnative speakers of a variety of languages. The vast majority of these studies have analysed requests and apologies, although other speech acts have also been examined. These other speech acts include suggestions (e.g., Banerjee & Carrell, 1988; Koike, 1994, 1996; Rintell, 1981), complaints (e.g., Nakabachi, 1996; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987; Trosborg, 1995), chastisement (e.g., Beebe & Takahashi, 1989b), expressions of gratitude (e.g., Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986), refusals (Beebe et al., 1990; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). While a majority of studies have included learners of English, learners of other languages have also been investigated, such as Chinese (e.g., Kasper, 1995), German (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1981; House, 1989), Hebrew (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982, 1991; Olshtain, 1983; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993), French (e.g., Geis & Harlow, 1996; Van der Wijst, 1996; Van Mulken, 1996), Japanese (e.g., Kasper, 1992b) and Spanish (e.g., Koike, 1989, 1994, 1996; Le Pair, 1997).

Studies investigating the realization of speech acts have found varied results with respect to directness level of strategies used by learners in comparison with native speakers, level of politeness expressed in strategies and utterance length of responses. For example, Blum-Kulka (1983) found that English learners of Hebrew tended to be less direct than native speakers of Hebrew in formulating requests. Le Pair (1997) found that Dutch learners of Spanish used fewer direct strategies, in particular imperatives, than his native speakers of Spanish.

On the other hand, studies have also found that learners tended to use more direct speech act strategies than native speakers. House and Kasper (1987) found that both Danish and German learners of English preferred more direct levels of realizing requests than native speakers of English. They also found that the range of directness was more pronounced for both groups of learners than for the native speakers, i.e., the learners used more different levels of directness than the native speakers. Trosborg (1995), too, found that even advanced Danish learners of English used more direct request strategies than the native speakers of English. Banerjee and Carrell (1988) found that Chinese learners of American English produced more direct suggestions than native speakers of American English. Beebe and Takahashi (1989b) found that Japanese learners of English were more direct than native speakers in communicating chastisement and disagreement than American native speakers. Billmyer and Varghese (2000) found that learners of English from a variety of L1 backgrounds used more direct request strategies than native speakers.

In addition to using different levels of directness, learners have also been found to use different types of strategies than native speakers. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991), for example, found that their nonnative speakers frequently resorted to asking questions in rejections, which was not a strategy used by native speakers. Murphy and Neu (1996) found that Korean learners of American English frequently included elements of criticism in their complaints. The American native speakers in the study, who were asked to give

acceptability judgements of the learners' answers, felt that these elements of criticism were both unacceptable and potentially harmful when making complaints.

In addition to using different request strategies, learners have also been found to differ from native speakers with respect to length of utterance. A number of studies have found that learners tend to produce longer speech act utterances than native speakers (the 'waffle phenomenon', cf. Edmondson & House, 1991), which was mainly due to the fact that the learners tended to use more supportive moves to modify their speech acts (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Edmondson & House, 1991; House & Kasper, 1987). Tentative explanations for this phenomenon have pointed at the learners' tendency to 'better be safe than sorry' in a foreign language. In other words, learners might feel inclined to include extra supportive moves in, for example, requests, to make sure that their message comes across. In contrast, however, Beebe and Takahashi (1989b) reported that their American native speakers used more softeners and positive remarks in expressing disagreement than their Japanese learners of English, who sounded rather direct because they tended to use less elaborate strategies to express disagreement.

In summary, learners have been found to be reasonably successful in producing speech act strategies, although they have been found to vary, to some extent at least, from native speakers with regard to directness level of speech act strategies, type (content) of strategies and length of utterance.

1.2.3 Pragmatic transfer

Apart from the investigation of learners' comprehension and production of different speech acts, ILP has been concerned with the role and influence of the learner's native language and culture on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. More specifically, a number of ILP studies have investigated whether learners transfer pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2.

Following Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983), most ILP studies make a distinction between two broad categories of transfer: sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic. Leech (1983), in setting up his framework of general pragmatics considers sociopragmatics as 'the sociological interface of pragmatics', which is concerned with the influence of sociocultural and contextual factors in determining language use. These factors include dimensions of power distance and social distance, but also for instance, rules specifying what constitute taboo topics in particular situations or cultures. Sociopragmatics is mainly concerned with how people vary their linguistic behaviour relative to contextual and sociocultural constraints. Pragmalinguistics, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with the linguistic means or resources that languages provide for conveying communicative intentions such as, for example, complaints or apologies. What and how forcefully speakers communicate their intentions is determined by sociopragmatic rules, but how their intentions are 'encoded' in linguistic means and subsequently interpreted by hearers, is determined by pragmalinguistic rules of the language in question. These theoretical insights were subsequently applied by Thomas (1983), who tried to account for different types of problems that learners face in cross-cultural communication. Thomas claims that,

apart from learning the grammatical rules of a given foreign language, learners also need to learn how these rules should be applied in actual communication. So, in addition to learning to understand what is said, they also need to learn 'what is meant' by what is said. Thomas argues that problems that learners face in acquiring this pragmatic competence fall into two broad categories. Learners need to learn what the communicative intent is of an utterance, i.e., whether it was to be interpreted as a request, a promise, etc., but also what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour relative to sociocultural and contextual constraints. What complicates the learners' task is that cultures may vary in the way communicative intent is encoded in linguistic forms, but may also vary in what is considered appropriate linguistic behaviour. If languages differ in the way intent is encoded in linguistic forms, this may give rise to pragmalinguistic failure if learners transfer their native speaker norms to the foreign language. An example provided by Thomas is that of Russian learners of English who often fail to interpret the utterance 'Would you like to read?' as a polite request, but instead interpret it as a question about their preferences. Sociopragmatic failure might occur when languages vary in what is considered polite linguistic behaviour. If, for example, learners assess contextual information in a situation differently from native speakers, they might be inclined to use too direct (or indirect) strategies in formulating requests. Thomas was mainly concerned with pragmatic failure as a possible cause for cross-cultural communication breakdown and was thus focussed on looking at the transfer of pragmatic knowledge in situations where languages differ. Transfer of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge in cross-cultural encounters may lead to pragmatic failure and thus miscommunication.

In mainstream SLA, however, the term 'transfer' is no longer restricted to (negative) transfer of knowledge resulting in 'error' or 'failure', but has also come to include (positive) successful transfer. Consequently, most recent ILP studies have extended Thomas' original definition to include both positive and negative transfer. Thus, pragmatic transfer has come to refer to the "influence of learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (Kasper, 1992a: 207). Pragmatic transfer, then, does not necessarily result in performance that is different from the target norm (negative transfer), but can also lead to successful native(-like) linguistic production (positive transfer). ILP studies also distinguish between pragmalinguistic transfer, "the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L1 influences learners' perception and production of form-function mappings in L2" and sociopragmatic transfer, "which is operative when learners' social perceptions underlying language users' interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts" (Kasper, 1992a: 209).

Negative transfer

Sociopragmatic (negative) transfer has been found to occur both at the level of appropriateness of speech acts and at the level of choice of strategy. Both Beebe et al.

(1990) and Takahashi and Beebe (1993) found that Japanese learners of English transferred L1 pragmatic knowledge relating to contextual factors to their L2. Beebe et al. found that Japanese learners varied their refusals according to other sociopragmatic dimensions than the native speakers of American English. The Japanese learners tended to vary their responses depending on whether their interlocutor was lower or higher in status, just as the Japanese native speakers did. The Americans, however, used the same strategies to people with higher or lower status, but different strategies for status equals versus status unequals. Takahashi and Beebe found that, unlike Americans, Japanese learners (and Japanese native speakers) were reluctant to use positive remarks, especially in situations where they had to correct people in lower status positions. The authors suggest that this might be due to a difference in politeness orientation between America and Japan. In Japan speakers are less oriented at using positive politeness than in America, so it is possible that the Japanese learners refrained from using positive remarks in English because they were not used to doing this in their native language. Similar effects relating to the status of interlocutors were reported by Doğançay-Aktuna and Kamıplı (1997), who also looked at how speakers get listeners to correct mistakes they have made. They found that Turkish learners of English, just like native speakers of Turkish, were less likely to tell people to correct their mistakes than Americans, which suggests that the learners may have been influenced by their L1 norms.

Other studies have found that learners are not always successful in deciding whether and when to use certain speech act strategies. Cohen and Olshtain (1981) found that Hebrew learners of English transferred their L1 cultural patterns about when and how to apologise in English and failed to express apology and offer repair as frequently as native speakers of English. Olshtain (1983) reported similar findings with respect to the role of L1 cultural norms. When studying the production of apologies by English and Russian learners of Hebrew they found that Russian learners in particular tended to base decisions on whether and how often to apologise on what they would do in Russian. Olshtain suggests that the difference between the English and Russian learners was due to different perceptions that the two groups of learners had of the speech act in question. The Russian learners, who took a 'universalist' perspective, felt that apologising is a universal phenomenon. Consequently, they felt no need to adjust their way of apologising when communicating in a foreign language. The English learners, on the other hand, acted on the assumption that apologies are language-specific, in other words, that different cultures have different rules. Consequently, they tried to adjust their speech act behaviour to what they felt was the Hebrew way.

Pragmalinguistic (negative) transfer has been found to occur at the level of overall politeness style, but also at the level of conventions of means and/or forms used to formulate strategies. Blum-Kulka (1982) found that her English learners of Hebrew used an overall politeness style that was different from that of native speakers of Hebrew, which could, partially at least, be attributed to transfer of social norms and appropriateness. She found that in some situations learners used less direct strategies, which seemed to reflect a similar tendency in their L1. However, she also found that the learners' choices for either more direct or less direct strategies did not systematically

conform to patterns in L1. House and Kasper (1987) found that learners transferred certain pragmalinguistic forms and means from their native language. In this study both German and Danish learners of English transferred the range of directness levels from their native language, i.e., they were found to vary the directness level of their request strategies more than the native speakers of English. Other instances of transfer concerned the use of mitigating devices used to modify the impact of the requests. House (1988) found that German learners tended to use 'self-oriented' strategies, characteristic of German, rather than English 'other-oriented' apology strategies. The learners also tended to use certain routinized formulaic expressions for apologies that were typical of German, but not of English. Beebe et al. (1990), who also reported instances of sociopragmatic transfer, observed that at the pragmalinguistic level transfer occurred in the English of Japanese learners with respect to the order, tone and frequency of the semantic formulas used in refusals. On the whole, the learners' refusals were much more formal than the American refusals, contained different elements, such as excuses and statements of principle, and frequently included apologies.

positive transfer

A few studies have also found that learners sometimes quite successfully transfer pragmatic knowledge of L1 to L2 (positive transfer). Positive transfer has, just like negative transfer, been found to occur at different levels. Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983) found that English learners of Hebrew were quite successful in transferring those request strategies that were the same in English and Hebrew (but less successful in those that were different). Faerch and Kasper (1989) found that both German and Danish learners of English successfully transferred questions referring to a hearer's ability to perform a request. Maeshiba et al. (1996) found that in their study of apologizing by Japanese learners of English more positive than negative transfer occurred. Positive transfer was found for two different proficiency groups with the advanced learners being most successful at using strategies that were similar in Japanese and American English.

In summary, transfer (both negative and positive) has been found to occur at both the sociopragmatic and the pragmalinguistic level for learners from a variety of L1 backgrounds. Negative transfer has consistently received more attention in ILP research than positive transfer because it is more likely to result in pragmatic failure (Kasper, 1996a).

1.2.4 Transferability

The studies described so far were, predominantly, concerned with locating instances of transfer. Increasingly, however, researchers have called for more research with respect to the 'transferability' of pragmatic knowledge, in other words, how, why and when L1 pragmatic knowledge is estimated to be transferable to L2 (e.g., Kasper, 1996a, Takahashi, 1996). The most systematic attempt at investigating the process of pragmatic transfer in requests has been the work of Takahashi, who applied concepts developed in

studies examining transferability of syntactic, lexical and semantic features to transferability of pragmatic knowledge (Takahashi, 1992, 1995, 1996).

In ILP studies a number of criteria have been proposed to define transferability. Faerch and Kasper (1987) distinguish between linguistic criteria and psycholinguistic criteria that have been put forward in accounting for transferability. Definitions of transferability that have employed linguistic criteria are those in which predictions about transferability are based on structural properties of L1 and L2. An example of this approach is Eckman's (1977) 'markedness differential hypothesis', which relies on similarities and differences between L1 and L2 and the relative markedness of structural properties for the prediction of transfer. Generally speaking, the prediction is that the more typical and unmarked an L1 structure is, the more likely it is to be transferred. The concept of markedness is strongly related to the notion of universality that has also been proposed as a criterion for transferability (Gass, 1979). Gass claims that universality interacts with structural (surface) characteristics of L1 and L2 in determining whether transfer will occur. Faerch and Kasper argue, however, that it is questionable whether the concepts proposed in these studies are 'psychologically real' for L2 learners. In other words, they claim that, among other things, it is not clear whether L2 learners do in fact, regard particular L1 features as more typical or more marked than others. Also, it is not clear to what extent transferability criteria should be based on both L1 and L2 properties.

Other studies (esp. Takahashi, 1992, 1995, 1996) have adopted Kellerman's (1983, 1986, 1987) approach to (lexical) transferability. Kellerman claims that although equivalence between L1 and L2 may lead to transfer, this is not to say that transfer will actually occur. Whether or not transfer occurs, depends on constraints that are primarily determined by the learners' perceptions of their L1. Kellerman proposed the following three criteria for transferability:

- (a) psycholinguistic markedness; if a particular structure (for example, an idiomatic expression is felt to be typical (i.e., marked) of L1, transfer is not likely to occur;
- (b) the reasonable entity principle (REP); learners tend to transfer only those structures that they feel 'fit in' with what they already know about the L2. Those L1 features that are not in line with what they have already mastered, will not, in principle, be transferred to L2
- (c) learners' psychotypologies; if learners feel that L1 and L2 are relatively similar languages, they will be more inclined to transfer structures to L2.

Takahashi (1992), applying Kellerman's approach to transfer of pragmatic knowledge, defined pragmatic transferability as the probability with which an L1 strategy will be transferred relative to other L1 strategies. She selected five Japanese conventionally indirect requests and their English equivalents on the basis of earlier studies (Takahashi, 1987; Takahashi & DuFon, 1989) and asked Japanese learners at two levels of proficiency to indicate how acceptable these strategies were in four different contexts. These acceptability scores formed the basis for the calculation of the pragmatic transferability rate of each request. This transferability rate was calculated by subtracting the acceptability rate of the English request from the acceptability rate of the Japanese request. The resulting transferability rate was taken to represent the 'psycholinguistic

markedness' of each strategy. If a request strategy was judged (by Japanese respondents) to be acceptable in Japanese and in English, the strategy was considered to be 'transferable'. Conversely, if a strategy was considered to be acceptable in Japanese, but not in English, the strategy was considered to be non-transferable. Takahashi reports that her findings indicate that the transferability of two strategies in particular was determined by contextual factors, such as content and the imposition of the request in question. She also found that the two groups of learners differed in their acceptability judgements.

In later studies Takahashi (1995, 1996) discussed two major problems in her original design. First, she argues that the pairs of request strategies used as stimuli in the earlier study may not have been real equivalents in the perception of the learners, since they had been selected on the basis of theoretical considerations. The question is, however, whether these request strategies were actually perceived to be equivalent by the learners in the study. The second problem, she points out, was that the 'learners' own perceptions', a key concept in transferability research, may not have been reflected enough in her original definition of transferability, which relied solely on acceptability ratings. In a more detailed follow-up study (1995), the definition was extended to include not only contextual appropriateness of L1 strategies but also equivalence of L1 and L2 strategies with respect to contextual appropriateness.

Since some effects for context and proficiency had been found in the earlier study, Takahashi's (1995) subsequent study was also specifically aimed at investigating the influence of contextual factors of the request situation and level of proficiency on learners' transferability perceptions. Here, learners were not just asked to rate the acceptability of Japanese request strategies, but, in addition, were asked to indicate whether the Japanese and English strategies were equivalent in terms of contextual appropriateness. The transferability rate was calculated by adding the ratings for contextual appropriateness and equivalence for each strategy.

Results showed that the five indirect strategies under investigation were differentially transferable from Japanese to English. The difference in transferability was due to the different degree of transferability of conventions of usage, i.e., those conventions that are typically used in a culture to perform requests. It turned out that, specifically, polite preparatory questions, such as 'Would you please ...' were considered more transferable than for example 'want' statements ('I want you to...').

With respect to the role of proficiency it turned out that the only significant difference between the two groups was the way 'want' statements were felt to be transferable. The low proficiency learners felt that the 'want' statements were more transferable than the high proficiency learners. This was mainly due to the fact that the low proficiency learners judged these requests as more equivalent to the corresponding Japanese strategies.

Takahashi (1995) also found that the transferability of strategies depended on the type of request in question. The more polite strategies were found to be more transferable in contexts with high-imposition requests. Takahashi suggests that this might have been due to a tendency by the learners to use the safest and most polite strategies for making 'difficult' requests. Other (less polite) strategies were found to be more transferable in

contexts with low-imposition requests, i.e. those requests that were considered less difficult.

A striking result was found with respect to the ability of both groups of learners to identify those English requests that were functionally, but not conventionally equivalent. It turned out that learners' equivalence judgements were based on whether an English request was formulated with the same conventional forms as a Japanese request, but not on whether an English request had the same communicative effect as a Japanese request. So, requests including similar conventional forms, such as modals or politeness markers, were felt to be more equivalent than requests formulated with different (pragmalinguistic) conventions but were similar with respect to communicative effect. This suggests that learners tend to base themselves on equivalence of form rather than on equivalence of function in deciding whether a particular strategy is appropriate or not.

Although Takahashi's work is, to date, one of the most detailed attempts to investigate conditions for pragmatic transfer to occur, it should perhaps be noted that the results are based on a small selection of request strategies (only five indirect strategies) in four situations that were varied according to one dimension, imposition of the request. Moreover, results were based on acceptability judgement tasks, which are aimed at learners' perception of speech acts, but not at the production of speech acts. Although learners might rate certain L2 strategies as acceptable on the basis of conventional equivalence with L1, it is not clear whether this implies that they would also actually produce these strategies in real interaction.

In addition to the studies described above, which were specifically designed to investigate constraints on transferability, a number of studies have reported findings related to factors that seem to play a role in determining pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2. Findings reported include effects for the role of proficiency (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Maeshiba et al., 1996; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, 1993; Trosborg, 1995), the role of length of stay in the target community (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Kitao, 1990), and learners' perception of universality versus language-specificity of L1 features (Olshtain, 1983).

Some studies have found that advanced learners are more prone to transfer from L1 to L2 (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987, 1993). Explanations suggest that this is because advanced learners are proficient enough to 'say what they want to say'. Less proficient learners might be 'prevented' from transferring strategies because they have to make do with the linguistic means they have available. Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) findings, however, present a more detailed picture of the role of proficiency. They found that advanced learners in a foreign language learning environment, but not those in a second language learning environment, were more likely to transfer pragmatic knowledge.

Kitao (1990) found that type of learning environment had an effect on how learners perceived the politeness levels of requests. ESL learners were found to be better at judging the politeness of requests than EFL learners. Kitao found that length of stay in the target community played an important role in making learners more sensitive to

differences in politeness in the second language. Similar effects for length of stay are reported by Olshtain & Blum-Kulka (1985).

Maeshiba et al. (1996), who set out to test Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) results that advanced learners are more likely to transfer strategies, found that, in fact, the reverse was true. In this study the less advanced learners transferred more L1 apology strategies. Similar results were obtained by Robinson (1992), who found that lower proficiency learners were more likely to use L1-type refusal strategies in their English.

Takahashi (1996), who also looked at the effect of proficiency, found no correlation between proficiency and rate of transferability. Of the five request strategies that she tested in her study only one was in fact perceived more transferable by the low proficiency group than the high proficiency group. On the basis of her results, however, she does suggest that level of sociopragmatic knowledge, rather than proficiency, might play an important role in determining the rate of transferability. In other words, learners who are more familiar with L2 contexts might be less inclined to transfer L1 strategies than those who are less familiar with these contexts, regardless of their level of proficiency.

Yet another factor that has been found affect transfer is learners' perception of the nature of the speech act in question (e.g., Olshtain, 1983; Robinson, 1992). As mentioned earlier, Olshtain (1983) found that whether learners transfer L1 strategies depended on whether they felt that the speech act in question was language-specific or universal. Robinson (1992) also found that her Japanese learners had a 'language-specific' perspective of refusals. The learners said that they thought that Americans were much more explicit than Japanese. Consequently, they felt that direct and explicit refusals were quite acceptable in American English. The universal-specific dimension is strongly related to the notion of psycholinguistic markedness described above.

1.2.5 Conclusion

What can be concluded from this brief overview of ILP studies is that a considerable amount of ILP research has been devoted to the study of both comprehension and production of speech acts by native and nonnative speakers of a variety of languages. A central position in these studies has been occupied by the investigation of politeness and indirectness in speech acts. Learners have been found to display varying degrees of success in understanding indirect speech acts. They have also been found to differ from native speakers with regard to politeness and directness in their realization of speech acts.

A number of factors have been found to influence learners' perception and production of speech acts. One factor that has been found to play an important role is level of proficiency. Less proficient learners are generally less successful in approaching native speaker target norms than more advanced learners. Sometimes beginning learners simply lack the linguistic means to understand or convey subtle differences in politeness or indirectness. In addition, they might also lack the necessary sociopragmatic knowledge to enable them to assess contextual and situational variables correctly. Even fairly advanced

learners, however, have been found to differ from native speakers in their production of speech acts. A related factor is length of stay in the foreign speech community. Generally speaking, learners who have more experience in the target language community have been found to be more sensitive to politeness distinctions and more successful at conveying them than learners with less experience. Evidence has also been reported of the different effects that the learning environment might have on the development of pragmatic competence. Second language learners have been found to be more successful at approaching target language norms than foreign language learners.

With respect to structural factors, pragmatic transfer studies have found that some aspects (but not all) of learners' speech act behaviour can be attributed to transfer of L1 pragmatic knowledge. Instances of both positive and negative transfer have been attested for both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. To date, however, little is known about the conditions for pragmatic transfer to occur, but evidence suggests that, to some extent, perceived similarities and differences between L1 and L2 play a role in facilitating or constraining the transfer of pragmatic knowledge. Increasingly therefore, studies have argued in favour of more research addressing conditions for transfer to occur in particular (Kasper, 1996a; Takahashi, 1995, 1996).

There is, however, another and perhaps equally important, matter that should receive more systematic attention. What becomes clear from the overview presented in this section, is that the notions of politeness and indirectness are important concepts in cross-cultural speech act studies. What is less clear, however, is what these notions entail. Results from ILP studies have indicated that learners are, among other things, sometimes 'too direct' or 'less polite' in formulating speech acts compared with native speakers. The question is, however, what exactly being 'too direct' or 'less polite' means in this context. Studies have also reported that learners sometimes use different request strategies than native speakers. But what exactly are request strategies? Although most studies report differences with respect to use of request strategies and/or politeness strategies, few studies have attempted to provide clear definitions of the notions of indirectness and politeness (notably Blum-Kulka, 1987, 1989).

Approaches to indirectness and politeness adopted in ILP studies will be discussed in section 1.5, which presents an overview of different frameworks of analysis for requests. However, in view of the prominent role of the concepts of indirectness and politeness in the analysis of speech acts in ILP, the next sections will first discuss these notions as seen through the eyes of speech act and politeness theorists. This discussion is a necessary prerequisite for the analysis of ILP frameworks that follow in subsequent sections.

1.3 Indirectness and politeness

In order to clarify the notions of indirectness and politeness in relation to speech acts, it is necessary to first determine what constitutes a speech act and more specifically, a request.

1.3.1 Speech act theory

1.3.1.1 Classification of speech acts

Most ILP studies of speech act strategies derive their theoretical underpinnings from speech act theories such as the theoretical framework for the classification of speech acts as first introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969, 1975). This section will therefore start with an outline of the key concepts of Searle's framework. The two aspects of Searle's framework that are most important to ILP research are his classification of speech acts and his account of indirect speech acts.

Crucial to Searle's classification of speech acts is his view of language as a 'form of rule-governed behaviour, a form of verbal acting'. In other words, for Searle speaking a language means performing speech acts, such as making promises, making statements or making requests. In his attempt to classify these speech acts into different categories, Searle claims that all speech acts can be analysed into a propositional component, the content of the message, and an illocutionary force, the communicative intention of the speaker. The propositional content of a speech act such as 'Could you clean up that mess?', for example is 'you clean up that mess'. Propositions can co-occur with different illocutionary forces, e.g., prediction, request or expressing thanks as in (1a-c):

- (1) a. *I predict that you will clean up that mess* (prediction)
 b. *Please, clean up that mess!* (request)
 c. *Thanks for cleaning up that mess* (expressing thanks)

The illocutionary force of a speech act, in Searle's analysis, is composed of different dimensions on which speech acts can vary. The most important dimension that determines the illocutionary force is the *illocutionary point*, which is the purpose, or point of an utterance. For example, the illocutionary point of both a request and a command is that the speaker is trying to get the hearer to perform an action. Requests and commands, however, differ in illocutionary force in that a command conveys the purpose of the speaker more forcefully than a request.

Originally, Searle (1969, 1976) formulated twelve dimensions along which speech acts can vary, which were later reduced to seven (Searle, 1985). These dimensions were posited to account for differences between classes of speech acts and to account for the fact that certain conditions (felicity conditions) need to be met in order for a speech act to be successful, or felicitous. An utterance is a successful request if it has the 'characteristics of a request' and if it is nondefective, i.e., if it fits the context. For example, a request such as 'Lift that ton of bricks, please' might be a successful request in that it has all the characteristics of a request utterance, but it would clearly be defective

in a situation where the hearer is clearly unable to lift the ton of bricks. Thus, success is related to the extent to which an utterance has certain 'speech act characteristics'. Defectiveness refers to how appropriate a request is in a particular context, in other words it operates at a situational or contextual level, rather than at the utterance level. In order to account for regularities in determining the success of different classes of speech acts, Searle (1969) formulated a number of conditions that different speech acts must meet. These conditions form the basis for his taxonomy of speech acts, or as they are also, called illocutionary forces.

The most important of these conditions is the *essential condition*, which refers to the illocutionary point of the utterance, as described above. The essential condition, constitutes the 'essence of the act' and primarily determines the illocutionary force of an utterance. The three other dimensions that determine the illocutionary force of a speech act are *propositional content*, which refers the proposition expressed in the speech act as discussed above, the *sincerity condition*, which refers to the psychological state of the speaker expressed in the act and the *direction-of-fit* between words and world. The *sincerity condition* specifies what the speaker's attitude is with respect to the propositional content expressed in the act. In requests, for example, the speaker wants something, namely for the hearer to carry out an action. Statements, however, merely express the speaker's belief with respect to what is expressed in the proposition. Direction-of-fit refers to the consequence of the illocutionary point. Some speech acts, such as requests, are attempts to 'get the world to match the words', i.e., the end result is change. Others are attempts to get the words to match the world such as statements and descriptions.

Finally, Searle distinguished a number of *preparatory conditions* specifying the preconditions that need to be satisfied for speech acts to be successful and nondefective. For example, a request can only be successful and nondefective if the hearer is able to carry out the requested action. Likewise, a promise can only be successful and nondefective if the speaker is able to carry out what is being promised and if the promise is actually in the hearer's interest (see also Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of felicity conditions).

On the basis of variations in illocutionary point, psychological state of speaker, propositional content and direction-of-fit, Searle distinguished five overall categories of speech acts (or illocutionary forces), representatives, expressives, commissives, declarations and directives. Relevant for the present study is the category of directives, which includes all speech acts that express an attempt by a speaker to get a hearer to carry out a future course of action as wanted by the speaker. Within each of these five categories individual speech acts, such as requests, promises and threats, have their own preparatory conditions that specify which preconditions need to be met before a speech act can be termed successful and non-defective. In the case of requests, for example, the preparatory conditions specify, first of all, that the speaker must believe that the hearer is able to carry out the desired action, but also that the hearer was not actually about to perform the action anyway. Searle (1975) claimed that strategies available for making indirect speech acts, such as indirect requests, can be grouped into categories on the basis of the felicity conditions. He claims that the majority of indirect requests refer to

conditions such as speaker's wish and hearer's ability and willingness. Searle's conditions, and preconditions for requests in particular, have been at the basis of the construction of taxonomies of request strategies used in ILP request studies, which have generally found that there seems to be a limited range of request strategies across languages (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989b).

A number of aspects of Searle's framework have been criticized by other studies. Some have claimed that Searle's categorisation into five classes of speech acts is too rigid and limited in reducing all possible speech acts to just these categories (e.g., Levinson, 1983). Others have argued that although Searle's felicity conditions can be successfully applied to prototypical examples of speech acts, they cannot always be applied to less prototypical or more ambiguous examples (e.g., Thomas, 1995).

Some have argued that a speech act theory based on felicity conditions fails to grasp and account for subtle differences between individual speech acts, such as, for example, requests, commands or orders, especially when they occur in natural discourse. Studies of interaction (e.g., Geis, 1995; Springorum, 1982) have argued for an approach in which contextual factors such as interests and rights and obligations of interactants receive a more prominent role in the interpretation of speech acts. Searle himself, however, never claimed that it was possible to draw sharp dividing lines between different speech acts as he saw speech acts as illocutionary forces positioned on "several distinct criss-crossing continua [of force]" (Searle, 1976: 2). His original suggestion (Searle, 1969) had been to posit additional preparatory conditions for individual speech acts. Both orders and commands, for example, have an extra preparatory condition to distinguish them from requests, which states that the speaker must be in a position of authority over the hearer. In a later study (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985) a more general principle was posited in the form of an extra dimension called 'mode of achievement of illocutionary point' (1985: 15-16). This mode of achievement refers to how the speaker tries to get the hearer to carry out the desired action, in other words, what the speaker's tactics are. Some speech acts are supposed to have special modes of achievements for their illocutionary point. An order, for instance, implies that the speaker is in a position of authority over the hearer, but for a speech act to count as an order the speaker must also invoke this authority.

Searle has acknowledged that his taxonomy might be too basic to account of subtle nuances that occur in natural discourse, but has also argued that it was not meant to do so as he was concerned with an analysis that was meant to provide 'the bare bones of modes of meaning' (1991: 85). So, the taxonomy was never meant to provide a definitive tool for the analysis of conversation, but, more importantly, at least in the light of the present study, it was meant to account for the use of indirect language in performing speech acts.

Whether it is possible or desirable to develop a taxonomy for speech acts that allows for a more fine-grained analysis remains a matter of ongoing discussion, but one that is not the immediate focus of the present study. The primary goal of the study is to examine learners' strategies to 'get other people to do things for them' in different contextual settings. Making a distinction in well-defined categories of speech acts is as such, at least at this stage, less relevant to our purpose. Consequently we will follow other studies in ILP research (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Trosborg, 1995) in making no distinction

between requests, orders, commands, but in regarding them as speech acts with similar points but different illocutionary forces. In cross-cultural communication, 'what' a speaker can attempt to get a hearer to do in a foreign language is a potential cause of pragmatic failure, as has been demonstrated by studies of, for example, 'free' and 'non-free' goods (e.g., Thomas, 1983, 1995). As was discussed above though, a more important cause for pragmatic failure, is 'how' a speaker attempts to get a hearer to do something in a foreign language. This is why the present study is primarily concerned with the realization of illocutionary force by learners of a foreign language and to a lesser extent with the realization of illocutionary point. Since learners have been found to differ from native speakers with respect to, among other things, level of indirectness of strategies used to perform speech acts, the main interest will be to look at if and how these strategies can be systematically ordered. As we shall see later on in section 1.5, many ILP request studies have used categories of request strategies based on Searle's felicity conditions. It is for this reason that we will now turn to Searle's analysis of how felicity conditions can be used to account for indirectness in language use.

1.3.1.2 Indirect speech acts

Searle's explanation of how indirect speech acts such as those in 2(a-d) are interpreted is based on the assumption that in making indirect speech acts, speakers are in fact making two illocutionary points. The primary illocutionary point is that of a request, whereas the secondary (literal) illocutionary point is that of a question.

- (2) a. *Can you pass the salt?*
 b. *Could you open the door?*
 c. *Would you willing to help me move these boxes?*
 d. *I want you to clean up that mess?*

The interpretation of an indirect request such as 'Can you pass the salt?' is derived through a set of inferential steps that listeners take to arrive at the intended meaning of the sentence. These inferential steps, Searle claims, fall into three broad categories. Some rely on general conversational principles such as that conversational partners tend to cooperate and supply relevant information. It would, for example, be odd to ask someone at a dinner table about their salt-lifting abilities, which explains why the addressee of the request in (2b) will reject the literal interpretation of the utterance. Other steps can be explained through general principles of speech act theory, such as conditions on speech acts. For example, one of the preparatory conditions for requests is that the hearer must be able to perform the request. Since hearers have (implicit) knowledge of these conditions, the addressee of a request such as 'Can you pass the salt?' will at some point in the interpretation process infer that the speaker's reference to this ability was probably to make a request, and not to ask an informative question. A third source that listeners draw on is shared background information. Since it is quite customary for people at a dinner table to pass and be asked to pass the salt, listeners will quite readily interpret a question such as 'Can you pass the salt?' as a request. Some forms, Searle claims, have

become conventionalised in that they will generally be interpreted as requests straightaway, such as (3a) as opposed to (3b):

- (3) a. *Can you pass the salt?*
 b. *Is it the case that you have the ability to pass me the salt?*

These conventional forms, he claims, have acquired conventional uses, the most important of which is the use as polite ways of making requests. In Searle's view 'politeness is the most prominent motivation for indirectness in requests and certain forms naturally tend to become the conventionally polite ways of making indirect requests' (Searle, 1975: 76).

The fact that conventional indirect requests are rarely interpreted as questions, however, poses a problem for the process of inferencing as described above. In order to remedy this, Searle, but also Morgan (1978) in an elaboration of Searle's notion of conventionality, posits a 'short-circuiting implicature' to account for the interpretation of conventionalised requests. Both claim that on the basis of background knowledge, but, more importantly, knowledge of conventions of usage, hearers can short-circuit the inferential path from literal to indirect interpretation.

Short-circuiting, in combination with an inferential approach, however, only solves part of the problem. Although it offers an explanation of how indirect speech acts are interpreted, i.e., on the basis of knowledge about felicity conditions, conversational principles and knowledge of 'how things are done' as Morgan calls it, it is less suitable for explaining politeness phenomena (see also Levinson, 1983 on inference theories). For both Searle and Morgan there is a direct link between indirectness and politeness in that the longer the inferential path from literal to indirect meaning, the more indirect and hence more polite a request is said to be. This, however, only applies to indirect requests that are not conventional. The link between indirectness and politeness is more problematic for conventional indirect requests, since the short-circuiting implicature reduces the length of the inferential path. In other words, conventional indirect requests are interpreted fairly quickly because they have relatively short inferential paths. Consequently they should also be less polite. The problem is, however, that highly conventional indirect requests such as 'Could you pass the salt' are commonly associated with a high level of politeness, and are considered to be less polite than less conventional requests.

Another approach to explaining the use of indirect speech acts has been to posit idiom theories (e.g., Sadock, 1974, 1975; Green, 1975) in which the literal meaning no longer plays a role in the interpretation of conventional indirect requests. Proponents of idiom theories claim that a conventional indirect request such as (4) is stored in the lexicon as a request and is no longer derived from the literal meanings of the utterance.

- (4) *Could you pass the salt?*

Opponents (e.g., Levinson, 1983; Clark, 1979) have argued that this type of approach cannot explain how in request-response sequences it is often not just the indirect meaning

but also the literal meaning of the utterance that is addressed in exchanges such as in (5a-b):

- (5) a. *Can you pass the salt?*
b. *Yes I can; here you are.*

The fact that the first part of the response is an answer to the literal (question) meaning can only be explained if, at some stage in the interpretation process, the literal meaning is also processed. Others have claimed that since there is an infinite number of indirect requests, it is difficult to imagine an indefinite number of entries in the lexicon. Moreover, idiom theory does not seem to be able to account for potentially ambiguous utterances such as (6).

- (6) *Could you lift that table?*

It is not impossible to imagine a context where (6) is not meant as a request, but as a genuine inquiry about a hearer's physical abilities. It is difficult to see how idiom theory would be able to account for this type of ambiguity.

1.3.1.3 Conclusion

What we have left then at this stage is an explanation of indirectness that is based on the use of felicity conditions. These felicity conditions can, partly at least, explain how it is that utterances such as (7a-b), where the speaker is merely questioning a hearer's ability, or stating a wish, are interpreted by a hearer as a request. Since felicity conditions are specific to individual speech acts or at least categories of speech acts, they can also explain why the sentences in (7a-b) are possible requests, but the sentences in (8a-b) are not.

- (7) a. *Can you read this report tonight?*
b. *I would like you to wash the dishes*

- (8) a. *?I promise to be back at nine.*
b. *?I'm sorry I broke that cup.*

Just exactly what the role of literal meaning is in the interpretation process is as yet unclear, but less important at this stage. Regardless of the role of literal meaning, it is by now commonly acknowledged that speakers often make use of indirect language in producing speech acts. What needs to be resolved next is why people use indirect language and what the link is between indirectness and politeness.

One important point to note about Searle's felicity conditions is that they do not predict how polite an indirect strategy is. Although they can explain how certain types of utterances (e.g., ability questions) carry illocutionary force, they cannot explain why certain types of indirect requests are more polite than others. Neither can inference or

idiom theory, as was discussed above. More importantly, however, none of these proposals can be used to explain variation in the actual use of strategies.

In the end, what is needed to link the notions of indirectness and politeness is an approach that is able to account for the type of situational and contextual constraints on the use of different strategies illustrated by examples (9a-b):

- (9) a. *Peter, go and clean up that mess.*
 b. *Peter, it seems there's another meeting scheduled in this room later today. Do you think you could just clean up the mess that we've just created before you leave?*

Example (9a) would be more typical of a request between parent and child, whereas (9b) would be more typical of a request utterance between colleagues in an institutional context. Searle's conditions can be applied to the examples to illustrate the different request strategies underlying the request utterances. However, they cannot be used to explain why (9a) would be unlikely in the context of (9b) and vice versa.

In order to account for this contextual variation, we need to turn to theories explaining meaning in interaction, i.e., what do utterances mean in the conversational setting in which they are used. A leading theory explaining how speakers and hearers understand and interpret the meaning of utterances is Leech's (1983) framework for principles of pragmatics. The notions of politeness and indirectness as put forward by Leech have been adopted by some ILP requests studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Takahashi, 1995, 1996) in their attempt to construct taxonomies for request strategies, which is why this theory will be discussed in some detail below.

1.3.2 Leech

1.3.2.1 General pragmatics

Leech (1983) set up a theoretical framework of general pragmatics to account for meaning in interaction. At the basis of his framework is the distinction between 'sentence meaning' and 'speaker meaning', which reflects the difference between the meaning of sentences produced in isolation and the meaning of sentences used in actual communication. 'Sentence meaning' is interpreted on the basis of semantic rules, whereas 'speaker meaning' is interpreted on the basis of pragmatic principles.

At the basis of the framework is Grice's (1975) *Cooperative Principle* (CP), the basic premise of which is that in a conversation both speaker and hearer are motivated by a desire to cooperate and work together on the assumption that a certain set of rules is in operation unless they receive indications to the contrary. This common set of rules and the 'indications to the contrary' are regulated by the CP in combination with four *conversational maxims*, the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. The maxim of Quantity states that speakers should be brief and clear in getting their message across. So, in an exchange such as in (10) the husband is clearly not observing the maxim of quantity.

- (10) *Wife: Did you buy any apples?*
Husband: I've got bananas, pears, grapefruits, two tins of baked beans, and yes, apples.

The maxim of Quality states that speakers should only say what they believe is true. An example of a situation in which the maxim of quality is violated would be 'telling white lies'. Both the maxims of quantity and quality pertain to the content of the message that a speaker is trying to get across. The maxims of Relation and Manner, on the other hand, deal with the quality of the communication between two interactants. The maxim of Relation states that speakers should only convey relevant information. An example of a (deliberate) failure to observe the maxim of relation is the exchange in (11):

- (11) *A: What do think of my new haircut?*
B: That's a lovely dress you're wearing.

Speaker A asks B for an opinion about a new haircut, but the response is, at least at surface level, totally irrelevant.

The fourth maxim, the maxim of Manner, states that speakers should avoid giving ambiguous information. An example in which the maxim of manner is not observed would be the exchange in (12):

- (12) *A: Would you like to go to the cinema tonight?*
B: Yes and no.

In principle both speakers and hearers cooperate in that they try to observe the maxims.

The CP, together with the conversational maxims, can be applied in explaining why speakers might say something different from what they mean and how hearers manage to interpret the meaning of utterances. Although the general idea behind maxims is that a speaker (and hearer) observes all four maxims, in actual communication speakers can either intentionally or unintentionally fail to observe maxims. Example (13) serves as an illustration of a speaker (the mother) intentionally failing to observe a maxim.

- (13) *Son: Can I go and play outside now?*
Mother: Your room is still in mess.
Son: Okay, I'll do that first then.

The mother in (13) seems to have failed to observe (at least) the maxim of relation in that her response is not an answer to the son's question. The son will probably notice the violation of the maxim and infer that there must be a reason for it, i.e., that his mother wants him to do something about the state of his room first. Similarly, 'telling white lies', which is a violation of the maxim of Quality, might be motivated by reasons such as maintaining good interpersonal relations. Speakers, then, may (un)intentionally fail to observe maxims, either because of the overriding importance of other maxims, or because they have communicative goals that conflict with one or more maxims.

1.3.2.2 Leech's notion of indirectness

Conversational principles like those sketched above have proved especially useful in accounting for the interpretation of indirect speech acts such as (14), which, although formulated as questions for information, are often intended as requests for action.

(14) *Could you open the door?*

Leech (1983) in developing his framework of general pragmatics claims that although the CP can explain *how* people interpret indirect speech acts, it cannot explain *why* people would use indirect speech acts. It cannot, for example, explain why the mother in example (13) did not just tell her son that she wanted him to do something about the mess of his room before he went outside.

In Leech's perspective of pragmatics, speech acts involve a process of problem-solving from both the speaker's (S) and the hearer's (H) point of view. The speaker's problem is primarily one of planning, whereas the hearer's problem is primarily one of interpretation:

"From S's point of view, the problem is one of planning: 'given that I want the mental state of the hearer to change or to remain unchanged in such and such ways, how do I produce an utterance which will make the result most likely?' From H's point of view, the problem is an interpretative one: 'Given that S has said U[utterance], what is the most likely reason for S's saying U?'" (Leech, 1983: 36)

In the mother-son example mentioned above, for instance, the mother wants the son to clean up the mess in his room and needs to find the right strategy to get him to do this. If she orders him to do it, he might throw a temper-tantrum, but if she only suggests that he do it, he might be inclined to go up to his room and sort out the mess.

This problem-solving approach leads Leech to posit that all intentionally produced speech acts should in fact be regarded as indirect. The underlying idea is that the speaker's problem-solving strategy can be viewed as a form of *means-end analysis*, where the end is the state of affairs that the speaker is aiming at by producing the speech act. The ultimate goal of the speaker in uttering 'clean up the mess in your room', is that the room ends up neat and tidy. Each step taken towards this ultimate goal constitutes a link in the chain from initial state (room in a mess) towards the final state (room is tidy). Consequently, indirectness in this perspective is defined as the length and the complexity of the chain between initial state and final state. To give an example to illustrate varying degree of indirectness in this approach, see (15a-b):

(15) a. *Clean up that mess in your room!*
b. *I'm really tired*

Firstly, the communicative goal in (15a-b) is the same, namely that the 'hearer interprets the speech act so as to realize that he should clean up the mess in his room'. This is however a subsidiary goal, as the primary goal of the speaker is to end up with a neat and

tidy room. Secondly, Leech's suggestion is that in (15b) the speaker does not, as Searle suggested, realize two speech acts simultaneously (i.e., produce a request by making an assertion about a physical state), but that it is merely an assertion from the speaker's point of view and that it is the interpretation of the hearer (the speaker wants me to clean up the mess in my room) that turns it into a request. This suggests a rather more dynamic role for the hearer than in other speech act theories, where speech acts tend to be explained from the perspective of the speaker only. Still, the question remains why people use different degrees of indirectness in formulating requests and how they decide which degree of indirectness is appropriate. In order to explain this Leech posited the Politeness Principle.

1.3.2.3 The Politeness Principle (PP)

Leech's interpretation of indirectness outlined above is reflected in his perspective of the relative degree of politeness of speech act strategies as incorporated in his Politeness Principle. What is important in his framework for the interpretation of speech acts lies in the distinction between the *illocutionary goal* of the speaker (i.e., which speech act is intended) and the *social goal* of the speaker (being honest, sincere, truthful, ironic, maintaining good relations, etc.). This distinction is reflected in the *Interpersonal Rhetoric*, which is governed by a Cooperative Principle, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by a Politeness Principle. In Leech's model both CP and PP consist of sets of maxims. The Cooperative Principle consists of a set of Gricean maxims, such as those outlined in the previous section. Likewise, the Politeness Principle also consists of a set of maxims, the most important one of which is the Tact Maxim. Politeness in this perspective is interpreted as tact. Leech claims that in formulating requests, speakers aim at getting their meaning across, but are also concerned with maintaining good interpersonal relationships. In order to achieve both, speakers will formulate the most tactful request relative to a given context. The next question is, of course, what constitutes a tactful request. Leech posited three dimensions that can be applied to order requests from least to most tactful, *the cost-benefit scale*, *the optionality scale* and *the indirectness scale*. These will be explained in the next section.

1.3.2.4 Cost-benefit, optionality and indirectness

The cost-benefit scale relates to the costs and benefits for the hearer that are involved in the speech act of a request. The essence of a request is that a speaker tries to get a hearer to perform a certain action. This action, Leech claims, can be analysed in terms of costs and benefits involved for the hearer. Consequently, tactful requests are requests that a) 'minimize (the expression of beliefs which express or imply) cost to other', and b) 'maximize (the expression of beliefs which express or imply) benefit to other' (Leech, 1983: 132). How tactful speakers should be in phrasing a request depends on the context. On the basis of this 'cost-benefit' analysis, requests with different types of contents can be ordered along a 'cost-benefit' scale. A request such as '*Clean up that mess in your*

house is ranked higher than *'Open the window'* on this scale because the costs (for the hearer) involved in 'cleaning the mess' are higher than those involved in 'opening the window', which requires little effort. This cost-benefit analysis applies primarily to ordering requests with different propositional content on a scale from least to most tactful. 'Opening a window' requires less effort than 'moving a car', and even less effort than 'cleaning a house'.

A second scale that involves the role of the tact maxim is Leech's *optionality scale*, which can be used to order requests with similar propositional content. The optionality scale refers to the options that the speaker has built into a request to allow the hearer to refrain from complying with the request without appearing impolite. An imperative, such as 'Open that window' leaves the hearer with no other option but to comply (or to refuse and be impolite). At the other end of the scale, a hint, such as 'It's hot in here' (as a hint meaning 'open the window') provides the hearer with more options to politely refrain from doing something. As hints are by nature ambiguous, thus allowing for other interpretations than a requestive one, they allow the hearer to opt out without too much loss of face. A hearer could decide to (politely) refuse to open the window by pretending the speaker was merely commenting on the temperature in the room. Likewise, a request such as 'Can you open the window' offers the hearer a 'polite way' out of complying. A hearer could decide to interpret the request as an informative question and merely phrase a fitting response, such as 'yes'. On the basis of the number of 'choices' offered to the hearer, requests can thus be ordered on a scale of optionality.

The third scale, the indirectness scale, refers to the distance between the speaker's request and the speaker's intended illocutionary goal in terms of Leech's means-end analysis as discussed above. In this analysis the inferential path followed by the hearer to arrive at the interpretation of the utterance becomes longer as the speaker's path from linguistic means to illocutionary 'end' becomes more complicated and hence, more indirect. This path comprises two types of inferential steps. On the one hand, there are those steps required to recognize the illocutionary intent (i.e., the type of request), on the other hand there are the steps that speaker and hearer use to interpret Leech's tact maxim, which determines the illocutionary force of the request. The illocutionary intent, then, is brought about through the inferences of the Cooperative Principle, whereas the illocutionary force is brought about through inferences of the Politeness Principle. The difference between the two is illustrated in examples 16(a-b):

- (16) a. *Clean up that wine.*
 b. *Could you perhaps just clean up that wine?*

The imperative in (16a) could be characterized as a relatively 'tactless' strategy in that the speaker displays a blatant disregard of the tact maxim by not providing the hearer with any opting-out possibilities. The illocutionary intent, on the other hand, is crystal-clear, as the imperative is the most explicit means to the speaker's requestive end. None of the maxims of the CP have been violated, as the speaker is brief, to the point and unambiguous in communicating the message. More importantly though, by using the imperative the speaker shows or rather 'is heard' to openly violate the Tact Maxim. This

disregard of the tact maxim is what distinguishes (16a) from (16b), where a more indirect strategy is used. In the request in (16b) the speaker is clearly observing the Tact Maxim, as a number of steps (e.g., literally asking about the hearer's ability, formulating request as a hypothetical request) have been encoded in the utterance. The request thus becomes less transparent as the path from means-to-end becomes longer. Consequently, the request in (16b) can be regarded as more tactful than the request in (16a).

Indirectness in this perspective comprises two kinds of inferential steps. The first type of steps are necessary to arrive at the illocutionary point of the message, in other words, what intention is the speaker trying to communicate. The interpretation of the illocutionary point comes about through a process of inferencing that relies on general conversational principles. The second type of inferential steps are those needed to understand the illocutionary force of the utterance. This, according to Leech, comes about via the Politeness Principle as demonstrated above. One of the strategies that speakers can use to increase the indirectness of a request is to incorporate options into the request that allow hearers to refuse to comply with the request. The more options a hearer is given, the more tactful the request. Tact, in this sense, is related to politeness, but not necessarily the same, according to Leech. Politeness, unlike indirectness and tact, is a context-related notion, in that what constitutes a polite request depends on what is most appropriate in a given context.

An important assumption in Leech's interpretation of indirectness is that the so-called options provided to the hearer are not 'real' options in the sense that hearers are actually given possibilities to refuse. The illocutionary goal of both (16a) and (16b) are the same, namely, to make clear to the hearer that the speaker is communicating a request. The extra steps that make the 'means-to-end' path longer and the request more indirect, merely serve the purpose of showing the hearer that the speaker is observing the Tact Maxim. In other words, the literal meaning of the utterance merely serves as a signal to the hearer that the speaker is being tactful, whereas the indirect (requestive) meaning is arrived at through the maxims of the Cooperative Principle.

Others have claimed that there is no need to distinguish a separate Politeness Principle with the same status as Grice's Conversational Principle (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 1987; Thomas, 1995). Brown and Levinson, for example, argue that a theory of pragmatics does not need a separate Politeness Principle to account for exceptions to and deviations from the Cooperative Principle, which is what Leech in fact claimed. In their view, Grice's CP has a general, overall status in that it defines a 'socially neutral' framework for communication. People are generally assumed to be cooperative unless they have overriding reasons to be uncooperative. In actual language use speakers may have various reasons for being uncooperative; they may be in an emergency situation, in a hurry, or they may simply want to be impolite. And although Brown and Levinson admit that politeness might be a more pervasive reason in actual communication than other reasons, they do not see the need for a Gricean type of Politeness Principle to explain politeness. Likewise, Thomas (1995) argues that positing a separate principle to account for every regularity in language use would lead to an infinite number of principles and would thus lead to an extremely complex theory of pragmatics. She does,

however, admit that Leech's approach is very useful in making cross-cultural comparisons and to explain cross-cultural variations in the use of politeness strategies.

1.3.2.5 Conclusion

The merits of Leech's theory, for cross-cultural studies at least, seem to lie in his interpretation of indirectness as comprising two kinds of steps in the means-to-end analysis. A speaker has to solve the problem of finding the right means to achieve the goal of getting something done. The speaker's communicative goal is to get this message across as briefly and clearly as possible. The speaker's second goal, however, is the wish to maintain good social and interpersonal relations with a hearer. In general, a speaker will aim at minimizing the potential damage to these social and interpersonal relations that speech acts, such as requests, might pose. In formulating requests, speakers can reduce this potential damage by incorporating indirectness in their requests in the form of opting-out choices for the hearer. Indirectness in this perspective is regarded as a context-independent notion, which can be analysed solely on the basis of the literal meaning of a request.

The present study will adopt the view put forward by Blum-Kulka (1987), who argued that indirectness and politeness are two separate, but related notions. Since in cross-cultural research learners have been found to differ from native speakers on both dimensions, an attempt will be made to incorporate these two distinct notions separately in the framework used for the analysis of request utterances. The first step will therefore be to adopt Leech's interpretation of indirectness as steps in a means-end analysis. Indirectness in this perspective is not related to the inferential steps that speakers take to arrive at the interpretation of an utterance, but to the inferential steps made by speaker and hearer to arrive at the illocutionary force of an utterance.

As was discussed above, Leech's interpretation of the notion of indirectness has been less problematic than his account of politeness, for which a separate Politeness Principle is required. A politeness theory that has featured more prominently in ILP research on speech acts is the framework as put forward by Brown and Levinson.

1.3.3 Brown and Levinson

1.3.3.1 Face

Brown and Levinson's approach to the concept of politeness is different from those sketched above in that they reserve a central place in their politeness theory for the Goffman's (1963, 1967) notion of 'face', the public self-image that members of society want to claim for themselves. Both speaker and hearer have 'face wants' in that they desire to protect their public self-image, their *positive face*, and their claim to freedom of action, their *negative face*. Brown and Levinson claim that it is the "mutual awareness of 'face' sensitivity [...], that together with the CP allows the inference of implicatures of politeness" (1987: 5-6). Speech acts, in their view, are potentially threatening to both

types of face, hence the term face-threatening acts (FTA). In a face-threatening act such as a request, a hearer's desire not to be imposed upon is under threat since this is exactly what the speaker does by issuing a request. The speaker, in turn, risks losing positive face, since the hearer might disapprove of the speaker for asking the request, or refuse to comply with the request. Because of the face-threat inherent in FTAs, the protection of face wants is at odds with a speaker's illocutionary and communicative goal. As the speaker will want to minimize the threat to the hearer's negative face, some 'face-work' is required. This 'face-work', so Brown and Levinson claim, is achieved through the use of politeness strategies. Politeness, then, can be defined as the desire to protect 'face' or self-image. It is a type of redressive action to counterbalance the potentially harmful effect of FTAs. There are two ways to achieve this redressive action, a speaker can use politeness strategies aimed at protecting the hearer's negative face (negative politeness strategies) or politeness strategies aimed at enhancing or 'anointing', in Brown and Levinson's terms, the hearer's positive face. Negative politeness strategies, since they are aimed at minimizing the damage to hearer's negative face, include strategies such as playing down the imposition posed by the request by using minimizers such as 'Could you just help me with this', or indicating reluctance to ask the request as in 'I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to help me'. Positive politeness strategies, on the other hand, which are meant to enhance the hearer's positive face, are usually ways to make the hearer 'feel good'. This category includes strategies such as 'attending to hearer's interests such as That's a lovely dress you're wearing... could you just give me a hand with this?' or using terms of endearment such as, for example, 'Raymond darling, give us a hand with this'. The function of positive politeness strategies in requests is that they tend to counterbalance the negative face-threat inherent in the request.

1.3.3.2 Face-saving strategies

Brown and Levinson distinguish four superstrategies for doing FTA's, ranging from least minimization of negative face-threat to most minimization of negative face-threat, in other words 'face-protection':

1. do FTA 'Bald-on-record'; by using an imperative (17a), the bald-on-record strategy *par excellence* for requests. Bald-on-record strategies are not necessarily impolite as illustrated in (17b):

- (17) a. *Change those sheets.*
 b. *Don't touch that stove! It's hot. (to child about to burn its fingers)*

2. use positive politeness, which includes a range of substrategies the common element in which is that they are all directed towards the hearer's positive face, i.e., the hearer's desire to be liked and approved (18):

- (18) *You did a wonderful job on those handouts, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to change a few.*

3. use negative politeness, which includes a range of substrategies all designed to reduce the imposition of the request on the hearer, such as playing down the time or effort involved (19a), taking a pessimistic view on the likelihood of compliance (19b), or using a conventionally indirect strategy such as questioning a hearer's (19c):

- (19) a. *It would only take about half an hour.*
 b. *I don't suppose there's any chance of you giving me a hand.*
 c. *Can you help me with my homework. (cf. You can help me with my homework)*

4. go off record, which implies that the utterance is ambiguous as to what the communicative intent is, as is the case in hints (20):

- (20) *I hadn't realized it was time for lunch already.*

5. don't do FTA, i.e., don't do the request, which is not so much a strategy for getting the communicative intent across, but one that at least guarantees a maximum degree of face-protection.

In Brown and Levinson's framework the choices that speakers make in terms of how much face-work to include in their strategies, depend heavily on a number of contextual factors. The main factors that Brown and Levinson originally distinguished are relative power (P) of speaker and hearer, social distance (D) of speaker and hearer and size of imposition (R), where the size of imposition refers to how imposing a speech act is. Cultures vary in, for example, what speakers can ask hearers to do for them or what sorts of topics they can safely talk about. In general, the more serious a request is felt to be in a particular culture, the more face-saving strategies a speaker will be expected to employ. On the basis of these three factors the 'weightiness' (W), or seriousness of a speech act (x) can be calculated on the basis of the following formula:

$$W(x) = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R(x)$$

The degree of face-threat posed by a particular speech act can be seen to be higher depending on the degree of power the hearer has over the speaker, the degree of social distance between the speaker and hearer and the imposition posed by the content of the speech act. Generally speaking, the more 'serious' the speech act in question, the more politeness strategies are required from a speaker.

Studies that have put Brown and Levinson's politeness model to the test have argued that their model is too ethnocentrically Anglo-Saxon because it does not seem to account for politeness strategies in non-Western societies. Matsumoto (1988) in studying linguistic politeness in Japanese claims that negative face wants, the desire to be unimpeded upon, is alien to Japanese culture. Social interaction in Japanese society is not governed by the preservation of an individual's proper territory, underlying Brown and Levinson's negative face wants, but by acknowledging and maintaining the relative position towards others. Matsumoto seems to claim that the Japanese concept of face is fundamentally

different from that in Western societies, because a person's self image is not as an independent individual, but as a group member. Given this collective rather than individual orientation, negative face wants cannot account for politeness behaviour in Japan. This claim has been supported by evidence from Chinese culture, which has also been shown to have concepts of face that would appear to be incompatible with the notion of negative face (for a detailed account of Chinese *li/n* and *miànzi*, see Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994). Although evidence from other cultures seems to suggest that there might be cultural variation in the weights attached to the components of face (negative versus positive), as indeed Brown and Levinson themselves have suggested, the underlying concept of face as a motivator for politeness would seem to remain unchallenged:

"... while the content of face will differ in different cultures (what the exact limits are to personal territories, and what the publicly relevant content of personality consists in), we are assuming that the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal." (1987: 61-62).

The concept of face has played an important role in cross-cultural pragmatics research. As was discussed above, there is enough evidence to suggest that the use of politeness strategies in face-threatening acts is a universal phenomenon, that cultures vary with respect to commonly used politeness strategies and, in addition, that foreign or second language learners are not always sensitive to these cross-cultural differences. A number of studies have also found evidence for the role of contextual variables such as power, social distance and size of imposition in determining variation in the use of politeness strategies.

The merit of Brown and Levinson's approach to politeness is that it puts Leech's (1983) interpretation in a wider perspective. Leech, as was discussed above, interpreted the communicative goals that speakers have when making requests as a kind of 'means-end' analysis. The two approaches can be linked to explain how and why speakers use indirect strategies. The implications of the concepts of face and politeness for the goals a speaker wants to achieve are that a speaker will determine the relative weight of factors such as social distance and power distance and subsequently formulate a request which is the best 'fit' given the situation and given the goals that need to be accomplished. This goal can be further specified into three subgoals, which a speaker needs to accomplish, although not necessarily in this particular order:

- to get the communicative intent across (i.e., the content of the request);
- to do this in as brief and efficient a fashion as possible (as specified in CP);
- to protect the hearer's negative face (i.e., fulfill universal face-want).

The protection of the hearer's negative face is achieved by using negative politeness strategies such as being pessimistic or minimizers. Requests, which are by nature imposing on the hearer, always pose a threat to the hearer's negative face and consequently frequently include negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies are less frequent, primarily because the hearer's positive face is not generally

under threat in requests. This in contrast to, for example, complaints, in which there is often an element of disapproval towards the receiver of the complaint, i.e., the hearer. The fact that the prime concern of the speaker of a request lies with the protection of a hearer's negative face, does not, however, preclude the use of strategies directed at a hearer's positive face altogether. In general, though, the main concern of the speaker will be to protect the hearer's negative face through the use of negative politeness strategies. 'Being indirect' is one type of negative politeness strategy that a speaker might resort to.

Most ILP (request) studies have used Brown and Levinson's framework in trying to account for the use of what have become known as modifiers of the request strategy, but have relied on interpretations of indirectness from different frameworks to construct taxonomies of request strategies. This has partly been due to the fact that Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies have proved to be difficult to order in a taxonomy as they frequently tend to co-occur. A request utterance usually contains one single request utterance, but a variety of politeness strategies as in (21):

(21) *I don't suppose you could just give me a hand with this.*

The request strategy consists of referring to the ability of the hearer and in addition there are a number of politeness strategies (be pessimistic, don't coerce, etc.). Politeness strategies, unlike request strategies, tend to co-occur in requests, which makes it very difficult to rank order them. One thing that is not clear is whether different politeness strategies carry equal weight in the protection of face. In other words, it is not clear whether, for instance, 'apologize' and 'be pessimistic' offer the same degree of face-protection. Moreover, if they do offer the same degree of face-protection, do they add up to offer double face-protection? What is also not clear is whether there are differences between politeness strategies that operate at the level of the request strategy itself, such as syntactic modifiers, and those modifiers that operate at the level of the request utterance, such as 'give reasons'. Consequently, most studies have built their taxonomies on the request strategies only and analysed politeness strategies separately, as modifiers of the request, either at the level of the request strategy or at the level of the request utterance. In short, the status of politeness strategies is not entirely clear, which has given rise to some confusion, as will become clear from the discussion of ILP taxonomies (section 1.5).

1.3.4 Conclusion

The aim of this section was to examine if insights from speech act theory and theories of politeness and/or indirectness can be used in constructing a taxonomy of request strategies. An important notion with respect to speech acts is that it is important to distinguish between the illocutionary point of a speech act, i.e., what the message is and the illocutionary force of a speech act. A great number of ILP studies aimed at investigating the realization of speech acts, such as requests, refusals, apologies etc., have made use of Searle's notion of felicity conditions to account for differences in force of

speech acts and have used the Searle's framework to categorise the different types of strategies with which speech acts can be formulated.

Since the present study is concerned with the investigation of cross-cultural differences, these felicity conditions will be used to explain what the mechanics are underlying certain strategies. Although there is still controversy with respect to Searle's classification of speech acts, in which these felicity conditions play an important role, we feel that there is enough evidence from cross-cultural studies of different languages (notably the CCSARP project) that suggests that the majority of request strategies are made with reference to, at least some of these felicity conditions. We will outline our approach to using these felicity conditions in Chapter 2.

In the present study no distinction will be made between the speech acts of request, order or command, since we agree with others that it might be impossible and perhaps undesirable to categorise these acts into neat separate categories. In the present study the distinction is also less relevant since it is primarily focussed on 'how foreign language learners get things done', but not whether listeners might interpret their requests as orders or commands. Consequently, the present study will follow other request studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Trosborg, 1995) in regarding requests, orders, commands as speech acts with similar illocutionary points but different illocutionary forces.

ILP research has shown that learners of a foreign or second language often differ from native speakers with regard to the politeness or directness of their requests. In an attempt to provide more insights into what the notions of indirectness and politeness entail a number of different approaches to these notions were discussed. As was discussed above, indirectness and politeness should be regarded as separate but related notions. This implies that in analysing requests in cross-cultural studies these two notions should also be analysed separately. The approach taken in the present study will be to use Leech's notion of indirectness as 'means-to-end analysis'. Indirectness in this perspective is not related to the inferential steps that the hearer needs to take to arrive at the interpretation of the request, but to the inferential steps that are made by speaker and hearer to arrive at the illocutionary force of an utterance. These inferential steps are in a way 'encoded' in the literal meaning of indirect requests. The function of the literal meaning in this approach is not to allow the listener to interpret what the utterance means, but to allow the listener to work out how tactful a speaker was trying to be in making a request. A speaker has at least two ways of being tactful, reducing the transparency of the request, or giving a hearer choices to refuse.

The next step was to see why speakers might want to be tactful in making requests. An explanation for this tactfulness can be found in the politeness theory as proposed by Brown and Levinson, who define politeness in terms of face-wants and face-protection. Linked to the notion of indirectness as put forward by Leech, politeness, or the protection of face-wants, can be regarded as the prime motivator for indirectness. Speakers can provide 'face-protection' by resorting to positive or negative politeness strategies, which are aimed at protecting or enhancing positive or negative face, respectively. One such (negative) politeness strategy is indirectness, which is effected at the level of the request strategy that a speaker chooses for a request. Other types of politeness strategies, such as

syntactic or lexical modification can occur either at the level of the request strategy, or at the level of the request utterance as a whole. Although Brown and Levinson's politeness theory has been extremely influential in accounting for politeness phenomena, it has never been fully applied in setting up taxonomies of request strategies. As was discussed above, this is partly due to the fact that the framework does not provide a weighting of politeness for individual strategies. Consequently, politeness strategies have been mainly used to explain how the impact of speech act strategies can be modified.

So far, the discussion has mainly centred on the problem of defining politeness and indirectness in speech act use. One aspect that has not been discussed is how listeners interpret indirect utterances. As became clear from the discussion of speech act theory and the notion of indirectness, the role of the literal meaning of an indirect speech act is somewhat controversial. Proponents of inference theories claim that the literal meaning of an indirect request is always derived, whereas others have claimed that, especially in what have become known as conventional indirect requests, the literal meaning of the request is not processed at all, but that instead conventional indirect requests are interpreted through a process of 'short-circuiting' on the basis of conversational principles. However, the literal meaning of indirect speech acts plays an important role in Leech's means-to-end analysis; not because it facilitates the interpretation of indirect requests, but because it determines the inferential 'tact' steps incorporated in the request. Since this is the interpretation of indirectness that will play a central role in the taxonomy of request strategies used in the present study, the next section will first review findings from the field of psycholinguistics with regard to the interpretation of indirect speech acts.

1.4 Indirectness and politeness in psycholinguistics

Analogous to the attention in philosophy and linguistics for indirect language and speech acts in particular, psycholinguistic research has also witnessed a growing interest in the processing of indirect language. Studies in this field have been directed at resolving three main issues. The first has been the role of literal meaning in the interpretation of indirect language. A second issue has been the processing of nonliteral language. Finally, studies focussing on indirect requests in particular, have looked at how variations in politeness can be explained. In studies investigating indirect requests types of three types of psychological processing models have been proposed (Takahashi & Roitblat, 1994): the 'literal first model' (Clark & Lucy, 1975), the 'multiple-meaning model' (Clark, 1979; Clark & Schunk, 1980; Takahashi & Roitblat, 1994) and the 'conventional-meaning model' (Gibbs, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1985b, 1986b).

This section will start with a discussion of these three models and evidence that has been put forward to support or reject each of these models. It will conclude with a discussion on the explanations offered in the models for the role of politeness in indirect requests.

1.4.1 The literal-first model

One of the first models for understanding indirect speech acts, the 'literal first model' was proposed by Clark and Lucy (1975), who investigated how listeners construe the intended (requestive) interpretation of literal questions like 'Can you make the circle blue?'. Clark and Lucy proposed a model in which listeners derive the intended meaning of indirect speech acts by means of a three-step analysis. Firstly, a listener interprets the literal meaning of an utterance and, secondly, checks this literal interpretation against the context. If the literal meaning does not fit in the context, then an indirect interpretation is derived by relating the utterance to the context. In other words, it is only in second instance that contextual information is used to arrive at an indirect interpretation. The assumption is that the indirect interpretation is derived through conversational maxims or rules of speech acts (Gordon & Lakoff, 1975; Grice 1975; Searle, 1975). The two basic assumptions of the model are that the computation of the literal meaning is obligatory and that it always precedes the computation of the indirect meaning (serial-processing). One prediction of the model is that indirect (nonliteral) interpretations of utterances take longer to process than literal utterances. In order to test their model, Clark and Lucy presented subjects with a picture of a circle coloured pink or blue. The picture was accompanied by a sentence that had either a literal (direct) meaning, such as, *Please colour the circle blue* or a nonliteral (indirect) meaning, such as *Can you make the circle blue?* Subjects were asked to judge whether the circle had been coloured according to the request. Results showed that subjects took longer to verify indirect requests than direct requests. Although these findings seem to support the literal-first model, other studies in field have suggested that differences in reaction times may have been caused by differences in length of the stimuli (Takahashi & Roitblat, 1994) or to the absence of more natural and appropriate situational and linguistic context (Gibbs, 1979, 1983).

In an attempt to illustrate the impact of appropriate context on the interpretation of indirect requests, Gibbs (1979) compared reaction times for paraphrase judgements of sentences presented in isolation or in context. The sentences, presented in story-contexts, had either a literal interpretation (question) or an indirect interpretation (request). Subjects were asked to give comprehension responses and to judge paraphrases of each story's last line. Results showed that for isolated sentences, subjects took longer to comprehend the indirect requests than they did to comprehend the literal questions. These results tie in nicely with Clark and Lucy's (1975) findings, and thus seem to provide support for the literal-first model. However, Gibbs' results also indicated that when the sentences were presented in context, subjects were faster, and not slower, at understanding the indirect meaning than at understanding the literal meaning of questions. Moreover, a comparison of reaction times for indirect vs direct requests revealed that it took subjects no longer to understand indirect requests than direct ones. Gibbs suggests that these findings contradict the predictions made by the literal-first model and argues in favour of a model in which the literal meaning of speech acts is not necessarily derived first.

In summary, then, it seems that there is some, but hardly conclusive evidence for the literal-first model, especially since most of the evidence was based on reaction times for isolated sentences rather than sentences in context. Consequently, subsequent studies have mostly argued against the serial processing order of literal and nonliteral meaning implied in the literal-first model, and even against the role of literal meaning in processing indirect speech acts altogether. The main distinction between the two other models that will be discussed in the remainder of this section is, in fact, the role assigned to the computation of the literal meaning in the comprehension of indirect speech acts. Studies have either argued in favour of a model in which the derivation of literal meaning is an essential component (Clark, 1979; Clark & Schunk, 1980) or in favour of a model in which the literal meaning is not necessarily always computed (Gibbs, 1981, 1982, 1983).

1.4.2 The multiple-meaning model

Proponents of a multiple-meaning comprehension model in which both literal and indirect meaning of utterances are computed are Clark (1979) and Clark and Schunk (1980). Both studies were set up to provide insights into the comprehension of indirect requests and the way listeners phrase their responses to indirect requests. Evidence in favour of the multiple-meaning model is mainly based on an analysis of indirect requests and responses to indirect requests from naturalistic data, although the model has received some support from studies using more on-line measures. Clark (1979) set up a series of experiments in which responses to requests for information were collected over the phone. In Clark's model, indirect requests, such as, for example, *Can you tell me what time you close tonight?* have both a literal meaning (*I ask you whether you can tell what time you close tonight*) and an indirect meaning (*Tell me what time you close tonight*). A basic assumption in Clark's model is that the literal meaning of indirect requests can be intended seriously or merely pro forma (along with the indirect meaning). If the literal meaning is intended seriously by the speaker, a hearer is expected to respond to both the literal and the indirect meaning, as in *Yes - at six*. 'Yes' is the answer to the literal question, whereas 'at six' is the answer to the indirect request. If the literal meaning is intended pro forma, a hearer is expected to respond to the indirect meaning only, as in *At six*. Clark was interested in investigating how listeners decide if an indirect interpretation applies. The multiple-meaning hypothesis was tested in a series of experiments in which responses to requests were collected. The results of these experiments showed that listener's, in deciding what a speaker's intentions are, make use of six sources of information:

- conventionality of means: if a speaker uses a highly conventional request such as 'Could you tell me what time it is', this is an indication for the listener that the literal meaning is merely intended pro forma. However, if the speaker uses a less conventional request such as 'Do you know what time it is?', this is a signal that the literal meaning (i.e., informative question) might be intended seriously.

- conventionality of form: following the same reasoning the use of more conventional forms ('can' versus 'able') is more likely to signal to the listener that the literal meaning is merely intended pro forma.
- special markers: the use of politeness markers such as *please* indicates that a requestive interpretation rather than a literal interpretation is intended;
- transparency of indirect meaning; the more transparent the indirect meaning, the more confident listeners can be that the direct meaning is merely pro forma. A request such as 'Could you tell me the price of X' is more transparent than 'Do you have a price for X?', where it is less clear what the listener expected to 'do' with the price. Both are equally likely to prompt the indirect (request) interpretation, as they are both conventional forms. The 'Do you have' request, however, is more likely to prompt a literal interpretation as well, as it is less transparent for the listener what should be done than in the 'Could you' request. Clark does admit that this dimension correlates highly with conventionality.
- implausibility of the literal meaning; a request to a merchant such as, *Could you tell me the time you close?* is not likely to be interpreted literally, as a merchant knows the closing time of the shop. On the other hand, for a request such as, *Could you tell me the price for a fifth of Chivas Regal?* a literal interpretation might be more plausible, as the merchant may not remember the price, or may not have the product. If the literal meaning of a request is less plausible, it is more likely to be interpreted as merely pro forma.
- speakers' imputed plans and goals; on the basis of the phrasing of a request a listener draws conclusions about what the speaker's intentions are. On the basis of these conclusions the listener decides whether the literal meaning should be taken seriously or pro forma.

Although Clark suggests that these six sources of information are used in computing both literal and indirect meaning, no claims are made as to how these sources interact.

The model was further elaborated by Clark and Schunk (1980), who claimed that the role of literal meaning in the comprehension of indirect requests is that it specifies the politeness value of the request. Two arguments are put forward to support the model. The first argument concerns the relation between indirectness and politeness. Indirect requests such as *Could I ask you where Jordan Hall is?*, and *Shouldn't you tell me where Jordan Hall is?* have the same indirect meaning, i.e., *Tell me where Jordan Hall is*, but differ in politeness. Clark and Schunk claim that the difference in politeness of these indirect requests is derived from the literal meaning of these requests. The more the literal meaning of an indirect request benefits the listener, the more polite the request is. For the examples mentioned above this would mean that *Could I ask you where Jordan Hall is?* is the more polite request as the speaker gives the hearer the option to deny the ability to give directions, thus allowing the hearer to avoid embarrassment. By the same reasoning, the second example, *Shouldn't you tell me where Jordan Hall is?* is less polite because the speaker suggests that the hearer is under some sort of obligation to carry out the request. Also, the negative *shouldn't* express irritation on the part of the speaker that the hearer had not done this already.

The first argument in favour of the model is based on the fact that indirect requests that have the same indirect meaning were found to vary in politeness. This variation can only be explained if the politeness value is derived from the literal meaning of the indirect requests. This, in turn, can only be accounted for by positing a comprehension model in which both the literal and indirect meaning of indirect requests are computed.

The second argument in favour of the multiple-meaning model is based on an analysis of the different kinds of answers that listeners give in response to requests. Just as there are different ways of making indirect requests, there are also different ways of responding to these requests, which also vary in politeness. For example, in responding to the indirect request mentioned above, *Can you tell me what time you close?* a listener can choose from a variety of responses ranging from *six, at six* to *Yes, I can - at six*. As with requests, the question is again how and why speakers choose a particular response. One option open to the listener is to attend to the intended seriousness of the literal meaning of the request on the part of the speaker (cf. Clark, 1979). For a listener to be able to do this, the literal meaning must be computed at some stage in the comprehension process. A second option relates to how polite the hearer wants the response to be. As with requests, variations in politeness in responses to requests are determined by the extent to which the response decreases or increases the costs for the hearer. Clark and Schunk posit an attentiveness hypothesis, which predicts that the more attentive a listener is to all aspects of a speaker's request in formulating a response, the more polite the response will be. They predict that the two main aspects that the listener must attend to are the literal meaning and the indirect meaning of the request. Again, for the listener to be able to do this, the literal meaning must be computed at some stage in the comprehension process.

Evidence for the importance of literal meaning in conveying politeness, the first assumption, was provided in an experiment in which respondents were asked to rate 18 types of requests. Results showed that there was a tight fit between politeness ratings for the requests and the costs and benefits (for the hearer) implied in the literal meanings of the requests. The more polite requests were those that reduced costs and maximized benefits to the hearer, whereas the less polite requests were those that implied a great deal of imposition on the hearer. This implies that people base their politeness judgements on the literal meaning of the requests. Evidence for the second claim, that the literal meaning of indirect requests is often reflected in responses, was provided in a series of experiments in which subjects were asked to rank order responses for politeness. It turned out that those responses that attended to both of the requester's meanings (literal and indirect) were ranked as most polite. Based on the evidence from these experiments, Clark and Schunk argue that people must compute both literal and indirect meanings of indirect requests. They claim hearers must do so to be able to recognise when speakers are being polite (or impolite) and to be able to decide whether to respond politely (or impolitely).

1.4.3 The conventional-meaning model

Gibbs (1981, 1982, 1983) argues in favour of a 'conventional-meaning' model in which the processing of indirect requests does not necessarily involve the computation of literal meaning. The main tenet of this model is that speed of processing is not determined by the underlying literal meaning, but by the degree of conventionality of the requests. In line with other studies (Clark 1979; Clark & Schunk 1980), Gibbs (1981) distinguished between two types of conventions: *conventions of means* and *conventions of form*. Conventions of means refer to the semantic devices that can be employed by speakers to make indirect requests, such as referring to a speaker's ability to carry out a request, as in *Can you pass the salt?* Conventions of form concern those specific linguistic devices that speakers of a language typically use to formulate these indirect requests. In English, for example, *Can you pass the salt?* is considered to be more idiomatic and thus more conventional than *Are you able to pass the salt?* Gibbs' hypothesis was that more conventional indirect requests should be processed faster than less conventional requests. Using an on-line measure of comprehension he found that indirect requests that were rated as highly conventional in a given context were processed faster than nonconventional indirect requests. These findings suggest that the conventionality of an utterance, rather than the literal meaning is a decisive factor in processing.

Although this study seems to provide evidence against the role of literal meaning in processing indirect requests and in favour of conventional-meaning model, this is less so when we look at the definition of conventionality used. Gibbs (1981) defines conventionality in terms of frequency of use and subjects' own intuitions of how likely they are to use a particular utterance in a given situation (1981: 438). The question is, however, whether likelihood of use can be taken as a measure of conventionality. Conventionality of means, at least in most other definitions (Clark, 1979; Clark & Schunk, 1980; Morgan, 1978), is related to the semantic devices that are commonly or typically used to perform indirect speech acts, regardless of context. Highly conventional requests are, for example, questions about a hearer's willingness or ability to perform the request in question. Likelihood of use, however, appears to be related to whether a particular request strategy is appropriate in a given context. Although a question referring to a hearer's ability such as *Could you open the door?* is a highly conventional request, it might not be an appropriate, and hence not very likely, request, in, for example, emergencies. Likelihood of use, then, seems to be a measure of appropriateness, or politeness, but not, of conventionality. In fact, Clark and Schunk (1980), who asked people to rank order request strategies for politeness and conventionality, found no significant correlations between the two and concluded that 'conventionality appears to have a somewhat independent status' (1980: 129).

A second problem is that, although Gibbs' (1981) results seem to suggest that highly conventional indirect requests are understood faster than nonconventional indirect requests, this does not necessarily mean that the literal meaning is not computed at some stage in processing. It might indeed be the case that highly appropriate indirect requests require very little processing time because the literal meaning can be rejected quickly on

the basis of contextual clues. For less appropriate indirect requests, where there is a poor match between context and sentence, additional processing time might be required in relating possible meanings to contextual clues. The conventionality of indirect requests, does not, then, seem to provide arguments against the role of literal meaning in the processing of indirect requests.

More substantial evidence in favour of a conventional-meaning model comes from a later study (Gibbs, 1983), which was more directly aimed at the investigation of the role of literal meaning. The hypothesis explored in this study is that people *only* process the conventional, nonliteral interpretation of indirect requests. Gibbs designed two sentence-priming experiments to support his claim that people do not always compute the literal meanings of conventional requests such as *Can't you be friendly?*. His second claim was that people are biased towards the conventional nonliteral interpretations of these utterances even when they are read in contexts favouring a literal interpretation. Subjects were asked to read stories that ended with sentences like *Can't you be friendly?*. The sentence had either an indirect (requestive) or a literal interpretation. Immediately after reading a story, subjects were asked to make a judgement of a target sentence, which contained a paraphrase of either the indirect or the literal interpretation. It turned out that comprehension times for reading prime sentences were shorter for indirect requests than for the literal sentences. Moreover, it turned out that subjects' responses to indirect targets, but not to literal targets, were facilitated when they read direct primes. If the literal meaning were indeed computed at some stage in the comprehension process, then some facilitation of reading direct primes was expected to occur. As there was no evidence of any facilitation, however, this suggests that people do not compute the literal meaning of indirect requests automatically. Gibbs also found that, even when reading literal primes, subjects were quicker to respond to indirect targets, but not to literal targets, which seems to suggest that they were biased towards the conventional, indirect interpretation of sentences. Gibbs concludes that his findings provide strong support for a processing model in which people do not always process the literal meaning of indirect requests, but are biased toward the conventional, nonliteral interpretation of these requests. Gibbs' findings, then, seem to provide evidence against the serial processing order of literal and indirect meaning as proposed by the literal-first hypothesis, and against the role of literal meaning in interpretation process.

In summary, it appears that of the three models that have been proposed so far to account for the processing of indirect speech acts, only the multiple-meaning modal and the conventional-meaning model have received substantial empirical support. The literal-first model is too strict with respect to the role assigned to the serial processing order of direct and indirect meaning. Originally proposed by Clark and Lucy (1975), even Clark (1979) and Clark and Schunk (1980) admitted that the model was probably too simplistic with respect to the role of direct meaning. What we have, then, is two models of comprehension of indirect speech acts, which differ mainly in the role assigned to the computation of literal meaning. In Gibbs' (1982, 1983) conventional-meaning model, literal meaning is not necessarily computed, whereas in Clark and Schunk's (1980) model the computation of literal meaning is an essential component.

Shapiro and Murphy (1993) compared the three models mentioned above in a series of reaction-time experiments. In the first of a series of experiments designed to test these models, subjects were presented with four types of questions, presented as isolated sentences. The questions differed according to the plausibility of direct or indirect interpretations. There were four conditions that varied according to whether items had both plausible direct and indirect meaning, plausible direct but implausible indirect meaning, implausible indirect but plausible direct meaning, or, finally, implausible direct and indirect meaning. Subjects were asked to indicate whether each item had a plausible direct meaning. If, as predicted by the serial-processing order of the literal-first model, direct meaning is computed first, then reaction time results should bear no evidence of interference from indirect meaning. It turned out, however, that reaction times for items that had a plausible indirect meaning were longer than those that did not. This was interpreted as evidence against a serial processing model, and in favour of a parallel model in which direct and indirect meanings are on equal footing. Results also showed that subjects did not manage to ignore the indirect meaning even though they were specifically instructed to do so. Shapiro and Murphy argue that this suggests that indirect meaning is obligatorily derived. A first conclusion, then, is that processing takes place by way of a parallel model, rather than a serial model. In a second experiment, two varieties of a parallel model were put to the test.

The first model is a version of a multiple-meaning model in which direct and indirect meaning are accessed independently, a model that best resembles Clark's multiple-meaning version (Clark, 1979; Clark & Schunk, 1980). The second, called the single-meaning model, predicts that only the single best interpretation is derived, regardless of whether this is direct or indirect. This model best resembles Gibbs' conventional-meaning model. In a second experiment subjects were again given four question types, but this time a relevant context was provided. Shapiro and Murphy (1993) predict that under the multiple-meaning model all meanings of a question are generated at once. Consequently, the more meanings there are, the longer it should take subjects to respond, as, for one thing, more processing resources are required and for another, listeners need more time to select the appropriate interpretation. So, for questions with both plausible direct and indirect meanings, reaction times should be longer compared with those for questions with only one plausible meaning (either direct or indirect). In contrast, the prediction under the single-meaning model is that one interpretation is derived, the one that is most appropriate in view of the sentence and the context. Consequently, under this model, all questions should take equally long to react to. Results showed that response times were equivalent for sentences that had one plausible meaning (direct or indirect) or two plausible meanings (both direct and indirect). Shapiro and Murphy (1993) argue that these results support a single-meaning hypothesis model in which the most plausible meaning of a sentence (direct or indirect) is invoked first. The study would thus seem to support the conventional-meaning model proposed by Gibbs (1982, 1983).

Evidence in support of a multiple-meaning processing model as proposed by Clark (1979) has been provided by Takahashi and Roitblat (1994), who investigated reading speed of literal and (conventionally) indirect utterances for native speakers and Japanese

learners of English. Subjects were asked to read stories inducing either an indirect (conventional) or a literal interpretation of a priming sentence. After they had read the story, they were asked to give acceptability judgements of target sentences. The target sentences contained a paraphrase of the prime sentence's literal or indirect interpretation or an unrelated sentence. Subjects were asked to give acceptability judgements of these targets. Results showed that reading speed for prime sentences did not vary as a function of the interpretation of the primes. Subjects read at the same speed, regardless of whether the prime sentence had a direct or indirect interpretation. Target sentences, however, were read more quickly if they contained a paraphrase of the conventional interpretation than if they contained a paraphrase of the literal interpretation. Target sentences were also read more quickly if they paraphrased a context-related interpretation of the prime sentence than if they did not. Unrelated target sentences were read more slowly than either positively or negatively primed sentences. This suggests that subjects kept both interpretations in mind while reading the target sentences, as both interpretations seemed to be more readily available than the unrelated control targets. Takahashi and Roitblat claim that their data strongly support the multiple-meaning model in which both the literal and indirect meaning are activated. They do, however, suggest that people are inclined to use the indirect, conventional interpretations of indirect requests, which partly supports Gibbs' conventional-meaning model. They also suggest that people are also flexible enough, however, to activate a literal interpretation if this is relevant in a given context.

Additional support, although again the evidence does not seem conclusive, has been provided by related studies investigating the comprehension of metaphors and idioms (Gibbs 1980, 1985a, 1986a). Gibbs (1980) found that subjects took less time to process idiomatic expressions than to understand the literal uses of these expressions. Furthermore, Gibbs (1985a, 1986a) found that people do not compute the literal interpretations of idioms in comprehending their figurative meanings. He also found, as with indirect requests, that people are biased towards interpreting the figurative meanings of idioms before deriving their literal meanings. Similar results were reported by Ortony, Schallert, Reynolds & Antos (1978), who found that metaphors were processed as quickly as their literal counterparts and found strong contextual effects. These results seem to tie in with Gibbs' findings (1983) for the interpretation of indirect requests, and can thus be taken to support his conventional-meaning model.

1.4.4 Evaluating competing processing models

The purpose of this section was to look at evidence from psycholinguistic research with respect to the understanding of indirect speech acts. Consequently, the studies discussed in this section were mainly directed at resolving three, often related issues. As far as the processing of indirect speech acts is concerned, it turns out that most evidence argues against a processing model in which the literal meaning of an indirect speech act is obligatorily processed before the nonliteral interpretation. This suggests that the first of the three models discussed in this section, the literal-first model, is less plausible. In the two remaining, parallel, models literal and nonliteral meaning are on equal footing, the

multiple-meaning model and the conventional-meaning model. As discussed earlier, the main difference between these two models seems to lie in the different role assigned to literal meaning in comprehension. The multiple-meaning model claims that literal meaning is always obligatorily derived, but not necessarily before indirect meaning. The conventional-meaning model, on the other hand, claims that people are biased toward conventional indirect interpretations of indirect requests and that the literal meaning of these speech acts is *not* necessarily computed. Both models have received some support from studies. Although this is clearly a matter to be resolved by future research, it is beyond the scope of the present study to shed light on issues relating to serial or parallel processing order of literal and nonliteral meaning. For the time being therefore, the working assumption will be that no definitive support for either the conventional-meaning model or the multiple-meaning model has been provided.

1.4.5 Explanations of politeness

Of the three processing models discussed in the previous section, only the conventional-meaning model and the multiple-meaning model make predictions about the politeness of indirect requests. An essential difference between the two models is the process proposed to account for the fact that indirect speech acts vary in politeness. In Clark's multiple-meaning model, the literal meaning of an indirect request is essential in that it almost 'determines' the politeness value of the request. In Gibbs' conventional-meaning model the politeness of (conventional) indirect requests is explained through a kind of idiomatic process in which requests have politeness values conventionally associated with them.

Politeness in the multiple-meaning approach

As briefly discussed in the previous section, the main tenet of the multiple-meaning model is that the literal meaning plays an important role in the comprehension of indirect requests in determining the politeness value of the request. This approach is heavily indebted to other politeness theories (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1973, 1974), in which the concept of 'face' and 'face-threat' are central notions. Speakers will be try to be polite to the extent that they will try to reduce the costs to a hearer's face. Applied to requests, this predicts that in formulating a request a speaker will try to minimize imposition on the hearer. Consequently, a speaker will select those linguistic devices that maximize the benefits and minimize the costs for the hearer. Clark and Schunk (1980) claim that the politeness value of a request can thus be 'calculated' on the basis of an analysis of the surface structure of the sentence. For example, in a relatively polite request such as *Can you tell me where the station is?*, hearers are (literally) asked about their ability to give directions. Hearers are thus given the option to refrain from complying on account of not being able to do so. The costs involved are thus fairly low, as hearers are saved the embarrassment of, for example, having to state that they are not willing to comply. Table 1.1 displays the strategy types that Clark and Schunk selected on the basis of earlier work on indirect requests such as Searle (1975) and Gordon and Lakoff (1975).

Table 1.1 Clark and Schunk's request categories: mean politeness rankings by native speakers of English

Descriptive category	Request type	Mean	Category mean
1. Permission	May I ask you where Jordan Hall is?	2.00	2.16
	Might I ask you ...?	1.87	
	Could I ask you ...?	2.62	
2. Imposition	Would you mind telling me ...?	3.31	3.04
	Would it be too much trouble to tell me...?	2.77	
3. Ability	Can you tell me ...?	3.22	3.85
	Could you tell me ...?	2.63	
	Can't you tell me ...?	5.58	
	Do you know ...?	3.98	
4. Memory	Have I already asked you ...?	3.48	3.8
	Did I ask you ...?	3.51	
	Have you told me ...?	3.99	
	Do I know ...?	4.24	
5. Commitment	Will you tell me ...?	4.24	4.2
	Would you tell me ...?	3.39	
	Won't you tell me ...?	4.41	
	Do you want to tell ...?	4.76	
6. Obligation	Shouldn't you tell me ...?	5.77	5.77

(1980, p. 119)

The politeness level, and thus the rank order, of each strategy can be calculated depending on the costs and benefits for the hearer. These calculations are made on the basis of the literal meaning of the request. In asking permission, such as in *May I ask you where X is?*, a speaker offers a listener the authority to make a request. This places the listener in a position of authority. This maximises the benefit for the listener and thus makes the request very polite. The imposition category includes request types such as, *Would you mind telling me where X is?*. Here, the listener is merely given the chance to say that the requested act is too imposing. The benefits to the listener are, however, lower than for permission request. The memory category includes strategies such as *Did I ask you where X is?*. This type of request implies some costs for the listener as the literal meaning suggests that she should try to remember whether the speaker had already asked her this question. The category of commitment includes strategies such as *Will you tell me where X is?*, in which listeners are asked to commit themselves to carrying out the request. This implies more costs than benefits for the listener. Commitment strategies are therefore less polite than the previous category. Finally, the category of obligation strategies includes requests such as, *Shouldn't you tell me where X is?*. These requests are even less polite, because the listener has no choice but to comply. Moreover, the inclusion of negation also suggests that the listener should already have supplied the information anyway, which makes it a fairly impolite request.

Apart from the cost-benefit factor, three other factors play a role in determining the politeness value of an indirect request: conditionality, negativity and strength of the request. Conditionality refers to the difference between *may* and *might* or *can* and *could*.

Negativity refers to the difference between *can* and *can't* or *will* and *won't*. The third factor, strength, refers to the force of the verb in the request: *want* expresses a more forceful attitude on the part of the speaker than *would like* and thus implies more imposition on the hearer. Clark and Schunk (1980) asked respondents to rate the politeness of all 18 request types and found that mean ratings for the categories confirmed the predicted order, except for the ability and commitment categories. They also found that the three additional factors, conditionality, negativity and strength of the request had the predicted impact on the politeness value of the strategies. Conditional requests (could/would) were perceived to be more polite than nonconditional requests (can/could). Negative requests (can't/won't) were rated as less polite than positive requests (can/will). Finally, a strong request such as, 'do you want to tell me' was rated as fairly impolite. As could be observed in Table 1.1, these three factors were found to cut across overall categories. Although the category means can be ordered from most polite to least polite, there is considerable variation in the politeness value of individual strategies within these categories. This variation is mainly due to the influence of these three factors. If we look at the ability category, for example, it turns out 'can you' was rated as considerably more polite than negative 'can't you', which received a similar rating to the least polite strategy of all, obligation ('shouldn't you').

In summary, then, politeness in the multiple-meaning approach is the minimization of face-threat. This minimization of face-threat is achieved by maximizing the benefits and minimizing the costs involved for the hearer. For each (indirect) request, the politeness value can be calculated on the basis of this cost-benefit analysis and the three factors, conditionality, negativity and strength of the request. This calculation is made on the basis of the literal meaning of the request.

Politeness in the conventional-meaning approach

A different approach to explaining politeness is Gibbs' (1983) conventional-meaning model, in which indirect requests are understood without derivation of the literal meaning taking place. Consequently, in this approach variations in politeness cannot be explained through reference to the literal meaning of indirect requests. Although, admittedly, the model was not primarily set up to account for differences in politeness, it does make some predictions about how people interpret the politeness value of indirect requests. The basic tenet of the model is that conventional indirect requests, like idioms, are 'stored in the lexicon' and that people understand these requests 'via established conventions of language use and not necessarily from any analysis of the combined meanings of their words apart from context' (Gibbs, 1983: 531). The suggestion is that conventional requests, at least, have politeness values associated with them, which are, presumably, also stored in the lexicon. Gibbs does admit that for other, less conventional requests, the calculation of politeness is based on the literal meaning of the utterance.

Clark and Schunk (1980) claim that the main weakness of an explanation involving idiomatic processes is that one and the same construction would need to have different politeness values attached to it, depending on the purpose for which it used. For example, a request like *May I ask you (to pass the salt?)* would be labelled as more polite than

Won't you (pass the salt?). However, if *May I ask* is used as an offer, as in *May I ask you to take some cake?*, it is less polite than *Won't you (take some cake?)*. Consequently, *May I ask you* would need to have two, or even more, different politeness values attached to it, depending on whether it is used as a request or an offer. Clark and Schunk claim that the multiple-meaning model would be able to account for these different politeness values by analysing costs and benefits implied in the literal meaning.

An additional, related problem, is the hypothesized interaction between context and degree of conventionality in the model. Gibbs (1983) claims that context is a determining factor in deciding how conventional a particular utterance is. Although a request such as *Can you tell me what time it is?* might be highly conventional in one particular context, it might be less conventional, and probably even nonconventional, in others. It is difficult to imagine how an idiomatic process might be able to account for this.

An additional, and perhaps more important problem, is that although an idiomatic process might be able to account for the different degrees of politeness of conventional indirect requests, an additional process would be required to account for variations in politeness in direct and nonconventional indirect requests. As these are not derived through an idiomatic process and thus do not have politeness values conventionally associated with them, a different process would be required.

1.4.6 Conclusion

It can be concluded that an idiomatic process, as posited in the conventional-meaning model, does not seem to be able to account for all variations in politeness expressed in indirect requests as well as the multiple-meaning model. Evidence also suggests that the literal meaning of indirect requests is available at some stage in the interpretation process, but that it does not play a role in the interpretation of the conventional indirect requests, since these are interpreted as requests almost straightaway. That the literal meaning does seem to play a role supports Leech's (1983) interpretation of indirectness as 'tactful options', which was based on the assumption that the literal meaning of indirect requests serves as a 'tact indicator'. As will become clear in Chapter 2, this interpretation of indirectness in the sense of 'tact indicator' will be at the basis of our taxonomy of request strategies. Before we turn to this framework, however, the next section will first give an overview of how ILP studies to date have analysed request strategies.

1.5 Indirectness and politeness in ILP request studies

If we look at the speech act studies in ILP, requests appear to be the most researched speech acts by far, with apologies probably ranking second best. Of the odd forty studies reviewed in Kasper and Dahl (1991), some twenty deal with requests. One of the main reasons why requests have received so much attention is that they are, by nature, face-threatening acts and should thus be formulated with considerable care by the speaker. In request studies, more than in other speech act studies, a great deal of time and effort has therefore been invested in gaining insight into the nature and use of face-saving strategies.

In trying to account for the nature of face-saving strategies, researchers have made extensive use of the notions of indirectness and politeness. This section will therefore look at how ILP request studies have used the notions of indirectness and politeness to account for the production and comprehension of request strategies by native speakers and language learners.

1.5.1 Early studies

The majority of request studies (cross-cultural and/or intercultural) conducted in the last two decades can roughly be subdivided into three categories on the basis of the taxonomies used in the analysis of request strategies.

The early studies can be characterised as explorative in that they were aimed at investigating which request strategies were available in different languages and if (and how) these strategies could be ordered on a universal scale of increasing politeness. Most of these studies adopted principles of politeness from the framework put forward by Lakoff (1973, 1974), although some reference is made to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) face theory (e.g., Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Scarcella, 1979; Scarcella & Brunak, 1980; Tanaka & Kawade, 1982; Walters, 1979). In some studies researchers relied on their own intuitions to arrive at set of request strategies (e.g., Fraser et al., 1980). If elaborate frameworks were constructed, they were not, however, always applied consistently, nor were the notions of politeness and indirectness for that matter, incorporated systematically. In most of these studies politeness was hypothesized to increase with the complexity of a surface syntactic markers (Carrell & Konneker, 1981)

Of these early studies, Carrell and Konneker's (1981) and Tanaka and Kawade's (1982) taxonomies are probably among the most elaborate attempts to arrive at a politeness scale. The starting point for their analysis of request strategies is the notion of politeness as put forward by Lakoff (1973, 1974). In Lakoff's framework politeness corresponds to the options provided to the addressee of a request to comply with or refuse the request without losing face. Principle conveyors of politeness in this framework are the *imperative*, *declarative* and *interrogative* moods, which are ordered on a scale of increasing politeness. An *imperative* leaves an addressee no option but to comply with the request, as in '*Give me a pack of Marlboros*'. A *declarative* is slightly more polite in that the addressee can choose to agree or disagree with what is stated, but the addressee does not necessarily need to take any action, as in '*I'd like a pack of Marlboros*'. An *interrogative* is the most polite form as, on the face of it, it merely requires a verbal response, but not necessarily an action on the part of the addressee as in '*Can you give me a pack of Marlboros?*'. Strictly speaking this could be an informative question to which an addressee could choose merely to supply a verbal response. Thus, the addressee is provided with an option to opt out of the request without losing face. Besides these three distinctions in mood, Carrell and Konneker add two further semantic/syntactic aspects, *modal* and *tense*, which are also supposed to convey different levels of politeness. The rationale behind including these two aspects in particular is not entirely clear. Carrell and Konneker claim that a number of lexical, semantic and syntactic aspects have, in the

literature, been shown to play a role in politeness, such as politeness marker *please*, use of tags, negation, etc., but only decided to include modal and tense. Both the use of a modal verb and the use of past tense (as opposed to present tense) are supposed to distance the request in time or reality, thus making the request less definite and consequently less imposing on the addressee. Combined with the three different *mood* categories, this results in eight different request strategies, which Carrell and Konneker ordered on a scale ranging from least polite to most polite (see Table 1.2 - taxonomy). In their study Carrell and Konneker asked respondents (native speakers and learners of English) to judge the politeness value of each of the eight strategies by means of a card-sorting task. It turned out that the native speakers only distinguished five different politeness levels in the hierarchy, instead of eight. *Imperatives* (1) and *elliptical imperatives* (2), the two least polite strategies were not judged to be significantly different with respect to the level of politeness conveyed. At the more polite end of the scale three supposedly different strategies, *declarative - past tense modal* (5 - 'I'd like ...'), *interrogative - no modal* (6 - 'Do you have...') and *interrogative - present tense modal* (7 - 'Can you give me...') were not judged to be significantly different. So instead of the hypothesized seven different politeness levels, only five were recognized as such by the native speakers of English. However, the rank order of the strategies from least to most polite remained basically the same (see Table 1.2 - judgement task).

Tanaka and Kawade (1982) carried out a similar study to investigate different levels of politeness conveyed by request strategies. Although they tried to replicate Carrell and Konneker's study, they did not entirely succeed in doing so upon closer analysis. They adopted most, but not all, of Carrell and Konneker's categories (Table 1.2) and added six of their own. Added categories involved the distinction between modals can/will and could/would, the use of tag questions with imperatives. They also added the 'idiomatic expression', which are requests that include expressions such as 'I'd appreciate it if...' or 'I'd be very grateful if...', which are considered to be more indirect than the rest of the strategies in Table 1.2 (cf. Sadock, 1974; Rintell, 1981). Tanaka and Kawade tested these twelve categories in a judgement task with native speakers of English and found that respondents only recognized six distinct levels within the hierarchy of politeness. These six categories were then used in a second multiple choice task in which respondents were asked to pick the most appropriate strategy for a number of different situations. The six remaining categories are listed in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Request strategies in Carrell & Konneker (1981) and Tanaka & Kawade (1982) - ranging from least polite to most polite

	Carrell & Konneker (1981)		Tanaka & Kawade (1982)	
	taxonomy	judgement task	taxonomy	judgement task
<i>imperative - elliptical</i> "A pack of Marlboros"	1 ¹	1	1	1
<i>imperative</i> "Give me a pack of Marlboros"	2		2	2
<i>declarative - no modal (need/want)</i> "I want a pack of Marlboros"	3	2	3	
<i>imperative - tag question</i> "Give me a pack of Marlboros, will you?"	-	-	4	3
<i>suggestory formula</i> "Why don't you give me a pack of Marlboros?"	-	-	5	4
<i>imperative - tag question</i> "Give me a pack of Marlboros, won't you?"	-	-	6	
<i>declarative - present tense modal</i> "I'll have a pack of Marlboros"	4	3	-	-
<i>interrogative - present tense modal</i> ² "Will you give me a pack of Marlboros?"	-	-	7	4
<i>declarative - past tense modal</i> "I'd like a pack of Marlboros"	5	4	8	
<i>interrogative - no modal</i> "Do you have a pack of Marlboros?"	6		-	-
<i>interrogative - present tense modal</i> "Can you give me a pack of Marlboros?"	7		9	4
<i>interrogative - past tense modal</i> "Would you give me a pack of Marlboros?"	-	-	10	5
<i>interrogative - past tense modal</i> "Could you give me a pack of Marlboros?"	8	5	11	6
<i>idiomatic expression</i> "I'd appreciate it if you could give me a pack of Marlboros"	-	-	12	

¹ the numbers in the left-hand columns refer to the position of the strategy in the original taxonomy; the numbers in the right-hand columns refer to the position of the strategy on the basis of the results of the judgement task (for the native speakers of English)

² both *interrogative - present tense modal* and *interrogative - past tense modal* occur twice in Tanaka & Kawade's taxonomy; Tanaka and Kawade make a distinction between interrogatives with 'will/would' (strategy 7/10) and interrogatives with 'can/could' (strategy 9/11)

As becomes clear from the table, the range of strategies is largely the same for both studies. With the exception of the extra category ‘idiomatic expression’ in the Tanaka & Kawade framework, both scales range from ‘imperatives’ at the least polite end of the scale to ‘past tense interrogative’ at the other, most polite end of the scale. An additional problem is the inconsistent way in which politeness has been incorporated. Sometimes, politeness is associated with surface syntactic complexity, at other times politeness is associated with conventional indirectness (Carrell & Konneker, 1981). With respect to the hierarchical ordering of strategies, politeness is associated with what speakers feel to be commonly polite. It is not, however, clear what the exact relationship between indirectness and politeness is.

1.5.2 CCSARP-related studies

A more systematic attempt at trying to account for variation in request strategies was undertaken in a group of studies that has since become known as the CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a). A difference with the approach sketched above is that the analysis of requests in this line of research was both more systematic and more comprehensive. More systematic in that an attempt was made to incorporate (and distinguish between) the notions of indirectness and politeness, more comprehensive in that the unit of analysis was not the isolated request strategy, but the entire request utterance.

Whereas earlier work had predominantly been focussed on analysing isolated request strategies, here the request utterance was taken as the unit of analysis, such as the one in example (22):

- (22) *Dad, I'm working on this project for school, but I'm afraid I got stuck. Could you just help me finish it? I'll wash the car in return.*

The rationale behind this more comprehensive approach was, on the one hand, that requests are rarely formulated by means of isolated sentences, but on the other hand, the growing realization that the notions of indirectness and politeness were related, but not necessarily, parallel notions and should therefore be analysed separately. For example, requests such as ‘give me that pen’ and ‘just give me that pen, please’, which are both realized by means of fairly direct imperatives, have been found to differ in politeness value. A difference which has been attributed to the use of, in this case internal, modifiers. So, although requests might be realized by equally direct strategies, the overall politeness value is also determined by the use of modifiers. Consequently, the approach taken in these studies also concentrated on analysing so-called external and internal modifiers, rather than just the request strategy itself. External modifiers are all elements external to what has come to be known as the *Head Act* of the request, i.e., the actual request (the underlined sequence in example (22)). External modifiers include, for example, promises such as ‘I’ll wash the car in return’ in (22), which are supposed to ‘soften the blow’ of the request for the hearer. Internal modifiers are elements that occur in the head act of the request strategy. Modifiers can have either a downgrading effect

when they minimize the force of the request, or an upgrading effect when they maximise the force of the requests. An example of a downgrader is 'just', which tends to minimize the effort involved in carrying out the request (as in example (22)). Two categories of internal modifiers have been distinguished: lexical modifiers, such as 'just' or 'possibly' and syntactic modifiers, such as use of modal, tense, negation, etc. (for list of modifiers see Chapter 2). Discussions about the notions of indirectness and politeness have mainly been aimed at the analysis of the head act of request utterances, i.e., the actual request strategy.

Blum-Kulka (1987, 1989) showed that for requests, indirectness and politeness should be regarded as related, but not parallel notions. Results from a series of experiments investigating perceptions of native speakers of Hebrew and English indicated that the most indirect strategies were not always perceived as the most polite strategies. Consequently, Blum-Kulka argues in favour of a framework of analysis in which the two notions are incorporated as separate notions. The basis for the proposed taxonomy is formed by Searle's (1975) conditions for requests and Leech's notion of indirectness, based on the Tact Maxim. Based on theoretical and empirical work, a classification of request strategies is constructed in which three broad categories of requests are distinguished: *direct*, *conventional indirect* and *nonconventional indirect* strategies (House & Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka, Danet & Gherson, 1985). There is some variation between the individual studies in the CCSARP project (see Table 1.3), in particular with respect to the kind and number of strategies that make up the framework. The basic categories of strategies, however, remain largely the same. The category of *direct* strategies includes those strategies in which the illocutionary intent is syntactically or semantically marked in the surface structure of the request, such as imperatives, performatives, want statements and obligation statements. The category of *conventionally indirect* requests includes those strategies in which reference to preconditions is made by means of conventional linguistic means. A conventional means to formulate a request, for example, is to make a reference to a hearer's ability to carry out the requested act. Furthermore, in English, it is customary to refer to a hearer's ability by means of the modal 'can', but less so by means of 'be able to'. Hence, example (23a) is more conventional than example (23b).

- (23) a. *Can you help me?*
 b. *Are you able to help me?*

Conventional indirect strategies have both a literal and a requestive interpretation. Blum-Kulka (1989, p. 43) claims that this 'pragmatic duality' makes these strategies ideally suitable in situations in which a maximum degree of politeness is required. The literal meaning serves as an indication of politeness (at least as interpreted in Leech's framework), but because they are conventional, they are easily interpreted as requests.

The most indirect strategies, finally, are the nonconventional indirect strategies, which include both mild and strong hints. Nonconventional indirect requests form an open-ended category in that there are no restrictions with respect to the linguistic means that can be used to formulate them; as such, they can be classified as nonconventional. The difference between mild and strong hints is one of degree of opacity. In strong hints there

is at least some reference to the requested act, whereas in mild hints there is virtually no reference at all to the request itself (cf. Weizman, 1993 for a more fine-grained analysis of hints). Nonconventional indirect strategies such as hints are, what Blum-Kulka (1987) calls 'pragmatically vague'. For hints, unlike for conventional indirect strategies, listeners need to make use of contextual clues to arrive at a requestive interpretation. Hints are thus the most indirect strategies. They are not, however, the most polite strategies. Blum-Kulka claims that because hints are more difficult to interpret, they can be considered to impose more on the listener conventionally indirect strategies. This reasoning is in line with the interpretation of the Maxim of Manner as put forward by Leech, who claims that speakers should not be more pragmatically vague than strictly necessary in a given context. Blum-Kulka claims that 'tipping the balance in favour of either pragmatic clarity or the appearance of non-coerciveness [i.e., giving listeners options to opt out] might be perceived as impolite' (1987:144). The relationship between indirectness and politeness (in Leech's Tact interpretation) in this approach is one of two dishes in an interactional balance. If one outweighs the other, a request might be perceived as impolite. It was this interpretation of the notions of indirectness and politeness that provided the foundation for a taxonomy of request strategies that was adopted by most CCSARP (and other) studies. Although most studies used the principles outlined above, differences can be observed with regard to the types and the total number of strategies that are distinguished in different studies. Some examples of taxonomies that have been used in different studies are displayed in Table 1.3.

The most important differences between the taxonomies in Table 1.3 concern the criteria underlying the hierarchy of request strategies and the way indirectness and politeness have been incorporated in the framework. In most frameworks, but not all, request strategies are subdivided into three broad categories: direct, conventional indirect and nonconventional indirect strategies. There is, however, some degree of variation with respect to which strategies are placed in each category. For example, the category of direct strategies includes imperatives and performatives, and obligation statements. In some studies, however, the category of direct strategies also includes want and need statements, such as 'I wish you would give me a pack of Marlboros' (Blum-Kulka, 1987, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1995). This suggests that the criteria that have been put forward for strategies to be included in a particular category have not always been clear or consistent.

In the CCSARP taxonomy, direct strategies are those that are syntactically marked as requests, such as imperatives, or those that contain linguistic means that explicitly express illocutionary force, such as performative verbs. It is not clear, however, why obligation statements, which refer to a hearer's obligation to carry out the request, or want statements, which refer to a speaker's wish should be included. The latter are not exactly polite strategies, but the taxonomy is supposed to be constructed on the basis of increasing indirectness, not increasing politeness. Trosborg claims that obligation statements are direct because they express a weak form of order and are thus a modified version of an imperative, but again, this seems to be an argument based on the relative politeness level of the strategy, rather than on the relative directness level. In the

CCSARP taxonomy *want statements* (which include *need statements*) are also classified as direct strategies, because ‘the understanding [of the strategies] relies on the semantic content of the utterance’, i.e., the meaning is derivable from the surface structure of the request’ (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b: 19).

Table 1.3 CCSARP-based taxonomies of request strategies

	House & Kasper 1981	Blum-Kulka et al., 1985	House & Kasper, 1987	Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, Blum-Kulka, 1987, 1989 (CCSARP)	Trosborg, 1995
Mood derivable Give me a pack of Marlboros	1 ¹	1 D ²	1	1 D	1 D
Explicit performatives I ask you to give me ...	2	2 D	2	2 D	2 D
Hedged performative I would like to ask you to give me..				3 D	
Locution derivable (obligation statement) You'll have to give me ...	3	3 D	3	4 D	3 D
Desires/needs I need a pack of Marlboros	4	4 CI	4	5 D	4 CI
Scope stating/want statement I wish you would give me ...					5 CI
State-preparatory You can give me ...	5	? ³		?	?
Suggestory formula Why don't you give me ...?	?	?	5	6 CI	6 CI
Question directive Will you give me ...?	6	5 CI	6	7 CI	7 CI
Reference to preparatory conditions (query preparatory, conventionally direct) Can you give me ...?		6 CI			
Preparatory Would you mind giving me ...?		7 I			
Strong hint Is that a pack of Marlboros?	7	8 I	7	8 NCI	8 I
Mild hint I'm not the John Player's type ...	8	9 I		9 NCI	8 I

1. the numbers refer to the position occupied in the hierarchy
2. D, CI, I and NCI stand for direct, conventionally indirect, indirect and non-conventionally direct strategies. Some studies group individual strategies together into direct, conventionally indirect and indirect/non-conventionally strategies.
3. A question mark means the strategy is not included in the taxonomy

Trosborg, however, claims that *want statements* are conventionally indirect strategies, because they are conventional ways of referring to (underlying) speaker-based conditions.

From this perspective, this strategy is the ‘speaker-based’ counterpart of a ‘hearer-oriented’ conventionally indirect strategy such as, ‘Can you...’ or ‘Would you mind ...’. Trosborg is not, however, consistent in following this line of reasoning in her claim that there are two different speaker-based strategies. She claims that there are two categories of speaker-based conventionally indirect strategies, *statements of wish or desire* and *want statements*. She claims that the difference between the two is that ‘a speaker’s intent may be expressed politely as a wish (24a) or more bluntly as a demand’ as in (24b):

- (24) a. *I would like to have some more coffee*
 b. *I want to have some more coffee.*

Again, however, this is a matter of politeness and not indirectness, which is supposed to be the basis for the taxonomy. The fact that (24a) is more polite than (24b) is not because the request strategy is different, but because the internal modification within the strategy is different. This, however, is a matter of politeness, not of indirectness. Likewise, she claims that speaker-based conventionally indirect strategies are more direct than hearer-oriented strategies. The reason for this is that by using a speaker-based strategy such as ‘I wish you’d give me a pack of Marlboros’, speakers place their own interests above the hearers’ interests. By doing so, the request becomes more direct. The question is, however, whether this is not simply a matter of relative politeness, i.e., what is proper behaviour, rather than directness.

In addition to differences with respect to the overall categories of request strategies, there is also a lack of agreement on the total number of request strategies that should be distinguished. Some studies distinguish seven types of request strategies, whereas other studies distinguish eight or nine. Some studies include strategies that do not seem to be included by others, or seem to be included in a different category. For example, House and Kasper (1981) distinguish a category called *state preparatory*, which is the assertive counterpart of questions such as ‘Can you help me?’. In *state preparatory* requests, just like in *query preparatory* requests there is a reference to preparatory conditions for requests, such as a hearer’s ability. The difference, however, is that in a *state preparatory* request, the precondition is not questioned, but stated, which makes it a more direct strategy. It is not clear if, and how, this category is included in other taxonomies. Trosborg (1995), for example, notes the difference between the two types of strategies, but does not include a separate category in her taxonomy.

The taxonomies discussed so far are all based on analysing request strategies and modifications separately. The basis for the rank order of requests is the directness level of the strategy in the head act of the request. Internal or external modifiers of this request strategy are not in principle incorporated in the taxonomy. As was shown above, however, taxonomies have not always been entirely consistent in applying these principles. The next section will discuss two (different) taxonomies that are based on a combined approach, in that both the request strategy and (some degree of) internal modification have been incorporated in the taxonomy.

1.5.3 Combined approach

Van der Wijst (1996), in a contrastive study of politeness in French and Dutch, used a taxonomy of 19 request strategies that was inspired by Clark and Schunk's (1980) framework (Table 1.4). One of Van der Wijst's aims was to investigate differences in the politeness value of request strategies as perceived by native speakers of Dutch and French.

Table 1.4 Taxonomy of request strategies used by Van der Wijst (1996).

categories	English	Dutch
Permission	May I ask you where the railway station is?	Mag ik u vragen waar het station is.?
	Might I ...?	Zou ik u mogen vragen...?
	Could I ...?	Zou ik u kunnen vragen...?
Imposition	Would it be too much trouble ...?	Zou u het erg vervelend vinden...?
	Would you mind ...?	Zou u het vervelend vinden...?
	Is it too much trouble ..?	Vindt u het erg vervelend...?
	Do you mind ...?	Vindt u het vervelend...?
Ability/ possibility	Could you ...?	Zou u me kunnen vertellen ...?
	Couldn't you ...?	Zou u me niet vertellen...?
	Can you ...?	Kunt u me vertellen..?
	Can't you ...?	Kunt u me niet vertellen..?
	Do you know..?	Weet u ...?
	Don't you know...	Weet u niet...?
Commitment	Would you ...?	Zou u me willen vertellen...?
	Wouldn't you ...?	Zou u me niet willen vertellen...?
	Will you ...?	Wilt u me vertellen...?
	Won't you ...?	Wilt u me niet vertellen ...?
Obligation	Should you ...?	Zou u me vertellen...?
	Shouldn't you ...?	Zou u me niet vertellen...?

There are a number of differences with the taxonomies used in the CCSARP-related studies. First of all, Van der Wijst's taxonomy, as was Clark and Schunk's, is based on a combination of three linguistic properties: modality of main verb, conditionality of main verb and negativity. The taxonomy only includes indirect strategies, but no direct strategies such as imperatives or performatives. This is partly due to the fact that the focus of the study was the influence of politeness markers on overall level politeness, rather than the investigation of request strategies as such. It is probably also partly due to the fact that the taxonomy was based on Clark and Schunk, who were primarily concerned with investigating indirect responses to indirect (interrogative) requests.

The principle behind the ordering of the strategies from most to least polite is derived from Leech's Politeness Principle, although here, unlike in the approach sketched above, it not as closely linked to Searle's conditions for requests. In the CCSARP framework, for example, the rationale behind including categories such as query preparatory strategies ('can you' or 'will you') was that they were directly linked to the preconditions for requests (ability and willingness). In Van der Wijst's taxonomy strategies are included

on the basis of the modality and consequently ordered on the basis of costs and benefits involved for the addressee of the request. Although this works well for most of the indirect requests (but not for all, as will be demonstrated below), which are usually formulated with the help of auxiliary verbs, it might be more problematic to include direct strategies in the taxonomy using the same principle of modality.

Another problem of this type of taxonomy, with modality as a basis for both including and ordering strategies, is that modal verbs do not translate well into other languages. For example, Van der Wijst points out that the French 'pouvoir' in the ability category was problematic as it can be translated into Dutch as both 'kunnen' (can) and 'mogen' (may), which are both classified as 'permission' in his framework. So, for French, an extra permission category had to be included. There are, however, other, more serious problems. The first problem concerns the obligation requests. In Clark and Schunk's framework, this category only included negative obligation as in 'Shouldn't you tell me where Jordan Hall is?'. Van der Wijst added the positive variant 'Should you tell me where the station is?', which would not, however, normally be a plausible request. It is possible for a speaker to formulate a request by stating the obligation, as in 'you should tell me where the station is'. But because the obligation is a given, it is not possible to question this obligation. That the negative interrogative ('Shouldn't you') is possible, is because it serves as a reminder to the listener that the obligation exists. The addressee should have carried out the request, but has failed to do so. In Dutch the same principle applies. An additional problem, however, is that the Dutch translation 'Zou u me vertellen' does not refer to obligation, but to commitment, or more specifically, commitment that has not been fulfilled. As such, it is much more equivalent to 'Would you tell me' than 'Should you tell me'. This, however, is even more problematic, since 'Would you tell me' is reserved (in this taxonomy at least) for 'Zou u me willen vertellen'. An additional problem is that 'will/would' requests are problematic anyway in English, as it is not clear whether they express willingness (as does Dutch 'willen') or whether they merely predict future acts (see Chapter 2 for competing views on interpretation of 'will/would' requests). So, although this type of taxonomy might be suitable for investigating the influence of certain politeness markers, such as modals, past tense, etc. it might be less suitable than a taxonomy that is based on more general principles, such as Searle's classification of requests.

Another difference with the approach sketched above is the interpretation of the concept of conventionality and the relationship with indirectness and politeness. In Van der Wijst's definition, based on Gibbs (1983), conventionality is a measure of appropriateness in context. Van der Wijst also adopts Gibbs' Obstacle Hypothesis, which predicts that what is the most conventional request in a given context is dependent on what a speaker conceives to be the most obvious obstacle for the hearer to refrain from complying with the request. So in the 'way to the station request' the most likely obstacle is probably that the listener might not know where the station is. Thus, the most conventional request would be an ability question such as (25a). Since it is unlikely that the listener might not be willing to share this type of information a willingness (25b) request would not be conventional.

- (25) a. *Can you tell me the way to the railway station?*
 b. *Will you tell me the way to the railway station?*

This approach suggests that the most conventional request is not necessarily the most polite request. Results of the ranking tasks, however, showed that rankings for conventionality and politeness tended to converge. Both ability and permission requests were ranked as highly conventional and highly polite, irrespective of context, which was contrary to what had been predicted. This result is perhaps less surprising if we re-examine the definition of conventionality. As was discussed earlier, in other studies (Blum-Kulka, 1987, 1989; Morgan, 1978; Searle, 1975), conventionality (in requests) has been associated with the systematic reference to preconditions for requests (conventions of means) and the choice for certain linguistic means over others to refer to this precondition (conventions of forms). Conventional indirect requests are thus conventional regardless of the context. This is not to say that conventional indirect requests are always the most appropriate strategies. In some contexts conventional indirect strategies might be most appropriate, whereas in others, even direct strategies might be suitable. Van Mulken (1999), for example, found that in official letters of requests written to an examination board of a university, students displayed an overwhelming preference for performative verbs such as *ask* and *request*. This is quite surprising, since in most other request studies, conventionally indirect requests are usually by far the most frequent strategies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Le Pair, 1997; Trosborg, 1995). Apparently, however, the writers of the letters felt that the context of the request (official letter) warranted the use of fairly direct strategies. If we were to adopt Gibbs' (1983) (and Van der Wijst's (1996)) definition, then, performatives should also be qualified as 'conventional'. But if this were the case, then the category of conventional strategies would be open-ended and, given enough contexts, all request strategies would eventually be classified as conventional (direct or indirect).

Takahashi (1992, 1995, 1996) constructed a taxonomy of request strategies on the basis of Leech's Tact Maxim (Table 1.5). The taxonomy closely resembles the CCSARP taxonomy discussed above, except for the role of syntactic modifiers. Syntactic modifiers are, unlike in the CCSARP framework, not analysed separately, but incorporated in the taxonomy of request strategies itself. The guiding principle underlying the ordering of request strategies from direct to indirect is Leech's Tact Maxim. According to this Tact Maxim, indirectness should be interpreted as the options that a hearer is offered to refrain from complying with a request. A request such as 'can you open the window' is less tactful than 'open the window', because, on the surface at least, 'can you open the window' gives the hearer the option to merely respond with a 'yes' or 'no'. In 'open the window', the hearer is not given any options to refuse to carry out the request. Indirectness in this interpretation is the resultant of incorporating tactfulness in a request. In applying this principle, Takahashi arrives at a taxonomy of 11 categories of Japanese and English request strategies.

The main difference with the CCSARP taxonomy lies in the importance assigned to syntactic modifiers. In the CCSARP taxonomy syntactic modifiers were analysed separately from the request strategy of the head act, as were lexical modifiers and

external modifiers. Takahashi, however, decided to incorporate syntactic modifiers in the taxonomy itself, because she claims that these are elements that affect the directness level of the request itself. This resulted in a framework in which eleven categories of strategies are distinguished, as opposed to the nine categories in the original CCSARP framework. The majority of additional categories are included on the basis of the syntactic modification of the strategies. These include, mitigated preparatory questions ('Do you think you can open the window?'), mitigated preparatory statements (I was wondering if you could open the window') and mitigated want statements (I would appreciate it if you would open the window).

The decision to incorporate syntactic modification in the taxonomy is in line with Leech's framework who tried to account for the use of syntactic modification through his Tact Maxim. He argued, for example, that the use of 'could' rather than 'can' in a request such as 'could you open the window' implies an extra option, and hence more tact, because the request is phrased as an unreal situation. The use of syntactic modification can thus be analysed on the basis of the options (provided to the hearer) incorporated in the request.

Table 1.5 Takahashi's (1995, 1996) taxonomy of request strategies

Request strategies ordered from most to least direct	
1	Mood derivable Open the window
2	Explicit performatives I ask you to open ...
3	Obligation (expectation) statement You should...
4	Want statement I would like you to..
5	Preparatory questions without mitigated forms Will/would you, can/could you open ...
6	Suggestion questions Why don't you open ...?
7	Permission questions Can/May I
8	Mitigated preparatory questions Do you think you can open...?
9	Mitigated preparatory statements. I was wondering if you could open ...?
10	Mitigated want statement I would appreciate it if you would ...
11	Hints (8 categories of hints)

There are, however, a number of problems with this type of approach, some of which resemble the problems discussed above in relation to Van der Wijst's taxonomy. First of all, it is not clear what is the basis for positing new categories for certain types of

syntactic modifiers but not for others. To give an example, the use of embedded clauses, as in mitigated want statements (11) such as 'I would appreciate it if you would open the window' prompts Takahashi to posit an extra category. Mitigation in the form of embedding is supposed to make the request less definite, and is thus supposed to express more tact. But according to this reasoning, the use of past tense modals such as 'could' rather than 'can' should also warrant an extra category. All preparatory questions, such as will/would you, can/could you, are, however, subsumed under one category.

In addition, it is not clear why other types of modification such as the use of tag questions (Open the door, will you?) or use of negation (couldn't you open the door), are not included in the framework. In Leech's framework this type of modification is also claimed to have an effect on the directness level of a request.

Also, if syntactic modification is supposed to be included because it can be analysed according to the Tact Maxim, then the same could be said for the use of lexical modifiers, or even external modifiers. Adding a modifier such as 'if you can find the time' to a request such as 'Could you give me a hand', also provides the hearer with an extra option to opt out. But if all types of modifiers were to be included this might lead to an open-ended number of request categories.

So, incorporating the use of syntactic modification in a taxonomy of request strategies, might seem an attractive option, but perhaps less so if the full range of syntactic modifiers is to be included. A related problem posed by the inclusion of syntactic modifiers is that this might make the taxonomy less suitable for cross-cultural research, as modifiers (both lexical and syntactic) are difficult to translate. As Takahashi herself admits, her taxonomy was constructed specifically for English-Japanese encounters, and might not be suitable for analysing requests in other languages.

1.5.4 Evaluating different taxonomies

With respect to the taxonomies used in early ILP studies it turned out that the rank orders of request strategies were not always clearly defined. Evidence for these early taxonomies seems to be based on perceptions of speakers with respect to the politeness level of requests, and less on characteristics of the requests. An additional problem is that it is not clear why and how certain types of syntactic (but not lexical) modifiers are incorporated in the taxonomies. Moreover, the taxonomies seem to be based on politeness, which is a notion that is highly context-dependent. Since the influence of contextual variables has been shown to vary cross-culturally, a taxonomy of request strategies should preferably be based on a context-independent notion such as indirectness.

Later frameworks, notably the CCSARP taxonomy, were more successful in distinguishing between indirectness and politeness, but were not consistent in applying these notions in constructing hierarchies of request strategies. An additional problem was that the criteria for distinguishing different categories of request strategies were not always clear. Some categories of requests were included on the basis of semantic/syntactic criteria, others were included because the requests referred to Searle's felicity conditions. An advantage of the CCSARP approach, however, is that the

taxonomy is based on the 'bare' request strategy formulated in the head act of the request utterance and that modification, whether internal or external to the head act, is analysed separately.

Some studies have tried to take a 'combined' approach in basing hierarchies on both request strategies and, mainly syntactic, modification. As was discussed above, however, these have not been entirely successful in constructing consistent taxonomies. Although Takahashi's (1995, 1996) taxonomy with a basis in Leech's Tact Maxim turned out to be the most successful one, it is not entirely consistent. Takahashi's taxonomy is successful in ordering strategies solely on the basis of indirectness by applying the Tact Maxim. The advantage of this approach is that the rank ordering of the request strategies can be achieved without invoking the notion of politeness, which is a context-dependent notion. It is not clear, however, why this taxonomy includes syntactic but not other types of modifiers. Although there are arguments in favour of including syntactic modifiers, as they can indeed be interpreted along the lines of the Tact Maxim to affect the directness level of a strategy, it is not clear why this should not equally apply to the effect of lexical modifiers and external modifiers. Including all types of modification, however, would lead to an infinite number of request strategies, which would be difficult, if not impossible, to order from least to most indirect.

An additional problem and perhaps more serious problem is that it is not clear how different types of modifiers interact. The analysis of syntactic modifiers as put forward in Leech (1983) works well for isolated modifiers, but makes no predictions as to possible consequences for the overall rank order of requests. It is not clear, however, how different types of modifiers interact. To give an example, the use of the modal 'will' is supposed to be more direct than 'can', because a request with 'can' offers the hearer an extra option to refuse. However, along the same lines, the use of 'will' can be analysed as more direct than the use of 'would', because the latter makes the request more unreal. It is not clear whether this means that 'would' is also more indirect than 'can'. In other words, it is not clear whether requests with these modals should be ordered from most direct to least direct as in (a) where choice of modal is more dominant than tense of modal, or whether they should be ordered as in (b), where tense of modal is more dominant than choice of modal:

(a)

1. Will you open the door?
2. Would you open the door?
3. Can you open the door?
4. Could you open the door?

(b)

1. Will you open the door?
2. Can you open the door?
3. Would you open the door?
4. Could you open the door?

The analysis would be even more complicated if additional syntactic modification were taken into account, such as the use of tag questions or negation. An additional problem, especially in cross-cultural research, is that syntactic modification is difficult to translate, which makes this type of approach perhaps less suitable for analysing requests in different languages.

1.6 Conclusion

In the introduction of this chapter it was stated that the purpose of the literature review was twofold. On the one hand, it served to sketch out the background of the study, but, equally importantly, it served to clarify the notions of indirectness and politeness that figure prominently in ILP research. The purpose of this final section is again twofold. It will serve to briefly summarize those aspects of ILP that are relevant to the present study, but will also discuss the basic principles that will be used to construct our framework for analysing request strategies that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Interlanguage Pragmatics

The present study was motivated by an increasing number of interlanguage pragmatics studies aimed at investigating how successful learners of a foreign language are at acquiring pragmatic knowledge. An area of ILP research that has received a great deal of attention is the investigation of how learners perform face-threatening acts, such as requests, complaints and refusals.

Evidence from ILP research has shown that learners are successful at varying degrees when it comes to understanding and communicating politeness and/or indirectness. ILP studies have also demonstrated that possible causes for success or failure in this respect can, to some extent be attributed to the transfer of pragmatic knowledge from L1 to L2. Instances of pragmatic transfer, both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic, positive and negative have been well-documented, but a less well-developed area is the investigation of why and when pragmatic transfer is likely to occur. Some factors have been found to either facilitate or hinder transfer, such as level of proficiency, length of stay in target-community, but also the attitude of learners towards the language in question. Increasingly, however, researchers have called for more research on developmental issues, such as the relationship between the universality and relativity of pragmatic knowledge and acquisition and conditions for pragmatic transfer (cf. Kasper, 1996a).

We agree that, in the long run, in order to understand the acquisition process of pragmatic knowledge there is a strong need for transferability studies. We feel, however, that before we can investigate how pragmatic knowledge is transferred, it is important to investigate what it is that is transferred. As has become clear from the brief overview of ILP research in section 1.2 and the review of frameworks developed for the analysis of requests in section 1.6, there is a great deal of variation in how studies have analysed requests. It has also become clear that part of this variation can mainly be attributed to different interpretations of politeness and/or indirectness.

Indirectness and politeness

In order to clarify the concepts of politeness and indirectness it was necessary to turn to other related disciplines such as speech act and politeness theory. The guiding principle in this discussion was to discover how these concepts were to be incorporated into our taxonomy. First of all, it turned out that the way speech acts themselves have been defined and classified on the basis of felicity conditions is still somewhat controversial.

We feel however that there is enough evidence in cross-cultural studies of different languages to suggest that the majority (if not all) types of request strategies have been found can be classified using these felicity conditions as a basis for our taxonomy.

With respect to the role of indirectness and politeness the approach that will be taken in the present study, is to regard them as separate but related notions. The approach taken in the present study to analysing these notions with respect to request strategies will lean heavily on Leech's interpretation of indirectness as a 'means-end analysis' and Brown & Levinson's interpretation of politeness as protection of face-wants. Consequently, indirectness in this perspective will be regarded as the inferential steps that are made by speaker and hearer to arrive at the illocutionary force of an utterance while observing the Tact Maxim.

The link with politeness is that indirectness is one type of strategy that speakers can resort to in their attempt to protect a hearer's face when making a request. As such, politeness will be interpreted as the prime motivator for the use of indirectness. Other types of politeness strategies, such as syntactic or lexical modification can occur either at the level of the request strategy, or at the level of the request utterance, and serve to further enhance a hearer's face. Although Brown and Levinson's politeness theory has been extremely influential in accounting for politeness phenomena, it has never been fully applied in setting up taxonomies of request strategies. This is partly due to unclarity about the weighting of individual politeness strategies in terms of face-protection. Politeness strategies have thus predominantly been used to explain how speech acts can be modified. This last point, as was discussed above, has been problematic in constructing taxonomies for use in ILP studies.

ILP taxonomies

As has become clear in the discussion of ILP taxonomies, the analysis of syntactic modification in combination with directness level of the request strategy, has been problematic. The majority of ILP studies have tried to account for the role and function of syntactic modifiers in request strategies, but in different ways. Some studies (e.g., Takahashi, 1996; Van der Wijst, 1996) have incorporated some but not all types of modifiers in their taxonomies, whereas other studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Trosborg, 1995) have tried to analyse modification separately from the directness level of the request strategy. Consequently, the variety of taxonomies used in the analysis of requests tends to complicate the comparison of findings reported by different studies. The question is what it means if learners are said to be too direct, or too polite, in language X, if the notions are not clearly separated or are only partially incorporated in a taxonomy.

In the end, if the overall politeness level of a request is a combination of directness level of request and additional politeness strategies in the form of modification, then the effect of the directness level of the request strategy might be neutralized. In other words, a fairly direct strategy but elaborately modified strategy may be more polite than a highly indirect but unmodified request strategy. In order to gain insights into the way request strategy and request modification determine the overall politeness level of a request it is,

thus, first necessary to construct an analytical framework in which the notions are clearly separated.

The details of the approach adopted in the present study will be described in the next chapter, but the general principle will be as follows. First of all, a taxonomy of request strategies will be developed at the basis of which will be Searle's felicity conditions and Leech's interpretation of indirectness as a means-end analysis. This taxonomy will serve to analyse the requests collected in the production task in terms of strategies that respondents employed to get their message across. Secondly, modification of request strategies, whether internal or external, will be analysed separately. Subsequently, the analysis of the requests collected will be focussed on examining overall use of modification and on examining patterns of modification in relation to request strategies. This approach will enable us to discover typical request patterns, in terms of combinations of strategies and modifiers. More importantly, however, it will enable us to compare to what extent learners of English display a preference for either English or Dutch request patterns, both in terms of request strategies, but also in terms of patterns of modification.

Chapter 2

Analysing requests

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will be devoted to outlining the application of felicity conditions, indirectness and politeness as discussed in the previous chapter in the analysis of request strategies in the present study. The taxonomy of request strategies proposed in this chapter will not deviate substantially from previous taxonomies, but will merely be based on a slightly different approach to the principles underlying the ordering of request strategies in the light of the problems discussed in the previous chapter.

Some of these problems were due to inconsistent use of principles underlying the taxonomies, such as indirectness or politeness, whereas others were related to the criteria used for including particular strategies. Others still, were related to the problematic role assigned to different types of modifiers typically found in requests. Since modifiers have been found to play a crucial role in affecting politeness, this chapter will therefore start with a section discussing problems related to the analysis of these modifiers.

Subsequently, a taxonomy of request strategies will be discussed which is based on Leech's optionality scale and indirectness scale. The optionality scale is of particular importance, since it is closely related to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) concept of 'negative politeness', which plays a crucial role in face-threatening acts such as requests. The taxonomy developed in this study is based on the interpretations of politeness and indirectness as outlined in the previous chapter. The main principles used to order the request strategies will be outlined in section 2.3, which will be followed by a proposal for the analysis of request strategies.

2.2 Request modification in ILP studies

2.2.1 Request utterances

In natural conversation requests rarely consist of single sentences, but are more commonly realized by sequences of elements that all contribute to the politeness value of the request. Consequently, the unit of analysis in the majority of request studies has been the request utterance (1), rather than the isolated request sentence itself.

- (1) *John, could I ask you a favour? Do you think you could go to the presentation tomorrow? I really can't find the time to do it myself. I promise I'll take care of the next presentation.*

Most ILP request studies make a distinction between the *head act*, which can be regarded as the 'core' of the request, (underlined in (1)) and the remainder of the utterance, which usually contains a number of external modifiers. The head act is the minimal unit by

which a request is performed. It is the element that includes the request strategy. In the case of hints, however, locating the head act of the request is often difficult. Since hints are by nature ambiguous, they usually lack an explicit core as in (2):

- (2) *Hello Mrs Blackwell, erm ... I'm really hungry and all the others have gone down to lunch. It's my first day today and I'm afraid I'm a bit slow ... (request for help)*

Example (2) could be interpreted as a request for help, but equally, in a different context, as an apology for not having finished a particular task.

In formulating requests, speakers can vary the politeness value of their request by choosing a strategy at a particular level of indirectness. In addition, they can choose to modify the politeness value of their request by means of so-called modifiers. The analysis of request strategies has partly been complicated by the effect these modifiers have on the overall politeness value of requests. Before we turn to the analysis of request strategies proposed for the present study, the next section will therefore briefly discuss some of the problems encountered in the analysis of these modifiers.

2.2.2 Internal and external modifiers

Although many ILP studies have been focussed at investigating how successful nonnative speakers are at producing and understanding requests, relatively few studies have in fact gone beyond an analysis of the request strategy itself. Although it is generally recognized that modifiers, and syntactic modifiers in particular, affect the politeness level of requests, few studies have to date attempted to fully incorporate these modifiers into the analysis of requests. Those studies that have tried to do so generally make a distinction between two classes of modifiers, internal (syntactic and lexical/phrasal) and external modifiers. The assumption is that these modifiers increase or decrease the overall politeness value of requests, depending on whether they reduce (downgraders) or increase (upgraders) the imposition of the request on the addressee. Since requests are by nature speech acts that impose on the hearer, speakers will primarily aim to reduce rather than increase this imposition. Consequently, requests such as in (3) can be considered rather forceful requests.

- (3) *You really must clean that kitchen.*

In terms of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, downgrading modifiers can be regarded as negative politeness strategies, aimed at protecting the hearer's negative face. Although the focus in most ILP studies has been on analysing these negative politeness strategies, positive politeness strategies have also been found to occur. Some modifiers such as 'okay' and 'you know', which function as in-group markers, are aimed at enhancing the hearer's positive face. Positive politeness strategies had not, as will become clear below, received a great deal of attention in ILP request studies. In the next section an overview will be provided of which types of modifiers are generally distinguished and how these modifiers are analysed in relation to request strategies.

Besides internal modification, which can either be achieved by syntactic or lexical means, request utterances have commonly been found to include different types of external modifiers. These external modifiers (also called *supportive moves*), usually consist of elements aimed at persuading a hearer to comply with the request. Common supportive moves include giving reasons for making the request, promising rewards upon fulfilment of the request, or using cost minimizers (4a-c):

- (4) a. *Could you look at my report tonight? I need to hand it in tomorrow.*
 b. *I was wondering if you could help me finish these parcels. I'll do the same for you next time.*
 c. *Could you me a hand with these? It would only take you about ten minutes.*

The main function of these external moves is that they make the request more plausible in an attempt to persuade a hearer to comply. If, for example, a speaker justifies a request by giving a valid reason for making it, a hearer might be more likely to do as asked. Likewise, by using a cost minimizer, which reduces the effort required in fulfilling the request, the speaker tries to increase the likelihood that the hearer will go along with the request.

2.2.3 Categories of modifiers

With respect to internal modifiers a distinction is commonly made between syntactic modifiers and lexical/phrasal modifiers that occur within the head act of the request utterance. The majority of ILP request studies (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Trosborg, 1995) have distinguished the following categories of syntactic and lexical modifiers:

Table 2.1 Categories of syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers

syntactic modifiers	lexical/phrasal modifiers
<i>interrogatives</i> Can you help me?	<i>politeness markers</i> ; language-specific means: 'please'
<i>past tense</i> I wanted to ask you to help me.	<i>downtoners</i> ; particles that reduce the impositive force of the request: 'possibly', 'maybe'
<i>negation</i> You couldn't help me, could you?	<i>understaters</i> ; elements that minimize the effort or cost involved: 'just', 'just for a bit', 'a little'
<i>tag question</i> Help me, will you?	<i>subjectivizers</i> ; expressions of hope, pessimism, etc.; 'I was hoping ...'; 'I don't suppose ...'
<i>modal</i> Can you help me?	<i>consultative device</i> ; 'Do you know if ...,'
<i>embedding</i> I was wondering if you could help me.	<i>hedges</i> ; 'sort of', 'kind of'
<i>aspect</i> I am wondering if you could help me.	<i>cajoler/interpersonal markers</i> ; in-group markers: 'you know', 'okay'
<i>subjunctive</i> (for modal auxiliaries) Could you help me?	

The common element in the modifiers listed in Table 2.1 is that they all in some way increase the politeness level of the request. For some modifiers, this effect is obtained because the request is presented more tentatively, such as by the use of an interrogative structure (5a), or a downtoner (5b) as opposed to the unmodified form in (5c):

- (5) a. *Can you help me?*
 b. *Can you perhaps help me?*
 c. *You can help me*

For other modifiers, such as the use of negation, the effect is obtained because the speaker takes a pessimistic attitude towards fulfilment of the request itself as in (6a) as opposed to (6b):

- (6) a. *You couldn't give me a hand, could you?*
 b. *You could give me a hand.*

Other modifiers reduce the effort required from a hearer in carrying out the desired action as in (7):

- (7) *Could you just help me for a bit?*

In addition to the categories of internal modifiers described above, the following categories of external modifiers are usually distinguished:

Table 2.2 Categories of external modifiers

External modifiers	examples
a. <i>preparator</i> ; signalling devices	'Could I ask you a question?'
b. <i>getting precommitment</i> ; elements that try to secure precommitment before the request is made.	'Could I ask you a favour?'
c. <i>grounders</i> ; reasons, explanations or justifications for the request.	'You see, I have to hand in the report tomorrow'
d. <i>disarmer</i> ; elements indicating that the speaker realizes the imposition of the request.	'I know it's a bit of a cheek to ask, but ...'
e. <i>rewards</i>	'I'll do it next time'
f. <i>expressions of thanks/appreciation</i>	'I'd be ever so grateful'
g. <i>cost minimizer</i>	'It'd take you no more than ten minutes.'

Those studies that have tried to investigate to what extent nonnative speakers differ from native speakers in their ability to modify their requests are predominantly those carried out in the CCSARP framework (Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1987; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1981, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). Results from these studies indicate that nonnative speakers, in addition to varying the directness of the request strategy, are capable of modifying their request strategies both internally and externally, but also that they are not always 'native-like' in doing so. Studies have reported quantitative and qualitative differences with respect to both internal

and external modifiers. Some studies have found that nonnative speakers use fewer and different types of internal modifiers, but more external modifiers than native speakers. In addition learners have been found to overuse certain modifiers compared with native speakers.

With respect to differences in internal modifiers, Trosborg (1995) found that nonnative speakers of English used significantly fewer modifiers than native speakers and, in addition, that their range of modifiers was much narrower. Other studies have found that learners sometimes overuse certain modifiers. Both House and Kasper (1987) and Faerch and Kasper (1989) reported on learners' overuse of conditionals, negation and external modifiers. Others, too, have found that the tendency for learners to produce rather lengthy utterances was mainly due to their overuse of supportive moves (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Edmonson & House, 1991). Most of these studies have suggested that learners may feel inclined to include more external modifiers because they want to make sure they get their intentions across. Another explanation offered is that learners might feel insecure about their ability to use syntactic and lexical downgraders in a foreign language and consequently rely on an abundance of supportive moves for the modification of their requests.

In conclusion, nonnative speakers are capable of modifying request strategies, but have been found to display both quantitative and qualitative differences in their use of modifiers compared with native speakers. They have been found to use both fewer and different types of internal modifiers, but also to overuse certain types of internal modifiers. In addition, they have been found to use more supportive moves than native speakers.

2.2.4 Analysis of request modification

It turns out that with respect to the analysis of modifiers, ILP request studies have taken different approaches to analysing these modifiers in relation to the directness level of the request strategy. Some have analysed modification separately from choice of directness level, whereas others have tried to incorporate certain types of, mainly syntactic, modification in their taxonomies of request strategies.

Most CCSARP-related studies have generally distinguished the categories of modifiers listed above and have analysed these modifiers in terms of frequency of use. Request modification (whether internal and external) is regarded as one of the dimensions along which speakers can vary the overall politeness level of their requests, in addition to choice of directness of the request strategy itself. In other words, speakers choose a request strategy at a particular level of directness and can modify this strategy either internally or externally. Both dimensions, directness level of request and additional modifications are felt to affect the overall politeness level of the request. The focus in this type of approach has been on investigating what the differences are in the use of syntactic downgraders between native speakers and nonnative speakers and on investigating to what extent learners display instances of transfer from L1 in transferring modification patterns to their L2. Studies have rarely tried to combine the two dimensions to analyse the overall

politeness value of requests produced by learners, or to relate the use of modifiers to the use of request strategy. A notable exception is House and Kasper (1987), who analysed the use of modifiers in relation to request strategy and found that both native and nonnative speakers varied their modifications according to the level of directness of their request strategies.

Other studies (notably Takahashi, 1996; Van der Wijst, 1996) have tried to include a selection of syntactic modifiers in the taxonomy of request strategies itself. As was demonstrated in Table 2.1, however, most studies distinguish (at least) ten categories of syntactic modifiers and, in addition, various categories of lexical/phrasal modifiers, which often co-occur in one and the same request strategy. For a full-scale analysis, all categories of modifiers and all possible combinations of modifiers would have to be included, and more importantly, would also have to be ordered on a scale of politeness. This approach is problematic for a number of reasons. One is that including and ordering all categories of modifiers with possible request strategies would result in a highly complicated framework that would be difficult to apply in a cross-cultural comparison. Moreover, including modifiers into a taxonomy of request strategies would blur the distinction between indirectness and politeness, which, should be regarded as two separate notions. Thirdly, although it is possible to order request strategies with single modifiers on a scale of politeness, it has turned out to be more problematic to do the same for request strategies with combinations of modifiers. One particular study that has tried to do so was Van der Wijst (1996), which will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.5 Modifiers as face-saving strategies

Van der Wijst (1996), who set out to put Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to the test in analysing negotiations, tried to calculate the overall politeness value of FTAs on the basis of Brown and Levinson's hierarchy of politeness strategies. Van der Wijst discussed a number of problems that are directly relevant to the problems discussed above.

The first problem noted by Van der Wijst is related to Brown and Levinson's claim with respect to the unidimensionality and hence mutual exclusivity of their politeness (super)strategies. In Brown and Levinson's politeness theory a speaker has essentially four different superstrategies for doing an FTA, which can be ordered on a scale from least polite to most polite depending on the risk of face-loss for the hearer (Figure 2.1). (Brown and Levinson's fifth superstrategy is 'don't do FTA', which for obvious reasons, cannot be divided into substrategies.) The least polite strategy is to perform an FTA *on record without redressive action* (1), i.e. the speaker does not attempt to redress the loss of face that a hearer might incur. At the other extreme, the most polite strategy for a speaker to use is to go *off record* (4), i.e. the utterance is purposefully vague so as to allow the hearer an option to refuse and to allow the speaker to deny that it was intended as an FTA.

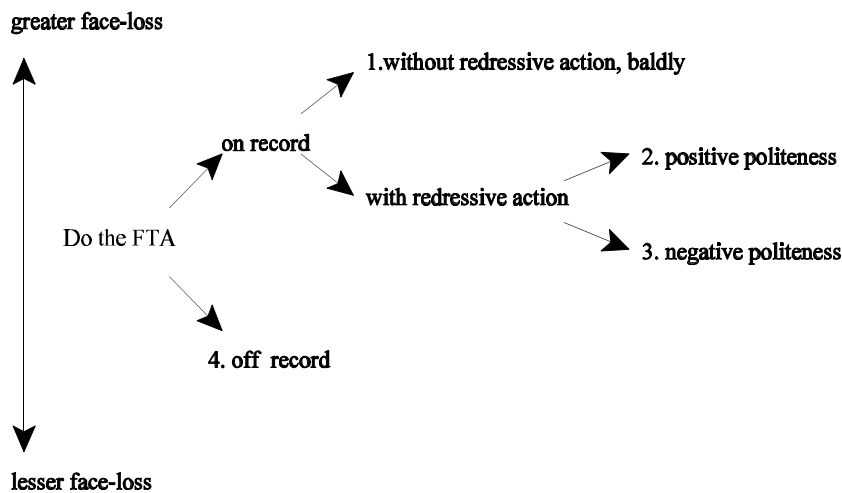


Figure 2.1 Possible strategies for doing an FTA (adapted from B&L, 1987:69)

For our present purpose, the order of the two middle categories (2 and 3) is particularly relevant, positive and negative politeness. In both strategies, the FTA is performed on record, but with a degree of face-saving strategies. In the case of positive politeness the speaker chooses to include redressive action aimed at protecting the hearer's positive self-image. A speaker can achieve this by communicating to the hearer that they share similar wants and desires. Crucial for this strategy to be successful, however, is that this assumption is shared by the hearer. If the hearer does not want the speaker to share his or her wants or desires, the strategy tends to backfire. Brown and Levinson claim that because wants and desires are highly personal and individual, a speaker cannot always safely assume that these are mutual wants. Positive politeness can thus be risky. The basis for negative politeness, on the other hand, is that individuals share a universal desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Since this is a universal, rather than a personal desire, a speaker can safely assume that strategies aimed at safeguarding freedom of imposition will be successful and appreciated. Consequently, negative politeness strategies can be considered more polite than positive politeness strategies. For any FTA, a speaker will assess the degree of face-loss involved for the hearer. The higher the risk of face-loss, the more likely a speaker will choose a safe strategy. Brown and Levinson claim that all strategies can thus be ordered along the same 'risk of face-loss' dimension, ranging from least polite for low-risk FTAs to most polite for high-risk FTAs. Since both positive and negative politeness strategies are ordered on the same dimension, it follows that the positive and negative politeness should be mutually exclusive.

Van der Wijst (1996), however, found that negative and positive politeness strategies frequently co-occurred in the same FTA and suggests that this may cast doubt on this claim of mutual exclusivity. Other ILP studies, too, have found that different types of substrategies frequently occur within the same request, as for example in combinations of different types of syntactic and lexical modifiers (Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Trosborg, 1995).

A related problem noted by Van der Wijst (1996) is the fact that FTAs often include several politeness strategies, which complicates the quantification of the overall politeness value of an FTA. Brown and Levinson claim that within each superstrategy, substrategies can be ordered along the same 'risk of face-loss' dimension as described above. This, however, Van der Wijst observed, makes it possible to determine the politeness value of individual strategies relative to each other, i.e. on an ordinal scale, but not to work out the exact politeness value of strategies. In other words, determining whether a particular substrategy is more polite than another substrategy is possible, but determining exactly how much more polite is difficult. Consequently, calculating the overall politeness value of utterances containing two or more politeness strategies, especially those from different substrategies, turns out to be problematic. Van der Wijst rightly suggests that Brown and Levinson's suggestion that the more politeness strategies an FTA contains, the more polite it can be assumed to be, is not a plausible solution to this problem. A mere compounding of politeness strategies would not work in comparing FTAs with multiple strategies from different subcategories, since strategies only have a relative politeness value assigned to them.

What can be concluded at this stage is that although ILP request studies have generally recognized the important role of modifiers in determining the politeness value of requests, few have attempted to fully incorporate the effect of these modifiers in their analysis of requests. This is perhaps not surprising considering the problems relating to the analysis of these modifiers in terms of politeness strategies. Moreover, it remains unclear how directness level of request strategy and modifiers interact in determining the overall politeness value of requests.

It is well beyond the scope of the present study, however, to attempt to resolve all issues discussed so far regarding the role of indirectness and politeness in the analysis of speech acts. Since the purpose of the present study is to analyse how learners of English use request strategies, it will primarily aim to combine insights discussed so far into a framework of analysis that will foremost need to serve this purpose. Moreover, since our data are limited to requests, it would be presumptuous to suppose that the present study would yield enough input to propose a framework for the analysis of speech acts in general. Therefore, our framework for analysis should not be regarded as a final solution to all problems concerning the notions of politeness and indirectness, but merely as an attempt to remedy some.

2.2.6 Analysing indirectness and politeness

The problems encountered in the analysis of request strategies can mainly be attributed to the complexity and interrelatedness of the notions of indirectness and politeness in performing speech acts. Considering the problems discussed above, the approach taken in the present study will therefore be to separate these notions in the analysis of requests. In line with the approach adopted in the majority of ILP request studies, the analysis will thus partly focus on indirectness of the request strategy in the head act of the request on the basis of a taxonomy of request strategies. An argument for adopting this approach is

that cross-cultural studies have shown that strategies for making requests tend to be similar and hence comparable in different languages. Adopting this approach will thus allow us to compare our results with other studies in the field. Considering the problems observed with respect to the selection and ordering of strategies, the basis for the taxonomy of request strategies will be Searle's felicity conditions for requests, as outlined in the previous chapter. These felicity conditions can be applied to define a limited set of request strategies. Given the supposedly universal nature of these felicity conditions, this taxonomy should then be applicable to cross-cultural analyses for a variety of languages. This claim can, for obvious reasons, not be substantiated on the basis of the two languages under study, but will need to be supported by future research. The basis for the hierarchical ordering of these request strategies will be Leech's interpretation of indirectness as outlined in the previous chapter. The taxonomy to be used in the present study will thus consist of more or less bare-boned, unmodified request strategies ordered from least to most indirect.

The major advantage of this approach is that indirectness of request strategy, which can be regarded as one type of politeness strategy can be analysed separately from other types of politeness strategies realized by the use of additional modification. The argument for doing so is that the choice for a particular request strategy can be regarded as a compulsory choice that speakers need to make in formulating a request. Modifiers seem to occupy a different status in that they seem to be optional choices. A speaker can choose to modify a request strategy for reasons of politeness, but cannot choose not to use a request strategy. If there is no request strategy in the utterance itself, there is nothing for a speaker to modify. After all, a downtoner can only function as a politeness strategy, if there is a request to be toned down. Similarly, a speaker can only enhance the politeness of a request by adding an apology if there is something to apologise for.

The analysis of request strategies as proposed above, however, will only solve part of the problem. A second major problem is the analysis of modifiers in requests, which have been found to play a significant role in determining the politeness value of requests. However, quantification of modifiers has been problematic because different types tend to co-occur within the same utterance. On the basis of Brown and Levinson's ordering of strategies predicting that the occurrence of a single modifier will add to the politeness value of the request seems possible. What is less clear though, is how different modifiers within the same utterance should be interpreted to affect overall politeness value. In addition, it is not clear how modifiers interact with directness level of strategy in contributing to overall politeness. In other words, it is not clear whether modification by means of, for example, politeness marker 'please' affects the politeness of a request formulated with an imperative as in (8a) in the same way as a request formulated with an ability question such as in (8b):

- (8) a. *Help me, please*
 b. *Can you help me, please?*

Needless to say, this problem would be even more complicated in the case of multiple modification. Clearly this is a matter that deserves much future attention.

The approach proposed in the present study to the analysis of request modification will still attempt to use the hierarchy of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson in the analysis of request modification, as it is to date the most comprehensive account of universal politeness phenomena. Even if exact calculations of politeness might in the end prove to be impossible, the general principles underlying the ordering of strategies still seem to be valid. The more a speaker tries to protect a hearer's face by means of negative politeness strategies the more polite a request will generally tend to be. There is consequently no reason to doubt Brown and Levinson's claim that in terms of absolute politeness (i.e. irrespective of context), requests with multiple modification can be ordered from most to least polite on the basis of the number of modifiers included in the request, as in 9(a-c):

- (9) a. *Could you possibly by any chance just help me move these boxes?*
b. *Can you help me move these boxes?*
c. *Help me with these boxes.*

It is not this general principle that has turned out to be problematic, but the operationalisation of these principles in cross-cultural speech act studies such as those described above.

The problems encountered by Van der Wijst (1996) in his attempt to quantify politeness will no doubt occur in the analysis of requests in the present study too. Requests in particular are highly face-threatening speech acts and thus prone to multiple modification. The question is, however, to what extent exact quantification of politeness strategies is a prerequisite to gaining insights in the requestive behaviour of nonnative speakers.

In view of the complexity of the analysis of indirectness and politeness in requests it might, in first instance, be more fruitful to investigate modification patterns in requests produced by nonnative speakers and native speakers in different settings, than to focus on the overall politeness value of these requests. If politeness strategies are supposed to add up, then it is quite feasible that a particular politeness value can be achieved by different combinations of modifiers. It is quite likely that contextual variables, such as power and social distance, not only determine the amount of face-redress required for a particular FTA, but also determine constraints on the type of politeness strategies, and hence modification pattern required for that particular FTA. In other words, part of the problems that nonnative speakers face in formulating request is choosing the right type of politeness strategy relative to a particular FTA in a particular context. Evidence to support this point of view comes from those request studies that have reported learners' tendency to overuse external modifiers in situations where native speakers tended to resort to internal modification of requests. In the end, an analysis of these modification patterns might provide more substantial information about how successful nonnative speakers are in formulating requests than an exact quantification of politeness strategies.

Consequently, the analysis of politeness strategies will primarily be focussed on identifying what might be called 'collocations' of politeness strategies in requests, which will need to result in a specification of potential pragmatic 'pitfalls' with respect to

formulating requests for nonnative speakers. Where possible and necessary rough calculations of politeness values will suffice in attempting to explain why requests produced by nonnative speakers might be less appropriate. The next two sections will discuss the analysis of request strategies in terms of indirectness as proposed in the present study. It will be followed by a section on the analysis of modification.

2.3 Felicity conditions for requests

In the previous chapter it was argued that a possible approach to constructing a consistent taxonomy of request strategies would be to use felicity conditions such as proposed by Searle (1969) as a guiding principle. The account below of how request strategies can be linked to felicity conditions and consequently ordered on a scale of increasing indirectness is predominantly based on Searle's (1969) original framework, although some adjustments will be made to account for different insights that have developed since.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Searle (1969) tried to establish a set of rules in an attempt to systematize the categorization of speech acts. His basic tenet is that these *felicity conditions* specify which conditions and preconditions need to be satisfied for a speech act to be successful and non-defective. For each individual class of speech acts these felicity conditions are 'translated' into more specific conditions. The most important felicity conditions are the *essential condition*, which specifies the essence of the speech act, the *propositional content condition*, the *sincerity condition*, and the *preparatory conditions*, which specify preconditions that need to be satisfied before a speech act can be successful.

2.3.1 Essential condition

The essential condition, according to Searle, constitutes the essence of a speech act. It is what others have called the speaker's 'linguistic goal' or 'the point of the utterance' (Reiss, 1985). For directives, the essential condition specifies that 'the U[ttterance] counts as an attempt to get H[earer] to do A[ct]' (Searle, 1969: 66). Although Searle's original definition specified the essence as a speaker's attempt to *get* the hearer to carry out the requested act, we would prefer to modify this to the speaker's attempt being directed at getting the hearer's *commitment* to carry out the request, rather than at achieving an immediate effect, i.e. the hearer actually carrying out the act. Requests do not necessarily always call for immediate action, but can also refer to actions to be carried out in the more distant future. The modified version of the essential condition used in the present study will therefore be that in order for something to be a request, it should count as 'an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer's commitment to carry out the requested act'. Consequently, the communicative goal a speaker has in formulating a request is to get the hearer to commit himself or herself to undertaking the action, either immediately or at a later point in time.

2.3.2 Propositional content condition

The propositional content condition for requests states that for a request to count as a valid request it should refer to a 'future A(ct) of H'. Crucial in the understanding of this condition is that the act the speaker has in mind is to take place in the future, but that the reference in the request itself might be to an action in the past. This interpretation of the propositional condition has proved to be crucial in interpreting requests that seemingly, but only superficially, refer to past action as in the hint in (10a) as opposed to the more direct request in (10b):

- (10) a. *Have you cleaned up that mess?*
 (i.e. at some point in time previous to asking; speaker knows that the hearer has not done this and intends this as a hint)
- b. *Will you clean up that mess?*
 (i.e. at some point in time in the future)

According to a literal interpretation of the propositional content condition, the request in (10a) is not a valid request, since the A(ct) referred to (cleaning up that mess) should have happened in the past. What counts in terms of the propositional content condition, however, is not the A(ct) that is actually referred to in the request strategy, but the A(ct) that the speaker has in mind, i.e. for the hearer to clean up the mess. Consequently, (10a) can be used as hinting strategy aimed at getting the hearer to clean up the mess, even if the action referred to took place (or should have taken place) in the past.

2.3.3 Sincerity condition

The sincerity condition is related to the psychological state of the speaker with respect to what is expressed in the propositional content and specifies how the speaker feels about the proposition expressed. The sincerity condition for requests specifies that the speaker must want or wish that the hearer carry out the act specified in the request. This sincerity condition is made explicit in requests referring to these wants and wishes, as illustrated in (11a-b):

- (11) a. *I want you to clean up that mess.*
 b. *I would like you to clean up that mess.*

2.3.4 Preconditions

In addition to these conditions, Searle also posited a number of preconditions that need to be satisfied before a request can be successful. Preconditions are different from the previous three conditions in that they are more general conditions underlying different types of speech acts. The relevance of distinguishing between different preconditions for requests is that they can be used to provide an explanation for different types of indirect request strategies. In the next section the following preconditions will be described: the

ability condition, the *willingness* condition, the *non-obviousness* condition, and the *reasonableness* condition.

Ability

The ability condition consists of two elements, first of all, that a *H(earer)* is *able to do A(ct)*, but also that the *S(peaker)* *believes* that the *H(earer)* is able to do *A(ct)*. A crucial difference between these two elements is that whereas the first predicts the success of the request, i.e. whether it will be carried out, the second element merely predicts the success of the request utterance. For, even if a request is not granted, which might be the case due to a hearer simply being unable to perform the act, this would render the request unsuccessful, but not the request utterance. The difference between the two interpretations is partly reflected in (12a-b):

- (12) a. *You can clean up that mess.*
 b. *Can you clean up that mess?*

In (12a), the speaker states the ability of the hearer, issuing an order almost, instead of making a request. In (12b) the speaker in fact checks if his belief is true. The fact that requests of the second type are much more common in actual communication than requests of the first type, as evidenced in literature on realization of requests (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a; Trosborg, 1995), might be an indication that the second interpretation of Searle's ability condition is more feasible. In the present study, we prefer to adopt the second interpretation, i.e. for a request to be successful it is essential that the speaker *believes* the hearer to be able to carry out the requested act, regardless of whether this is a reflection of the hearer's true ability.

Willingness

A second precondition, which was not in Searle's original framework, but is generally distinguished by others, concerns the hearer's *willingness* to comply with the request. It specifies that a *S(peaker)* believes that the *H(earer)* is willing to do *A(ct)*. What is again crucial is that the speaker *believes* that the hearer is willing. As was the case for the ability condition, requests realized by referring to the hearer's willingness condition normally refer to this belief rather than to the hearer's willingness itself. Unlike for the ability condition, indirect requests can only be made by questioning the hearer's willingness (13a), not by stating it, as in example (13b):

- (13) a. *Are you willing to clean up that mess?*
 b. *(?)You are willing to clean up that mess.*

Although a speaker can question a hearer's willingness to carry out an act, it is difficult to imagine how a speaker can assert a hearer's willingness to carry out an act.

Non-obviousness

This precondition was defined by Searle as ‘*it is not obvious to both S(peaker) and H(earer) that H will do A(ct) in the normal course of events of his own accord*’ (1969: 66). The non-obviousness condition is different from the two previous preconditions in that it is not hearer-oriented. Instead, it is focussed on the situational context, or more specifically ‘the course of events’. The implication of this condition is that, if on the basis of situational clues it is clear that the hearer was about to do the act anyway, the request is not a valid request. The *non-obviousness condition* is reflected in requests such as (14):

(14) *Are you going to move that car?*

Example (14) does not count as a valid request if, for example, the hearer has already walked over to the car with the obvious intention of moving it. The success of requests in which reference is made to this non-obviousness condition can thus only be determined on the basis of contextual information.

Reasonableness

The reasonableness condition as posited by Searle is not specific to requests, but applies in general to the rational behaviour of speakers. Speakers are supposed to have rational motives for their behaviour and, consequently, for performing speech acts. As such, the reasonableness conditions contrasts with the sincerity condition mentioned earlier, which referred to more emotional motives such as the speaker’s wishes or desires. Statements expressing the obligation on the part of the hearer to perform an act are often considered as reflecting this reasonableness condition (Trosborg, 1995), such as in (15a-b):

- (15) a. *You should move your car.*
 b. *You must clean up that mess.*

In both 15(a) and 15(b) the speaker refers to the obligation the hearer is felt to have to carry out the requested act. Because the hearer has this obligation, the assumption is that it is only ‘reasonable’ that the hearer should be reminded of this.

Our claim is that all possible types of request strategies (with the exception of strong hints) can be analysed in terms of this limited set of felicity conditions. The advantage of this approach over the taxonomies that have been put forward in other request studies, is that it no longer relies on surface characteristics of strategies or on semantic and/or syntactic criteria, but is linked more systematically to the felicity conditions that determine the success (in the Searlean sense) of requests. The next step is to examine how these conditions can be used to categorise and order the different types of request strategies in a taxonomy of (in)directness.

2.4 Request strategies

This section will be devoted to a description of the classification of request strategies that will be used in the analysis of request utterances in the present study. As was explained in the previous chapter, the classification and subsequent ordering according to increasing indirectness is based on Leech's (1983) interpretation of indirectness as a means-to-end analysis.

The basis for ordering the request strategies will be Leech's indirectness scale and optionality scale. As was explained in the previous chapter, Leech's third scale, involving costs and benefits for speaker and hearer, primarily applies to ordering requests with different propositional content. The next section contains a description of the seven main request strategies - ordered on a scale of increasing indirectness - to be used in the analysis of requests in the present study.

2.4.1 Seven main request strategies

1. Imperatives

One of the means that speakers have at their disposal in making a request is to resort to the use of imperatives as in example 16. In terms of satisfying felicity conditions, the use of an imperative fulfils the essential condition straightaway. This is because the imperative has no other use but 'to attempt to commit a hearer to do something'. Once the essential condition has been satisfied, there is no need to refer, either implicitly or explicitly, to any of the other conditions since they have automatically been fulfilled as well. It is probably the most direct example in the sense of the 'means-end' analysis, as the speaker comes straight to the point. In the rank order of indirectness the imperative is consequently classified as the most direct strategy. In terms of optionality, imperatives present the highest degree of imposition on the hearer. As no opting-out options are incorporated in the request they represent the highest degree of imposition on the hearer.

(16) *Help me with my homework*

As such the imperative is the most 'tactless' strategy. This absence of tact is in a way reinforced by the fact that by putting the hearer in a difficult position the speaker is forcing the hearer to break the tact maxim. Although the imperative is classified as the most direct and tactless strategy, this does not mean that it is also the most impolite strategy. Politeness is subject to contextual and sociocultural variation, such as for example in contexts where life-saving rather than face-saving may be an overriding principle. In an emergency situation a request such as in 17 might be considered tactless in that the speaker fails to observe the Tact Maxim, but it would not, presumably, be considered impolite.

(17) a. *Give me that scalpel!*

Likewise, in an exchange between close intimates it is quite likely that any of the requests in (18a-c) might be considered appropriate by speaker and hearer.

- (18) a. *Mallory, clean up that wine for me.*
 b. *Mallory, please clean up that wine for me.*
 c. *Mallory darling, clean up that wine for mummy, would you please?*

2. Performative verbs

A second strategy that speakers can resort to is the use of performative verbs as in (19a-b):

- (19) a. *I ask you to clean up that wine.*
 b. *I request you to clean up that wine.*

The use of a performative verb, like the use of an imperative, is one of the most explicit ways of fulfilling the essential condition, since it, literally, expresses the illocutionary point of the request. It is one step less direct in the means-end analysis, since the meaning of the request is derived through the semantic meaning of the verb. A request with a performative verb states, or asserts that the essential condition has been satisfied. From the hearer's point of view, it implies that the speaker has at least gone to the trouble of encoding one more inferential step in the means-end path than in the case of an imperative. As such, it differs from an imperative, which can be said to 'achieve' the essential condition. The hearer has relatively little choice but to interpret the utterance as a request, so the use of a performative verb figures at a fairly low position on the optionality scale. Again, as was the case with imperatives, the 'politeness' or appropriateness value of the performative is context-dependent. Moreover, although performative verbs do occur in their 'clean' unmodified form such as (20a), the modified, or hedged form is the default in (20b-c):

- (20) a. *I ask you to clean up that wine for me.*
 b. *I would like to ask you to clean up that wine for me.*
 c. *Could I ask you to clean up that wine for me?*

3. Obligation statements

A third, relatively direct strategy is one in which the hearer's moral or other obligation to comply with the request is asserted as in (21a) and the modified version in (21b):

- (21) a. *You must clean up that wine for me.*
 b. *You should clean up that wine for me.*

By referring to external rules, moral codes or other obligations the speaker indicates that the hearer is to carry out the desired action. Other studies investigating speech act realizations (e.g., Trosborg 1995) have posited a *reasonableness rule* to account for the interpretation of requests such as in (21). The basic premise of this rule is that since human interaction is governed by rational behaviour, speakers have rational motives for

making requests. As such, the reasonableness rule can be seen to derive from Searle's (1975) sincerity rule, which states that in order for a request to be 'successful' the speaker must want the hearer to carry out the request. In either approach, statements of obligation contain direct references to rational motives, as opposed to emotional motives, underlying the speaker's request. Obligation statements leave a hearer with few options to refuse, and hence be considered relatively 'tactless' strategies and hence direct strategies.

4. *Statements of wants, wishes or necessity*

Next in the rank order of (in)directness are the statements in which the speaker expresses the wish or desire that the requested action come about (22a-b), or the necessity for it to come about (22c):

- (22) a. *I want you to clean up that wine.*
 b. *I would like to clean up that wine.*
 c. *I need you to clean up that wine.*

As with the previous category, the mechanism underlying the interpretation of these statements derives from Searle's sincerity condition, albeit that the reference in this case is not to rational motives governing the speaker's behaviour, but to the speaker's sincerity in wanting the requested act to come about. Although the hearer has the option of taking assertions like (22) at 'face-value' and to ignore the speaker's wishes, it would be a particularly damaging one, since it would involve disregarding the speaker's wishes. Want statements, then, can still be considered fairly direct, as the speaker puts the hearer in a position, where a refusal would be going against the speaker's wishes, which would imply a violation of the Tact Maxim.

5. *Suggestions*

Gradually moving down the scale of indirectness, the next request strategy includes what have been termed 'suggestory formulae' (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b). Suggestions may be realized by various structures, some of which may be language-specific. In most languages, as in English or Dutch, requests made by means of suggestory formulae share a vague implication that the request concerned may be to the hearer's interest such as (23a-e):

- (23) a. *Why don't you give me a hand for a minute?*
 b. *Waarom help je me niet even?*
 ('Why don't just you help me?')
 c. *How about lending me a hand with these?*
 d. *Let's clean the house before we go to bed.*
 e. *Als jij nou even het huis opruimt...*
 ('If you just clear up the house ...')

Suggestions such as in 23(a-c) seem to at least hint at the pleasure or satisfaction the hearer might derive from lending the speaker a hand, although 23(a-b) at the same time seem to be carry an overtone of irritation on the part of the speaker, presumably at having

to ask in the first place (cf. also Blum-Kulka, 1989: 57). Explanations for the use of suggestions as request strategies have not been quite as unequivocal as for some of the other strategies. As a consequence, suggestions have been placed at different levels of directness in taxonomies. For example, Trosborg (1995: 201) ranks ‘pure’ suggestory formulae like 23(a-c) as a subcategory of hearer-oriented strategies, but not suggestions like 23(d), as, here, both speaker’s and hearer’s interests seem to be at stake. In Trosborg’s model suggestions like (23d) fall in a separate category, but since she does not elaborate on the use of suggestions as requests, it is not clear how the two types of suggestions differ with respect to level of directness. In Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b) suggestions are ranked as the most ‘direct’ of conventionally indirect strategies, the reason for this being that they are, like strategies referring to preconditions, conventionalized strategies. In the model used in the present study, both suggestions such as 23(d-e) and the more formulaic suggestions in 23(a-c) have all been subsumed under the same category of suggestions. We felt that for both types of suggestions the underlying mechanism is the same in that speakers by presenting the request as a suggestion, pretend to have, primarily, the hearer’s interest in mind when making the request, instead of their own wishes. This can be regarded as an additional step in the tactful path chosen by the speaker. Suggestions can be regarded as less direct than requests referring directly to the speaker’s wishes, but more direct than strategies incorporating yet another step in the tactful path by referring to preconditions for requests, which offer a hearer an extra chance to (tactfully) opt out of compliance by denying that these preconditions hold. So, in the model in the present study suggestions occupy the same place in the rank order as in the taxonomy used in the CCSARP project.

6. referring to preconditions

The most indirect request strategy, apart from hints, is by referring to preconditions which must be met in order for a request to be carried out. In general, three different preconditions have been distinguished. Two of these, the *willingness* of the hearer to comply with the request and the *ability* of the hearer to carry out the request have been classified as so-called hearer-based, or hearer-oriented conditions (Trosborg, 1995), whereas the third, *non-obviousness* (of the requested act), derived from Searle’s propositional content condition (1975), is essentially action-oriented. Examples of strategies, in which preconditions are queried are (24a-e):

- (24) a. *Ruim jij dat wijnglas op? (non-obviousness)*
 (‘Will you clear that wine-glass away?’)
 b. *Will you give me a hand with that presentation? (non-obviousness)*
 c. *Wil je me helpen die sheets te veranderen? (willingness)*
 (‘Do you want to help me change those transparencies?’)
 d. *Would you be mind working late tonight? (willingness)*
 e. *Can you help me with my project? (ability)*

Essential in requests made through reference to the non-obviousness condition (24a-b) is that the requested action would not be carried out by the hearer in the normal course of

events anyway (i.e. without the speaker making the request). Categorization of requests with 'will' such as in 24(b) have not been straightforward in the literature on speech act realization. Searle (1975: 65) lists them under 'sentences concerning H's doing A' where they seem to function as the interrogative counterpart of *You will help me* together with other sentences referring to the hearer's future act, such as *Aren't you going to eat your cereal?* Blum-Kulka (1987: 55) views them as related to both willingness and non-obviousness on the basis of 'a certain indeterminacy attached to such forms which allow for both interpretations in context'. Trosborg (1995: 199) implies that *will* requests such as 24(b) should be classified as concerning hearer's *willingness* together with requests such as in 24(c-d), but seems to have built in a proviso by implying that there are different subcategories of hearer's willingness, one of them 'conveying to the requestee that the requester does not take compliance for granted', which is basically the *non-obviousness* condition. In the present study we have decided to include in the *willingness* category only those requests 'explicitly' aimed at questioning the hearer's willingness such as in 24(c-d), but to follow Searle (1975) in classifying requests such as in 24(a) as *non-obviousness*. As there is no ambiguity in Dutch with respect to requests such as 24(a) or 24(c), we decided to try and keep our willingness category as unambiguous as possible for the sake of cross-cultural comparisons.

Although all three different conditions have here been subsumed under the same superstrategy of referring to preconditions, and are all highly indirect in that they give the hearer a number of options to refrain from doing the request, we do feel that there is a degree of difference between the three preconditions. Requests made by reference to the non-obviousness condition will be considered the most direct of the three, as by referring to this condition the speaker indicates that it is, more or less, taken for granted that the hearer is willing and capable of carrying out the request. The hearer can therefore not use this as an excuse for not performing the request.

The next subcategory, referring to hearer's willingness (24c-d), is slightly more indirect than the previous one, since the hearer has but one option to refuse, which is to deny willingness. This would, however, not be a very tactful strategy on the part of the hearer since it would involve breaking the tact maxim.

The most indirect subcategory is that in which the request is made by referring to the hearer's ability to carry out the request (24e). It is the least impositive of the three, since the hearer is given the option to decline on grounds of not being able to do so, which would be a fairly harmless refusal strategy for 'no one can be blamed for a failure to do something if the failure is due to inability' (Leech 1983: 120).

The default grammatical structure for requests referring to preconditions is the interrogative, in which preconditions are queried. Requests can be also realized by statements asserting rather than questioning the preconditions of non-obviousness and ability (25a-b), but not by stating the precondition of willingness (25c). Statements such as 25(a-b) are generally regarded as rather 'tactless' requests, since by stating a precondition rather than questioning it, a speaker does not offer the hearer the option to refuse by denying that the preconditions apply (Leech, 1983; Trosborg, 1995).

- (25) a. *You will clear that wine-glass away. (non-obviousness)*
 b. *You can clear this mess away. (ability)*
 c. *(?)You are willing to clear this mess away.*

Example 25(c) seems odd as a request or order, most probably because ordering someone to want something implies a uncanny degree of control over the hearer. This would to some extent lend support to our decision to interpret *will* requests as referring to non-obviousness rather than willingness. If 25(a) is the asserted counterpart of *Will you clear that wine-glass away*, and if 25(c) is indeed odd as a request, this might be an argument against the willingness interpretation of *will you* requests and in favour of the *non-obviousness* interpretation of *will you* requests. If *will you* does indeed imply willingness, this does not explain why 25(a) is fine as a request when 25(c) is odd precisely because imposing willingness on another person is not possible. In any case, statements asserting preconditions such as 25(a-c) will be regarded as ‘upgraded’ versions of their interrogative counterparts.

7. hints

The position at the indirect end of the scale is taken up by hinting strategies, which are characterized by a high degree of ambiguity. They are the least impositive strategy of all since they offer the hearer a maximum of options to refrain from carrying out the request. As they are highly ambiguous, a hearer is relatively free to choose a non-requestive interpretation. As a result of this ambiguity, the interpretation of hints is highly dependent on contextual clues:

- (26) *Weet u misschien hoe laat de kantine dichtgaat?*
 ('Perhaps you know what time the canteen closes?' - 'paper' situation: request for help from speaker who needs assistance before going down to lunch)

Although hints are by nature vague, it is important to note that they are intentionally so, as the speaker leaves it up to the hearer to decide on the exact interpretation. Although other studies have distinguished different types of hinting strategies based on different degrees of transparency, all hints will be subsumed under the same heading in this study (for a more detailed analysis see Trosborg, 1995; Weizman, 1989, 1993). As different types of hints are difficult to recognize, analyse and interpret without contextual and interactional clues, which are absent from the requests collected in this study, no subcategorization is attempted.

2.4.2 Classification of request strategies

Table 2.3 presents a summary of the request strategies that were described in the previous section, ordered from most direct (most impositive) to most indirect (least impositive). The framework presented for the analysis of requests has, up to this point, been focussed on the analysis of the strategy in the head act of the request sequence. The choice of directness level of strategy, however, is only one option that speakers have in varying the

politeness level of their requests. In addition, speakers can choose to modify their request either internally or externally. The analysis of request modification will be discussed in the next section.

Table 2.3 Classification of request strategies

strategy	example
1. imperative	Clean up that mess.
2. performative verb	I ask you to clean up that mess.
3. obligation statement	You must clean up that mess.
4. statement of want or wish	I want you to clean up that mess.
5. suggestion	Why don't you clean up that mess?
6. reference to preconditions	Will you clean up that mess?
a. non-obviousness	Are you willing to clean up that mess?
b. willingness	Can you clean up that mess?
c. ability	
7. hint	I'm really tired ...

2.5 Analysing request modification

In view of the problems in ordering different types of modifiers as discussed earlier, it was decided not to attempt an a priori ordering of the different types of modifiers. In first instance, the analysis of the requests produced in the present study will focus on identifying the request strategies and internal and external modifiers, using the categories of internal and external modifiers described earlier. Since these categories include modifiers that have commonly been found in other ILP request studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), the assumption is that they will also figure prominently in the requests in this study. This will enable us to analyse the requests in terms of overall politeness in the sense that more modification can roughly be said to correspond to a higher politeness value.

The next step in the analysis of the requests will be to investigate whether regular patterns occur in the data with respect to combinations of modifiers and request strategies, both in terms of which strategies are modified more than others, but also in terms of the types of modifiers that typically co-occur. This will allow us to identify 'typical' requests relative to particular contextual and situational variation for the groups of respondents under study. In addition, an attempt will be made to interpret differences and similarities between groups of respondents in the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 131) politeness strategies. Since the present study aims to investigate the production of requests, which are acts that threaten the hearer's negative face and thus tend to call for negative politeness strategies from the speaker, the analysis will predominantly be concerned with the use of negative politeness strategies. Although positive politeness strategies have been found to occur, they are not likely to play a prominent role in the typical request modification patterns that we are hoping to find. The hierarchy of politeness strategies will serve to identify to what extent differences in

modification can be attributed to differences in the way respondents address the addressee's face wants. In other words, it allows for an analysis beyond the categorization of linguistic forms.

2.6 Factors affecting the linguistic realization of requests

As was discussed in Chapter 1, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework the seriousness of a face-threatening act, and hence the amount of face-redress required from a speaker, is determined by three factors: the relative power distance between speaker and hearer, the degree of social distance between speaker and hearer and the ranking of the imposition of the FTA in the culture. The more power difference and social distance between speaker and hearer and the higher the ranking of the imposition of the FTA, the more face-redress in the form of politeness strategies is required from speakers.

To start with the third variable, ranking of the imposition, Brown and Levinson claim that FTAs can be rank ordered according to the degree to which they pose a threat to the hearer's positive and negative face wants. The more impositive an FTA, the more a speaker will be concerned with reducing the face-threat to a hearer's face by means of politeness strategies. For example, a request that requires a full day of an addressee's time will generally require a higher degree of politeness than a request requiring two minutes. Brown and Levinson claim that only relative, rather than absolute values of FTAs can be computed since what constitutes an imposition is highly culture and situation specific. For example, asking someone for a cigarette may be less impositive in a culture where cigarettes are considered 'free' goods than in a culture where they are not (e.g., Thomas, 1983). Likewise, the imposition of an FTA may vary from situation to situation. Asking someone who is about to board a train to fill in a questionnaire is likely to be more impositive than asking someone who is just sitting around waiting for a train to arrive to do this. Cross-cultural research has provided ample evidence that speakers adjust their speech act strategies relative to the degree of imposition of the speech act and that cultures differ with respect to assessments of the degree of imposition of different face-threatening acts (e.g., Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Blum-Kulka et al., 1985; Holtgraves & Yang, 1990; Kim & Bresnahan, 1994; Thomas, 1983).

The two other variables in Brown and Levinson's politeness formula, power and social distance, concern the relationship between speaker and hearer, or what Brown and Levinson call the 'actors'. Power is defined as "... an asymmetric social dimension of relative power ... the degree to which H[earer] can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S[peaker]'s plans and self-evaluation ..." (1987: 77). In other words, (relative) power is the extent to which a hearer can exercise a degree of control over the speaker. As the degree of (relative) power of the speaker decreases, the need for face-redress in the form of politeness strategies is hypothesized to increase. Brown and Levinson suggest that power may be a value attached to roles or role-sets, such as supervisor - trainee, parent - child, or manager - employee role constellations, rather than a value attached to individuals.

The second variable, social distance, is defined as the "... symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purpose of the act. In many cases (but not all), it is based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S and H ..." (1987: 76-77). The weight of an FTA is hypothesized to increase with an increase of social distance, which implies that speakers are inclined to use least politeness when addressing close intimates and most politeness when addressing complete strangers.

Brown and Levinson stress the fact that, like the ranking of imposition, power and social distance should not be regarded in terms of absolute ratings or values, but should be regarded as assumptions that actors have about the (relative) power and social distance between speaker and hearer. In addition, power and social distance, like size of imposition, are highly culture- and context-specific dimensions.

A range of studies has demonstrated that power and social distance play an important role in determining the politeness level of speech acts. Of these two factors, power has been revealed to be the most stable attribute of role relations in determining linguistic variation, with studies generally reporting increasing levels of politeness with an increase of relative power of the hearer (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1985; Ervin-Tripp, 1976; Holmes, 1990; Leichy & Applegate, 1991; Olshtain, 1989; Spencer-Oatey, 1997; Trosborg 1987). In addition, research in culture-related values has identified power as an important dimension for which cross-cultural variation can be found to occur (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994).

Studies have demonstrated that speakers tend to adjust the politeness level of their utterances relative to the perceived social distance with the addressee, but have also revealed that the dimension of social distance is perhaps a less unitary dimension than power (Spencer-Oatey, 1996). First of all, some studies have found that, whereas Brown and Levinson predominantly base social distance on frequency of interaction between speaker and hearer, aspects such as liking or affect may also play an important role in determining the need for politeness (Holtgraves, 1986; Holtgraves & Yang, 1990; Slugoski & Turnbull, 1988). In addition, studies have revealed that social distance is not necessarily related to degree of politeness in a strictly linear fashion. Wolfson (1988) found that the way speakers vary their linguistic actions relative to variations in social distance (and also power distance) could be characterized as 'bulge' shaped. She found that speech act behaviour between close intimates was highly similar to speech act behaviour between complete strangers and that, contrary to Brown and Levinson's predictions, speakers are in fact most polite in addressing friends and acquaintances. Wolfson's Bulge theory has been supported by findings from a number of studies investigating speech acts such as compliments, apologies and refusals (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Wolfson & Manes, 1980; Wolfson, Marmor & Jones, 1989).

Spencer-Oatey (1997) notes that the dimensions of power and social distance have been conceptualised in different ways. Some studies have defined power distance as 'power of control' (Brown & Gilman, 1972; Brown & Levinson, 1987) but others have focussed on social rank (Cansler & Stiles, 1981), or legitimate right to exert influence (Leichy & Applegate, 1991). Likewise, social distance has been based on frequency of interaction

and (social) similarity between speaker and hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987), but has also been regarded as to include intimacy (Boxer, 1993), which as was discussed above, has also been revealed as a separate factor.

In the present study, the factor power will be regarded as 'power of control' in the sense of 'legitimate authority' that one person has over another on the basis of their socially (parent-child) or institutionally (boss-subordinate) defined roles. Social distance will be primarily based on 'frequency of interaction between speaker and hearer'. The distinction will be between high social distance, with interactants who have never or only just met prior to the request and low social distance, with interactions who know each other (relatively) well.

Context-dependency of power, social distance and imposition

Since assessments of power, social distance and imposition vary cross-culturally, but more importantly, also cross-situationally, a number of studies have investigated which contextual factors in particular can be found to affect the politeness level of different speech acts. For example, Brown and Fraser (1979) have found that formality of the situation appears to be a strong factor in determining linguistic variation. Highly relevant for research into requests in particular are findings relating to context-specific factors that have been found to affect the linguistic realization of requests. Brown and Fraser claim that in addition to relatively more stable attributes of role relationship such as power and social distance, there are a number of context-specific dimensions which also affect the way speakers adjust the politeness level of their requests, such as the right of the speaker to make a request, the obligation of a hearer to comply with the request and the estimated likelihood of compliance with a request. Context-specific dimensions have been found to affect linguistic variation differentially across situations, but, more importantly for second language learners, also across cultures. Blum-Kulka and House (1989) found that even for request situations where the role-relationships between speaker and hearer in terms of power distance and social distance was relatively clear, respondents had different assessments of specific contextual features such as the right of the speaker to make the request, or the obligation of the hearer to comply with the request varied relative to the type of request. Similar findings with respect to the effect of context-specific features have been reported for other speech acts, such as apologies (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain, 1989) or complaints (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993). Blum-Kulka and House (1989) suggest that as these context-specific dimensions are highly culture-specific, but also important determinants of linguistic variation, they should always be measured in cross-cultural research.

Since formality of situation has been found to play an important role in affecting linguistic variation, two levels of formality will be distinguished in the present study. High formality contexts will be those situations where the requests are work-related. Low formality contexts are those situations involving everyday requests. In view of the context-dependency of power and social distance, the present study will also investigate to what extent respondents' assessments of context-specific dimensions can be found to affect the politeness levels of requests.

Chapter 3

Data collection methods in interlanguage pragmatics

3.1 Introduction

In addition to the largely theoretical issues discussed in the previous two chapters, ILP studies have been concerned with methodological problems related to the validity of data collection methods. A popular method in ILP speech act studies has been the so-called Discourse Completion Task, which was first employed on a large scale in the CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b). An adapted version of this instrument will be used in the present study to collect requests in different contexts from different groups of respondents. In support of the choices made in this study, this chapter will be concerned with a discussion of the different data collection methods used to date in ILP speech act studies.

As becomes clear from the comprehensive review of research methods in Kasper and Dahl (1991), ILP researchers have employed a variety of instruments, ranging from rating tasks and multiple choice (MC) questionnaires used in perception studies to discourse completion tasks and open role plays in studies aimed at investigating the production of speech acts. Some data collection methods, such as rating tasks and MC questionnaires, are tightly controlled, whereas other methods, such as observation of authentic discourse presuppose less control on the part of the researcher. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with a discussion of advantages and disadvantages of these different methods.

3.2 Data collection methods in ILP studies

3.2.1 Comprehension and perception studies

Characteristic of the early studies in interlanguage pragmatics is that they were mainly concerned with the investigation of perception and comprehension of speech acts, and to a lesser extent with the production of speech acts. Most of these early studies employed paper-and-pencil or card-sorting tasks to investigate the perception of politeness by NNS and NS of a variety of languages (English and Spanish - Walters, 1979; English - Carrell, 1979; Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Hebrew and English - Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985).

Walters (1979) used a paired comparison method to investigate the perception of politeness in English requesting strategies by native speakers of American English and second language learners of 17 different language backgrounds. Respondents were given pairs of request sentences and were asked to indicate which of the two was more polite. Results showed that native and nonnative speakers agreed in their overall perceptions of politeness but that the nonnative speakers distinguished more levels of politeness.

Both Carrell and Konneker (1981) and Tanaka and Kawade (1982) used a card sorting method to investigate the judgements of politeness made by native speakers and learners of English. Subjects were asked to read a card specifying a request context and to rank order request strategies from most to least polite for that particular context. Both studies reported high correlations between native and nonnative judgements.

MC questionnaire tasks were used by Carrell (1979) and Tanaka and Kawade (1982). Carrell (1979) used a questionnaire consisting of written dialogues between two interlocutors. The study was aimed at discovering whether learners of a foreign language had problems understanding indirect answers. Respondents were asked to interpret indirect answers given by one of the interlocutors in the dialogue, in the form of a multiple choice response. Learners turned out to be quite competent in interpreting the indirect answers.

Another instrument employed in comprehension studies is the rating task in which respondents are asked to rate the politeness value of speech act strategies or assess situational and contextual variables of speech act events. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) used a rating task to study the perception of politeness in both requests and apologies by learners of Hebrew. Respondents were asked to rate strategies for politeness on a 3-point scale. They found that differences between native speakers and learners could mainly be attributed to length of stay in the foreign language community. Blum-Kulka and House (1989) used a rating task to investigate cross-cultural variation in the assessment of situational factors. Since speakers vary their speech act behaviour according to their assessments of situational factors, it is important to investigate to what extent nonnative speakers differ from native speakers in judging the relative importance of these factors. Respondents were asked to give their assessments on a three-point rating scale of six dimensions, such as social distance between interlocutors, authority relationship between interlocutor and difficulty of the request. Results from the rating task were subsequently used to explain variations in the production of requests.

These early studies can be characterized as metapragmatic judgement studies, which probed into respondents' perception of generic speech act strategies in terms of acceptability and relative politeness, but not their production of speech act strategies. In later studies, rating tasks have more specifically been employed in the investigation of nonnative speakers' assessment of contextual and situational variables of speech act events. Kasper and Dahl (1991) state that the perception and comprehension tasks are particularly useful in providing, among other things, valuable information about the assessment of contextual factors constructed into data instruments employed to elicit production data. They are less suitable, however, to investigate the production of speech acts, because respondents are asked to judge language rather than actively produce it.

3.2.2 Production studies

One of the more popular methods employed in speech act production studies has been the so-called discourse completion test (DCT). Over half of the studies reviewed by Kasper and Dahl (1991) were based on DCT data, with about a third of the studies using a DCT

as the only data collection method. Despite its unparalleled popularity since it was first applied in speech act research by Blum-Kulka (1982), this data collection method has triggered a fair amount of methodological discussion. In its original, written format, a DCT consisted of a number of situational descriptions designed to elicit a particular speech act. Each situation was followed by a short dialogue which respondents were asked to complete. Blum-Kulka (1982) used a 17-item DCT to study the use of request strategies by NS and NNS of Hebrew. She found that although NNS used the same type and range of strategies as the NS, they differed in use of strategy according to contextual variation. Also, the NNS used fewer direct request strategies than the native speakers of Hebrew.

The first major project to use the DCT, in its original, written format, was the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns project (CCSARP), which was set up to investigate the realization of request strategies and apology strategies in a large number of languages (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a). The CCSARP project has since triggered a large number of studies investigating a variety of speech acts (e.g., Beebe et al., 1990 - refusals; Billmyer & Varghese, 2000 - requests; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986 - expressions of gratitude; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1991, 1993a, 1993b; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992 - rejections and suggestions; Sasaki, 1998 - requests and refusals). Studies employing the DCT have noted its benefits, such as ease in administering, availability of large samples and, in particular, control over situational variation, but have also expressed methodological concerns about the validity of this instrument in speech act research. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

3.3 Assessing the validity of the DCT

Studies aimed at assessing the validity of the DCT have been focussed at comparing DCT data to other types of data (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Hinkel, 1997; Rose, 1994; Rose & Ono, 1995; Wolfson et al., 1989) or at comparing data from different types of DCT (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993b; Johnston, Kasper & Ross, 1998; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Rose, 1992).

3.3.1 Oral vs. written DCT data

As part of the CCSARP, Rintell and Mitchell (1989) carried out a comparative study of requests and apologies produced by native and nonnative speakers of English, using a written and an oral role play version of the CCSARP DCT. In the first part of the study, which only included nonnative speakers, they found that the oral responses were considerably longer than the written responses. This was mainly due to the fact that the oral responses contained both more and longer supportive moves as well as numerous hesitations and recyclings. When they analysed their native speaker data, however, they found that this difference in length did not show up. Rintell and Mitchell's tentative explanation is that this may have been due to the learners' wanting to sound particularly

polite in the role plays, where they had to make their requests to real addressees. Since inclusion of supportive moves raises the overall politeness value of a request, the learners may have felt inclined to use more supportive moves than in the written requests. A second explanation offered by Rintell and Mitchell is that the nonnative speakers approached the DCTs as writing tasks and produced less 'spontaneous' and more planned discourse than they did in oral role plays, where they did not have the time to plan and revise their responses. As such, the responses in the oral data may have been more representative of authentic discourse.

Another clear difference between the written and oral data in Rintell and Mitchell's (1989) study concerned the use of request strategies in two particular situations in the study. In both situations the requester was asking the addressee to perform an obligatory action, which justified the use of relatively direct strategies. For both situations, however, the written data contained more direct strategies than the oral data. Rintell and Mitchell suggest that respondents may have been less comfortable in using these direct strategies in face-to-face interaction (i.e. the role play with the experimenter) than in writing. In other words, even in situations in which a high level of directness is appropriate, respondents might have been reluctant to use direct strategies because the requests were actually addressed to a 'live' hearer. Respondents might, however, have been less reluctant to use these strategies in written responses, where the addressee is not actually present.

Rintell and Mitchell (1989) tentatively conclude that since an oral role play is more representative of an authentic face-to-face encounter, the language elicited in role plays is probably more natural than the language elicited in written methods, but that they cannot, on the basis of their results, claim that oral data are better than written data. However, that they found no differences other than those discussed above, is not surprising if we take a more detailed look at their analysis of responses collected in the study.

The analysis of requests on which Rintell and Mitchell (1989) base their conclusions is limited to the use of request strategies, but does not include the use of syntactic or lexical/phrasal modifiers. The question is, however, whether it is surprising that they found no differences between their two data sets, as differences in request realization have been shown to be most conspicuous at the level of request modification rather than at the level of the request strategy (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1989; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987). So, the conclusion that no differences could be observed between the two data sets is perhaps somewhat premature, since it was based solely on the analysis of request strategies rather than an analysis of request modification. It is thus quite feasible that a more fine-grained analysis of the two sets of data, including an analysis of request modification, would have presented a different picture, in favour of oral data as being more representative of authentic discourse than written data. Supporting evidence comes from Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) who supplemented a (written) DCT questionnaire with post hoc interviews with respondents. Both native and nonnative respondents said that their written responses might have been somewhat 'abbreviated' compared to what they would have said in 'real' situations.

3.3.2 Effect of hearer response

Another methodological issue that a number of studies have been addressed is the effect of inclusion of hearer response in DCTs (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993b; Johnston et al., 1998; Rose, 1992). In the CCSARP format of the DCT, the items on the questionnaire had all consisted of a situational description, an empty slot for the respondent to provide the speech act in question, and a hearer response. Rintell and Mitchell (1989) had eliminated the hearer response from their version, because they feared it might influence respondents' responses and because they could not incorporate it into their oral version. Their study was, however, not set up to test the effect of hearer response.

One of the first studies to investigate the effect of hearer response on data elicited by means of a DCT was Rose (1992). Rose constructed two versions of a DCT meant to elicit requests. The two versions were identical except that only one version included hearer responses. He found that the responses provided in the version without the hearer response included slightly more supportive moves and downgraders. As was the case for the Rintell and Mitchell (1989) study discussed above, however, the absence of significant differences may have been caused by the fact that Rose analysed the request strategies at a fairly general level. In both versions of the questionnaire respondents again displayed an overwhelming preference for conventionally indirect strategies and modification was, again, not analysed in great detail.

A comparable study was set up by Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993b), who investigated the use of rejections of advice by native and nonnative speakers of English. In their study an open questionnaire is compared with a classic dialogue completion task in which a conversational turn is provided. They found that overall talk and naturalness of talk increased when no conversational turn was provided, but that distribution of semantic formulas was very similar. As for differences between respondents, they found that both native and nonnative speakers showed task influence, but that this was more noticeable in the nonnative speakers. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford conclude that turns provided in a DCT may help respondents to frame their replies, but also that inclusion of the conversational turn may make less of a difference for the native speakers. Although Rose (1992), as discussed earlier, found no effect of hearer response, this may have been due to the fact that he examined requests, which are initiating speech acts and can thus occur in isolation. Rejections, which were the focus of Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's study, are reactive speech acts, which do not occur in isolation. Rejections are usually preceded by another, and may therefore need to be introduced by means of conversational turns. The authors conclude that although DCT elicitation cannot entirely replace the study of natural conversation in interlanguage pragmatics, DCTs can be refined to elicit more natural responses by including authentic speech in the form of hearer responses where necessary.

Johnston et al. (1998) carried out a comparable, but more complex study on the effect of hearer responses (also *rejoinder*) in (written) DCTs, or production questionnaires (PQ), as they prefer to call them. Their study involved a production questionnaire

designed to elicit three different speech acts, complaints, requests and apologies. For each of the three speech acts under study, complaints, requests and apologies, three types of items were prepared, items without a rejoinder, items with a preferred rejoinder and items with a dispreferred rejoinder. The questionnaire was administered to native and nonnative speakers of American English. Results indicated that different speech act types were affected differently, as were different speech act realization strategies.

Native speakers and nonnative speaker were found to vary their speech act behaviour in similar ways according to type of rejoinder. Respondents were found to be least sensitive to type of rejoinder in the way they formulated complaints, slightly more in the way they formulated requests and most sensitive to type of rejoinder in the way they formulated apologies. The analysis of requests revealed that both NS and NNS groups mitigated requestive force by means of internal modifiers most frequently when the interlocutors indicated noncompliance. Noncompliance thus appeared to trigger greater politeness investment than compliance or the absence of an indication of interlocutor uptake. This is hardly surprising, however, since other studies have demonstrated that requestive behaviour is susceptible to variation in context-internal factors such as rights and obligations of speaker and hearer, likelihood of compliance, etc. (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Brown & Fraser, 1979). A dispreferred rejoinder is simply an explicit reference to noncompliance, which respondents are left to interpret by themselves in the case of no-rejoinder requests, as indeed they are in authentic interaction. What is perhaps surprising is that for the native speakers, but not the nonnative speakers, the same tendency was found with respect to external modification of requests. The native speakers tended to modify requests with negative rejoinders with supportive moves, whereas the nonnative speakers preferred not to support them by external modification. There was no effect on choice of directness level, as the most frequent strategy in this study, too, was the conventional indirect preparatory strategy. Johnston et al. (1998) conclude that their findings suggest 'that results from studies using different production questionnaire formats may not be comparable, but are likely to reflect respondents' sensitivity to presence and type of uptake represented in questionnaire items' (1998: 140). However, in view of the ongoing debate about the validity of DCTs or production questionnaires, a more important question that perhaps also needs to be answered is if rejoinders, whether preferred or dispreferred, are representative of authentic discourse. It may be that rejoinders or conversational turns are, as Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993b) suggested, necessary prerequisites in questionnaires eliciting reactive speech acts such as refusals or rejections, but not in those designed to elicit initiating speech acts, such as requests or complaints. In real interaction the requesters rarely (if ever) know whether requests will be complied with. At best speakers can weigh various factors such as rights and obligations, assess the likelihood of compliance and adjust their request strategy accordingly. In a way, asking respondents to make requests to which they know the outcome is like asking students to sit an exam that has already been graded.

3.4 DCT vs. Multiple Choice questionnaires

In view of the criticism of the DCT as data collection method, it is perhaps surprising to find that so few studies have compared DCT data to other types of data. Comparative studies of this type can be divided into two groups; those that have compared DCT data to multiple choice data (MC) and those that have compared DCT data to authentic data.

Rose (1994) reports on the results of two questionnaire studies which were primarily set up to address the issue of data collection in non-Western contexts. In the first study reported by Rose a written DCT was constructed to elicit requests, which was administered to native speakers of Japanese and American English. Contrary to what Rose had expected the Japanese turned out to be more direct than the Americans. Rose suggests that these results may have been the effect of the DCT itself. One explanation offered is that the written responses given by the Japanese may not have been characteristic of face-to-face interaction, due to the absence of a hearer in the DCT. In the second study Rose investigated whether Japanese respondents would choose more indirect strategies if given a choice in a MC questionnaire. A comparison of the two data sets revealed that first of all, the MC questionnaire triggered more contextual variation than the DCT. Secondly, it turned out that both Japanese and American NS preferred more indirect and opting out strategies in the MC questionnaire than in the DCT. Rose concludes that DCT data must be treated with caution, because this second study did not demonstrate conclusively whether DCTs are a valid means of data collection in non-Western contexts. Rose and Ono (1995) report on a study which was set up to replicate and validate the findings of Rose (1992). In this study, too, opting out and hinting strategies were used more frequently in the MC questionnaire than in the DCT, which seems to support Rose's earlier findings. The findings of these studies are, however, not convincing for a number of reasons.

First of all, upon closer analysis of the two tasks themselves, it turns out that the instructions, rather than the nature of the instruments may have caused some of Rose's results. In the instructions of the (English) DCT, respondents are instructed to 'write down what you would say in that situation' (Rose, 1994: 13). Also, the prompt after each situational description reads: 'what would you say' (1994: 13). The instructions for the corresponding MC questionnaire, however, specify that respondents should indicate what they would 'say or do', so opting out is actually offered as an explicit choice. Since opting out was not included as an explicit choice in the instruction for the DCT version, however, this may explain why respondents rarely opted out of making the request.

Moreover, the answer categories in the MC version were not entirely consistent across items. Although the possible choices for all items include three levels of directness (direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect) as well as opting-out, the request strategies offered as alternatives for the items varied with respect to degree of internal modification included. For example, in some items, an unmodified imperative was among the possible answers, whereas in other items an imperative with politeness marker *please* was listed among the possible answer categories. Likewise, conventionally indirect strategies were sometimes presented in their unmodified form: '*Can I borrow*

your notes?', but for other items included both syntactic and lexical downgraders: '*Could I have some more, please?*'. As internal modification in particular has been found to be important in determining the acceptability and / or appropriateness of request strategies, this may have biased some of the results on the MC questionnaire.

In a fairly recent study, Hinkel (1997) investigated differences between (written) DCT and MC data of appropriateness of advice by Chinese learners and native speakers of English. She found that in the MC the native speakers selected substantially fewer options with either direct or hedged advice than the Chinese learners. In the DCT, however, more native speakers than Chinese preferred direct and hedged advice. One possible explanation offered by Hinkel is that constraints imposed by the need to provide written responses in the foreign language in the DCT may have affected the behaviour of the Chinese. She suggests that they may have produced 'generic responses to DCTs that were more linguistically accessible than pragmatically appropriate, thus avoiding the written production of such complex syntactic constructions as impersonals and hedges' (1997: 18), but found it easier to choose the most appropriate strategy in the MC questionnaire.

In all, it turns out that perhaps all that can be safely concluded from studies that have been set up to investigate differences between DCT and MC is that results obtained with these types of instruments differ. As neither MC nor PQ data were set off against authentic data, however, there is no telling which is a more genuine reflection of natural, authentic speech, only that findings for the two instruments were not the same. A second question is whether the differences found were not simply a reflection of the difference between perception and production. It might be the case that MC questionnaires as used in the studies described above resemble the perception/comprehension tasks that were employed in some of the earlier interlanguage pragmatics studies. As respondents are merely asked to pick the most appropriate strategy in a MC task, this might not provide any insights into the strategies they would actually produce. These studies do not however provide evidence against the use of the DCT and in favour of MC questionnaires.

3.5 DCT vs. natural data

A number of studies have compared DCT data to authentic data. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) compared rejections in natural conversation data with data elicited by means of a DCT. The study was set up as a follow-up of two earlier studies (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1991), which were based on natural data from student advising sessions. The purpose of the follow-up study was to validate the generalizations about rejections made in their earlier study on the basis of data collected by means of a written DCT. The main conclusion drawn by the authors is that the DCT provided valuable evidence with respect to how rejections are formulated, which had not been available in their natural data. However, they also found evidence for a strong task bias, in that the DCT seemed to have elicited a narrower range of semantic formulas for both native speakers and nonnative speakers. Some formulas did not show up at all in the DCT data. The authors suggest, however, that this may have been due to the fact that in the rejections produced in the DCT, unlike in the natural data, there was no evidence of the

turn-taking or negotiating of outcomes that is characteristic of advising sessions. Although the DCT data lacked these features of negotiation and turn-taking, this was not reflected in the type and/or length of rejections produced. The authors did find that the DCT allowed students to use less politeness and more opting out strategies than in the natural situations. Their final conclusion is that the DCT had been a suitable method for testing the hypotheses that they had constructed on the basis of their natural data and that the DCT in fact facilitated the explanation and interpretation of their natural data. On the basis of their comparison of the two types of data, they do, however, conclude that DCT data should not be considered a substitute for natural data, at least not in the sense of representative of natural interaction.

Another comparative study is Beebe and Takahashi (1989a), who used two different data collection methods in a study of chastisement and disagreement by native speakers and Japanese learners of English. The first set of data consisted of natural speech collected in notebooks by the researchers. An additional set of data was collected by means of a written DCT. Beebe and Takahashi found substantial differences in the ways Americans and Japanese carried out face-threatening acts. The main finding was that the Japanese learners used less indirectness and avoidance of disagreement than might perhaps have been expected on the basis of stereotypical ideas about the Japanese way to deal with face-threatening acts. Beebe and Takahashi mention a number of disadvantages with respect to the collection of natural (notebook) data. First, they found that because long stretches of speech are particularly difficult to note down, short stretches tended to get noted down more quickly. This might have biased their data towards relatively short exchanges. Secondly, they found that, in the case of learners, they tended to write down those utterances that were distinctly nonnative, as these more clearly stood out and were thus more noticeable. They suggest that this may have caused their data to contain a higher number of nonnative utterances than learners generally produce. Finally, they also noted that, since situational contexts in which exchanges took place were rarely comparable, it was difficult to make generalizations on the basis of their natural data.

Similar limitations to the use of natural data were observed by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) and Bodman and Eisenstein (1988), in a number of studies investigating the use of expressions of gratitude. Their first study involved the use of a written questionnaire to supplement their notebook data with random observations of situations in which expressions of gratitude occurred. Their decision to use a written questionnaire was prompted by the fact that natural contexts were found to vary considerably with respect to contextual and situational variables. In their natural data they had identified fifty different situations in which expressions of gratitude occurred, which complicated the analysis of the data. In an attempt to control for this situational variation, they constructed a written questionnaire where the number of situations was limited to twenty-five situations. They concluded that although the written data were representative of natural language use, they may have been more limited than authentic data. In addition to the absence of prosodic and non-verbal elements characteristic of natural discourse, the written data also seemed to contain shorter exchanges than the natural data. With respect to the questionnaire itself, however, they concluded that this method allowed them to collect data in numbers that

would have been impossible to achieve by observation of authentic discourse. As an extension to this study, Bodman and Eisenstein (1989) went on to compare the written data and notebook data with data elicited in oral role plays. They found that both written and role-play data were representative of natural discourse in that respondents used the same words and expressions for expressing gratitude. The written data were, however, more limited than both the role-play data and the natural data in that the responses were generally shorter and less complex. Bodman and Eisenstein suggest that this might have been due to the fact that in a written task, there is no active role for the interlocutor. Since expressions of gratitude always occur as a response to another speech event, this may have made the written questionnaire less realistic. Still, however, they conclude that a questionnaire approach is an accurate method for investigating which semantic formulas speakers have at their disposal for making particular speech acts. They do admit, that on the basis of written or role-play data, now claims can be made about interactive processes characteristic of natural discourse. Ideally, therefore, written data would need to be supplemented with natural data.

Cohen (1996), who discusses the need for a multi-method approach in speech act studies, observed that results from written DCTs indicate that DCTs are effective instruments for gathering large amounts of data, for creating initial classifications of semantic formulas, and for investigating structural aspects of speech acts. He does admit, however, that prosodic and non-verbal features are not present in written data, which makes written responses less representative of natural discourse. An additional problem is that in written DCTs respondents usually have more time than in real interaction and that the very act of responding in writing 'as if speaking' may induce respondents to produce relatively short responses.

Houck and Gass (1996), likewise, pointed out that although natural data are the most ecologically valid means of learning about the social and linguistic constraints of a particular speech act, there are obvious limitations. The problem is not only that contextual variables cannot be controlled when gathering natural data, but also that the occurrence of a particular speech act cannot be predicted.

Beebe and Cummings (1996), despite the continuing debate over the reliability and validity of DCT, offer more support in favour of the continuation of DCT data collection. They claim each approach to data collection has strengths and weaknesses and that each should therefore be used for its own purpose. Beebe and Cummings compared refusal data from a previous study (Beebe & Cummings, 1985) collected via a written DCT and tape-recordings of telephone conversations. They found that the DCT biased responses toward less negotiation, less hedging, less repetition, less elaboration, less variety and ultimately less talk. The authors claim, however, that the similarities between natural spoken refusals and written questionnaire refusals are quite strong - strong enough to suggest that DCTs are a good way to discover what semantic formulas are frequently used (or expected) in the performance of a speech act. The responses in the natural data, however, were more varied in terms of the number of different formulas and strategies resorted to. Frequency counts of formulas and strategies, however, were very similar. Moreover, they did not discover any formulas in natural data that had not already been

found in the questionnaire data. One of the main differences between the DCT data and the natural data, is that the former does not bring out the 'psycho-social' dynamics of an interaction between members of a group. Their conclusion is that in many respects, written questionnaires accurately reflect the content expressed in natural speech. Beebe and Cummings argue that their findings legitimize the use of Discourse Completion Test data for certain purposes in sociolinguistic research, but should never be regarded as a substitute for natural data. They also observe that naturalness is only one of the many criteria for good data. As has been noted in some of the studies discussed above (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989a; Cohen, 1996; Houck & Gass, 1996), approaches featuring natural data have drawbacks of other kinds, one of the main drawback perhaps being that natural data cannot be situationally controlled.

3.6 Conclusion

In the literature on speech act research methods, the discussion about the validity of the DCT has focussed on a number of aspects. A first concern has been the use of an off-line technique to gather data about an on-line process. This is (and should be) a prime concern, as there is no way of determining how this on-off line difference interacts with other parameters of the test situations. However, the use of off-line techniques is not particularly restricted to the study of speech acts. In psycholinguistic research on language production and perception a fairly limited number of experimental techniques have been used to study various aspects of processes of language use. For the study of language production, word- and picture-naming tasks in various formats (cross-modal, picture-word interference, primed/unprimed, etc.) have been used extensively. For language perception, and reading in particular, a wide variety of lexical decision-type techniques has been used. Obviously the gap between these types of off-line tasks and the processes they are intended to inform us about is considerable. These techniques have proven to be useful and their validity is not considered to be a major problem. It could be argued that the 'validity gap' between the DCT and strategy use in spontaneous speech is not larger than between, for example, word naming and speaking or lexical decision and reading. In this respect, we have to accept that the DCT on the whole is not better than other off-line methods, but not worse either. Also, judging by the outcomes of studies that have so far compared DCT data to natural data, there is enough evidence to suggest that the 'validity gap' may not be as large as has sometimes been suggested.

Secondly, objections of the kind raised by Cohen (1996) with respect to the written mode of the DCT can partly be removed by constructing oral versions of the DCT, as has been done in present study. Although an oral version of the DCT still does not bring out interactional elements of ongoing discourse, it has the advantage over a written version in that respondents have less time to think and plan their responses.

Thirdly, studies set up to validate the DCT by comparing DCT data with natural (or other) data have concentrated on written versions of the DCT, but not on oral versions. Although Rintell and Mitchell (1989) claim that they did not find enough evidence to indicate that the requests elicited with an oral version of a DCT do not differ from those

elicited with a written DCT, this may have been due to the level of analysis of their data, as was discussed above. A number of other studies have expressed reservations about the written DCT to the extent that written, planned responses may not be representative of spoken, spontaneous discourse. We felt we have partly removed the 'written-spoken obstacle' by constructing an oral version of the DCT. We recognize that the single-turn responses collected by means of this DCT still do not contain discourse features typical of actual interaction, such as turn-taking and negotiation of meaning, but then management of discourse is not the focus of the present study.

Finally, the emphasis in the present study is on the impact of situational variation on the use of request strategies. However, the main aim of the present study is not the analysis of the widest range of possible forms in spontaneous speech, the types of strategies and patterns of request modification used by speakers relative to situational variation. In other words, our first concern is with the 'stereotypical, perceived requirements of a socially appropriate response' (Beebe & Cummings, 1996: 80), a purpose for which Beebe and Cummings claim the DCT is a highly effective and sufficiently valid method. One of the drawbacks, and perhaps in the light of the present study the most important one, noted in studies using natural data is that systematic collection and situational control are difficult if not, impossible to achieve. Since the influence of sociopragmatic factors is of prime interest in the present study, an experimental setting was thus almost a prerequisite. Even if large samples including different types of request strategies were collected and analysed, it is highly unlikely that such a corpus will allow us to do the type of statistical analysis on the sociopragmatic variables that can be carried out with DCT data. In this sense, a validation of the DCT using more naturalistic data, without giving up the testing of these variables, is virtually impossible.

The conclusion is that we feel that we have tried to choose the best data collection method for our purpose and for the questions under study, while, as do Beebe and Cummings (1996), 'acknowledging its weaknesses', but at the same time agreeing with Kasper and Dahl (1991) that:

"As in all data-based research, a good method is one that is able to shed light on the question(s) under study. Ecological (face) validity should not be a sacred cow in interlanguage pragmatics (nor anywhere else)."

(1991: 245)

Just how the DCT in the present study has been constructed to suit the purpose of the present study will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Design of the study

4.1 Aim and scope of the study

This chapter will discuss the aim, scope and method of the study. In the first section (4.1) the aim and the research questions will be described. This is followed by a description of the method in Section 4.2, which includes descriptions of respondents, tasks and test procedures. The chapter will conclude with a section on preparation of the data (4.3).

The aim of the study can be summarized as to gain insights into the way Dutch learners of English apply the rules of 'polite' language in formulating requests in English. More specifically, the study will examine how Dutch learners of English use request strategies and request modification in formulating requests relative to situational variation. Although, as has become clear from the literature review in Chapter 1, many studies have investigated learners' ability to vary request strategies, few studies have provided detailed accounts of learners' ability to modify requests. In addition, only few studies have looked at the effect of linguistic proficiency on learners' ability to make requests or have taken into account learners' assessments of sociopragmatic factors. However, as studies in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics have shown that assessments of sociopragmatic factors can be found to vary considerably cross-culturally, there is a clear need for studies investigating learners' ability to produce requests in relation to their sociopragmatic perceptions.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to gain more insights in the production of requests in relation to perceptions of situational factors by Dutch learners of English as compared to native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch.

As has become clear from Chapter 1, research into learners' pragmatic competence has provided ample evidence for the influence of learners' L1 on the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence. Consequently, the aim of the study will also be to investigate differences and similarities in the use of request strategies and request modification in formulating requests by native speakers of Dutch and native speakers of English. The comparison of the request behaviour of these two groups of speakers is a prerequisite for relating the learners' request behaviour to similarities and differences between English and Dutch.

As has also become clear from Chapter 1, learners have been found to differ from native speakers on two dimensions of pragmatic competence. At the sociopragmatic end of pragmatic competence, learners have been found to differ from native speakers with respect to, among other things, choice of speech acts relative to situational variation and perceptions of sociocultural factors. At the pragmalinguistic end learners have been found to differ from native speakers in, among other things, perception and production of directness levels of speech act strategies and choice and variation in linguistic forms in communicating pragmatic intent. The aim of the study is to look at two aspects of Dutch

learners' pragmatic competence in English in particular, choice and linguistic realization of request strategies and request modification relative to situational variation, and sociopragmatic perceptions of situational factors of request contexts. The rationale for this is that differences and similarities in sociopragmatic perceptions might serve as explanations for observed request behaviour.

Finally, as has also become clear from Chapter 1, a number of structural and nonstructural factors have been found to have an influence on the development of L2 pragmatic competence, such as the influence of L1, type of input and learning environment, level of proficiency and individual learner characteristics. The present study will be restricted in the sense that it will focus on two aspects in particular, influence of learners' L1 and level of proficiency.

4.1.1 Research questions

The study will address the following questions:

- (1) What are similarities and differences in the use of request strategies and request modification by Dutch learners of English compared to native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch?
2. To what extent can differences and similarities in the use of request strategies and types of request modification used by Dutch learners of English, native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch be attributed to pragmalinguistic differences between Dutch and English?
 - 1.1 To what extent can differences in the use of request strategies and types of request modification in the formulation of requests between Dutch learners of English, native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch be explained by looking at differences in the assessment of sociocultural and situational factors?
- (2) What are differences and similarities between intermediate and advanced learners of English with respect to the use of request strategies and request modification and/or the assessment of sociopragmatic factors?

4.1.2 Dependent variables

Central to the research questions above are pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of requests. Pragmalinguistic aspects pertain to those linguistic means that speakers have at their disposal in the realization of illocutionary intent and force. As requests are by nature face-threatening acts, politeness strategies, such as variations in directness levels and other modifiers of impositive force, will play an important role in determining the success and effectiveness of a request. In the present study the following aspects will be distinguished:

- level of (in)directness incorporated in the request strategy in the head act of the request; as was discussed in Chapter 1, indirectness will be regarded as the inferential steps that are made by speaker and hearer to arrive at the illocutionary force of an utterance while observing the Tact Maxim (Leech, 1983);
- use of internal and external modification in request utterances; as was explained in Chapter 2, the impositive force of a request can be modified through the inclusion of syntactic, lexical/phrasal means and by the use of supportive moves.

4.1.3 Independent variables

Power, social distance and context

The independent variables in the design are the sociopragmatic factors that determine the linguistic realization of a request (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.6). The factors that will be distinguished in this study are:

- Power (P); the degree of power distance between speaker and hearer; three types of constellations are distinguished:
 1. low speaker authority: the hearer is in a position of relative authority with respect to the speaker;
 2. status-equal: neither speaker nor hearer is in a position of authority;
 3. high speaker authority: the speaker is in a position of relative authority with respect to the hearer;
- Social distance (S); the degree of social distance between speaker and hearer; two types of relations are distinguished:
 1. low social distance ('acquainted'); speaker and hearer know each other well and / or are on more or less friendly terms;
 2. high social distance ('unacquainted'); speaker and hearer have never met before or have only just met prior to the request;
- Context (C); the setting in which the request is made; two different types of settings are distinguished:
 1. non-institutional contexts: contexts describing everyday requests
 2. institutional contexts: contexts describing work-related requests.

Language

Three different groups of respondents participated in the study: native speakers of Dutch, native speakers of English and Dutch learners of English.

Level of proficiency in English

The variable 'level of proficiency' is incorporated in the design by including learners at two levels of proficiency: intermediate and advanced learners. The intermediate group consisted of learners who had all received four or five years of instruction in English. The advanced group consisted of learners who had all received six years of instruction in English at secondary school and an additional two years of instruction in English at university.

4.2 Method

In order to provide answers to the research questions outlined above, two tasks were constructed: a production task and a judgement task. The production task was constructed to gain more insights into the range and type of request strategies and request modifiers used by the three groups of respondents under study, relative to situational variation. The judgement task was constructed to gain more insights into respondents' perceptions of the situational factors that were incorporated in the situations of the production task. The results from the judgement task would allow us to relate similarities and differences in request behaviour to sociopragmatic perceptions of the situations.

In addition, the design included a proficiency test for the Dutch learners of English. This section will start off with a description of the respondents that participated in the study. It will then continue with descriptions of the proficiency test, production task and judgement task respectively.

4.2.1 Respondents

Three groups of respondents participated in the study: native speakers of English, native speakers of Dutch and Dutch learners of English. Since we had decided to select learners of English at different levels of proficiency, secondary school pupils and university students, we also included two subgroups for each of the native speaker groups, which thus also included two subgroups of secondary school pupils and university students.

Learners of English (NNE)

The intermediate group of learners (NNE1) consisted of 55 secondary school pupils between the ages of 15 and 18. They had all received 4 or 5 years of instruction in English. Respondents in this group were recruited from schools in and around Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The second group (NNE2) consisted of 46 advanced learners of English between the ages of 20 and 22. The respondents in this group were all university students enrolled a Business Communication programme of the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. All students took English courses as part of their programme. The students had all had a minimum of 6 years of instruction in English at secondary school and an additional two years of instruction at university.

Native speakers of English (NE)

The native speakers of English also included two subgroups. The first group (NE1) consisted of 35 secondary school pupils (21 males and 14 females) recruited from three different secondary schools in and around Wolverhampton, England. The second group (NE2) consisted of 24 university students (5 males and 19 females) between the ages of 20 and 24. The students were all enrolled in a Languages for Business programme at the University of Wolverhampton, England.

Native speakers of Dutch (ND)

One group of native speakers (ND1) consisted of 49 secondary school pupils (23 males and 26 females) between the ages of 14 to 17, recruited from secondary schools in and around Nijmegen. The second group (ND2) consisted of 63 university students (11 males, 51 females and one respondent who failed to indicate gender) between the ages of 20 and 22, who were all enrolled in the Business Communication programme of the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. These were all students who took French, Spanish or German courses as part of their foreign language programme.

4.2.2 Materials

4.2.2.1 Proficiency test

Both groups of learners participated in an oral proficiency test. This was a tape-mediated, semi-direct test, constructed by Cito (Dutch National Institute for Educational Measurements). Apart from the 'warming-up' in which respondents were asked a number of personal questions the test consisted of five different sections: (1) pronunciation: the subjects had to read out a short written text of about 200 words, (2) describing sets of pictures of events or situations, (3) expressing an opinion, (4) describing and/or explaining a phenomenon and (5) presenting an argument. The maximum score for oral proficiency was 38. The mean score for the intermediate group was 15.4; the mean score for the advanced groups was 20.3. T-test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was significant: $t(99) = 4.86$; $p < .001$, $O^2 = .19$.

4.2.2.2 Production task

As was discussed in Chapter 3, it was decided to construct a discourse completion task (DCT) based on the format used in the CCSARP project (Blum Kulka et al., 1989b). As evidence has been reported in favour of an oral DCT over a written version (e.g., Cohen, 1996), it was decided to construct an oral version of the DCT.

The format for the production task was an adapted version of the DCT used in the CCSARP. In its original format, the DCT consisted of written situations representing socially differentiated contexts to which respondents provide written responses. An example of an original DCT dialogue is provided below (1):

(1) *At the University*

Ann missed a lecture yesterday and would like to borrow Judith's notes.

Ann:

Judith: Sure, but let me have them back before the lecture next week.

(Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b: 14)

In this version of the DCT each dialogue contained a hearer response to the (missing) turn that respondents were asked to provide. Following Rintell and Mitchell (1989), it was decided not to include the hearer response in the situations in our version of the test, since

this might affect respondents' answers (see also Chapter 3). It was also decided to aim for a type of scripting of situations that was different from both the original version, as in the example above, but also different from the revised Rintell and Mitchell version:

- (2) *Jack, a student, was sick and missed one of the classes of the course he is enrolled in. He would like to borrow another student's notes. The other student's name is Judith. Imagine you are Jack. What do you say to get Judith to lend you her notes for the class you missed?* (1989: 251)

Although the Rintell and Mitchell version was felt to be an improvement on the original DCT format, we still felt the situational prompts contained too many explicit clues as to what was expected of respondents, i.e. to make a request. In example (2), for instance, respondents are explicitly prompted that their goal is to get Judith to lend them her notes, and are also, albeit less explicitly, 'prompted' for possible request strategies by the sentence 'He would like to borrow another student's notes'. As this type of scripting might influence respondents in their choice for request strategies, we decided to script the situations more implicitly. All situations were scripted from the speaker's perspective and 'prompters' of request strategies such as the one in example (2) were avoided as much as possible. An example of the adapted version is (3):

- (3) *The supermarket*
You are standing in line at the checkout with a shopping trolley full of groceries. You are late for an important meeting. There is only one man in front of you.

What do you say to the man in front of you?

4.2.2.3 Request situations

As one of the aims of the study was to investigate the influence of situational variation, the request situations in the DCT were systematically varied along three parameters, power distance, social distance and context. Two of these, power distance and social distance, pertain to role relationships between participants (speaker and hearer) in a situation, whereas the third, context, specifies the situational setting in which the request is made. Power distance has in the present study been defined as relative authority between speaker and hearer in a situation. Three different types of role constellations are distinguished in the situations. In the first type (P1: low speaker authority) the hearer is in a position of relative authority over the speaker, such as for example in an assistant - manager, but also child - parent relationship. The second type (P2: status equal) are situations where speaker and hearer are more or less status equals, such as for example in a request between two colleagues (of similar rank) or two neighbours. Finally, a third type of situations (P3: high speaker authority) are those in which the speaker is in a position of relative authority with respect to the hearer, as in requests from supervisor to trainee, but also in requests from parent to child.

The second dimension that was incorporated was social distance between speaker and hearer. Two types of social distance were distinguished in the situations. In low social distance (S1: acquainted) situations speaker and hearer know each other well and/or are on more or less friendly terms, such as for example parent-child, but also colleague-colleague relationships. In high social distance (S2: unacquainted) situations, speaker and hearer have never met before, or have only just met prior to the request. Finally, the third dimension that had been varied was the setting (Context) in which the request was made. Two types of settings are distinguished. Situations were either non-institutional (C1), where the requests concern every-day life affairs, as opposed to the specifically job-related requests that were characteristic of the institutional (C2) contexts.

Systematic variations of these three variables resulted in twelve Power-Social Distance-Context (PSC) combinations, each specifying a different situation type. The different combinations are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Situation types in production task and judgement task

Power	Social Distance	Context	Situation Type		Situation
P1: P(s) < P(h)	SD1: SD-	C1: non-institutional	1	P1S1C1	Homework 1 Homework 2
		C2: institutional	2	P1S1C2	Report 1 Report 2
	SD2: SD+	C1: non-institutional	3	P1S2C1	Travel 1 Travel 2
		C2: institutional	4	P1S2C2	Lunch 1 Lunch 2
P2: P(s) = P(h)	SD1: SD-	C1: non-institutional	5	P2S1C1	Neighbour 1 Neighbour 2
		C2: institutional	6	P2S1C2	Campaign 1 Campaign 2
	SD2: SD+	C1: non-institutional	7	P2S2C1	Supermarket 1 Supermarket 2
		C2: institutional	8	P2S2C2	Paper 1 Paper 2
P3: P(s) > P(h)	SD1: SD-	C1: non-institutional	9	P3S1C1	Party 1 Party 2
		C2: institutional	10	P3S1C2	Overtime 1 Overtime 2
	SD2: SD+	C1: non-institutional	11	P3S2C1	Pensioner 1 Pensioner 2
		C2: institutional	12	P3S2C2	Customs 1 Customs 2

A total of 40 request situations were constructed along these lines that were subsequently tested in a pilot study. The pilot version of the DCT included the three situational variables described above, but in addition, a fourth variable that had originally been part of the design, that might be described as 'hearer's effort required in carrying out the request'. For each PSC situation type we included two situations, the difference between the two being a variation in the time or effort required from the hearer. An example of

this variation is the difference between 'report 1' and 'report 2', which describes a request from a student-trainee to a supervisor. In 'report 1' the trainee asks the supervisor to read and evaluate a summary of a report. In 'report 2' the request is virtually the same, except this time the trainee asks the supervisor to read and evaluate the entire report. The other '1' and '2' situations were varied along similar lines.

Pilot study

The purpose of the pilot was to test the format we had chosen for the DCT and to see if the request situations that had constructed and the way the situational prompts had been scripted worked. A second, but minor objective was to get an initial indication of the range of request strategies produced by Dutch learners of English. As the main purpose of the pilot was to test whether the DCT in the task format we had chosen worked and to test whether the way we had scripted the situations elicited request, the analysis of responses was restricted to transcription and analysis of the responses and coding of request strategies only.

The respondents who participated in the pilot were 29 students (aged 20-22) in the department of Business Communication at the University of Nijmegen. They were all advanced learners (75% females), taking English courses as part of their programme.

In the pilot version, the 40 situations were distributed over three versions of the test, with each version containing 21 request situations and in addition, 5 distracter items (refusals) situations. The latter were included in an attempt to prevent respondents from developing 'routine' responses. The task was administered in a language lab. Respondents were asked to read each individual situation and give their responses, which were recorded on tape. A time constraint was set in that respondents were given 30 seconds to read each situation. The time constraint was set in an additional attempt to get spontaneous rather than premeditated reactions.

The modifications to the DCT as a result of the pilot mainly concerned the choice of request situations and the length of the task itself. With respect to the request situations of the task, it became clear from respondents' reactions that some situations had to be discarded or revised. Due to the fact we had tried to avoid explicit prompting in the description of the situations, some situations did not elicit requests at all, but a variety of other speech acts such as apologies, complaints or refusals. Consequently a number of situations were revised or discarded, which resulted in a selection of 24 situations to be used in the main project. Descriptions of the situations have been included in Appendix A.

As was mentioned earlier, we had originally intended to include four situational variables in the DCT, power distance, social distance, context and 'hearer's effort'. This last variable, however, did not appear to have a particularly marked influence on the choice of strategy. Consequently, we decided to exclude the variable as such from the final version of the DCT, but to control for it by including two slightly different versions for each request situation. Since we still wanted to control for effects caused by the nature of the request itself - a request to borrow someone's yacht might require a different strategy than a request to borrow someone's lawn-mower if not negotiating tactics - two

situations were scripted for each combination type, the difference between the two being a (slight) variation in the time or effort required from the hearer. These situations were used in the production task and in the judgement task. In the production task they served as stimuli to elicit request strategies, whereas in the judgement task they served as stimuli to elicit respondents' assessments of situational variables of the situations

Apart from serving as a test of the situations, the pilot had also been carried out to test the overall format and to discover whether respondents would be able to provide oral responses within the time constraint (30 seconds) that we had set them. It turned out that neither format nor time constraint presented any problems. The only modification that seemed necessary concerned the overall length of the test. The pilot version had consisted of a total of 26 situations, which turned out to be too much of a strain on both respondents' concentration. It was decided to reduce the number of situations per test to a maximum of twenty. We also decided to increase the number of 'distracters' from five to eight, because it was felt that it was perhaps still too obvious that the purpose of the test was to elicit requests. Consequently, the final version of the DCT consisted of twenty items: twelve request situations and eight refusal/apology situations.

Final version

The basic format of the DCT version tested in the pilot remained unchanged in the revised version, apart from changes in the scripting of the situations and the length of the task. All situations were scripted from the perspective of the respondent, who was always the speaker in the situation as in example (4):

(4) The living room

You are upstairs in your room. You have just realized that you need to have finished your school project before tomorrow morning. So far you have not done much work on it and you need your dad to help you finish it. You go downstairs to the living room where your dad is watching a documentary on television.

What do you say to your dad?

Format

All versions contained all 12 situation types, but varied as to which situation (1 or 2) was included. Ten different versions of the task were prepared: situations 1 and 2 were randomly assigned to each version. Versions were randomly distributed to respondents. Apart from the 12 request situations, the DCT included eight 'distracter' items, which were situations in which respondents were to produce apologies or refusals. Three different language versions were constructed (see Appendix A - Part 1: Production task):

- an English version for the native speakers of English and advanced learners;
- a 'modified' English version for the intermediate learners; the modified version was largely similar to the unmodified English version, but included translations in brackets of those words that we felt might be problematic for less advanced learners;
- a Dutch version for the Dutch native speakers

In addition, the test itself also included instructions, some examples and 2 trial items.

4.2.2.4 The judgement task

The judgement task was constructed using the same situations that were used in the DCT. In the DCT, all situations were scripted from the perspective of the respondent (speaker), as in example (5a). Since in the rating task, respondents were asked questions about the speaker and the hearer in the situations, the situations were now scripted from the perspective of the interactants as in situation (5b).

(5a) *The public relations department*

You are a student-trainee who has worked in the PR department for the past six months. As part of your trainee ship you have had to write a report on your work experience. This report is to be handed in to your university tutor tomorrow. The head of the PR department, Peter Hopkins, who was your supervisor at work, will have to read and approve the report before you can hand it in. If he read the report tonight, you would be able to hand it in tomorrow morning. Peter Hopkins, your supervisor, has just walked into your office.

(5b) *The public relations department*

John Wilkins, a student-trainee, has worked in the PR department for the past six months. As part of his trainee ship, John has had to write a report on his work experience. This report is to be handed in to John's university tutor tomorrow. The head of the PR department, Peter Hopkins, who was John's supervisor at work, will have to read and approve the report before he can hand it in. If Peter Hopkins read the report tonight, John would be able to hand it in tomorrow morning. Peter Hopkins has just walked into John's office. John asks him to read the report tonight.

Respondents were asked two sets of questions about each individual situation. In the first three questions they were asked to give their judgement with respect to the dimensions 'authority', 'formality' and the degree of 'familiarity' between speaker and hearer. These three dimensions can be directly related to the independent variables power distance, context and social distance in the construction of the situations. The remaining four questions were related to rights and obligations of speaker and hearer in the situation, difficulty of the request and the likelihood of the hearer complying with the request. This second set of questions was indirectly related to the factors power distance, social distance and context in that they are more request-specific and vary relative to the content of the request. For instance, a manager might have the right to ask his assistant to work overtime, but would probably not have the same right to ask him to wash her car if she met him in the street on a Saturday morning. Likewise, the obligation of the assistant to comply with the first request would probably be considerably higher than for the second request. These last four factors were included because they too, might have an influence on the choice of request strategies.

For each situation respondents were asked seven questions relating to the factors mentioned above. In the first question they were asked to indicate their answer on a three-point scale, for the remaining six questions a five-point scale was used. The questions

they were asked are described below. Examples of the Dutch and English version are included in Appendix A (Part 2: Judgement task).

- *authority*; respondents were asked to indicate whether the relationship between the speaker and hearer was one of status equals or status unequals. If they believed that either of the two interactants was in a position of authority over the other they were asked to indicate the degree of authority on a three-point scale;
- *formality*; respondents were asked to indicate how formal or informal they felt the situation was;
- *familiarity*; respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they felt speaker and hearer were on friendly terms;
- *right of the speaker*; respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they felt the speaker had the right to make that particular request;
- *obligation*; respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they felt the hearer in the situation should feel obliged to comply with that particular request;
- *difficulty*; respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they felt that the speaker might find the request a difficult one to make;
- *likelihood*; respondents were asked to indicate how likely it was that the hearer would actually comply with the request.

Format

The test itself included 12 request situations, with 7 questions for each situation. It also included instructions and 2 trial items. Ten different versions of the task were prepared: situations 1 and 2 were randomly assigned to each version. Versions were randomly distributed to respondents.

4.2.3 Procedure

For the secondary school respondents and the university students in the native Dutch and the learner groups, special sessions were organised in one of the language laboratories at the University of Nijmegen. The sessions for the secondary school respondents (4 in total, 2 for the native Dutch respondents and 2 for the learners of English) were conducted by the experimenter and an assistant. The sessions for the university respondents (2 for the native Dutch respondents and 2 for the learners of English) were conducted by the experimenter.

For the university students in the native English group, two sessions were organised during regular classes in a language laboratory at the University of Wolverhampton. The secondary school respondents in the native English group were recruited from two different secondary schools in Wolverhampton. For half of these respondents a session was organised in the language laboratory in the school itself during a regular class. The other group of respondents was recorded manually as no language laboratory was available. All sessions were conducted by the experimenter.

All respondents completed both the production task and the judgement task in one session. The learners, in addition, also took an oral proficiency test. Half of the

respondents first participated in the production task and afterwards in the judgement task, whereas for the other respondents the order was reversed. Before each task, respondents were given written instructions and some example items. In addition, they were given two trial items to complete before the actual task started.

In the production task, a time limit was imposed in that respondents were given half a minute to read each situation and were then asked to give their answers. The task took about 30 minutes to complete. In the judgement task, no time limit was imposed on respondents. This task took about 20 minutes to complete. The oral proficiency test took 21 minutes to complete.

4.3 Coding and preparation of data

All responses on the production task were transcribed orthographically. Data from the native English group were transcribed by the experimenter. Data from the learners of English were transcribed by two assistants and subsequently checked by the experimenter. Afterwards all responses were coded for request strategy (Table 2.3 in Chapter 2) and linguistic form of the request strategy and type and linguistic form of syntactic, lexical/phrasal modifiers in the head act and external modifiers in the remainder of the request utterance. Coding of the Dutch data was done by the experimenter and a co-experimenter (Le Pair, 1997). Coding of the native English and learner data was done by the experimenter. Coded data were processed in MsAccess and subsequently converted to SPSS. Data of the judgement task were processed by an assistant using an SPSS data-entry form designed for this purpose.

The oral proficiency test was evaluated and graded by the experimenter and an English lecturer of the department of Business Communication, University of Nijmegen. Respondents' scores were processed in SPSS.

Chapter 5

Requests: a quantitative analysis

5.1 Introduction

The discussion of the results of the production task will be subdivided into two separate chapters. In this first chapter the main focus will be on a quantitative analysis of the requests produced in the DCT. Primarily, it will be concerned with examining the use of request strategies across situation types and the modification of these request strategies in relation to design factors *power*, *social distance* and *context*. In chapter 6 the discussion will focus on a more qualitative analysis of the requests produced, which will involve an analysis of the linguistic means that respondents employed in formulating their requests. The present chapter will start with a brief overview of the results of the production task (5.2), followed by an analysis of request strategies in relation to the design factors Power, Social Distance and Context (Section 5.3). Section 5.4 deals with modification of request strategies in relation to situational variation. Section 5.5 will discuss an analysis in which request modification was examined in relation to request strategy. A summary and conclusion of the quantitative analysis of requests will be presented in Section 5.6.

Statistical analysis

Two types of statistical analyses of request data will be reported in this chapter, the analysis of request strategies and the analysis of request modification. With regard to the analysis of request strategies, a first analysis showed that the majority of requests were formulated with conventionally indirect strategies, i.e. strategies in which the speaker referred to one of the preconditions for requests and that direct strategies and hints occurred in small numbers. Although request strategies can be ordered on a scale of increasing indirectness (cf. Chapter 2), the variable 'request strategy' should be regarded as a nominal rather than an ordinal variable, as distances between categories of request strategies cannot be considered equal. Consequently, it was decided to analyse differences in the occurrence of strategies by means of chi-square analyses. As *imperatives*, *performatives*, *obligation statements*, *want statements* and *suggestions* occurred infrequently, it was decided to combine these categories in the broader category of *direct strategies*³. Furthermore, as the number of *hints* in the data was too low to draw any valid conclusions, it was decided to discard this category from further statistical analysis. Thus, the focus of the analysis of request strategies will be on differences in the use of *direct strategies* and the three categories of *conventional indirect strategies*. Apart from an overall analysis, the use of request strategies will be analysed in relation to situational variation, which means the discussion will focus on differences in the use of request

³ 'Direct' in the sense that the strategies are more direct than conventionally indirect strategies. Although the strategies subsumed under this category clearly differ with respect to directness level (see Chapter 2), they have, for the sake of clarity, all been subsumed under this relatively broad cover term.

strategies in relation to *power*, *social distance* and *context*. The analysis of request strategies included the following number of steps:

1. Chi-square tests were performed to examine if groups of respondents differed with respect to the use of four categories of request strategies: *direct* strategies, *non-obviousness* strategies, *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies.
2. A series of chi-square tests were performed with the three design factors, *power*, *social distance* and *context* and four categories of request strategies: *direct* strategies, *non-obviousness* strategies, *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies.
3. An additional series of chi-square tests were performed, similar to the ones in step two, but this time for groups of respondents (native English, nonnative English and native Dutch; secondary school versus university) separately.
4. A final series of chi-square tests were performed for each of the categories of request strategies separately.

For the sake of clarity, the discussion of these analyses will concentrate on the most marked differences in the use of request strategies. Three criteria were important in determining whether differences were to be considered 'marked'. The first criterion was the significance⁴ of chi-square. The discussion will be restricted to those analyses where chi-square was significant, in other words to those analyses which revealed an association between the use of request strategies and the independent variable under analysis. The second criterion was the value of Cramer's V, which is a measure of association between variables. The value of Cramer's V ranges between zero and 1, with $V \# .30$ indicating a weak association, $.30 \# V \# .50$ indicating a moderate association and $V \geq .50$ indicating a strong association between row and column variables. The value of Cramer's V will be used as an indication of the strength of the association between the variables in the analysis. Finally, the third criterion was the value of the adjusted standardized residual of individual frequencies⁵. The value of the adjusted standardized residual indicates whether a certain frequency is higher or lower than might be expected on the basis of row and column totals. In the analysis reported below, values of adjusted residuals higher than $|2.58|$, corresponding to a 99% confidence interval, were taken as an indication for a deviation of observed frequency from expected frequency.

Secondly, with regard to request modification, for all request utterances mean numbers of modifiers were calculated, which were subsequently analysed with repeated measures analyses with two between subject-factors: *language* (native English, nonnative English and native Dutch) and *level* (secondary school respondents and university respondents) and three within-subject factors: *power*, *social distance* and *contexts*. The analysis of request modification comprised of three steps:

1. An analysis of overall patterns of modification

⁴ The significance of all tests was evaluated at alpha levels of .05, .01 and .001.

⁵ The adjusted standardized residual is the residual for a cell (observed minus expected value) divided by an estimate of its standard error. The resulting standardized residual is expressed in standard deviation units above or below the mean. These residuals have a standard normal distribution with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1.

2. An analysis of different categories of modification, lexical, syntactic and external, separately in relation to situational variation.
3. An analysis of request modification in relation to request strategies.

The repeated measures analyses revealed a large number of significant effects. As the foremost aim in this chapter is to discover trends in modificational patterns in requests produced by different groups of respondents, the discussion of the statistical analyses will largely be restricted to a discussion of those effects that account for at least ten per cent of explained variance (i.e. O^2 (eta-squared⁶) > .10). The analyses will be discussed in the relevant sections below.

5.2 Overview

A total of 272 respondents took part in the production task, divided in three different groups: 59 native speakers of English (NE), 101 nonnative speakers of English (NNE) and 112 native speakers of Dutch (ND). The native English group consisted of 35 secondary school pupils (NE1) and 24 university students (NE2). The nonnative English group consisted of 55 secondary school pupils (NNE1) and 46 university students (NNE2). The native Dutch group consisted of 49 secondary school pupils (ND1) and 63 university students (ND2).

Following other studies into the use of request strategies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Trosborg, 1995), all request utterances produced by respondents were analysed for the occurrence of request strategies in the head act of the request, internal modification inside the head act and external modification in the remainder of the utterance. The head act of a request is defined as the minimal unit by which a request can be realized, in other words, the core of the request sequence. Head acts are generally embedded in larger sequences, which typically include so-called *external modifiers*, such as justifications or explanations for the request. In addition, head acts often include *internal modifiers*, syntactic or lexical downgraders, which also modify the impact of the request.

In example (1), the request sequence starts with two external modifiers. First the speaker has used a precommitment getter 'could I ask you a favour', which serves to secure precommitment before the request itself is made. This is followed by a justification for the request that is about to be made: 'I have to hand in this report tomorrow'.

- (1) *Could I ask you a favour? I have to hand in this report tomorrow. Could you perhaps read it tonight?*

These external modifiers are followed by what constitutes the head act (underlined in example 1), which contains the actual request strategy 'could you perhaps read it tonight'. The request strategy itself includes two internal modifiers: 'perhaps', which is a

⁶ Eta-squared is the proportion of the total variability in the dependent variable that is accounted for by variation in the independent variable. It is the ratio of the between groups sum of squares to the total sum of squares.

lexical/phrasal modifier and 'could (instead of present tense 'can'), which is a syntactic modifiers. Both modifiers mitigate the impositive force of the request strategy.

The responses produced in this study varied considerably in length. Some requests were relatively short, consisting of a single head act with internal modifiers only, such as examples (2a-b).

- (2) *homework*⁷
- a. *Kun je me **even** helpen met m'n wiskunde-sommen?*
('Can you just help me with my math sums?') (ND2)
- pensioner*
- b. ***Could** I have your seat, **please**?* (NE1)

Other responses were quite elaborate, because speakers produced one or several external modifiers either before or after the head act of the request such as in examples (3a-b):

- (3) *paper*
- c. *Sharon, look, are you really busy at the moment? I'm sorry to ask, but I've run out of paper and it's nearly lunchtime and, you know, I'm gonna have to go across the industrial estate to get some more. So, you wouldn't do it for us, would you? Could you do us a massive favour? Cheers.* (NE2)
- campaign*
- d. *John, could you finish the advertising campaign for me, will you? I've got another campaign with another client and this work needs to be done this week. Next time I'll do it for you.* (NNE2)

All responses were coded for request strategy and modifiers. The frequency distribution in Table 5.1 shows that the majority of requests were formulated by means of conventional indirect strategies (strategy 6), which are highly indirect and hence relatively safe request strategies. Three types of conventional indirect strategies were distinguished: strategies referring to the *ability* precondition (strategy 6.3), which accounted for roughly half of all request strategies used (55.2%), strategies referring to the *willingness* precondition (strategy 6.1), which accounted for about a third of all strategies used (31.0%) and finally strategies referring to the *non-obviousness* precondition (strategy 6.1), which were rare in the data (4.5%). Only about ten per cent of the requests collected in this study were formulated with *direct* strategies. Of these direct strategies *imperatives*, *performatives* and *obligation statements* were hardly used at all, none of these three strategies exceeding the one per cent mark. *Suggestions* (2.1%) and *want statements* (4.5%) were employed relatively more frequently than other direct strategies, although neither category exceeded the five per cent mark in any of the respondent groups. Finally, *hints*, the most indirect request strategies, were used in less than 1 per cent of all requests (0.7%).

⁷ The labels refer to the situations in the DCT (descriptions of the DCT situations can be found in Appendix A)

Table 5.1 Distribution of request strategies 1 - 7 in % for all groups of respondents

Strategy	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		Total	
	NE1* (N= 35)** (n= 405)***	NE2 (N= 24) (n= 269)	NNE1 (N= 55) (n= 622)	NNE2 (N= 46) (n= 525)	ND1 (N= 49) (n= 550)	ND2 (N= 63) (n= 689)	n	%
1 imperative	1.0	1.9	1.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	27	0.9
2 performative	0.7	2.6	1.6	-	0.7	0.3	26	0.8
3 obligation statement	0.2	0.4	1.6	-	0.9	0.3	19	0.6
4 want statement	3.5	4.1	5.9	5.3	3.3	2.6	125	4.1
5 suggestion	0.2	1.1	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.3	64	2.1
6.1 non-obviousness	6.7	3.0	11.1	5.3	0.4	0.7	139	4.5
6.2 willingness	25.2	30.1	21.5	22.1	43.1	40.6	949	31.0
6.3 ability	62.5	56.1	53.9	62.9	47.8	51.7	1689	55.2
7 hint	-	0.7	0.3	1.0	0.5	1.5	22	0.7

* NE1= native English pupils; NE2= native English students; NNE1= nonnative English pupils; NNE2= nonnative English students; ND1= native Dutch pupils; ND2= native Dutch students;

** N = number of respondents in each group

*** n= number of requests produced in each group

Although in all groups of respondents conventional indirect strategies were much the preferred means for making requests, minor variations were found within groups of respondents with respect to the use of *direct* strategies and the use of the three types of conventional *indirect* strategies (for the purpose of statistical analysis, the five categories of direct strategies were combined into one category and hints were excluded altogether). First of all, a first overall analysis revealed a weak association between choice of request strategy and group of respondents ($P^2(6, n = 3038) = 187.95, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .25$). The nonnative English respondents used relatively more direct strategies and more non-obviousness strategies than the other respondents, but fewer willingness strategies. The native Dutch respondents used relatively few direct strategies, non-obviousness strategies and ability strategies, but a higher proportion of willingness strategies. Finally, the native English respondents used a relatively high proportion of ability strategies (full details of the chi-square analysis have been included in Appendix B, Table 1).

As for differences within each 'language' group, it turned out that in the native English and in the nonnative English group, the secondary school respondents differed from the university respondents in their choice of request strategies (NE: $P^2(3, n = 672) = 10.92, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .13$; NNE $P^2(3, n = 1140) = 20.17, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .13$; ND $P^2(3, n = 1226) = 5.40, p = .15$, Cramer's $V = .07$). Admittedly, however, the association between choice of strategy and group of respondents in the native English group and the nonnative English was not particularly strong (Cramer's $V < .3$). In the native English group, none of the differences in proportions of strategies were very substantial (all adj. res $< |2.58|$, in other words, the requestive behaviour of the

secondary school respondents was quite similar to that of the university respondents. In the nonnative English group, the secondary school respondents used relatively more non-obviousness strategies than the university respondents, but relatively fewer ability strategies. (Full details of the chi-square analyses can be found in Appendix B, Table 2(a-c)).

Other request studies have reported similar findings with respect to the preferred use of conventionally indirect strategies for formulating requests, although preferences have been found to vary across languages (cf. e.g., Blum-Kulka (1989) for Australian English, Argentinian Spanish, Hebrew and Canadian French; Faerch & Kasper (1989) for native speakers of German, Danish and English and learners of German and English; Le Pair (1997) for native speakers and learners of Spanish; Trosborg (1995) for native speakers of Danish and English and learners of English). Conventional indirect strategies, as was argued before, are highly indirect and hence relatively safe request strategies and can as such almost be regarded as routine formulae for making requests. It is not surprising that, not unlike in other request studies, the majority of requests produced in the present study were also formulated by means of conventionally indirect strategies and that direct strategies and nonconventionally indirect strategies, i.e. hints occurred infrequently.

With regard to request modification, respondents used an average of four to five modifiers per requests, with the nonnative English speakers and the Dutch native speakers using slightly fewer than the native English speakers (Table 5.2). In addition, the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents seem to have favoured the use of external modifiers over syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers. They tended to include an average of one lexical/phrasal and one syntactic modifier, but two external modifiers per request. The native English respondents generally used more syntactic modifiers than the other two groups and more lexical/phrasal modifiers than the nonnative English respondents in particular.

Table 5.2 Average number of modifiers per request for all groups of respondents (standard deviations between brackets)

modifier	Native English		Nonnative English		Native Dutch	
	NE1 0 (SD)	NE2 0 (SD)	NNE1 0 (SD)	NNE2 0 (SD)	ND1 0 (SD)	ND2 0 (SD)
syntactic	1.83 (0.95)	2.40 (0.65)	0.89 (0.61)	1.29 (0.67)	0.97 (0.53)	0.93 (0.32)
lexical/phrasal	1.02 (0.44)	0.91 (0.33)	0.59 (0.32)	0.65 (0.32)	0.93 (0.28)	0.99 (0.33)
external	1.74 (0.84)	2.26 (0.80)	2.06 (0.78)	1.90 (0.53)	2.12 (0.70)	1.74 (0.50)
total	4.59 (1.74)	5.56 (1.21)	3.54 (1.28)	3.85 (1.16)	4.02 (1.18)	3.65 (0.81)

Previous research has shown that modification, either internally or externally, of request strategies can be considered the default. Learners have been found to differ from native speakers in the way they modify their requests. Learners have been found to use less

internal (syntactic or lexical/phrasal) modification than native speakers (Kasper, 1981; Trosborg, 1995), but also more internal modification than native speakers (Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987) and, in addition, either less external modification (Trosborg, 1995) or, more commonly, more external modification than native speakers (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Edmondson & House, 1991; Faerch & Kasper, 1989). At an overall level, results of the present study with respect to the use of request modification seem only partly in agreement with findings from previous research. The nonnative speakers of English seem to have underused internal modification somewhat, but there is no evidence that they overused external modifiers. A more detailed analysis of internal and external request modification will be discussed in later sections.

So far the overall picture that emerges from the request data is that respondents displayed an overwhelming preference for conventional indirect strategies in formulating their requests and that they used both internal and external modification to modify the impact of these requests. The next question to be answered is to what extent respondents varied their requests relative to situational variation in the request contexts, not just in terms of overall request strategies, for which variation turned out to be limited, but also in terms of subcategories of conventional indirect strategies and, more importantly, request modification. First, the next section will discuss if and how respondents varied their request strategies relative to variations in power, social distance and context in the situations of the production task. Secondly, section 5.4 will discuss whether situational variation in contexts was found to be reflected in request modification. Finally, section 5.5 will discuss request modification of categories of request strategies.

5.3 Situational variation in request behaviour

The situations for which respondents formulated requests were systematically varied on the following three dimensions: power (authority relation between speaker and addressee), social distance (level of familiarity between speaker and addressee) and context (setting of the request). This section will discuss if, and how, respondents varied their choice of request strategy relative to variations in power, social distance and context in the situations. The discussion below will first concentrate on overall differences in the use of direct strategies and conventional indirect strategies in the different situation types. Secondly, this section will discuss differences in the use of request strategies for groups of respondents. Finally, this section will discuss cross-cultural differences between groups of respondents for individual categories of request strategies.

The chi-square analyses revealed that differences between secondary school respondents and university respondents in each of the groups with respect to situational variation in choice of request strategy were marginal. In other words, even though differences were found earlier in terms of overall strategy use, these were not reflected in the way secondary school respondents and university respondents varied their choice of strategy across the different situations. The chi-square analysis for design factor *power* revealed no significant differences between secondary school respondents and university

respondents. The analysis for design factor *social distance* revealed some significant differences between secondary school respondents and university respondents, none of which were very substantial though (adj. res. < |2.58|). However, chi-square analyses for design factor *context* did reveal significant differences between secondary school respondents and university respondents. Details of differences between these two groups of respondents will be dealt with in the relevant section on context below.

5.3.1 Power

In the DCT three different types of role relationships between speaker and hearer were operationalized. In four situations (P1) the hearer was in a position of (relative) authority vis-à-vis the speaker ('low speaker authority'). In four other situations (P2) the speaker and hearer were status equals. In the remaining four situations (P3) the speaker was in a position of authority with respect to the hearer ('high speaker authority'). The assumption was that respondents would vary their choice of strategy relative to the degree of authority of the speaker and hearer in the situations. Respondents were expected to use a relatively high proportion of indirect strategies in low speaker authority situations, and, conversely, a relatively high proportion of *direct* strategies in high speaker authority situations. The expectation was that the status equal situations would occupy a midway position between these two extremes.

Table 5.3 summarizes the results of the use of request strategies in the three situation types for all respondents (full details of the P^2 analyses for power have been included in Table 3(a-d) in Appendix B). In Table 5.3 frequencies and column percentages for the 4 categories of request strategies are shown. The chi-square analysis for power was significant, with Cramer's V indicating a weak association between power and the use of request strategies.

Table 5.3 Use of request strategies in different dimensions of Power

request strategy	power							
	P1 low speaker authority		P2 status equal		P3 high speaker authority		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
direct	75	7.4%	65	6.6%	121	11.6%	261	8.6%
non-obviousness	44	4.4%	32	3.2%	63	6.1%	139	4.6%
willingness	175	17.3%	401	40.6%	373	35.9%	949	31.2%
ability	717	70.9%	490	49.6%	482	46.4%	1689	55.6%
Total	1011	100.0%	988	100.0%	1039	100.0%	3038	100.0%

P^2 (6, $n = 3038$) = 189.15, $p < .001$; Cramer's V = .18

Table 5.2 shows that the most noticeable variation in the use of strategies occurred in the low speaker authority situations, where respondents used a relatively high proportion of *ability* strategies compared to the status equal situations or high speaker authority situations (P1: 70.9%; adj. res.: 12.0; P2: 49.6%; adj. res. -4.6 and P3: 35.9%; adj. res.: -7.4). In addition, respondents also used a relatively low proportion of *willingness* strategies in low speaker authority situations (P1: 17.3%; adj. res.: -11.7; P2: 40.6%; adj. res.: 7.7 and P3: 35.9%; adj. res.: 4.0). In high speaker situations respondents used a relatively higher proportion of *direct* strategies than in other situations (P3: 11.6%; adj. res. 4.3). In other words, if respondents used *direct* strategies at all, they were most likely to do so in those situations where the speaker had some degree of authority over the addressee. Finally, in the status equal situations, respondents used relatively more *willingness* strategies than in the other two situation types (P2: 40.6%; adj. res. 7.7), but comparatively fewer *ability* strategies (P2: 49.6%; adj. res. -4.6).

In summary, the results show that, to some extent at least, respondents varied their request strategies in the predicted way. Although, admittedly, *ability* strategies were used extensively in all situations, respondents used a higher proportion of these strategies in low speaker authority situations in particular, in other words, in those requests where the addressee occupied a position of authority. In the high speaker authority situations they generally used a lower proportion of indirect *ability* strategies, and, in addition, a higher proportion of *direct* strategies. This suggests that they formulated relatively more direct requests in situations in which the speaker occupied a position of authority vis-à-vis the addressee of the request. It is difficult to determine to what extent status equal situations occupy the predicted midpoint position between the two other situation types. Respondents used a relatively high percentage of willingness strategies, which can be considered as slightly less direct strategies than ability strategies. All that can be concluded so far is that requests addressed at status equal addressees were more characteristically formulated by means of strategies in which the requester queried the addressee's willingness, rather than ability.

A second series of chi-square analyses was performed to examine both differences in strategy use by native English, nonnative English and native Dutch respondents, and differences in strategy use between secondary school respondents and university respondents. As the category of non-obviousness strategies was too small for individual groups of respondents, this category was excluded from further analyses. All subsequent analyses were carried out with the three remaining categories: direct strategies, willingness strategies and ability strategies. The analyses revealed that the secondary school respondents did not differ significantly from the university respondents in their choice of request strategies across the three situation types. However, differences were found with respect to the way the native English, the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents had varied their strategies. Results for these three groups have been summarized in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Use of request strategies in different dimensions of Power for native English, nonnative English and native Dutch respondents

request strategy	Native English				Nonnative English				Native Dutch				
	power				power				power				
	P1	P2	P3	Total	P1	P2	P3	Total	P1	P2	P3	Total	
direct	Count	13	11	26	50	34	37	57	128	28	17	38	83
	% within P	6.0	5.3	12.2	7.8	9.8	10.6	16.3	12.3	6.9	4.3	9.2	6.8
willing	Count	38	76	69	183	53	109	88	250	84	216	216	516
	% within P	17.7	36.4	32.4	28.7	15.3	31.3	25.2	24.0	20.7	54.1	52.2	42.3
ability	Count	164	122	118	404	259	202	204	665	294	166	160	620
	% within P	76.3	58.4	55.4	63.4	74.9	58.0	58.5	63.8	72.4	41.6	38.6	50.9
Total	Count	215	209	213	637	346	348	349	1043	406	399	414	1219
	% within P	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		P ² (4, n = 637) = 30.81, p < .001, Cramer's V = .16				P ² (4, n = 1043) = 36.02, p < .001, Cramer's V = .13				P ² (4, n = 1219) = 130.70, p < .001, Cramer's V = .23			

In overall terms, the pattern as described above applied to each of the three groups. Chi-square tests were significant for all three groups, but the association between power and choice of strategy was strongest for the native Dutch group. Full details of the chi-square analyses can be found in Appendix B, Table 3(b-d).

First of all, the native Dutch respondents seem to have varied their choice of request strategy most relative to degree of authority of the speaker. They used relatively high proportions of *ability* strategies in situations where the speaker had little authority (P1), and relatively low proportions of *ability* strategies in situations where the speaker had more authority (P1: NE: 76.3%; adj. res.: 4.8, NNE: 74.9%; adj. res.: 5.3; ND: 72.4%; adj. res. 10.6 vs P3: NE: 55.4%; adj. res.: -3.0; NNE: 58.5%; adj. res.: -2.5; ND: 38.6%; adj. res.: -6.1). In other words, although all respondents tended to be relatively indirect in low speaker authority situations, this applied to the native Dutch respondents in particular. Secondly, in all groups of respondents, *willingness* strategies were used less frequently in low speaker authority situations than in the other situations, the difference being most pronounced in, again, the native Dutch group (NE: P1: 17.7%; adj. res.: -4.4; NNE: P1: 15.3%; adj. res.: -4.6; ND: P1: 20.7%; adj. res.: -10.8).

As was noted earlier, in the high speaker authority situations respondents used relatively high proportions of *direct* strategies. Upon closer inspection, this trend was slightly more noticeable in the native English and nonnative English group than in the native Dutch group (NE: P3: 12.2%; adj. res.: 2.9; NNE: P3: 16.3%; adj. res.: 2.8; ND: P3: 9.2%; adj. res. 2.4).

With regard to the status equal situations, the most marked differences were found in the native Dutch group. All respondents used relatively high proportions of *willingness* strategies in these situations, but the effect was most pronounced in the native Dutch group (NE: P2: 36.4%; adj. res.: 3.0; NNE: P2: 31.3%; adj. res.: 3.9; ND: P2: 54.1%;

adj. res.: 5.8). Likewise, the native Dutch group also used relatively fewer *ability* strategies in these situations than the other two groups of respondents (NE: P2: 58.4%; adj. res.: -1.8; NNE: P2: 58.0%; adj. res.: -2.7; ND: P2: 41.6%; adj. res.: -4.5). In other words, it turned out that the distribution of strategies in status equal situations was largely the same for all groups of respondents, but that differences in use of strategies was most pronounced for the native Dutch group.

To conclude, the results suggest that as far as the variable power is concerned respondents did, to some extent at least, adjust the level of directness in the predicted way. They tended to use relatively high proportions of *ability* strategies (i.e. the most indirect strategies) in low speaker authority situations. In addition, respondents also tended to use relatively high proportions of *direct* strategies in high speaker authority situations, in other words in those situations where the speaker was in a position of authority with respect to the addressee. The results also indicate that this pattern was largely the same for all three groups of respondents, but that it was most obvious in the native Dutch group. With respect to the distribution of strategies in status equal situations, it can be concluded that these were generally characterized by relatively high proportions of willingness strategies compared to the other two situation types. Overall, the nonnative English respondents seemed to have varied their request strategies in much the same way as the native English respondents. This implies that they were quite successful in interpreting authority relations between speaker and addressee in the foreign language context and in adjusting their request strategies accordingly.

5.3.2 Social distance

The second factor that is commonly believed to have an influence on respondents' choice of request strategy is social distance, or degree of familiarity, between speaker and addressee. Half of the situations (6) in the DCT involved requests between a speaker and addressee who knew each other ('acquainted' situations: S1), whereas the other half involved requests between a speaker and addressee who had never met before ('unacquainted' situations: S2). The assumption was that respondents would use a higher proportion of indirect strategies in requests in the unacquainted situations and a higher proportion of *direct* strategies in requests in the acquainted situations. Analogous to the analysis of power discussed above, a series of chi-square analyses was performed to analyse the association between social distance and the use of request strategies (full details of the P^2 tests for social distance can be found in Table 4(a-d) in Appendix B).

Table 5.5 displays the results of the overall analysis for all respondents. The chi-square analysis for social distance was significant, with Cramer's V indicating a weak association between social distance and the use of request strategies. The most noticeable differences between the situation types could be observed in the categories of *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies and to a lesser extent in the categories *direct* strategies and *non-obviousness* strategies. Contrary to assumptions, the analysis revealed that respondents used fewer *ability* strategies in the unacquainted situations than in the acquainted situations (S1: 62.5%, adj. res.: 7.7; S2: 48.7%, adj. res.: -7.7). This

suggests that respondents were less indirect in requests to strangers than in those to addressees they were supposed to know. Respondents used a relatively low proportion of *direct* strategies in requests to strangers, which was more in line with what had been predicted (S1: 10.6%, adj. res. 4.0; S2: 6.5%; adj. res.: -4.0). Furthermore, it also turned out that respondents used a relatively high proportion of *willingness* strategies in requests to strangers (S1: 21.4%, adj. res.: -11.8; S2: 41.2%; adj. res.: 11.8).

Table 5.5 Use of request strategies in different dimensions of social distance

request strategy	social distance				Total	
	acquainted S1		unacquainted S2			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
direct	162	10.6%	99	6.5%	261	8.6%
non-obviousness	84	5.5%	55	3.6%	139	4.6%
willingness	325	21.4%	624	41.2%	949	31.2%
ability	951	62.5%	738	48.7%	1689	55.6%
Total	1522	100.0%	1516	100.0%	3038	100.0%

$P^2(3, n = 3038) = 142.31, p < .001; \text{Cramer's } V = .22$

It can be concluded that, contrary to assumptions, respondents were not highly indirect in formulating requests directed at strangers. Respondents used higher proportions of highly indirect ability strategies in requests to addressees they knew than in requests to addressees they did not know. Admittedly, however, respondents also used a relatively high proportion of direct strategies in acquainted situations, which suggests that speakers are more likely to formulate a direct request when they know the addressee. The requests in the unacquainted situations were characterized by a high degree of willingness strategies in particular.

Analogous to the analysis for power a second series of chi-square analyses was performed to examine differences in strategy use for different groups of respondents. Again, the analyses were only carried out with the three remaining categories of request strategies. The analyses revealed that the secondary school respondents did not differ significantly from the university respondents in their choice of request strategies across the three situation types. However, differences were found with respect to the way the native English, the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents had varied their strategy. The analyses for the three groups of respondents revealed that the pattern as described above was generally the same in each group. Chi-square tests for social distance were significant for all three groups, but the association between social distance and choice of strategy was strongest for the native English and the nonnative English respondents.

Table 5.6 summarizes the results of the chi-square tests for social distance for all three groups. The most noticeable trend is that respondents in all three groups tended to be relatively direct in requests to strangers, as the proportion of *ability* strategies in the unacquainted situations was generally lower than in the acquainted situations. This trend

was most pronounced in the native English group and least so in the native Dutch group (NE: S2: 51.9%, adj. res.: -6.2; NNE: S2: 56.7%, adj. res.: -4.9; ND: S2: 44.4%, adj. res.: -4.5). All three groups of respondents produced relatively high proportions of *willingness* strategies in unacquainted situations (NE: S2: 41.7%, adj. res. 7.3; NNE; S2: 33.8%, adj. res.: 7.6 and ND: S2: 51.2%, adj. res.: 6.2). Both the nonnative English respondents and the native Dutch respondents produced slightly more *direct* strategies in the acquainted situations than in the unacquainted situations, which was more in line with what had been predicted (NNE: S1: 15.1%, adj. res.: 2.7; ND: S1: 9.1%, adj. res.: 3.2). In the native English group no difference could be observed between the two situation types in this respect.

Table 5.6 Use of request strategies in different dimensions of social distance for native English, nonnative English and native Dutch respondents

request strategy	Native English			Nonnative English			Native Dutch			
	social distance		Total	social distance		Total	social distance		Total	
	S1	S2		S1	S2		S1	S2		
direct	Count	29	21	50	77	51	128	56	27	83
	% within S	9.3	6.5	7.8	15.1	9.6	12.3	9.1	4.5	6.8
willing	Count	48	135	183	70	180	250	207	309	516
	% within S	15.3	41.7	28.7	13.7	33.8	24.0	33.7	51.2	42.3
ability	Count	236	168	404	363	302	665	352	268	620
	% within S	75.4	51.9	63.4	71.2	56.7	63.8	57.2	44.4	50.9
Total	Count	313	324	637	510	533	1043	615	604	1219
	% within S	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		P ² (2, n = 637) = 53.91, p < .001, Cramer's V = .29			P ² (2, n = 1043) = 58.80, p < .001, Cramer's V = .24			P ² (2, n = 1219) = 41.58, p < .001, Cramer's V = .19		

In conclusion, the results suggest that level of familiarity influenced respondents in their choice of strategy, albeit not entirely in line with the assumptions. Contrary to what had been assumed, all three groups of respondents tended to use fewer *ability* strategies in the unacquainted situations than in the acquainted situations. All three groups of respondents used relatively high proportions of *willingness* strategies in requests to strangers. Since *willingness* strategies can be regarded as slightly more direct than *ability* strategies, this, too, suggests that respondents, were not, as expected, highly indirect in formulating requests to strangers in particular. If we look at cross-cultural differences between the three groups of respondents, it turns out that the distribution of strategies is similar for all respondents, but that the association between social distance and choice of strategy is stronger for the native English and the nonnative English groups than for the native Dutch group.

5.3.3 Context

A third factor incorporated in the design of the DCT was context. Six of the twelve requests occurred in non-institutional contexts (C1), whereas the other six requests were set in institutional contexts (C2). The institutional contexts all concerned requests that were work-related, such as a request to a colleague about working overtime or about preparing a presentation. The non-institutional contexts involved everyday requests, such as, for example, a request between members of a family to tidy up a room. The assumption was that in the institutional contexts, which tend to be characterized by a higher level of formality than non-institutional contexts, respondents would use more indirect strategies and fewer *direct* strategies.

The results of the chi-square analysis for context are summarized in Table 5.7 (full details of the P^2 tests can be found in Table 5(a-d) in Appendix B). Generally speaking, the analysis revealed the association between *context* and use of strategy was less strong than in the case of *power* and *social distance*. Although the chi-square analysis for context was significant, differences between relative frequencies of strategies were smaller than for *power* and *social distance*.

Table 5.7 Use of request strategies in institutional and non-institutional contexts

request strategy	Context				Total	
	non-institutional C1		institutional C2			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
direct	102	6.8%	159	10.3%	261	8.6%
non-obviousness	75	5.0%	64	4.1%	139	4.6%
willingness	530	35.5%	419	27.1%	949	31.2%
ability	787	52.7%	902	58.4%	1689	55.6%
Total	1494	100.0%	1544	100.0%	3038	100.0%

P^2 (3, $n = 3038$) = 33.32, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .11$

Respondents produced more *ability* strategies in institutional contexts than in non-institutional contexts (C1: 52.7%, adj. res. -3.2; C2: 58.4%, adj. res.: 3.2). In addition, respondents also produced fewer *willingness* strategies in institutional contexts (C1: 35.5%, adj. res.: 5.0; C2: 27.1%, adj. res.: -5.0). This suggests that respondents were slightly more indirect in formulating work-related requests than in formulating normal requests. What is surprising, however, is that they also used more *direct* strategies in institutional requests (C1: 6.8%, adj. res. -3.4; C2: 10.3%, adj. res.: 3.4), which suggests the exact opposite. In other words, the results do not present conclusive evidence as to whether respondents were generally more direct or indirect in formulating work-related requests.

In summary, there is a weak association between context and request strategy, but respondents only partly adjusted their use of strategies to the type of context in the

predicted way. They used relatively more indirect strategies in institutional requests, but at the same time also produced a higher proportion of *direct* strategies.

Analogous to the analyses for *power* and *social distance*, a second series of chi-square analyses were performed for groups of respondents. The analyses revealed differences for the three 'language' groups, but also differences between secondary school respondents and university respondents. With respect to cross-cultural differences, chi-square tests were significant for the native English and the nonnative English group, but not for the native Dutch group (ND: context $P^2(2, n = 1219) = 1.54$, $p = .46$, Cramer's $V = .04$). In the native Dutch group there was little variation between the two contexts.

Table 5.8 summarizes the results of the chi-square tests for the two remaining groups, the native English and the nonnative English respondents. The analysis showed that the more substantial differences can be found in the nonnative English group, who seem to have varied their strategies most between the two contexts. First of all, it is the nonnative English group in particular that used more *direct* strategies in institutional contexts (NNE: C2: 16.4%, adj. res. 4.1). In the native English group the difference between the two contexts was not very pronounced. Secondly, although both native English and nonnative English respondents used fewer *willingness* strategies in institutional contexts than in non-institutional contexts, the difference was most pronounced for the nonnative English group (NE: C2: 22.1%, adj. res. -3.8; NNE: C2: 17.5%, adj. res. -4.9). This implies that both native English and nonnative English respondents tended to avoid *willingness* strategies in institutional contexts in particular.

Table 5.8 Use of request strategies in institutional and non-institutional contexts for native English and nonnative English respondents

request strategy	Native English			Nonnative English			
	context		Total	context		Total	
	non-institutional C1	institutional C2		non-institutional C1	institutional C2		
direct	Count	20	30	50	41	87	128
	% within C	6.4%	9.2%	7.8%	8.0%	16.4%	12.3%
willing	Count	111	72	183	157	93	250
	% within C	35.7%	22.1%	28.7%	30.6%	17.5%	24.0%
ability	Count	180	224	404	315	350	665
	% within C	57.9%	68.7%	63.4%	61.4%	66.0%	63.8%
Total	Count	311	326	637	513	530	1043
	% within C	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
		$P^2(2, n = 637) = 14.76$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .15$			$P^2(2, n = 1043) = 34.49$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .18$		

Finally, if we look at the use of *ability* strategies, it turns out that the native English respondents, but not the nonnative English respondents, tended to use more *ability*

strategies in the institutional contexts (NE: C2: 68.7%, adj. res.2.8). This suggests that they were moderately more indirect in making work-related requests than in making everyday requests.

As was discussed earlier, *context* was the only design factor for which any significant differences were found between secondary school pupils and university students. Chi-square analyses revealed that for both the native English and the nonnative English group there were significant differences between pupils and students, but only for institutional contexts (NE: $P^2(2, n = 326) = 7.54, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .15$; NNE: $P^2(2, n = 530) = 8.10, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .12$). Differences between pupils and students were not very substantial though. The native English pupils produced slightly more *ability* strategies in institutional contexts than the students (NE pupils: 74.1%; adj. res.: 2.6; NE students: 60.5%; adj. res.: -2.6). In other words, the pupils were slightly more indirect in formulating work-related requests than the students. In the case of the nonnative English respondents the pupils used more *direct* strategies to formulate work-related requests than the students (NNE pupils 20.7%; adj. res.: 2.8; NNE students 11.6%; adj. res.: -2.8). So, in this case the pupils were more direct in institutional contexts than the students.

In summary, it can be concluded that the relation between context and use of request strategies was different for each of the three groups of respondents. The native Dutch respondents varied their strategies only marginally. The nonnative English respondents appear to have been relatively direct in institutional contexts, as they produced more *direct* strategies in formulating work-related requests. A closer analysis of the nonnative English group indicates that this may have been due to the fact that the secondary school pupils in this group, the less advanced learners, produced more *direct* strategies in institutional contexts. Finally, the native English respondents tended to be fairly indirect in institutional contexts, as they used both a relatively high proportion of *ability* strategies in addition to a low proportion of *willingness* strategies. As far as the distribution of strategies is concerned the nonnative English group differed from both other groups. There is some evidence that, at least as far as choice of strategy is concerned, the nonnative English respondents formulated more direct requests in institutional contexts than the native English respondents.

5.3.4 Cross-cultural differences at the level of individual request strategies

So far, the analysis of request strategies has been focussed on analysing the patterns of distribution of request strategies for each of the three groups separately, rather than on testing differences between the groups. As there was some evidence that the patterns of distribution were slightly different for the three groups of respondents, the discussion will now focus on analysing cross-cultural differences for isolated categories of request strategies. Consequently, the perspective in this section is slightly different from that in the previous section. Whereas the previous analyses were concerned with looking at the use of strategies in relation to each other, the focus will now be on differences between groups of respondents with respect to the way a particular strategy was used in relation to power, social distance and context. To this purpose an additional series of chi-square

analyses were carried out for the three categories of request strategies, which revealed some significant differences between the three groups of respondents for *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies only. The discussion below will concentrate on the most substantial significant differences. Full details of the chi-square analyses have been included in Appendix C, Tables 1(a-c).

willingness strategies

The analysis for willingness revealed that chi-square was significant for both *social distance* and *context*, but not for *power* (social distance $P^2(2, n = 949) = 17.45, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .14$; context $P^2(2, n = 949) = 12.00, p < .01$, Cramer's $V = .11$; power $P^2(2, n = 949) = 5.07, p = .28$, Cramer's $V = .05$). The analysis for *social distance* revealed that the native Dutch respondents used a relatively low proportion of *willingness* strategies in the unacquainted situations compared to native English respondents and nonnative English respondents (NE: 73.8% adj. res.: 2.5; NNE 72.0%; adj. res.: -2.4 vs. ND: 59.9%; adj. res. -4.2). With respect to the distribution of strategies in the different types of contexts, it turned out that the native Dutch respondents used comparatively more *willingness* strategies in institutional contexts than the nonnative English respondents in particular (NE: C2: 39.3%, adj. res.: -1.5; NNE: C2: 37.2%, adj. res.: -2.6; ND: C2: 49.2%, adj. res. 3.4).

ability strategies

Finally, chi-square analyses for *ability* strategies revealed significant cross-cultural differences between groups of respondents for *power*, but not for *social distance* or *context*. Although chi-square for *power* was significant, Cramer's V was fairly low, indicating that the association between power and language was not very strong (power $P^2(4, n = 1689) = 10.30, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .056$; social $P^2(2, n = 1689) = 1.59, p = .45$, Cramer's $V = .03$; context $P^2(2, n = 1689) = .90, p = .64$, Cramer's $V = .02$). The only significant difference of any kind, in fact, concerned the use of *ability* strategies in low speaker authority situations. It was in these situations in particular that the native Dutch respondents used a relatively high proportion of *ability* strategies, in other words more indirect strategies, compared to the native English and the nonnative English respondents in particular (NE: P1: 40.6%, adj. res.: -.9; NNE: P1: 38.9%, adj. res. -2.3; ND: P1: 47.4%, adj. res. 3.1).

5.3.5 Conclusion

The majority of requests produced in the present study were formulated by means of conventionally indirect strategies, and more in particular by means of either *willingness* strategies or *ability* strategies, both of which constitute highly indirect and hence safe strategies. Although respondents clearly preferred to use conventionally indirect strategies across all situation types, the results nevertheless suggest that they did to some extent vary their choice of strategy relative to situational and contextual variation. Of the three design factors, *power* appeared to be the most influential factor in determining

respondents' choice of strategy. Respondents in all three groups tended to adjust their choice of strategy according to the degree of authority of the speaker in the situation. In those situations where the speaker occupied a position of authority, respondents produced fewer indirect requests. Conversely, in those situations where the addressee occupied a position of authority respondents produced relatively more indirect strategies. Although this pattern was similar for all three groups of respondents, it was most noticeable in the native Dutch group. The analysis of individual strategies revealed that in the low speaker authority situations in particular, the native Dutch respondents used a higher proportion of highly indirect *ability* strategies than the other two groups. The pattern for the status equal situations was less unequivocal than for the other two situation types, although the results suggest that in some respects these situations occupy a midpoint position between the low and high speaker authority situations.

Although respondents adjusted their request strategies according to the degree of social distance between speaker and addressee, they tended to do so in the opposite direction from what had been assumed. Respondents in all three groups used fewer indirect strategies in the unacquainted situations than in the acquainted situations, which suggests that they were relatively direct in formulating requests to strangers. No marked differences between the three groups of respondents could be observed, although the association between social distance and request strategy was stronger for the native English respondents and the nonnative English respondents than for the native Dutch respondents.

Of the design factors, contextual variation had the least effect on choice of strategy, especially in the native Dutch group, where respondents did not vary strategies between the two types of contexts at all. The native English respondents produced relatively high proportions of *ability* strategies in institutional contexts, which means they were relatively indirect when formulating work-related requests. The nonnative English respondents, however, tended to produce fairly direct requests in institutional contexts. This suggests that they may have perhaps misjudged the formality of these contexts. In overall terms, however, it appears the nonnative English respondents varied their choice of request strategies in ways similar to those of the native English respondents.

5.4 Internal and external modification of requests

When formulating requests, speakers have a variety of linguistic means at their disposal to modify the impositive force of these requests. Speakers can reduce or enhance the impact of requests by choosing more indirect or less indirect strategies. In addition, they can vary the impact of a request by modifying the request strategy either internally or externally. Internal modifiers are modifiers that function at the level of the request strategy itself, such as, for instance, English politeness marker 'please' or Dutch minimizer 'een beetje'. External modifiers, on the other hand, operate at the level of the request utterance as a whole, and are as such not an integral part of the request strategy. Degree of request modification, just like choice of request strategy, is dependent on situational and contextual variation. In other words, speakers will modify their requests

more or less elaborately relative to, for example, degree of familiarity between interlocutors.

The discussion of internal and external modification of the requests produced in the present study will start with an overall analysis of modification. Subsequently, the three different categories of modifiers, syntactic, lexical and external, will be analysed separately. The main aim will be to examine to what extent the native English, nonnative English and native Dutch respondents modified their requests differently depending on variations in *power*, *social distance* and *context*. Subsequently, the next section (5.5) will focus on an analysis of request modification in relation to request strategy.

Statistical analysis

To examine differences in request modification, mean numbers of internal and external modifiers were calculated for all requests. Subsequently repeated measures analyses were performed with *language* (native English, nonnative English and native Dutch) and *level* (secondary school versus university) as between-subject factors and *power*, *social distance* and *context* as within-subject factors. The repeated measures analyses revealed a large number of significant effects. As the main aim of this chapter is to examine patterns of modification, the discussion of the statistical analyses will largely be restricted to a discussion of those effects that account for at least ten per cent of explained variance (i.e. O^2 (eta-squared) $> .10$). Full details of the repeated measures analyses for request modification are included in Appendix D.

5.4.1 Overall use of modifiers

With respect to overall use of modification (see Table 5.2), the analysis revealed a significant interaction between *language* and *level*, which implies that secondary school respondents and university respondents in the native English, the nonnative English and the native Dutch group modified their requests differently ($F(2, 266) = 5.89$; $p < .01$; $O^2 = .04$). However, tests of simple main effects revealed that the difference between secondary school respondents and university respondents was not significant in any of the groups ($p > .05$). This suggests that there was little variation between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents in the way they modified their requests. Moreover, since the interaction between *language* and *level* accounted for less than 5% of the explained variance ($O^2 = .04$), it was decided to exclude the factor *level* from further analysis.

A subsequent repeated measures analysis revealed a large number of significant interaction effects between *language*, *type of modifier* and all design factors (P, S, C). For the sake of clarity, this section will, first of all, start with a discussion of overall modification of requests relative to situational variation. More detailed interaction effects between *power*, *social distance* and *context* will be discussed in the sections below, which will discuss variation in use of different categories of modifiers, i.e. lexical, syntactic and external modifiers separately.

The most substantial effects, in terms of percentages of explained variance, concerned the interaction between *language* and *type of modifier* and, in addition, the interaction between power and type of modifier. First of all, it turned out that respondents differed in the extent to which they used syntactic, lexical and external modifiers in their requests (modifier*language: Wilks'8 = .63, $F(4, 536) = 34.67$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .21$; Table 1, Appendix D). Figure 5.1 displays the modificational pattern for each group.

As becomes clear from the plot, most variation concerned the use of syntactic modifiers, with differences in use of lexical and external modifiers being less pronounced. An analysis of the means on the basis of confidence intervals showed that the

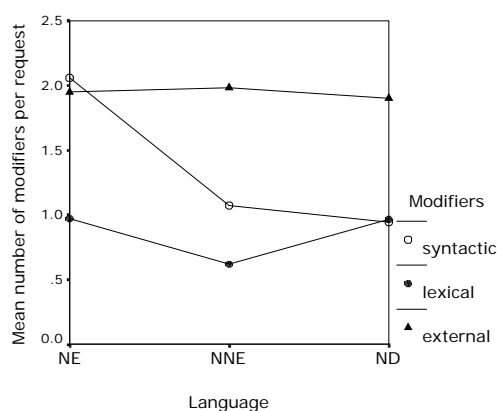


Figure 5.1 Syntactic, lexical and external modification for native English, nonnative English and native Dutch respondents

native English respondents used more syntactic modifiers than the nonnative English respondents and the native Dutch respondents. The requests produced by the native English group generally included around two external and two syntactic modifiers, but only one lexical/phrasal modifier. The nonnative English respondents on average included two external modifiers in their requests, but fewer syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers than the native English respondents. Finally, the native Dutch respondents produced two external modifiers per request, but generally only one syntactic and one lexical/phrasal modifier per request.

In terms of total modification, the native English respondents modified their requests more than the other respondents, especially with respect to syntactic modification. Although the nonnative English respondents used more syntactic than lexical/phrasal modifiers, as did the native English respondents, they still generally included fewer of both. This suggests that the nonnative English respondents may have 'undermodified' their requests slightly according to English standards.

In addition, the analysis showed that variations in use of modifiers were highly dependent on situational variation. Interactions between type of modifier and the design factors power, context and social distance were all significant, but only the interaction between type of modifier and power accounted for over 10% of explained variance (power*modifier: Wilks'8 = .63, $F(4, 266) = 39.96$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .37$). Although

interaction between *power*, *type of modifier* and *language* was also significant, this effect was again not very substantial in terms of percentage of explained variance (power*modifier*language: Wilks' $\eta^2 = .84$, $F(8, 532) = 5.88$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .08$). This suggests that there were no substantial differences in the way the three groups of respondents varied their modification according to the authority relation between speaker and hearer in the situations.

The plot in Figure 5.2 shows to what extent respondents varied their modification of requests according to the degree of authority of the speaker. Most variation in modification is due to the fact that requests in status equal situations (P2) were modified differently than requests in the status unequal situations (P1 and P3). Contrast analyses revealed that in overall terms respondents used slightly more modifiers in status equal situations than in status unequal situations (P1 vs P2: $F(1, 269) = 33.88$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .11$; P1 vs P3: $F(1, 269) = 2.64$; $p = .11$; $O^2 = .01$; P2 vs P3: $F(1, 269) = 24.47$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .08$). In addition, an analysis of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed that in status equal situations respondents tended to use both more syntactic and more external modifiers, but fewer lexical/phrasal modifiers than in either low or high speaker authority situations. The assumption was that respondents would generally tend to modify their requests extensively in low speaker authority situations in particular, where a higher degree of politeness is required, but less elaborately in high speaker authority

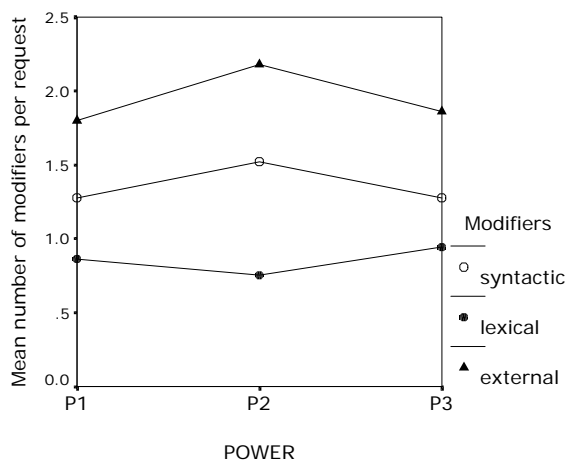


Figure 5.2 Syntactic, lexical and external modification in different dimensions of power

situations. As the plot shows, however, the modificational patterns of requests in low and high speaker authority situations were, in fact, rather similar.

A first conclusion is that, in overall terms, the native English respondents modified their requests more than the other respondents, which seems to have been due to a higher preference for the use of syntactic modifiers. The nonnative English respondents seem to have undermodified their requests slightly, since they used both fewer lexical and syntactic modifiers than the native English respondents. Finally, the native Dutch respondents used fewer syntactic modifiers than the native English respondents, but

modified their requests to the same degree with lexical and external modifiers. If, as was argued earlier, the total number of modifiers included in a request can be regarded as a rough measure of overall politeness, then the nonnative English requests can be considered to be lacking in politeness compared to the native English requests.

A second conclusion is that of the three design factors, *power*, in other words, the authority relationship between speaker and hearer, was found to be the most influential factor in determining the way respondents modified their requests. Contrary to what had been predicted, however, requests in status equal situations were modified more elaborately than requests in either low or high speaker authority situations.

5.4.2 A closer look at internal and external modification

This section will take a more detailed look at each of the categories of modifiers separately. As in the section above, the analyses revealed a large number of significant interaction effects. For the sake of clarity, the discussion below will focus on those effects that accounted for substantial proportions of explained variance (> 10%). Full details of the analyses are included in Tables 2-4 in Appendix D.

syntactic modification

As was discussed above, the three groups of respondents differed with respect to the use of syntactic modification in that the native English respondents used significantly more syntactic modifiers than either the nonnative English respondents or the native Dutch respondents. This section will focus more on differences in use of syntactic modification in relation to the design factors *power*, *social distance* and *context*. What determined variation in syntactic modification most, apart from the factor *language*, were the factors *power*, *context* and, in particular, the interaction between *context* and *social distance* (Table 2 in Appendix D). In other words, the native English, the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents differed in the way they modified their requests with syntactic means. In addition, requests in different situations were also modified differently.

The repeated measures analysis revealed a large significant effect for *language*, which points to substantial variation in use of syntactic modifiers between the three groups of respondents ($F(2, 269) = 64.14$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .32$). Post hoc comparisons (Bonferroni) revealed that the difference between the native English group and the two other groups was significant ($p < .001$), but that the difference between the nonnative English and the native Dutch group was not ($p = .48$). Both the nonnative English respondents and the native Dutch respondents included around one syntactic modifier per request, whereas the native English respondents included an average of two. In other words, the nonnative English respondents modified their requests to the same extent as the native Dutch respondents, but less than the native English respondents.

Of the design factors, *power* and *context* were the most influential variables in determining variations in syntactic modification. The factor *power* interacted significantly with the factor *language*, but only the main effect for *power* accounted for a substantial

proportion of explained variance (Wilks' $\eta^2 = .89$, $F(2, 268) = 16.99$, $p < .001$; $O^2 = .11$). Contrast analyses showed that respondents used significantly more syntactic modifiers in status equal situations than in either low or high speaker authority situations (P1 vs P2: $F(1, 269) = 21.28$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .07$; P1 vs P3: $F(1, 269) = 0.02$; $p = .90$; $O^2 < .001$; P2 vs P3: $F(1, 269) = 30.92$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .10$). Clearly, respondents felt a stronger need to syntactically modify requests in status equal situations, such as between neighbours or colleagues of similar rank, than in status unequal situations. This confirms the findings discussed in the overall analysis above, which showed that, contrary to what had been expected, respondents tended to modify requests in status equal situations more profusely than requests to addressees of lower or higher status.

Another important factor that determined syntactic modification was *context* (Wilks' $\eta^2 = .87$, $F(1, 269) = 38.65$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .13$). As the interaction between *context* and *social distance* (Wilks' $\eta^2 = .75$, $F(1, 269) = 91.11$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .25$) was also highly significant, the effect of *context* should, however, be interpreted in relation to the degree of familiarity between speaker and addressee. If we examine the plot in Figure 5.3, it turns out that respondents used fewer syntactic modifiers in non-institutional contexts where they knew the addressee than in non-institutional contexts where they did

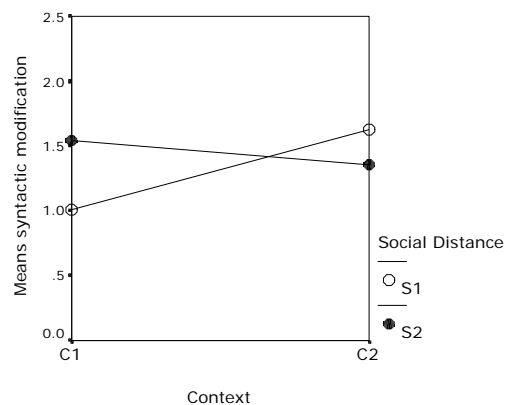


Figure 5.3 Syntactic modification: Context by Social Distance

not know the addressee. In other words, in formulating everyday requests respondents tended to be most polite in formulating requests to strangers. In the institutional contexts, on the other hand, differences in syntactic modification in acquainted versus unacquainted situations were marginal. The assumption that speakers would be inclined to use more modifiers in requests to strangers was only partly confirmed, then, since it turned out that this was highly dependent on the contextual setting of the request. In institutional contexts respondents did not modify requests differently relative to the social distance between speaker and hearer. One explanation for this might be that institutional contexts are, by nature, characterized by a somewhat higher level of formality than non-institutional contexts and thus prompt speakers to modify their requests regardless of the social distance between interlocutors.

The conclusion is that there was substantial variation in the way the three groups of respondents modified their requests syntactically. The native English respondents modified their requests more elaborately than the nonnative English respondents and the native Dutch respondents. Compared to the native English respondents, the nonnative English respondents seem to have slightly undermodified their requests syntactically. Contrary to what had been expected, respondents tended to use more syntactic modifiers in status equal situations than in status unequal situations. The effect of context on the use of syntactic modification was relative to the degree of familiarity between speaker and hearer in the situation. In non-institutional contexts respondents were found to use more syntactic modification in situations where speaker and addressee were strangers than in situations where they knew each other. In the institutional contexts, respondents did not significantly vary their use of modifiers relative to the social distance between speaker and hearer.

lexical/phrasal modification

The variation in the other category of internal modifiers, lexical/phrasal modifiers, was less pronounced than in the category of syntactic modifiers. First of all, respondents used altogether fewer lexical than syntactic modifiers per request. Secondly, respondents varied their lexical/phrasal modifiers less relative to situational variation (Full details of the repeated measures analysis for lexical/phrasal modification have been included in Table 3 in Appendix D.)

The analysis revealed a significant main effect for *language* ($F(2, 269) = 33.53$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .20$). Both the native English respondents and the native Dutch respondents used significantly more lexical/phrasal modifiers per request than the nonnative English respondents ($p < .001$). The difference between the native English group and the native Dutch group was not significant.

In addition, the analysis revealed a significant effect for *power* (Wilks'8 = .87, $F(2, 268) = 19.90$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .13$), but also significant interaction effects for *power* and *social distance* (Wilks'8 = .78, $F(2, 268) = 38.10$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .22$) and even for *power*, *social distance* and *context* (Wilks'8 = .88, $F(2, 268) = 18.60$; $p < .000$; $O^2 = .12$). In other words, although degree of authority between speaker and hearer had an important effect on the extent to which respondents modified their requests with lexical means, this effect was relative to the type of setting in which the request was made and the degree of familiarity between interlocutors.

The interaction plots in Figures 5.4(a-b) show that respondents used the same amount of lexical/phrasal modification in all high speaker authority situations (P3), regardless of *context* or *social distance*. The picture for the other situation types, however, is somewhat different, especially for the non-institutional contexts. In the low speaker authority situations (P1) in non-institutional contexts (C1), respondents used fewer modifiers in the unacquainted situations (S2) than in the acquainted situations (S1). Here, the unacquainted situation describes a request in a travel agency, where respondents had

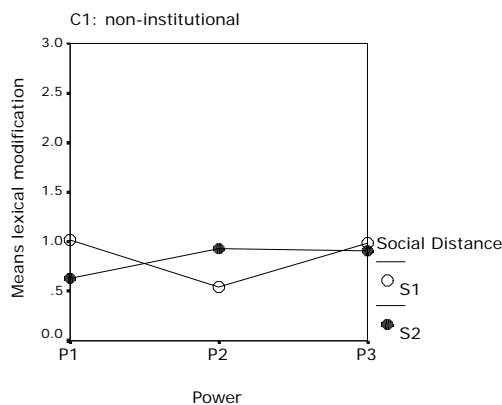


Figure 5.4a Lexical/phrasal modification Power by Social Distance in non-institutional contexts

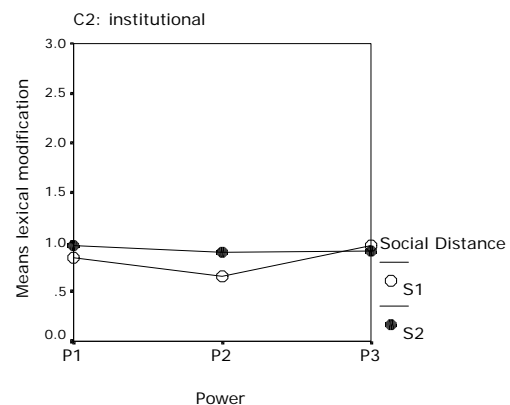


Figure 5.4b Lexical/phrasal modification Power by Social Distance in institutional contexts

to ask the staff to make last-minute changes to reservations for a flight. Apparently, respondents felt less need to modify this request than in the corresponding acquainted situations, where the request was from child to father. The fact that respondents were less inclined to modify the travel agency request elaborately is surprising, since generally speaking speakers are found to increase their level of politeness when addressing strangers. It might be the travel agency situation was special in that it involved changing a reservation, a standard service that any travel agency is expected to offer. Consequently, respondents may have felt no need to modify this request very elaborately.

The most important finding with respect to lexical/phrasal modification is that the nonnative English group used significantly fewer lexical/phrasal modifiers than the other two groups of respondents. An explanation for this 'underuse' of lexical/phrasal modifiers is that the nonnative English respondents may have lacked the linguistic means in English to (lexically) modify their requests adequately. With respect to the effect of the design factors, it can be concluded that degree of authority between speaker and hearer of the request was the most influential factor in determining respondents' use of lexical/phrasal modifiers, albeit relative to contextual setting and degree of social distance between speaker and hearer of the requests. No substantial differences were found between the three groups of respondents and the influence of the design factors.

external modification

In addition to modifying their requests internally, speakers can choose to modify requests externally by including, for example, reasons or justifications for the request. On average, all respondents used roughly about two external modifiers per request. Differences between the three groups of respondents were not significant ($F(2, 269) = 0.38$; $p = .68$; $O^2 = .00$). (Full details of the repeated measures analysis for external modification are included in Table 4 in Appendix D).

With respect to the influence of the design factors, the analysis revealed that the interaction between *power*, *social distance* and *context* was significant (Wilks'8 = .87, $F(2, 267) = 22.28$; $p < .001$; $O^2 = .14$). This suggests that, as was the case with lexical/phrasal modification, variation in the use of external modifiers cannot be

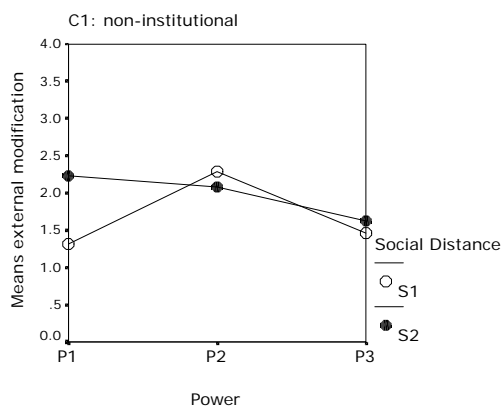


Figure 5.5a External modification Power by Social Distance in non-institutional contexts

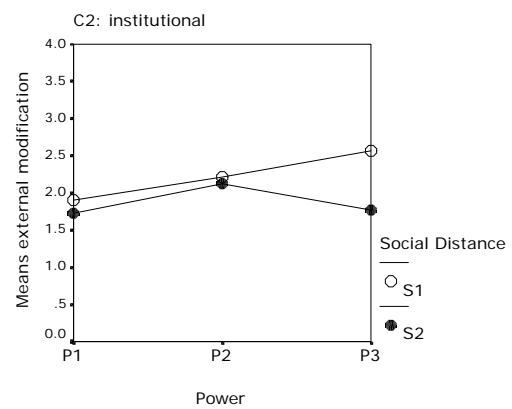


Figure 5.5b External modification Power by Social Distance in institutional contexts

attributed to any single design factor, but rather to a combination of design factors. The interaction plots in Figures 5.5(a-b) reveal that most variation in the use of external modifiers could be found in those situations where a status difference exists between speaker and hearer. In status equal situations (P2) respondents varied the use of external modifiers only marginally. An analysis of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed no significant differences for P2 situations, with all respondents using an average of two modifiers per request, regardless of social distance and context. Most variation, then, can be attributed to different modificational patterns in the status unequal situations (P1 and P3). The plot in Figure 5.5a shows that in the non-institutional contexts with low speaker authority (P1), respondents used more external modification in requests directed at strangers (S2) than in requests directed at addressees they were familiar with (S1). The requests are the same as those discussed above for lexical/phrasal modification, i.e. the travel agency request versus the request from child to father. In this case, however, the request from child to father was modified less than the request in the travel agency. A tentative explanation might be that requests from children to parents do not need the same degree of supportive moves as requests from clients to travel agents. The plot also shows that, generally speaking however, requests in low or high speaker authority situations included fewer supportive moves than those in the status equal situations.

The plot for the institutional contexts displays a somewhat different modificational pattern (Figure 5.5b). An analysis of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed that differences in modification of requests in low speaker authority situations (P1) and status equal situations (P2) were not significant. With respect to the institutional contexts, most variation was found in the requests produced in high speaker authority situations (P3). In the acquainted situations with high speaker authority (P3S1) respondents used significantly more modifiers than in the other work-related requests. The situation type in question ('overtime') involves a request from an immediate superior to an assistant to work overtime. Apparently, respondents felt a need to modify this request more extensively than any of the other requests. One tentative explanation for the extensive modification is that asking a person to work overtime is by nature a high imposition request, which, regardless of the authority of the speaker or degree of familiarity between speaker and addressee, always needs to be modified elaborately.

To summarize, the analysis revealed a number of differences with respect to the way respondents modified their requests. On average, native English respondents produced more internal modifiers, in particular more syntactic modifiers, than the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents. If we compare the requests produced by the nonnative English and the native English respondents it appears that the nonnative English respondents included both fewer syntactic modifiers and fewer lexical/phrasal modifiers in their requests. This implies that, in quantitative terms at least, the nonnative English respondents produced slightly less polite requests than the native English respondents. No differences between groups were found with respect to external modifiers, all respondents producing about two external modifiers per request. Variations in modification could often be attributed to the differences in degree of authority between interlocutors in situations. Somewhat surprisingly respondents generally tended to modify status equal situations more elaborately than either low speaker authority or high speaker authority situations.

5.5 Request modification in relation to request strategy

The analysis of the requests produced in the present study has so far been restricted to looking at variations in use of request strategies and the three categories of modifiers in isolation. Results indicate that respondents differed both in their choice of request strategy, but also in their choice of internal and external modification. Since both request strategy and request modification affect the overall politeness level of requests, this section will now attempt to analyse request modification in relation to request strategy. The first question to be answered is whether the three groups of respondents modified individual request strategies differently. In other words, did the native English respondents use more or fewer modifiers with, for example, *direct* strategies than the nonnative English respondents. The second question is whether situational and contextual variation affected the way respondents chose to modify individual request strategies. The discussion below will focus on the occurrence of syntactic, lexical and external modifiers

in relation to three categories of request strategies only: *direct* strategies, *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies.

In the original data set the dependent variables *request strategy*, *syntactic modification*, *lexical/phrasal modification* and *external modification* had all been coded as separate variables. In order to analyse request modification in relation to request strategy, for each situation the modifiers had to be linked to the request strategy used in each situation. In effect, this involved computing nine additional variables per situation:

- *direct* strategies with syntactic modifiers (*DS*)
- *direct* strategies with lexical/phrasal modifiers (*DL*)
- *direct* strategies with external modifiers (*DE*)
- *willingness* strategies with syntactic modifiers (*WS*)
- *willingness* strategies with lexical/phrasal modifiers (*WL*)
- *willingness* strategies with external modifiers (*WE*)
- *ability* strategies with syntactic modifiers (*AS*)
- *ability* strategies with lexical/phrasal modifiers (*AL*)
- *ability* strategies with external modifiers (*AE*).

Since utterances generally only include one request strategy, this implied that once a situation had been coded for a particular request strategy (*direct*, *willingness* or *ability*), the remaining categories had to be set at zero. If, for example, a request was formulated with a direct strategy, the variables *DS*, *DL* and *DE* received a value that corresponded to the number of modifiers that occurred in the request, whereas the other six variables were all set at zero. The result of this procedure was that all averages were reduced to roughly a third of their original value. This does not affect the results reported on in the section below, since the analysis is concerned with relative, rather than absolute, differences in the occurrence of strategy-modification combinations.

After the new variables had been computed a repeated measures analysis was performed with one between-subjects variable, *language*, and five within-subjects variables, i.e. the original three design factors *power*, *social distance* and *context* and, in addition, *request strategy* and *modifier*. As before, the section below will discuss those significant effects that accounted for at least 10% of the explained variance (full details of the analysis have been included in Table 5 in Appendix D).

5.5.1 Syntactic, lexical/phrasal and external modifiers in relation to request strategy

The repeated measures analysis revealed differences in the way *direct* strategies, *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies were modified by the three groups of respondents (strategy * modifier * language Wilks'8 = .70, $F(8, 532) = 12.79$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .16$). The modificational patterns for the three groups of respondents are displayed in Figure 5.6(a-c).

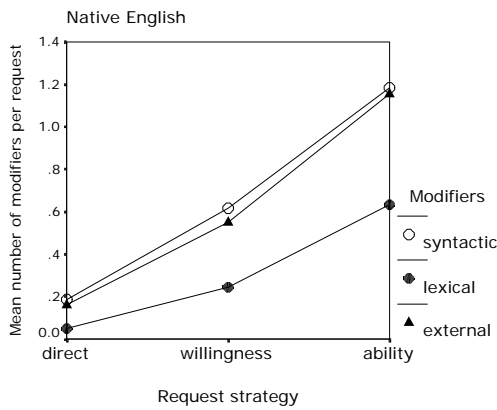


Figure 5.6a Modification of request strategies by native English respondents

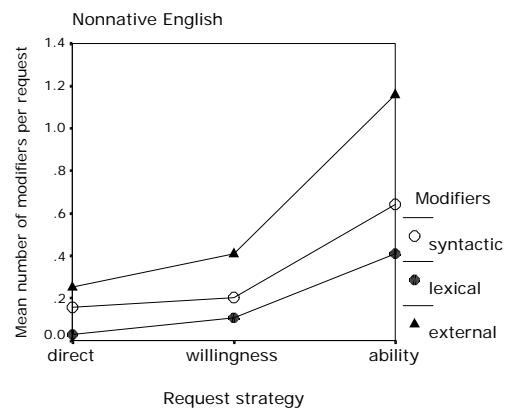


Figure 5.6b Modification of request strategies by nonnative English respondents

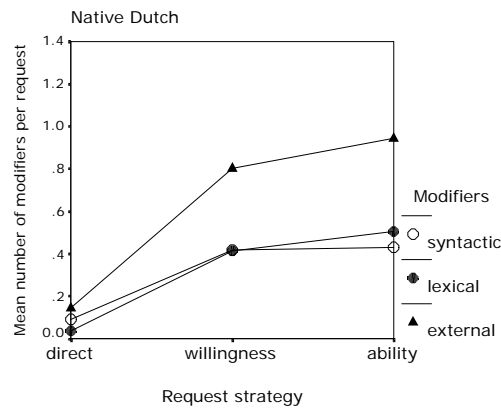


Figure 5.6c Modification of request strategies by native Dutch respondents

What becomes clear from the plots is that, although there is some variation in modification for particular strategies, modificational patterns for the three groups of respondents are quite similar. An analysis of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed that in all three groups *direct* strategies were modified least of all. In both the native English group and the native Dutch group *willingness* strategies were modified more than *direct* strategies. In the nonnative English group *willingness* strategies were also modified more than *direct* strategies, although this only applies to lexical and external modification. In both the native English group and the nonnative English group *ability* strategies were modified more extensively than *willingness* strategies or *direct* strategies. In the native Dutch group, however, differences between modification of *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies were marginal.

At the level of individual categories of modifiers, differences were found in the way the three strategies were modified. The native English respondents used more syntactic means to modify *ability* strategies than the other two groups. The native Dutch

respondents used more external modifiers in combination with *willingness* strategies in particular.

The conclusion is that the three categories of request strategies were modified differentially. Requests formulated with *direct* strategies included few internal or external modifiers, whereas requests formulated with *willingness* strategies generally included more, except in the nonnative English group, where respondents were found to have used fewer syntactic modifiers in particular. Requests formulated with *ability* strategies were modified more elaborately than other requests, especially in the native English group, where respondents used more syntactic means than in the other two groups.

5.5.2 Modification of request strategies in relation to PSC

The next question is to what extent respondents chose to modify request strategies differently relative to situational and contextual variation. For the sake of clarity the discussion below will focus on differences in overall modification of individual strategies and not on differences between individual categories of modifiers. In addition, only first order interactions between the design factors power, social distance and context will be discussed. Due to the complexity of the statistical analysis, second order interactions between design factors had in effect become third order interactions, which were beyond interpretation. The factor *language* interacted significantly with all design factors, but did not account for substantial proportions of explained variance. This means that differences between groups of respondents with respect to modification in relation to the design factors were not substantially different from overall differences reported in the previous sections. Full details of the repeated measures analysis are included in Table 5 in Appendix D.

The results indicate that respondents modified their request strategies differently relative to situational variation. Interaction effects for power, social distance and strategy, but also for power, context and strategy were highly significant, both effects accounting for at least ten per cent of explained variance. Interaction between social distance, context and strategy was also significant but accounted for less than ten percent of explained variance. As was discussed above, interaction effects for language and the design factors were significant but not very substantial in terms of explained variance. Consequently, the discussion below will focus on an analysis of request modification for all respondents.

Figures 5.7(a-c) display the modificational patterns for *direct* strategies, *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies in the different conditions of power and social distance (power * social distance * strategy: Wilks'8 = .67, F(4, 266)= 32.93; p < .001; O² = .33). As becomes clear from Figure 5.7a, *direct* strategies were not modified elaborately across all situation types. One unexpected difference was that in high speaker authority situations (P3) in particular, respondents tended to include more modification in those requests where the speaker knew the addressee (S1) than in those where the speaker did not know the addressee (S2).

More variation was observed in the way respondents modified *willingness* strategies, especially in making requests to strangers (S2) (Figure 5.7b). Respondents used more

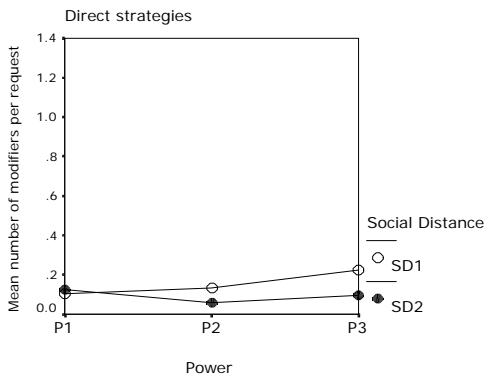


Figure 5.7a Modification of *direct* strategies: Power by Social Distance

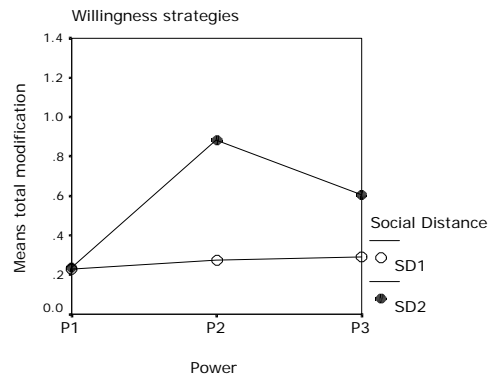


Figure 5.7b Modification of *willingness* strategies: Power by Social Distance

modification in requests to strangers of equal status in particular (P2), and to a lesser extent also to strangers in high speaker authority situations authority (P3). That requests to strangers rather than non-strangers included more modification is perhaps not surprising, since the assumption is that speakers are generally more polite to strangers than to addressees they know. What is surprising, however, is that this trend occurred in the status equal situation types rather than in the low speaker authority situation types (P1), where the lack of authority of the speaker might have prompted respondents to increase the politeness level of their requests. In low speaker authority situations, however, respondents did not vary their modification relative to the degree of social distance of the speaker to the addressee.

The plot for modification of *ability* strategies (Figure 5.7c) displays a somewhat different picture. Requests in low speaker authority situations (P1) were modified quite similarly, regardless of whether speaker and hearer knew each other. Requests in status equal situations (P2) and high speaker authority situations (P3) were modified differently

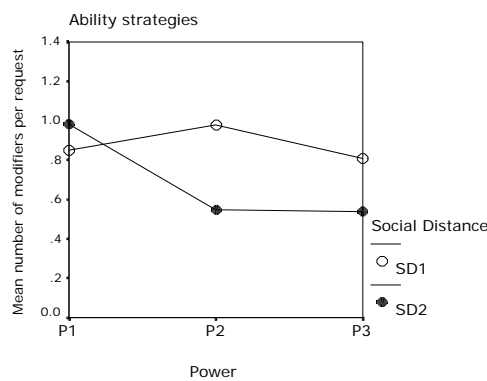


Figure 5.7c Modification of *ability* strategies: Power by Social Distance

depending on the social distance between speaker and hearer. Requests to strangers were modified less than requests in acquainted situations.

A second significant and substantial interaction effect was that between power, context and strategy (Wilks' $\eta^2 = .78$, $F(4, 266) = 18.43$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .22$). An analysis of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed that *direct* strategies were modified similarly across all situation types. The modificational patterns for the two remaining categories, *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies are plotted in Figures 5.8(a-b). The plot for modification of *willingness* strategies (Figure 5.8a) shows that most variation occurred in, again, the status equal situations (P2), where respondents used more modifiers in non-institutional contexts (C2) than in institutional contexts (C1). In low speaker authority and high speaker authority situations (P1 and P3) respondents modified their requests similarly in both types of context. The plot in Figure 5.8b shows that *ability* strategies in low speaker authority situations (P1) were modified more than *ability* strategies in high speaker authority situations (P3). In addition, it reveals that *ability*

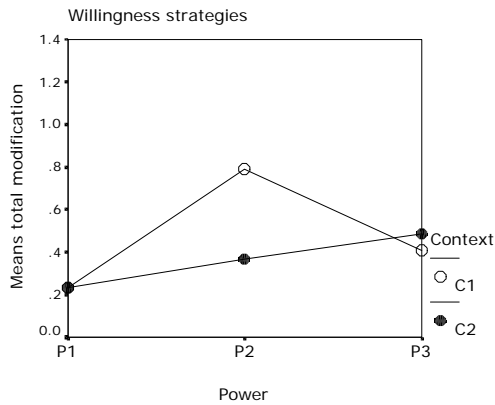


Figure 5.8a Modification of *willingness* strategies: Power by Context

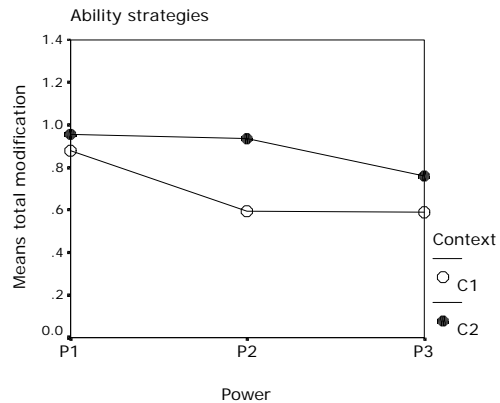


Figure 5.8b Modification of *ability* strategies: Power by Context

strategies used in institutional contexts (C2) are generally modified more than those in non-institutional contexts (C1) and in particular in those situations where speaker and hearer are status equals.

To summarize, the results suggest that the three groups of respondents differed in terms of total modification of the three request strategies. *Direct* strategies were modified least by all respondents, but more variation was found for both *willingness* and *ability* strategies. Both native English and nonnative English respondents modified *ability* strategies extensively. The native Dutch respondents differed from the other two groups in that they did not modify *willingness* strategies more than *ability* strategies. The results suggest that on the whole the nonnative English respondents modified their requests in similar ways to the native English respondents.

Respondents varied their modification of individual strategies relative to situational and contextual variation, most notably so in the case of *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies in status equal situations in particular. Low and high speaker authority situations were generally modified in the same way.

5.6 Summary and conclusion

If we compare the requests produced in the different groups of respondents in purely quantitative terms, then perhaps the similarities stand out more than the differences. By and large, all respondents employed similar request strategies to formulate their requests and used similar means to modify their requests. All respondents displayed an overwhelming preference for the use of conventionally indirect strategies and for the subcategories of *willingness* strategies and *ability* strategies in particular.

Situational variation appears to have affected both choice of strategy and modification of request strategies, the most influential factor being degree of authority. Generally speaking, respondents were more indirect in those situations where the speaker had little authority with respect to the addressee of the request and more direct in those situations where the speaker had more authority vis-à-vis the addressee of the request. This pattern was most noticeable in the requests produced by the native Dutch group. *Degree of authority* also affected the way respondents modified their requests, more in particular, the way respondents modified their requests syntactically. In situations where speaker and hearer were status equals requests generally included more syntactic modifiers than in the other situations.

The influence of *social distance* and *context* on choice of request strategy and modification was less noticeable than for *power*. Respondents varied their strategies according to the degree of *social distance* between speaker and hearer, but did so in the opposite direction from what had been predicted. Quite unexpectedly, respondents used relatively more *indirect* strategies in acquainted situations, where speaker and hearer knew each other, and relatively more *direct* strategies in unacquainted situations, where speaker and hearer were strangers. At the same time, however, respondents also used more syntactic modifiers in unacquainted situations, especially in the non-institutional contexts. Respondents thus seem to have partly compensated for their directness in addressing strangers by modifying their requests more elaborately.

The nonnative English respondents appear to have been quite successful in formulating English requests. They were generally found to vary their request strategies along the same lines as the native English respondents, although there were some indications that they may have assessed situations differently from the native English respondents. For example, the nonnative English respondents used more *direct* strategies in institutional contexts in particular, which suggests that they may have misjudged the formality level of these contexts. This slight overuse of *direct* strategies could be attributed to the less advanced nonnative English group (i.e. the secondary school pupils) in particular. A tentative explanation is that the university students, who were all enrolled in a business communication programme, may have been more sensitive to the formal nature of these institutional contexts. Other than that few variations occurred between native English and nonnative English respondents at the level of the request strategy.

More differences could be observed in the area of request modification. The nonnative English respondents differed from the native English group in that they generally included both fewer syntactic modifiers and fewer lexical/phrasal modifiers in their requests. This

suggests that the nonnative English respondents may have undermodified their requests slightly according to 'native English standards'.

Little variation was found between the requests produced by the secondary school respondents versus those produced by the university respondents. Although some of the chi-square tests for *level* were significant, none of the differences between the secondary school group and the university group turned out to be very substantial. Likewise, although the analysis of request modification revealed a number of significant effects for the factor *level*, none of the differences between secondary school group and the university group were very marked. For the native English group and the native Dutch group this implies that there were no quantitative differences between secondary school pupils and university students with respect to the types of request strategies and request modification. For the nonnative English respondents in particular, this suggests that there were no differences that could be attributed to a difference in level of English proficiency between secondary school pupils and university students. It thus seems safe to conclude that both groups of nonnative English respondents were quite successful in formulating 'English' requests, even though perhaps they may have failed to finetune the politeness level in terms of request modification.

The analysis and discussion of request strategies has so far been limited at an examination of similarities and differences with respect to the *strategies* that respondents used to formulate their requests. In the next chapter, the discussion will focus on an analysis of the *linguistic means* that respondents used to formulate their requests.

Chapter 6

Requests: a qualitative analysis

6.1 Introduction

Whereas the focus of the previous chapter was to examine quantitative differences with respect to the use of request strategies and request modification, the focus of this chapter will be on a more qualitative analysis of the linguistic means that respondents employed in formulating their requests. The aim of the chapter is, therefore, to examine similarities and differences in the way respondents formulated their requests, both in terms of request strategies, but also in terms of the linguistic devices that were used to modify these strategies, either internally or externally. The first part of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the different realizations of request strategies in combination with the most commonly found syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers. After this the discussion will focus on an analysis of the three types of modifiers, syntactic, lexical/phrasal and external modifiers separately. In the final section of this chapter results from the present study will be discussed in relation to findings from other request studies.

6.2 Direct strategies

As was discussed in the previous chapter, *direct* strategies were not used in great abundance by any of the groups of respondents. In terms of cross-cultural differences, the nonnative English respondents were found to have used slightly more direct strategies in formulating requests than the other respondents, whereas the native Dutch respondents formulated relatively few direct requests compared to the native English and the nonnative English respondents. None of the differences between groups of respondents were found to be very substantial though. In this section the discussion will focus on the linguistic means respondents used to formulate *direct* strategies and the types of request modification that commonly co-occurred with these strategies. Where relevant the discussion will also focus on the specific situations in which *direct* strategies were used. Total numbers of *direct* strategies for all groups of respondents are displayed in Table 6.1. As becomes clear from Table 6.1, only around eight per cent (261 of 3060 requests) of all requests were formulated with *direct* strategies, almost half of which were *want* statements. The analyses discussed in the previous chapter revealed that, although *direct* strategies were not used in great numbers, respondents did to some extent adjust their use of *direct* strategies relative to situational variation. Respondents were found to have used slightly more *direct* strategies in high speaker authority situations than in the other situations and were also found to have used slightly more *direct* strategies in acquainted situations as opposed to in unacquainted situations.

Table 6.1 Distribution of *direct* request strategies for all groups of respondents

Direct strategies	Native English		Nonnative English		Native Dutch		Total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 imperative	4	5	10	3	4	1	27
%	1.0	1.9	1.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.9
2 performative	3	7	10	-	4	2	26
%	0.7	2.6	1.6	-	0.7	0.3	0.8
3 obligation statement	1	1	10	-	5	2	19
%	0.2	0.4	1.6	-	0.9	0.3	0.6
4 want statement	14	11	37	28	18	17	125
%	3.5	4.1	5.9	5.3	3.3	2.6	4.1
5 suggestion	1	3	15	15	14	16	64
%	0.2	1.1	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.1
total direct strategies	23	27	82	46	45	38	261
% of total requests	5.6	10.1	13.1	8.8	8.1	5.6	8.5
total requests	405	269	622	525	550	689	3060

In addition, they were also found to have formulated relatively more direct requests in institutional contexts than in non-institutional contexts. If we now look at the use of distribution of direct strategies in individual situations, it appears that the majority of direct strategies (65.1%) occurred in five situations in particular, situation 3 'travel', 6 'campaign', 9 'party', 10 'overtime' and 12 'customs' (Table 6.2). As becomes clear from Table 6.2, the high speaker authority situations in which relatively more *direct* strategies occurred were 'party', 'overtime' and 'customs'.

Table 6.2 Distribution of *direct* request strategies across situations for all respondents

P	S	C	Situations	n	%
low speaker authority	acquainted	non-institutional	1. homework	11	4.2
		institutional	2. report	23	8.8
	unacquainted	non-institutional	3. travel	26	10.0
		institutional	4. lunch	15	5.7
status equal	acquainted	non-institutional	5. neighbour	14	5.4
		institutional	6. campaign	34	13.0
	unacquainted	non-institutional	7. supermarket	6	2.3
		institutional	8. paper	12	4.6
high speaker authority	acquainted	non-institutional	9. party	35	13.4
		institutional	10. overtime	45	17.2
	unacquainted	non-institutional	11. pensioner	10	3.8
		institutional	12. customs	30	11.5
			total request strategies	261	100.0

Of these three situations, both 'party' and 'overtime' are also characterized as 'acquainted'. These two situations, in addition with the situation 'campaign', seem to account for the slightly higher use of *direct* strategies in the acquainted situations. As for the higher use of *direct* strategies in institutional contexts, this can be attributed to

situations 'campaign' (also acquainted), overtime (also acquainted and high speaker authority) and 'customs' (high speaker authority). The only situation that appears to be the 'odd one out' is the 'travel' situation, which can be characterized as 'low speaker authority, 'unacquainted' and 'non-institutional'. As was suggested in the previous chapter, the 'travel' situation may have invited respondents to formulate slightly more direct requests because it involves a so-called service-encounter request. In service-encounter requests, where compliance is the norm, at least if the service requested is legitimate, requesters can afford to be less concerned about potential loss of face on the part of the requestee and can thus formulate relatively direct requests (Blum-Kulka et al., 1985).

6.2.1 Imperatives

Imperatives were rarely used to formulate requests (0.9%; 27 requests). Half of all imperatives were found in the nonnative English group, mainly in the secondary school group, and occurred in two situations in particular: 'party' and 'customs'. The 'party' situation concerns a request between close intimates (mother and daughter), whereas the 'customs' situation is a request from a customs official to a traveller. Both situations bear a close resemblance to two request situations in the CCSARP project, the 'kitchen' request and the 'policeman' request, for which Blum-Kulka and House (1989) reported relatively high percentages of direct strategies. The 'kitchen' request is a request between two flatmates to clean up the mess in the kitchen, whereas the 'policeman' request is one where a police officer asks someone to move their car. In the CCSARP project, these situations triggered relatively high proportions of direct strategies, although admittedly the English respondents used fewer than the Spanish, French, Hebrew and German respondents. Blum-Kulka and House suggest that both requests can be characterized as highly legitimate: in the 'policeman' request because a policeman can rightfully ask someone to move their car and in the 'kitchen' request because the role relationship between flatmates is such that they can ask each other to clean up their own mess.

With respect to request modification, most imperatives included one or several modifiers, usually more external than internal modifiers. Of the lexical modifiers, politeness marker 'please' (or Dutch 'alsjeblieft') was used most frequently (in 13 of the 27 requests).

- (1) *party* (ND1)
- a. *Ruim het even op, alsjeblieft, Manon, anders zitten we morgen met die rotzooi*
(Just clean it up, please, Manon, or else we will still be in this mess tomorrow)
 - b. *Give me a hand with this, will you?* (NE1)
- customs*
- c. *Open your bags, please* (NNE2)

The only other lexical modifier used in combination with imperatives was Dutch downtoner 'even' ('just') (example (1a)). The only syntactic modifier that was used to modify the impositive force of imperatives was the tag question, as in example (1b-c).

Obviously, however, *imperatives* occurred too infrequently in the present study to draw any solid conclusions about typical modification patterns.

6.2.2 Performatives

The second most direct request strategy, *performatives*, occurred in only 0.8% of all requests (26 requests), the majority of which were found in the native English and the nonnative English requests. In the nonnative English group all performatives were produced by the secondary school respondents. Unlike imperatives, *performatives* were not restricted to particular situations. Most requests were formulated with English 'to ask' or Dutch 'vragen'. The formal performative verb 'to request' was not used in any of the English requests, whereas only one Dutch request was formulated with Dutch performative 'verzoeken'.

All *performatives* were modified with at least one internal and one external modifier. The requests in the native English group rarely occurred in unmodified form, but were generally mitigated with modal verb 'could'. In addition, respondents also often mitigated their requests with lexical modifiers such as *subjectivizers* 'I wonder' or 'I'm afraid/I'm sorry' (examples (2a-c)).

- (2) *presentation*
- a. *I was wondering if I could ask you to go to the presentation.* (NE2)
 - b. *I'm sorry but I'm gonna have to ask you to do this campaign on your own.* (NE1)
- overtime*
- c. *Could I ask you to stay for another half an hour?* (NE1)

The *performatives* found in the nonnative English group were rather different than those produced by the native English respondents, partly because they included different types of modifiers, but partly also because they were often ungrammatical. Six of the ten requests produced by the learners were formulated like the requests in the following examples (3a-b). In both examples the respondents seem to have been struggling with two different request strategies/formulas: 'I want you to do X' (a want statement rather than a performative) and 'I want to ask you to do X' (a modified performative).

- (3) *homework*
- a. *I want you to ask me to help me with my school project* (NNE1)
- report*
- b. *I want you to ask to read my report* (NNE1)

Although these requests were all produced by the less proficient learners, the difference between requests with *performatives* and requests with *want statements* is a problematic one, even for advanced learners. The confusion is probably caused by the fact that English *want statements* have the structure 'I want you to do X', where 'you' immediately follows the verb 'want'. Learners often have similar problems in mixing up modified *want statements* such as 'I would like you to do X' and statements of speaker's wishes

that serve as announcements such as 'I'd like to show/give etc. you X'. The following (typical) examples can regularly be heard in student presentations:

I'd like to read you what is on the transparency
(asking audience to read transparency)
I'd like you to show you our results
(presenter introducing results)

The examples are typical of spoken English, when learners are under more pressure to perform and rarely occur in written requests, when they have more time to think about their requests.

6.2.3 Obligation statements

The third type of direct strategy, *obligation statements*, occurred even less frequently than the two previous categories (0.6%; 19 requests). The majority of obligation statements were found in the native Dutch data (7 requests) and the nonnative English data, where all obligation statements (10 requests) were produced by the secondary school respondents. In the native English data only two requests were formulated with obligation statements. Most requests with obligation statement occurred in the institutional contexts where speaker and hearer knew each other ('report', 'campaign', and 'overtime'). Eight of the ten obligation statements in the nonnative English group were formulated with unmodified 'have to', which made these requests rather direct (examples (4a-b)). The Dutch obligation statements were all formulated with unmodified 'moeten'. Some requests included lexical modifier 'even' (examples (4c)).

- (4) *overtime*
- a. *You have to stay for a couple of hours to change the handouts* (NNE1)
 - b. *You have to stay for half an hour to make it up* (NNE1)
 - c. *Je moet me even helpen.* (ND1)
(‘You must help me’)

The majority of obligation statements (13) occurred in the situations 'overtime' and 'campaign', both of which are institutional contexts. In 'overtime' the request is made by a higher status superior, who may have been in a position to issue direct requests, but in 'campaign' the request is between colleagues of equal rank, where direct requests such as obligation statements are less customary.

6.2.4 Want statements

The fourth category of direct strategies, *want statements*, were used in a mere 4.1% (125) of all requests and even then only in five situations in particular: 'report', 'travel', 'customs' and again, 'campaign' and 'overtime'. Three different types of *want statements* could be distinguished in the data:

- a Expressions in which speakers state their wishes or desires. This subcategory accounted for the majority of *want statements* found in the data. Almost half of all nonnative English requests were formulated as statements of wishes or desires, most of which were formulated with *would like* (5a), although *want* was also found (5b):

- (5) *presentation*
 a. *I would like you to go to the presentation for me.* (NNE1)
campaign
 b. *I want you to change these overhead sheets tonight.* (NNE2)

The native English speakers only used modified ‘would like’ to express the speaker’s wish. Roughly a third of the native Dutch *want statements* were formulated as wishes or desires on the part of the speaker, the majority of which were formulated with *willen* (to want). Statements of wishes or desires were usually modified syntactically as in (6a), although the unmodified ‘willen’ also occurred (6b).

- (6) *presentation*
 a. *Ik zou graag willen dat jij gaat.* (ND2)
 (‘I would like you to go.’)
overtime
 b. *Ik wil dat je nog een uurtje doorwerkt.* (ND1)
 (I want you to work on for another ‘small’ hour)

- b Expressions in which the speaker states that there is a need (whether personal or external) for the request to be carried out. *Need statements* were found in only 21 requests, half of which were used by the nonnative English respondents. The *need statements* found in the native English group were all formulated as personal needs with the verb ‘need’ as in example (7a). In the nonnative English group, both ‘need’ but also ‘have to’ were used (example 7b).

- (7) *travel agency*
 a. *I need to reschedule my flight.* (NNE2)
 b. *I have to reschedule my flight.* (NE2)

- c Expressions in which a speaker expresses appreciation, gratitude or hope with respect to the hearer carrying out the desired act, such as English *appreciate*, *be grateful*, *hope* or Dutch *op prijs stellen*, *dankbaar zijn*, *hopen*:

- (8) *overtime*
 a. *I’d appreciate it if you stayed behind for a couple of hours.* (NNE2)
report
 b. *Ik zou u erg dankbaar zijn als u dat vanavond zou willen lezen.* (ND2)
 (‘I’d be very grateful if you would be willing to read it tonight.’)

Expressions of this type often co-occurred with expressions in which the speaker referred to the non-obviousness condition (8a), the hearer’s willingness (8b) or the hearer’s

ability. Almost half of the *want statements* were requests in which the speaker expressed his or her appreciation. Most of these requests were modified with hypothetical 'would' or 'could' in English and 'zou' in Dutch.

Lexical modifiers were not used frequently. Two thirds of the requests included no lexical modification, whereas most of the remaining requests included just one lexical modifier, usually politeness marker 'please'.

6.2.5 Suggestions

Suggestions were only used in 2.1% (64) of all requests, almost all of which were produced in the nonnative English and the native Dutch group. The use of suggestions was mainly restricted to the 'party' situation in the native Dutch data and the 'overtime' situation in the nonnative English data. Two types of suggestions could be distinguished: those that include the speaker (*we suggestions*) and those that exclude the speaker from the action suggested in the request (*you suggestions*). The majority of requests (43 requests) were you-suggestions in which the speaker suggested that the addressee undertake the action specified in the request. These suggestions were generally embedded in 'if-clauses', in particular in the nonnative English data (examples (9a-c)):

- (9) *presentation* (NNE1)
 a. *If you go tomorrow then I'll go the second time.*
overtime
 b. *If you stay for a couple of hours, we can get them done tonight.* (NNE2)
(ND2)
 c. *Als je nog een paar uurtjes langer blijft, dan zijn de stencils vanavond nog klaar.*
 ('If you wait another couple of hours, then the stencils will be done tonight'.)

We-suggestions mainly occurred in the native Dutch data, particularly in requests in the 'party' situation. These, too, were generally embedded in an 'if-clause', which makes the request more conditional.

- (10) *party* (ND1)
Als we even snel opruimen dan hoeven we morgen niet in die rotzooi op te staan.
 ('If we just quickly clean up then we won't need to get up in this mess in the morning'.)

The most frequently used lexical modifier in combination with suggestions was English understater 'just' and especially Dutch understater 'even'.

The conclusion is that as far as the use of direct strategies is concerned, no striking differences were found in the way respondents formulated their requests. Both the native Dutch respondents and the native English respondents avoided using highly direct strategies and so did the nonnative English respondents. The most frequently used direct strategy was the *want statement*, which accounted for almost half of all direct strategies used. If direct strategies were used at all, they were generally used in a limited number of

situations, mainly those where the requester was in a position of authority and/or where requester and requestee knew each other relatively well.

The nonnative English respondents were found to have used similar linguistic means to formulate direct requests as the native speakers of English. Although there are some indications that some of their requests, such as unmodified obligation statements or unmodified want statements, may have been relatively blunt according to native English standards, the total number of direct strategies was obviously too low to substantiate this.

6.3 Indirect strategies

As became clear in the previous chapter, the vast majority of requests produced in the present study were formulated with conventionally indirect strategies. The category of conventionally indirect strategies has been divided in three subcategories, based on the type of precondition queried or referred to by the speaker. As can be seen in Table 6.3, most conventionally indirect strategies were strategies in which the speaker questioned the requestee's ability to carry out the requested action (*ability* strategies). This category accounted for just over half of all conventionally indirect strategies (55.2%). The second largest category included strategies in which the speaker queried the requestee's willingness to carry out, or allow the desired act or action (*willingness* strategies). This category accounted for a third of all conventionally indirect strategies (31.1%). Finally, the third and smallest category consisted of strategies in which the speaker made reference to a future action or act to be carried out by the addressee (*non-obviousness* strategies). This category accounted for around five per cent of all conventionally indirect strategies, although percentages were slightly higher for the native English and the nonnative English respondents.

Table 6.3 Distribution of *conventionally direct* request strategies for all groups of respondents

Conventionally indirect strategies	Native English		Nonnative English		Native Dutch		Total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 non-obviousness	27	8	69	28	2	5	139
%	6.7	3.0	11.1	5.3	0.4	0.7	4.5
2 willingness	102	81	134	116	237	279	949
%	25.2	30.1	21.5	22.1	43.1	40.5	31.0
3 ability	253	151	335	330	263	357	1689
%	62.5	56.1	53.9	62.9	47.8	51.8	55.2
total conventionally indirect strategies	382	240	538	474	502	641	2777
% of total requests	94.4	89.2	86.5	90.3	91.3	93.0	90.7
total requests	405	269	622	525	550	689	3060

The discussion below will focus on the linguistic means that respondents used to formulate these three types of substrategies.

6.3.1 Strategies referring to the non-obviousness condition

In requests referring to the precondition of non-obviousness a speaker makes reference to a future act(ion) to be carried out by the addressee. *Non-obviousness strategies* occurred in 4.5% (139) of all requests, most of which were produced by the native English and the nonnative English respondents. In the nonnative English secondary school group they accounted for just over ten per cent (11.1%) of all requests in this group, which was more than in any of the other groups. Non-obviousness strategies were used in all situations, but especially in the situations 'homework' and 'party', both requests set in a family context.

The vast majority of non-obviousness strategies in the native English and nonnative English data were formulated as 'will/would' questions as in examples (11a-b)):

- (11) *party*
 a. *Will you help me with my school project?* (NNE1)
paper
 b. *Would you give me a hand please?* (NE1)

As was discussed earlier (cf. Chapter 2), categorization of 'will/would you' requests has proved to be difficult and ambiguous in previous request studies. In the CCSARP project 'will/would you' requests were classified as both willingness strategies and non-obviousness strategies (cf. Blum-Kulka, 1989, p. 55). Other studies have classified them as willingness strategies (Trosborg, 1995), or as 'preparatory' questions together with other questions referring to preconditions for requests (Takahashi, 1996). In the present study it was decided to follow Searle (1975) in classifying 'will/would you' requests as strategies referring to the non-obviousness condition.

The only study to report detailed results for the use of 'will/would you' requests is Blum-Kulka (1989), who found that around 15% of the requests produced by the (Australian) native speakers of English were formulated as 'will/would you' requests. In the present study the proportion of 'will/would' requests in the native English group was considerably lower, whereas the nonnative English respondents produced slightly more.

The vast majority of non-obviousness requests produced in the native English and the nonnative English groups were modified with hypothetical 'would'. The native English respondents, but not the nonnative English respondents, also used tag questions and negation, such as in example (12):

- (12) *paper*
You wouldn't go and fetch some from the other building, would you? (NE2)

Both groups of respondents relied heavily on politeness marker 'please' for lexical modification of their requests. In the native English group the lexical modifier 'please'

accounted for 70% of all lexical modifiers used, whereas in the nonnative English group, it was used almost to the exclusion of other lexical modifiers (94.4%). The use of tag questions, negation and lexical modifier 'please' will be discussed in more detail in the section on syntactic modifiers.

In the Dutch data only seven requests were formulated with non-obviousness strategies, all but one of which occurred in the 'party' request:

- (13) *party*
- a. *Pak je even een doekje en doe je het even op?* (ND2)
(‘Will you get a cloth and will you just mop it up?’)
 - b. *Ruim jij even dat glas wijn voor me op?* (ND2)
(‘Will you just clean up that glass of wine for me?’)

The virtual absence of this type of strategy in the Dutch data suggests that in Dutch conventionally indirect requests are not commonly formulated by means of referring to the non-obviousness condition. Consequently, Dutch and English can be said to differ with respect to the degree of conventionality of referring to the non-obviousness condition as a means for formulating indirect requests. In other words, in both Dutch and English it is possible to formulate an indirect request by referring to the non-obviousness condition, but the substrategy is more commonly used, and thus more conventional, in English than in Dutch.

6.3.2 Strategies referring to the willingness condition

The second subcategory consists of strategies in which a speaker refers to a hearer's willingness to carry out the request. This type of strategy occurred in roughly a third of all requests (31%; 949 requests). Two types of willingness strategies could be distinguished in the data. The first type of willingness strategy is more explicit in that the hearer's willingness or objections are queried explicitly (examples (14a-c)). More than half of the requests querying the hearer's willingness fell in this subcategory (66.8%; 634 requests). A less explicit way involves the speaker asking the hearer's permission for a requested action to be carried out. In these requests the speaker, rather than the hearer, is usually the agent of the action. In other words, in a permission request the speaker inquires about the hearer's willingness to allow the speaker to 'go ahead' with whatever the request was about. The 'costs' of the request, even in permission requests, are still, however, incurred by the hearer. In the 'supermarket' situation, for example, the costs for the hearer would involve 'lost time'. Most permission requests did, in fact, occur in the 'supermarket' situation. Explicit willingness strategies were mainly found in those situations where the hearer was asked to engage in some kind of activity, such as in the 'homework', 'party', 'presentation' or 'overtime' situation.

- (14) *overtime*
- a. *Would you be so kind as to help me change these transparencies* (NNE2)
homework
 - b. *Would you mind helping me with my school project* (NE2)

- party
- c. *Zou je het erg vinden om even te helpen met opruimen?* (ND2)
- supermarket
- d. *Could I just squeeze in front of you?* (NE1)
- e. *I don't suppose I could push in front of you, could I?* (NE2)

Table 6.4 presents an overview of the linguistic means that respondents used to formulate explicit willingness requests and permission requests. It is interesting to note that in the native English group, the secondary school respondents displayed an almost equal preference for 'mind' requests (45.1%) and 'can I' requests (47.1%). However, the university respondents in this group clearly preferred 'mind' requests over 'can I' requests (65.4% and 18.5% respectively). The nonnative English respondents in both groups also used the verb 'to mind', but in considerably fewer requests (22.4% and 25.0%). The Dutch version of this request, with Dutch 'erg vinden' as in example (14c) above, was used infrequently (8.9% and 8.6%).

Table 6.4 Distribution of linguistic structures *willingness* strategies

		native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		
		NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND	ND2	total
willingness								
mind/erg vinden		46	53	30	29	21	24	203
	%	45.1	65.4	22.4	25.0	8.9	8.6	21.4
want/wil (ND)		2	4	28	1	144	163	342
	%	2.0	4.9	20.9	0.9	60.8	58.5	36.0
be so kind/zo vriendelijk zijn		2		17	44	8	6	77
	%	2.0		12.7	37.9	3.4	2.2	8.1
other		1	1	3	2	1	4	12
	%	1.0	1.2	2.2	1.7	0.4	1.4	1.3
permission								
can I/kan ik		48	15	48	38	6	13	168
	%	47.1	18.5	35.8	32.8	2.5	4.7	17.7
may/mogen			1	8	1	56	69	135
	%		1.2	6.0	0.9	23.6	24.7	14.2
other		3	7		1	1		12
	%	2.9	8.6		0.9	0.4		1.3
total		102	81	134	116	237	279	949
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In the nonnative English groups, the advanced learners displayed a relatively high preference for highly formal request structures such as 'Would you be so kind as to do X' as in example (14a) above (12.7% and 37.9%), which only occurred twice in the native English data. Requests of this type are highly formal and as such more typical of (formal) written English, which is probably why the native English respondents avoided this structure. Interestingly enough, the Dutch version of this request, 'zou u zo vriendelijk willen zijn', which is also a rather formal expression, was hardly used by the Dutch

respondents. This suggests that the learners' overuse of formal 'would you be so kind' was not a result of interference from Dutch.

In the native Dutch data well over half of willingness requests (60.8% and 58.5%) were formulated with 'willen', usually in a modified form, such as in example (15a).

(15) *homework*

- a. *Zou je me straks met m'n huiswerk willen helpen?* (ND1)
 ('Would you be willing to help me with my homework later on?')
- b. *Do you want to help me with my homework?* (NNE1)
overtime
- c. *Would you like to stay behind for a couple of hours?* (NNE1)

The corresponding English requests (examples 15b-c), formulated with 'want' or modified 'would like', mainly occurred in the responses of the nonnative English secondary school group. Only a few of these requests were found in the native English data. The virtual absence of 'want' in the native speaker data, suggests that English 'want' is not commonly used to refer to a hearer's willingness. The more advanced learners seem to be aware of this since 'want' was rare in the data from this group. The slightly higher use of 'want' in the less advanced group might be an indication that the learners in this group may have been influenced by their L1, as 'wil' appears to be a highly conventional form for referring to hearer's willingness in Dutch.

Permission requests were often used in those situations where the request involved the hearer giving up time, rather than doing something. As was mentioned above, typical examples are the 'supermarket' situation where the speaker asks permission to jump the queue (examples (16a-c)) and the 'customs' situation, where the costs incurred by the hearer upon compliance is again 'lost time' (example 16d).

(16) *supermarket*

- a. *Could I squeeze in front of you?* (NE2)
- b. *May I go first?* (NNE1)
- c. *Mag ik misschien even voorgaan?* (ND2)
 ('May I perhaps just go before?')

About a third of willingness strategies (33.2%) were permission requests. In the native English and nonnative English data permission requests were generally realized with 'can'. Permission requests with 'may' are rather formal in English, which the nonnative English respondents seem to have realized, since they only used 'may' occasionally in their requests. Dutch 'mogen' ('may') does not have the same level of formality as English 'may', which is reflected in the permission requests in the Dutch data, which are almost exclusively formulated with 'mogen'. Dutch 'kunnen' occurred in a small number of Dutch permission requests in the situations 'customs', 'pensioner' and 'supermarket' as in examples (17a-c):

- (17) *customs*
 a. *Zou ik uw bagage even kunnen controleren?* (ND1)
 ('Could I just check your luggage?')
- pensioner*
 b. *Zou ik misschien op jouw plaats kunnen zitten?* (ND2)
 ('Could I perhaps sit in your seat?')
- supermarket*
 c. *Zou ik misschien even voor kunnen?* (ND2)
 ('Could I perhaps just go before?')

Permission requests with Dutch 'kunnen' are not common though, as 'kunnen' is generally used to denote 'ability', such as in strategies referring to the hearer's ability, which like in other studies, were the most frequently employed request strategy for all groups of respondents.

6.3.3 Strategies referring to the ability condition

Ability strategies, in which the speaker queries the hearer's ability to comply with the request, were used in half of all requests (55.2%; 1689). Ability strategies were evenly spread across all situations with the exception of the 'supermarket' situation, where, as was discussed above, respondents often resorted to permission requests. Ability strategies, like willingness strategies, were realized with a number of different linguistic means, although requests with modal 'can' or Dutch 'kunnen' seemed to be the default form. Percentages of ability strategies formulated with 'can' or 'kunnen' ranged from 72.8% for the native English university group to as high as 89.7% for the native English secondary school group (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Distribution of linguistic structures *ability* strategies

ability strategies	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND	ND2	
can/kunnen	227	110	292	279	216	279	1403
%	89.7	72.8	87.2	84.5	82.1	78.2	83.1
have time/tijd hebben	2	7	9	18	32	54	122
%	0.8	4.6	2.7	0.5	12.2	15.1	7.2
possible/mogelijk	11	15	23	24	15	22	110
%	4.3	9.9	6.9	7.3	5.7	6.2	6.5
able/in staat	13	19	8	8			48
%	5.1	12.6	2.7	2.4			2.8
other			3	1		2	6
%			0.9	0.3		0.6	0.3
total	253	151	335	330	263	357	1689
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

All groups of respondents used both modified and unmodified 'can/kunnen' in their requests (examples (18a-d)). Half of all 'can/kunnen' requests were formulated with past

tense modals, as in the examples below. In the native English group over a third of requests (37.2%) were formulated with 'could'. The nonnative English respondents used an even higher proportion of past tense modals, as well over half of their requests were formulated with 'could' (59.3%). However, the highest percentage of syntactic modification of 'kunnen' was found in the native Dutch group who formulated the majority of these requests with 'zou kunnen' (68.9%).

(18) *homework*

a. *Dad, can you help me with my maths?* (NE1)

b. *Pap, zou je me met m'n huiswerk kunnen helpen?* (ND1)
 ('Dad, could you help me with my homework?')

overtime

c. *John, could you do this advertisement for next week?* (NE1)

d. *John, zou jij die campagne voor me kunnen doen?* (ND2)
 ('John, could you do dat campaign for me?')

The second most frequently used linguistic structure, at least in the native Dutch group, involved the speaker checked on the availability of the hearer's time as in (19). Strategies in which the speaker checked on the hearer's time were rare in the native English and the nonnative English data.

(19) *campaign*

Zou jij tijd hebben om naar die presentatie te gaan? (ND2)
 ('Would you have time to go to that presentation?')

The preference for 'can/could' requests in the present study is in line with what other studies have found with respect to the high conventionality of 'can/could' requests in English (cf. e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1989; Kasper, 1989). It can be concluded that in Dutch, too, 'kunnen/zou kunnen' requests are highly conventional. For the nonnative English respondents the high conventionality of 'can/could' requests in English did not turn out to be problematic as they used the strategy quite frequently.

6.3.4 Hints

Hints, the most indirect of request strategies, were rarely used at all. It should however be noted that this may have been due to the fact that hints were often difficult to identify. For some responses it proved to be impossible to say whether the speaker had intended to make a (very indirect) request or had merely misinterpreted the situation. An example is the response in example (20), which has at least two interpretations. The situation concerns a request from a speaker who promised the neighbours to pick up their kids from football practice, but has suddenly been called away to an urgent meeting. One interpretation is that the speaker merely wanted to inform the neighbour that he or she would not be able to pick up the kids. A second interpretation is that the speaker was actually hinting at the neighbour to go pick up the kids herself. In those instances where it was not clear whether a respondent had produced a hint or had misinterpreted the

situation, the utterance was coded as 'misinterpretation'. This in fact meant that only those responses including strong hints were coded as 'hints', such as those in (21a-c).

(20) *neighbour*

Joyce, I can't take, pick up your kids from football practice, because I've got an urgent meeting. (NE2)

(21) *pensioner*

a. *No, no, no, no, you don't have to stand up for me just because I've been out shopping all day and I'm here with all my bags and I have a long way to go and I'm old and I have a bad leg. No, no, no, just...just stay there, just sit.* (NNE2)

b. *HHHMMM, HHHHMMM, HHHHMMM, (extensive coughing)* (NE1)

c. *Excuse me sir, but I'm old. Oh, thank you very much.* (NNE2)

Trosborg (1995) noted similar problems in identifying hints in her data, which consisted of open role plays. Even so, Trosborg found relatively high proportions of hints, which varied from almost ten per cent for the advanced learners to around 20 per cent for the native speakers of English. Role plays, like the one used in Trosborg's study, are probably more suitable for eliciting hints than either oral or written production tasks. For one thing respondents are more likely to use hints when engaged in longer stretches of discourse, but for another because the identification of hints is largely dependent on contextual clues which are generally absent from single-turn responses. As the number of hints in the present study was too low to allow a meaningful analysis, they will be disregarded in the remainder of this chapter (detailed accounts of different hinting strategies can be found in Trosborg (1995) and Weizman (1989, 1993)).

6.4 Syntactic modification

As was discussed in the previous chapter, differences were found in the way respondents mitigated their requests with syntactic modifiers. Findings of the quantitative analysis revealed that the native English respondents generally used more syntactic modification in their requests than the nonnative English respondents and the native Dutch respondents. In this section the discussion will focus on qualitative differences between groups of respondents in terms of types of syntactic modifiers that were used to modify requests.

Initially, eight categories of syntactic downgraders had been included in the coding scheme ranging from interrogative, tag question and negation, to two types of conditional clauses, if-interrogative and if-conditional. Table 6.6 shows that the most popular syntactic modifier in all three groups of respondents was the *past tense modal*, which accounted for almost 75 per cent of all modifiers used.

Table 6.6 Distribution of syntactic downgraders; all groups

	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 interrogative		1	2		1	2	6
%		0.3	0.5		0.2	0.3	0.2
2 tag question	19	21	3	3			46
%	4.0	5.4	0.7	0.5			1.6
3 negation	36	23	1	4		7	70
%	7.5	5.9	0.2	0.7		1.2	2.4
4 aspect	26	27	7	30			90
%	5.4	7.0	1.6	5.4			3.1
5 tense	33	44	15	37	21	16	166
%	6.9	11.4	3.5	6.7	4.7	2.7	5.8
6 past tense modal	304	203	346	412	371	502	2138
%	63.6	52.5	80.7	74.5	82.4	86.8	74.2
7 interrogative clause	41	36	25	39	30	37	209
%	8.6	9.3	5.8	7.1	6.7	6.4	7.2
8 conditional clause	19	32	30	28	30	17	157
%	4.0	8.3	7.0	5.1	6.7	3.0	5.4
n (= number of modifiers)	478	387	429	553	453	580	2881
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Past tense modals function as mitigating devices in that they add an element of conditionality to the request, which gives the hearer an extra option (over non-conditional requests with present tense modals) to refrain from complying with the request, as in examples (22a-b) and (23a-b):

- (22) a. *Can you give me a hand with my project?*
 b. *Will you give me a hand with my project?*

- (23) a. *Could you give me a hand with my homework?*
 b. *Would you give me a hand with my homework?*

The frequent use of past tense modals is not surprising given the high preference of conventionally indirect strategies in the data. Although they were clearly the favourite syntactic modifier in all groups of respondents, some degree of variation could be observed. Both the native speakers of Dutch and the nonnative speakers of English made frequent use of past tense modals (ND1: 82.4%: ND2: 86.8% vs. NNE1: 80.7%: NNE2 74.5%), but the native speakers of English and the university group in particular, used considerably fewer (NE1: 63.6, NE2: 52.5%). Since the native English respondents were found to have syntactically modified their requests more than both the nonnative English or the native Dutch respondents, this suggests they must have resorted to other types of syntactic modifiers in addition to past tense modals. The discussion below will focus on the most salient differences between respondents in the use of these modifiers.

6.4.1 Tag question and negation

A clear difference in the use of syntactic modification between the native English respondents and the other two groups of respondents could be observed with respect to the use of tag questions and negation. The majority of tag questions was found in the native English data, where they were often used in combination with negation (examples (24a-c)) and/or lexical modifier *I don't suppose* (24d):

- (24) *supermarket*
 a. *You wouldn't mind if I jumped in front of you, would you?* (NE2)
pensioner
 b. *You wouldn't do me a favour and help me carry these bags, would you?* (NE1)
 c. *You couldn't carry these bags up for me, could you?.* (NE1)
neighbour
 d. *I don't suppose you could pick them up, could you, from football practice?* (NE1)

Requests such as those in the examples above are highly polite (and idiomatic) requests, because they convey a pessimistic attitude on the part of the speaker about possible compliance with the request, which reduces the imposition on the addressee of the request. These requests are also, however, structurally difficult due to co-occurrence restrictions on tags and negation, which might explain why the learners rarely used them. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that if a speaker asserts a felicity condition, such as the ability or willingness condition, then in order for the request to be polite it needs to be negated and, in addition, to be accompanied by a tag or a possibility expression (such as 'possibly') or a hedge (such as subjectivizer 'I don't suppose'), as in the examples above. Assertions of felicity conditions as in (25a-b) below result in possible but rather impolite requests, since they assert rather than query the hearer's ability (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 134-136).

- (25) a. *You can pick up the kids.*
 b. *You could pick up the kids.*

In addition, restrictions apply to the co-occurrence of interrogative structures and negation. Negative interrogatives such as in example (26a-b) have been found to convey an element of annoyance on the part of the speaker, since the assumption is that the response from the addressee will be negative. In other words, whereas a positive interrogative structure questions the addressee's willingness or ability, the negated version seems to start from the addressee's unwillingness or inability.

Interrogatives can be combined with negation in invitations or offers, when the 'requested' action is clearly to the hearer's benefit, such as in example (26c) or when the requested action is supposed to be carried out by the speaker such as in the permission request in example (26d):

- (26) a. *Can't you pick up the kids?*
 b. *Won't you help me?*
 c. *Won't you have some wine?*
 d. *Couldn't I borrow some records?*

In Dutch, too, negative interrogative structures have been found to receive significantly lower politeness ratings than interrogative structures without negation (Van der Wijst, 1996). Negated interrogative structures were not found in the data of any of the groups of respondents, except in a small number of permission requests such as in example (26d) above, which seems to corroborate findings in other studies with respect to the lack of politeness of these structures.

None of the native Dutch requests included tag questions, whereas in the nonnative English data tag questions were restricted to requests formulated with imperatives as in (27):

- (27) *Clean up that mess, will you?*

Underuse of requests combining tag questions and negation in the nonnative English group may have been due to the structural difficulty of these requests, as was explained above, but may also have been transfer-induced since they did not occur in the Dutch data.

6.4.2 Tense and aspect

Two other syntactic devices that tended to co-occur, especially in the native English group, were (past) *tense* and (durative) *aspect*. Both devices have a mitigating effect although they work along different lines in achieving this effect. The use of the *past tense* in a request distances the request away from reality. Continuous aspect, such as in (I'm wondering), creates a mitigating effect by making a request more tentative. In Dutch durative aspect is not expressed with syntactic means but with lexical means, such as *Ik zit me af te vragen of* ('I'm sitting here wondering if...'). This is not, however, a structure that occurred in the data.

In both native English and nonnative English requests (past) *tense* (28a) and *aspect* (28b) were often combined with subjectivizer *wonder*. In Dutch, *tense* was frequently used in combination with the subjectivizers *vragen of* or *afvragen*, where either subjectivizer or precondition, or both, were marked for *tense* (28c-d).

- (28) *report* (NE1)
 a. *I wondered if you could read it through for me, so I can hand it in tomorrow.*
lunch (NNE1)
 b. *I'm just wondering if you could give me a help with these, a couple of parcels.*
 c. *Ik vroeg me af of u me kon helpen.* (ND1)
 ('I wondered if you could help me.')
- overtime*
 d. *Ik wilde je vragen of je vanavond kan overwerken.* (ND1)
 ('I wanted to ask you if you can work late tonight.')

The frequencies in Table 6.6 suggest that the nonnative English respondents, especially those in the secondary school group, may have underused *aspect* and *tense* compared to the native English respondents. Trosborg (1995) found that the Danish learners of English used *aspect* and *past tense* considerably less frequently than the native speakers of English in her study. In Danish, like in Dutch, *aspect* needs to be expressed with lexical means rather than syntactic means. Interestingly enough, in Trosborg's study, as in the present study, the more advanced learners used more continuous *aspect* markers and *past tense* than the intermediate learners.

6.4.3 Interrogative and conditional clauses

Two types of subclauses had been included in the coding scheme, interrogative if-clauses and conditional if-clauses. The interrogative if-clauses were mainly used in combination with subjectivizers such as *I wonder* and *I would like to ask you ...*, or Dutch *Ik vroeg me af* and *Ik wilde je vragen* (29a-b), and as such co-occurred with the use of *past tense* modals. Conditional if-clauses were more often than not combined with *want/wish* statements or suggestions as in examples (30a-c):

- (29) *paper*
 a. *I was wondering if you could help me.* (NE2)
 b. *Ik wilde je vragen of je me zou kunnen helpen.* (ND1)
 ('I wanted to ask you if you could help me.')
- (30) *overtime*
 a. *I would appreciate it if you could give me a hand with these sheets.* (NNE2)
 b. *Ik zou je dankbaar zijn als je nog een paar uur zou overwerken.* (ND2)
 ('I'd be grateful if you could work overtime for some more hours.')
- c. *Dus als je me zou kunnen helpen, dan zou het misschien nog afkomen.* (ND1)
 ('So if you could help me, it might perhaps just get done.')

There were no major differences between the different groups of respondents with respect to their use of interrogative clauses or conditional clauses.

6.4.4 Conclusion

As we saw in the previous chapter, the three groups of respondents differed in the degree to which they modified their requests with syntactic means. The native English respondents generally included slightly more syntactic modifiers in their requests than either the native Dutch respondents or the nonnative English respondents in particular. It can now be concluded that in addition to quantitative differences in syntactic modification, there are also qualitative differences with respect to types of syntactic modifiers. Although the favourite mitigator in all groups was the use of past tense modals, the nonnative English respondents made more use of this modifier than the other respondents, almost to the exclusion of other types of syntactic modification. Compared to the native English respondents, the learners seem to have been underusing other categories of syntactic downgraders, such as tag questions, negation or aspect. It is not clear if and how the less varied modificational pattern found in the nonnative English requests affects the overall politeness value of the requests. At this stage it can only be concluded that the requests produced by the learners may have been more standard and perhaps slightly less idiomatic than those produced by the native English respondents.

6.5 Lexical/phrasal modification

As was discussed in the previous chapter, differences were found in the amount of lexical/phrasal modification that respondents included in their requests. No significant differences were found between the native English and the native Dutch requests. However, the nonnative English respondents were found to have underused lexical/phrasal modifiers. In this section the focus will be on an analysis of the types of lexical/phrasal modifiers that respondents included in their requests.

Originally, seven categories of lexical/phrasal downgraders were included in the coding scheme, which was based on previous research (notably Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b; Trosborg, 1995). Two of these categories, cajolers and hedges did not occur in the data. Table 6.7 shows the distribution of the other categories for all groups of respondents. The favourite lexical/phrasal modifier in the nonnative English group is politeness marker, *please*, which was used almost to the exclusion of other modifiers, especially by the secondary school respondents (NE1: 79.5%, NNE2: 71.8%). In comparison, the native speakers of English used *please* considerably less often, although it was clearly the most favourite modifier in the secondary school group (NE1: 50.6%, NE2: 29.8%). In the Dutch data, the politeness marker *alsjeblieft* or *alstublieft* occurred infrequently (ND1: 11.9%, ND2: 7.6%).

Table 6.7 Distribution of lexical downgraders; all groups

	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		Total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 politeness marker	216	77	310	257	65	57	982
%	50.6	29.8	79.5	71.8	11.9	7.6	36.0
2 downtoner	20	22	25	27	169	295	558
%	4.7	8.5	6.4	7.5	31.1	39.4	20.5
3 understater	100	86	18	26	274	362	866
%	23.4	33.3	4.6	7.3	50.4	48.3	31.8
4 subjectivizer	65	57	33	44	32	25	256
%	15.2	22.1	8.5	12.3	5.9	3.3	9.4
5 consultative device	26	16	4	4	4	10	64
%	6.1	6.2	1.0	1.1	0.7	1.3	2.3
n	427	258	390	358	544	749	2726
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The second category, *downtoners*, includes those particles that give a request a slightly more tentative 'ring', thus lowering the impositive force. Examples of downtoners are English *maybe* and Dutch *misschien* ('maybe'). It appears that both groups of Dutch native speakers used a fairly high proportion of downtoners (ND1: 31.1%, ND2: 39.4%). They were not used very often by the native English respondents (NE1: 4.7%, NE2: 8.5) or the nonnative English respondents (NNE1: 6.4%, NNE2: 7.5%).

The third category of downgraders, *understaters*, was clearly highly frequent in the native Dutch data (ND1: 50.4%, ND2: 48.3%). Understaters can perhaps best be characterized as 'belittling' devices, since they are typically particles that seemingly reduce the effort or time that would be required from the hearer in carrying out the request. Typical examples are English *just* and Dutch *even* ('just') or *heel even* ('very just'). They were also fairly frequent in the native English data (NE1: 23.4%, NE2: 33.3%), but not as it turns out in the learner data though (NNE1: 4.6%, NNE2: 7.3%).

The fourth category, *subjectivizers*, includes phrases in which the speaker expresses his personal opinion, attitude or a degree of pessimism with respect to the request such as in *I'm afraid* or Dutch *Ik vroeg me af* ('I wondered'). It turns out that subjectivizers were not frequent in the Dutch native speaker data (ND1: 5.9%, ND2: 3.3%), but were used in a somewhat higher proportion by the learners of English (NNE1: 8.5%, NNE2: 12.3%). They were comparatively more frequent in the native English data, where the university students used the highest proportion of subjectivizers of all groups (NE2: 22.1%), with the secondary school pupils as a kind of 'second best' compared to the other groups with 15.2%.

Consultative devices, which made up 2.3 per cent of all lexical modifiers, mainly occurred in the native English data. A consultative device is a phrase in which the speaker asks the hearer's opinion with respect to the request. By thus consulting the addressee the hearer, the speaker indicates that compliance is not a given, thereby reducing the imposition on the addressee of the request. In the English data, two types of consultative

devices were found, 'do you think' and 'is there any chance' (examples (31a-b), whereas the nonnative English respondents only used 'do you think' (example (31c)) .

- (31) *report*
- a. *Do you think you could give me a hand?* (NE1)
neighbour
 - b. *Is there any chance you could pick up the kids from football practice?* (NE2)
supermarket
 - c. *Do you think I can go in front of you?* (NNE1)
campaign
 - d. *Ik weet niet of jij dat voor mij kan doen?* (ND2)
(‘I don’t know if you can do that for me?’)

The native Dutch respondents mainly used ‘ik weet niet of’ (‘I don’t know if’) (example (31d)). As the total number of consultative devices was rather low, they will not be discussed in detail below. The remainder of this section will be devoted to a discussion of the other categories of lexical/phrasal downgraders.

6.5.1 Politeness markers: please and *alsjeblijft/alstublijft*

In order to discover whether respondents varied their use of politeness markers across situations relative frequencies were calculated for *please/alsjeblijft* across different situation types (Table 6.8). It turns out that politeness markers were not evenly distributed over all situations, but that most occurred in the ‘homework’ and ‘party’ situations. The Dutch native speakers also used a high proportion of *alsjeblijft* in the ‘supermarket’ situation and the ‘overtime’ situation.

The finding that *please*, and to a lesser extent Dutch *alsjeblijft*, both politeness markers *par excellence*, were used most frequently in fairly informal contexts, is in line with findings in other studies. House (1989) in her analysis of *please* and German *Bitte* found that these politeness markers serve a special, double function. She suggests that their politeness value varies according to different situations and collocation with different request strategies. She found that in standard situations, characterized by transparent role relations and rights and obligations of speaker and hearer, politeness markers often co-occurred with imperatives and strategies referring to preconditions. In nonstandard situations, where role relations are less well-defined, they tended not to co-occur with strategies referring to preconditions. She suggests that in standard situations, where requestive intent is often signalled by relatively direct strategies, politeness markers have indeed a mitigating effect. In non-standard situations, however, where a high degree of indirectness is the rule and where the requestive intent of the request strategy is less transparent, politeness markers such as ‘please’ have the opposite effect, i.e. make the request less polite, precisely because of this ‘request signalling function’.

The findings in this study seem to confirm House’s (1989) findings with respect to the use of politeness markers in standard and nonstandard situations. Both ‘homework’ and ‘party’ were informal, standard situations in which query preparatory strategies co-occurred with the use of *please*. Moreover, although imperatives were few and far

between in absolute numbers, half of the imperatives that did occur (13 out of a total of 27) were used in either of these two situations, usually in combination with *please*.

Table 6.8 Distribution of politeness markers *please* and *alsjeblieft/alstublieft* in different situations

	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		Total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 homework	27	20	45	31	10	13	146
%	12.5	26.0	14.5	12.1	15.4	22.8	14.9
2 report	24	7	24	20	4	3	82
%	11.1	9.1	7.4	7.8	6.2	5.3	8.4
3 travel	15	7	15	14		1	52
%	6.9	9.1	4.8	5.4		1.8	5.3
4 lunch	17	6	36	19	6	3	87
%	7.9	7.8	11.6	7.4	9.2	5.3	8.9
5 neighbour	8		19	18	3	3	51
%	3.7		6.1	7.0	4.6	5.3	5.2
6 campaign	11	3	22	18	3	2	59
%	5.1	3.9	7.1	7.0	4.6	3.5	6.0
7 supermarket	15	4	21	16	14	6	76
%	6.9	5.2	6.8	6.2	21.5	10.5	7.7
8 paper	17	6	21	23	4	5	76
%	7.9	7.8	6.8	8.9	6.2	8.8	7.7
9 party	25	8	36	28	6	9	112
%	11.6	10.4	11.6	10.9	9.2	15.8	11.4
10 overtime	13		18	17	8	7	63
%	6.0		5.8	6.6	12.3	12.3	6.4
11 pensioner	21	7	30	27	6	4	95
%	9.7	9.1	9.7	10.5	9.2	7.0	9.7
12 customs	23	9	24	26	1	1	84
%	10.6	11.7	7.7	10.1	1.5	1.8	8.5
n	216	77	310	257	65	57	982
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

The nonnative speakers of English do not seem to have varied the use of politeness marker 'please' differently than the native speakers of English, although in overall terms, as was discussed above, they tended to use it more frequently. The distribution of politeness markers in the Dutch data is largely similar to that in the other two groups with the exception of a relatively frequent use of politeness markers in the 'overtime' situation and the 'supermarket' situation in particular. A possible explanation for the high use of politeness markers is that the native Dutch respondents assessed contextual factors differently than the other respondents. The analysis of the judgement task in the next chapter will reveal whether this was indeed the case.

6.5.2 Downtoners

Apart from using specific politeness markers to minimize the imposition of the request on the hearer, speakers can also reduce the impositive force of the request by using modal particles. The function of downtoners as a politeness strategy is that they enable the speaker to impose less forcefully on the hearer by phrasing the request more tentatively. Common downtoners are particles such as *perhaps*, *possibly* and Dutch *misschien* ('maybe') and *eventueel* ('possibly'). The distribution of different categories of downtoners is presented in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9 Distribution of downtoners; all groups

	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 maybe/ perhaps/ misschien	7	4	22	18	155	270	476
	35.0	18.2	88.0	66.7	91.7	91.5	85.3
2 possibly / eventueel	13	12		5	7	6	43
	65.0	54.5		18.5	4.1	2.0	7.7
3 actually / eigenlijk		4			5	3	12
		18.2			3.0	1.0	2.2
4 by any chance/ toevallig		1.0		2.0		4.0	7
		4.5		7.4		1.4	1.3
5 other		1	3	2	2	12	20
		4.5	12.0	7.4	1.2	4.1	3.6
n	20	22	25	27	169	295	558
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

As was discussed above, the native Dutch respondents made frequent use of downtoners, but downtoners rarely occurred in the native English or the nonnative English data. In the Dutch native speaker data, downtoner *misschien* ('maybe') accounted for around 90 per cent of the downtoners. Other downtoners were *eventueel* ('possibly'), which only occurred in 7.7% of all cases, *eigenlijk* ('actually'), and *toevallig* ('by any chance'). It is interesting to note that, despite the high use of *misschien* in Dutch, the nonnative speakers of English did not use the English equivalent in any great length in their English requests. The most frequently used downtoner in the native English group was *possibly*, which, as was discussed earlier, is probably linked to the higher use of negation and tag questions in the native English group (examples 32a-c). In the nonnative English group *possibly* only occurred in the university group. Both groups of nonnative English respondents preferred *maybe*, if they used any lexical modifiers at all (33a-b):

The learners of English rarely used understaters at all, but if they did, also preferred *just*. The low occurrence of understaters suggests that they might lack the necessary (English) means to do so. As was mentioned earlier, Dutch *even* frequently co-occurred with downtoner *misschien*, such as in (34):

- (34) *report*
Zou jij misschien vanavond tijd hebben om het verslag even door te lezen?
 ('Would you perhaps have time tonight to just read through the report?') (ND1)

The fourth category in the table, *diminutive endings*, is typical of Dutch. By adding a diminutive ending to lexical items central in the request, speakers can achieve an 'understating' effect, because the impression is created that the hearer would not have to invest a great deal of effort in carrying out the request. Typical examples of this use of diminutives are (35a-b):

- (35) *lunch*
 a. *Zou u mij misschien kunnen helpen met deze pakketjes?* (ND2)
 ('Could you maybe help me with these small parcels?')
homework
 b. *..., dus of je me even mee kan helpen met mijn werkstukje.* (ND1)
 ('..., so if you could just help me with my small project.')

The conclusion that can be drawn with respect to understaters is that although both native speaker groups, the Dutch group in particular, used a fair number of understaters, the learners did not.

6.5.4 Subjectivizers

Around ten per cent of all lexical/phrasal modifiers were *subjectivizers*, in which speakers express their own personal feelings, opinions or attitudes with respect to the requested action. Characteristic phrases are *I was wondering if*, *I'm afraid* and Dutch *Ik vroeg me af of* ('I wondered if'). As is shown in Table 6.11, the favourite subjectivizer in the native English group was clearly *wonder*, which accounted for 75 per cent of all lexical modifiers. In the majority of requests *wonder* was also marked for tense and aspect (*I was wondering if ...*).

Another frequently used *subjectivizer* was *I don't suppose*, which derives its mitigating effect from the pessimistic attitude expressed by the hearer with respect to fulfilment of the request. The favourite subjectivizer in the native Dutch group was *vragen of* ('ask if') (ND1: 65.6%; ND2: 76.0%), although they also used *afvragen of* ('wonder if') (ND1: 12.5%, ND2: 12.0%). The nonnative speakers of English also preferred *wonder if* (NNE1: 51.5, NNE2: 68.2%), but they also used *ask if* frequently, which only occurred occasionally in the native English data (NNE1: 33.3%, NNE2: 22.7%). The relatively high occurrence of *ask if* in the nonnative English group may have been due to transfer from their native language Dutch.

Table 6.11 Distribution of subjectivizers; all groups

	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		total
	NE1	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2	
1 wonder / afvragen	45	44	17	30	4	3	143
%	69.2	77.2	51.5	68.2	12.5	12.0	55.9
2 ask (if) / vragen (of)		1	11	10	21	19	62
%		1.8	33.3	22.7	65.6	76.0	62.0
3 I'm afraid / ik ben bang	1	1	1				3
%	1.5	1.8	3.0				3.0
4 I don't suppose / ...	19	10					29
%	29.2	17.5					29.0
5 I don't know if / ik weet niet of				2	1	1	4
%				1.5	3.1	4.0	4.0
6 other		1	4	2	6	2	15
%		1.8	12.1	4.5	18.8	8.0	15.0
total	65	57	33	44	32	25	256
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

There were no marked differences between the two groups of learners, although the university respondents displayed a slightly higher preference for *wonder* than the secondary school respondents. The difference between the verbs *wonder* and *ask* is that the former expresses a more tentative and hesitant attitude on the part of the speaker than the latter and would therefore seem more appropriate in (polite) requests. Although this might explain the high proportion of *wonder* in the native English data, it does not, however, explain the preference of the Dutch native speakers for *vragen*. Although Dutch *afvragen* and *vragen* differ along the same dimension as their English translation equivalents, the Dutch native speakers do not seem to share the preference of the English for the more tentative verb. It did turn out that *vragen* rarely occurred in its unmarked form, *Ik vraag u of ...* ('I ask you if'), but more often than not in combination with modals and conditionals, as in *Ik zou u willen vragen of...* ('I would like to ask you if'), which might indicate that Dutch native speakers preferred to use syntactic devices over lexical variation here to modify the impact of their requests.

6.5.5 Conclusion

The most important conclusion with respect to the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders is that the learners of English tended to use politeness marker '*please*' as a kind of multi-purpose lexical modifier. A tentative explanation for this is that they may have simply lacked other lexical/phrasal means to modify their request strategies. Although native speakers of English also used a relatively high proportion of politeness markers, they also made more use of other lexical/phrasal modifiers. The requests produced in this group

Clearly, the majority of external modifiers used consisted of grounders, which accounted for 59.7% of the total. A second overall impression is that there are no marked differences between the three groups of respondents with respect to preferences for one category over another. Results for the individual categories of external modifiers will be discussed in the next section.

6.6.1 Precommitment and preparators

The first two categories in Table 6.12, precommitment getters and preparators, are quite similar in that both tend to occur in pre-'head act' position, i.e. before the content of the request has become transparent. Both types of supportive moves 'pave the way' for the actual request, but vary in degree of explicitness. A preparator such as *Could I ask you a question?* functions as a mere signalling device to indicate that the hearer's attention is required. However, a precommitment getter, such as *Could I ask you a favour?*, can be regarded as a first attempt at getting the hearer's commitment, which makes it a slightly less polite modifier than a preparator. Precommitment getters were used infrequently (2.8%), whereas preparators made up just under 10 per cent of all external modifiers.

The preparators found in this study ranged from the more standard phrases such as *Could I ask you a question?* and *Are you busy* to more implicit ways of 'preparing' the hearer such as *Just the person I was looking for* or Dutch *Wat ben ik blij dat ik u even tref* ('Am I glad to see you!'). Precommitment getters in the English data were mainly of the *Could you do me a favour?* type, the Dutch translation equivalent of which rarely showed up in the Dutch requests. Dutch respondents preferred to ask for 'help' rather than 'favours' as in *Zou je me kunnen helpen?* ('Could you help me?'). This difference may be due to the fact that the Dutch word 'gunst' as in *Mag ik je/u om een gunst vragen* ('May I ask you a favour?') has a more formal ring to it and is therefore more characteristic of written language than the English translation equivalent. Learners of English only asked for 'favours' in a minority of precommitment getters, but, like the Dutch native speakers, preferred asking for 'help'. The somewhat higher preference for asking for 'help' rather than for 'favours' may have been due to interference from Dutch.

Respondents frequently modified preparators and precommitment getters internally with syntactic and lexical phrasal downgraders (36a-c):

- (36) *paper*
 a. *Sandra, I was wondering if I could ask a favour.* (NE 2)
report
 b. *Hoi, ik heb even een vraagje.* (ND1)
 ('Hi, I've just got a small question')
homework
 c. *Dad, could you do me a little favour?* (NNE1)

In the first example (36a) the precommitment supportive move is mitigated rather heavily with both lexical/phrasal and syntactic modifiers. Example (36b) also illustrates the preference in Dutch for understaters mentioned earlier in the discussion of lexical/phrasal modification. The precommitment supportive move in (36c) is probably a good example

of a learner who is applying Dutch 'understating techniques' in English. Since English, unlike Dutch, does not have diminutive endings, the next best thing was to 'belittle' the favour that was being asked. Internal modification of supportive moves was not included in the coding scheme of the present study, which means a detailed analysis cannot be presented at this stage.

6.6.2 Grounders

The largest category of supportive moves was beyond doubt that of *grounders*, modifiers in which speakers give reasons, explanations, or justifications for their requests. The position of grounders in requests is relatively free, for they can either precede or follow the head act in the request utterance. Grounders were clearly the most frequently selected external modifier. If we look at the proportions of this category for the three groups individually, it turns out that there are only minor differences. There was some, though not very marked variation across situations. Respondents had a tendency to use relatively elaborate grounders for requests in institutional contexts, but fairly short and simple versions in the non-institutional contexts, especially in making requests to members of the family. Typical examples of grounders in these contexts are (37a-b):

(37) *homework*

a. *Dad, could you give us a hand with my maths, please ... I'm finding it really hard.* (NE2)

report

b. *Mister Hopkins, I just finished my report on my work experience and as it has been handed in by my university tutor tomorrow, I would ask you if you could be so kind to approve of it or to read it tonight, so I will be able to hand it in tomorrow. Would you please do that for me?* (NNE1)

Apparently, as the situations got more formal more explanation and justification for the request was felt to be appropriate.

Although the function of all supportive moves is to gain compliance from the hearer, the categories discussed so far might all be characterized as 'non-coercive' strategies, as they are fairly neutral compliance gaining tactics that merely serve to introduce, explain or justify the request to the hearer. In addition, there is a second group of supportive moves, which includes techniques that are slightly more 'persuasive', in that they rely on exerting varying degrees of 'pressure' on the hearer to comply with the request concerned. These more persuasive strategies will be discussed in the next section.

6.6.3 Disarmers, rewards, appreciation

What the three supportive moves in this group have in common is that they all seem to rely on what might be called 'gentle persuasion', this as opposed to, for example, threats, which constitute rather more forceful tactics. Disarmers are expressions that allow speakers to openly admit the imposition and/or indicate that they would prefer not to make the request. The mitigating function of disarmers is that the speaker is 'heard' to

have carefully and hence, 'politely', considered the hearer's position. Disarmers accounted for the highest proportion of supportive moves in this group of 'persuasive strategies' (12.8%). The disarmers found in the data varied from relatively standard formulae such as *I'm sorry to bother/trouble you but ...* and *I'm sorry to have to ask you this...* to slightly more creative versions. The examples in (38a-i) are a selection of disarmers encountered in requests for the three groups of respondents.

- (38) a. *Sorry to bother you dad, but ...* (NE2)
 b. *I know it's a bit cheeky-like, but ...* (NE1)
 c. *Sandra, I know this is a lot to ask, but ...* (NE1)
 d. *I do realize how late it is this evening, but ...* (NE1)
 e. *Sir, I know this is a really, really odd question, but ...* (NNE1)
 f. *Oh hello, I'm sorry but I ... can I bother you with a question?* (NNE2)
 g. *Ja, sorry, ik vind het heel vervelend om u hiermee lastig te vallen, maar ...* (ND2)
 ('Yes, sorry, I really hate to have to bother you with this, but ...')
 h. *Pap, ik vind het echt kei lullig, maar ...* (ND1)
 ('Dad, I find it really shitty, but ...')
 i. *Ja, sorry dat ik je op de eerste dag al lastig moet vallen met dit soort onbenulligheid, maar ...* (ND2)
 ('Yes, sorry I have to bother you on your first day with this sort of trivial stuff, but ...')

An essential element of disarmers, as becomes clear from the examples, is the speaker's 'regret' at having to make the request. In some cases, as in example (38f), disarmers were combined with preparators to introduce the request.

Another 'persuasive' strategy is for the speaker to promise a reward upon fulfilment of the request by the hearer. Reward modifiers did not occur very often (3.6%). The promised rewards were quite varied and ranged from services offered in return and extra pocket-money to less material rewards, such as in the last example in (39a-c):

- (39) *neighbour*
 a. *... ik wil toch vragen of u het dan een keertje deze week wilde doen en dan doe ik het wel de volgende twee weken.* (ND1)
 ('... so I still want to ask if you just this once ... wanted to do it this week and then I'll do it the next two weeks.')
party
 b. *Goh Manon, zou jij dat niet kunnen doen? Krijg je wel volgende week extra zakgeld.* (ND2)
 ('Gosh Manon, couldn't you do that? You'll get some extra pocket money next week.')
pensioner
 c. *Excuse me young man, could you please let me sit there. 'Cause it would be very kind of you. You'll be repaid in heaven.* (NE1)

The third and final category of persuasive strategies, appreciation, includes expressions in which speakers indicate how pleased they would be if the hearer were to carry out the

request. Expressions of appreciation typically occurred towards the end of the request utterance, often almost as a reinforcement of the head act of the request. The function of these expressions is somewhat complex, as they seem to have both a mitigating as well as an aggravating effect. On the one hand, they serve as politeness strategies in which the speaker thanks the hearer in advance for carrying out the desired action. On the other hand, however, they sometimes seem to serve as upgraders, since the implication of a refusal on the part of the hearer would be openly disregarding the speaker's wishes. Expressions of appreciation were not frequent in the data (4.1%), but were used by all respondents. English expressions of appreciation were mainly *I'd be very grateful*, or *I'd appreciate it* (40a-c).

(40) *lunch*

- a. *Could you give me a hand, please? All my colleagues have gone to lunch but I still have to do fifty more parcels, so if you give me a hand I can go to lunch too. I will appreciate it.* (NNE1)
- b. *Hi Helen, I wonder if you could help me with this...with these three more parcels. You see, all my colleagues are down to the canteen and I have to make...finish this job before I can go with them, so I wonder if you could help me? It would really mean a lot to me, you know.* (NNE1)
- c. *Hello, Mrs Blackwell. They've all gone down to the canteen. You wouldn't give me a hand with this, so I can quickly hurry up. I'd be ever so grateful. Thanks.* (NE1)

6.6.4 Cost minimizers

The final category of external modifiers is that of cost minimizers, the function of which is similar to that of the lexical minimizers understaters and downtoners. In order to persuade a hearer to carry out the desired action, a speaker can, implicitly or explicitly, try to minimize the effort that might be involved in carrying out the request. Cost minimizers were used by all groups, with native speakers of English employing them more frequently than learners of English. They were used most frequently in the neighbour and supermarket situation. In the neighbour situation cost minimizers involved indicating to the neighbour that no effort was involved as the kids were already in the car and the tickets and everything else had been arranged (41a). In the supermarket situation respondents often used rather explicit cost minimizers, with exact specifications of the time it would cost the addressee, such as in (41b):

(41) *neighbour*

- a. *Hello Joyce, I know I promised to take our children to see a film and for a hamburger, but I just got a very important call to go to a meeting, so I can't make it. Would you mind to take them? I already bought the tickets and the kids are all waiting in the car. I'd really appreciate it.* (NNE1)
- b. *Excuse me, do you think I could possibly push in front of you? I've only got one bottle of milk, it's gonna take me two seconds to get through and I'm really late.* (NE2)

6.7 Discussion and conclusion

The overall picture that has emerged from the discussion of the results of the production task in this and the previous chapter is that respondents predominantly chose conventionally indirect strategies to formulate their requests and only incidentally resorted to direct request strategies. Nonconventionally indirect strategies, hints, were rarely used at all. This applies both to the English and the Dutch respondents who formulated requests in their native language, but also to the Dutch respondents who formulated requests in English.

The low use of direct request strategies mirrors findings in other request studies, particularly those examining English requests. In the CCSARP project, the native English data revealed the lowest proportion of direct strategies (9.8%) compared with the French, Spanish and Hebrew data, where proportions of direct strategies ranged from 24% for French direct requests to 39.6% for Hebrew direct requests (Blum-Kulka, 1989).

Learners of English have been found to differ from native speakers in their use of direct strategies. For example, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) analysed requests produced by (mid-intermediate) learners of English from a variety of backgrounds, among which Korean, Japanese, Turkish and French learners, and found that around 30 per cent of the learners' requests were formulated with direct strategies as opposed to 10 per cent of the native speakers' requests. Japanese learners of English, and beginners and intermediate learners in particular, have been found to use higher proportions of direct strategies than native speakers of English (Fukushima, 1996; Tanaka & Kawade, 1982). More advanced (Danish and German) learners have been found to approach native English norms more closely, although they were still found to use more direct strategies than native speakers of English (House & Kasper, 1987; Trosborg, 1995)

Although most request studies report on the use of the overall category of direct strategies, only few studies present detailed accounts for the different categories of direct strategies. Those studies that have analysed the use of different categories of direct strategies generally report results similar to those found in the present study. In the CCSARP project the native English respondents used imperatives infrequently, as did the learners of English, especially compared to speakers of Hebrew, French or Spanish (Blum-Kulka, 1989; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Kasper, 1989). One of the few studies reporting relatively high percentages of imperatives in English requests is Trosborg (1995), who found that both her native English and her native Danish respondents used imperatives in around 10 per cent of all requests. She also found that her advanced Danish learners of English used imperatives in similar frequencies as the native speakers of English, but that the less proficient learners clearly used fewer. The relatively high use of imperatives in Trosborg's study may have been due to the fact that respondents were asked to produce longer stretches of discourse, which often included multiple requestive moves. In multiple-request sequences, where some of the requests may be more indirect, the use of imperatives may be more appropriate in English, since much of the requestive 'ground' has been prepared in the preceding moves. In single-turn requests, such as the ones collected in the present study, imperatives are

rare in English, but have been found to be more acceptable in, for example, Spanish or Hebrew (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Le Pair, 1997). Le Pair (1997), who used the Spanish version of the oral production task used in the present study, found that his Spanish native speakers produced imperatives in almost 10 per cent of all requests (8.7%).

The use of performatives is not generally discussed in great detail in studies focussed on analysing oral requests, presumably because, as in the present study, they are infrequently used to formulate oral requests. Trosborg (1995) found that the native speakers of English in her study did not use any performatives, whereas her learners used performatives in negligible numbers. Studies examining written communication have reported higher percentages of performatives in requests. Yli Jokipii (1994) found that around 20% of her Finnish letters, but only 3% of her English letters, were formulated with performative verbs. Van Mulken (1999) reported an exceptionally high number of requests (52%) formulated with performative verbs in highly formal Dutch letters of request addressed to a board of examiners. These findings suggest that the use of performatives is restricted, at least in English and Dutch, to highly formal written means of communication, rather than oral communication. Findings from the present study seem to corroborate this.

Obligation statements were infrequently used in the present study, which is again in line with findings in most other studies. In the CCSARP requests, obligation statements were generally restricted to one particular situation, 'policeman', which involved a police officer asking someone to move their car, a situation which clearly warrants the use of these very direct and almost 'command-like' requests (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). Trosborg (1995) found that none of the requests produced by the native speaker groups were obligation statements and that the learners of English used obligation statements only occasionally (and often inappropriately). In the present study, both native speakers and learners seem to have avoided using obligation statements, most likely because none of the situations in the production task, except perhaps the 'customs' situation, warranted the use of these highly authoritative request formulas.

The most frequent direct strategies were want statements, the majority of which were statements of speaker's wishes or desires, rather than need statements. Trosborg (1995) found that the less proficient learners of English in her study tended to overuse these statements of speaker's wishes in particular, and, in addition, that they often used them inappropriately compared with the native speakers. The learners tended to use statements of speaker's wishes as initial requests in longer stretches of discourse. By contrast, both groups of native speakers, who used them less frequently, tended to use them as second or third requests, rather than as initial requests. In other words, the learners were found to use want statements rather inappropriately and bluntly. In the present study, no such overuse with respect to want statements was found, although some of the unmodified want statements produced in the learner group may also have been relatively blunt according to native English standards.

Finally, suggestions were mainly found in the nonnative English and the native Dutch data and were mostly formulated as 'you'-suggestions, rather than as 'we'-suggestions'.

In Trosborg's (1995) study, suggestions occurred in negligible numbers in all respondent groups, although the native English respondents produced more (2.4%) than the native speakers of English in the present study. The fact that both the learners of English and the native Dutch respondents in the present study used suggestions in relatively equal numbers, suggests that the learners may have been influenced by their L1, but the total number of suggestions is obviously too low to validate this.

Generally speaking, however, the learners of English seem to have been quite successful in not formulating direct requests, since, just like the native English and the native Dutch respondents, they preferred to use more indirect means in getting their message across.

Indirect strategies

The basis for a more detailed discussion of conventionally indirect strategies in the discussion below will be Blum-Kulka's (1989) detailed account of cross-cultural variation in terms of Clark's (1979) distinction between conventionality of means and conventionality of form, where the former refers to the strategies/substrategies commonly used in a language to formulate indirect requests and the latter to the linguistic forms commonly used. Blum-Kulka (1989) reported cross-cultural variation in the degree of conventionality of indirect requests for English, French, Spanish and Hebrew. In all four languages the strategy of referring to the ability condition was found to be the most conventional strategy, whereas cross-cultural variation was observed with respect to the degree of conventionality of referring to the willingness condition and referring to the non-obviousness condition. In Australian English, for example, non-obviousness strategies turned out to be more conventional than willingness strategies, whereas in Canadian French, willingness strategies were found to be more conventional than non-obviousness strategies. Findings from the present study suggest that, to some extent, Dutch and English differ with respect to conventionality of the three substrategies of conventional indirectness, but also with respect to conventionality of form.

Judging from the low number of non-obviousness strategies in both the Dutch and the English data, referring to the non-obviousness condition does not seem to be a highly conventional request strategy in either English or Dutch. As was reported earlier, in English this strategy was most frequently realized by 'will/would you' requests. As was discussed earlier, the classification of English 'will/would you' requests has been problematic. Some studies have subsumed these requests under willingness strategies (e.g., Trosborg, 1995), whereas others have classified them as non-obviousness strategies (e.g., Takahashi, 1992, 1995). Others still have classified them as both (Blum-Kulka, 1989). Regardless of whether English 'will/would you' requests express volition or prediction, however, they do not seem to constitute highly conventional request forms in English. If we look at the requests produced by the learners, the intermediate learners were found to have used a relatively high proportion of 'will/would you' requests compared with the native speakers of English. This suggests that this group of learners may have slightly misjudged the conventionality of these requests. A highly speculative explanation in view of the low total number 'will/would' requests is that the less

proficient learners may have been inclined to use 'will/would' requests in English because they believed them to be translation equivalents of Dutch 'willen' requests, which, judging from the Dutch data, constitute highly conventionalized request forms in Dutch.

Findings with respect to the use of willingness strategies suggest that Dutch and English differ in terms of both conventionality of means and conventionality of form. In both English and Dutch indirect requests can commonly be made by referring to the hearer's willingness, but since the Dutch data revealed a higher proportion of willingness strategies than in the native English data, this suggests that the strategy is more conventional in Dutch than in English. With regard to conventionality of form, Dutch willingness strategies were most commonly formulated with 'willen', which is a direct reference to the hearer's will, whereas in the native English group, the most frequently used linguistic structure was 'do you mind', in which the speaker questions the hearer's objections. Within the native English group itself, however, the secondary school respondents were found to differ from the university respondents with respect to the forms used to formulate requests. In the secondary school group, respondents displayed an equal preference for 'do you mind' requests and 'can/could I' permission requests. This suggests that conventionality may not just vary across cultures, but also across age groups. In Blum-Kulka's (1989) study 'do you mind' requests were the third most frequently used request form (after 'can/could' and 'will/would') in the English native speaker data. In the present study, however, the native speakers of English used considerably more 'do you mind' requests than 'will/would' requests, which implies a reversed rank order.

If we look at the willingness strategies produced in the nonnative English group it turns out that the secondary school respondents used the verb 'want' relatively frequently, which made their requests often rather blunt and direct. Willingness strategies with 'want' were rare in the English data. Overuse of 'want' suggests that the learners may have been less aware of the difference in conventionality of forms between Dutch and English than the more advanced learners. The overuse suggests that the learners may have been influenced by their native language, since the Dutch translation equivalent 'willen' turned out to be a highly conventional request form. A different type of overuse was found in the requests produced by the university learners who frequently used the formal request formula 'would you be so kind as to'. Interestingly enough, a similar overuse of this highly formal request was reported by House and Kasper (1987) who found that their German learners used it quite frequently (and inappropriately) in the CCSARP situations, none which called for highly formal requests. House and Kasper report that, when asked, the learners told them they used this request because it was often used in their English classes. It is difficult to say whether a similar explanation applies since the learners in the present study were not asked to comment on their performance. It seems quite plausible, however, that the overuse of this formula may partly be found in the students' formal instruction in English. The university students who participated in the study were all enrolled in a business communication programme. As part of their programme, students are required to take a number of English writing courses, which deal with, among other things, English business correspondence. Consequently, they may have regularly come

across highly formal request structures in, for example, letters of request. Still, although this might explain how they learned, it does not explain why they used them in contexts that called for less formal request structures.

Finally, in both English and Dutch, ability strategies turned out to be highly conventional, as they were used in the vast majority of requests produced by both the English and the Dutch respondents. Both the native Dutch and the native English respondents mainly used 'can/could you' requests to realize this substrategy, as did the learners of English. Other ability strategies were those in which the speaker checks on the hearer's availability (or rather the availability of the hearer's time), 'have time/tijd hebben', which was a more popular structure in the Dutch group than in the other two groups, or those in which the speaker inquired about the possibility of the hearer carrying out the act, 'possible/mogelijk'. The high popularity of 'can/could' requests in both English and Dutch are in line with findings in Blum-Kulka (1989) who found that in English, French, Hebrew and Spanish, conventionality was highest for 'can/could' requests. For the learners of English this clearly presented no problems.

Request modification

In addition to differences in linguistic forms used to realize request strategies, there were also differences in the types of modifiers that respondents used to reduce the impositive force of their requests. The quantitative analysis of request modification discussed in the previous chapter revealed that the learners tended to include fewer lexical and syntactic modifiers in their requests than the native speakers of English. The analysis of modifiers in this chapter revealed that, in addition, the learners also used a narrower range of modifiers than the native English speakers. The learners clearly favoured the use of politeness marker 'please' as a multi-purpose modifier and the past tense modal 'could' as a routine syntactic marker in most requests. The native English requests also frequently included 'please', but in addition, other types of lexical/phrasal modifiers such as understaters and subjectivizers. The native Dutch speakers clearly favoured the use of downtoners and understaters to modify their requests and to a lesser extent, politeness marker 'alsjeblieft'.

Although few request studies have presented detailed accounts of modification patterns, those that have examined request modification have found that, even for advanced learners, request modification is one of the more problematic areas of request realization. Even though advanced learners may be quite successful in choosing appropriate levels of directness in their request strategies, findings almost invariably show that they tend to underuse both lexical and syntactic modification in particular (Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1981, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). House and Kasper (1981) found that German learners of English used less internal modification than native speakers, but also that they employed a narrower range of modifiers than the native English respondents. Likewise, Faerch and Kasper (1989) found that learners tended to use less internal modification overall than the native speakers of English, although they used past tense modals in much the same way as native speakers. In addition, learners were found to have overused politeness marker 'please' and underused other types of

lexical modifiers. Trosborg (1995) found that all three groups of her Danish learners used significantly less syntactic and lexical modification (especially lexical downgraders) than the native speakers in her study, although she did not observe an overuse of 'please'.

Explanations for learners' overuse of politeness marker 'please' have centred on the double role of these markers as both mitigating devices (i.e. they express politeness) and indicators of illocutionary force (i.e. they signal requestive intent) (e.g., House, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987), but also on the fact that politeness markers such as 'please' are (syntactically) less complex in actual use than other types of lexical/phrasal downgraders (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). In other words, politeness markers are 'popular' downgraders among learners because they indicate to the addressee that a request is being made, while conveying a polite attitude at the same time. An additional advantage is that 'please' can be inserted in various positions in the sentence, which means learners do not have to worry about syntactic constraints on the occurrence of, for example, downtoners or understaters. Findings in the present study suggest that relative ease of use may also have been a prime motivator for the learners to use 'please' as multi-purpose politeness marker. It is unlikely that the high occurrence of 'please' may have been due to an influence from Dutch, since the Dutch politeness marker 'alsjeblijft/alstublijft' was comparatively rare in the Dutch requests. Moreover, other studies have found that advanced learners overused 'please' in English even if their native language had no formal equivalent (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989). A more plausible explanation for the overuse of 'please' might be that the learners may lack the proficiency to modify their requests with other lexical/phrasal means.

The relative lack of syntactic modification in the learners' requests may partly have been due to interference from their native language, as the native Dutch respondents used both less syntactic modification and a narrower range of syntactic modifiers than the native English respondents. Again, the learners seem to have used past tense modals as a kind of multi-purpose modifier. This may also partly have been due to the fact that other types of syntactic modifiers, such as combinations of negation and tags are more complex and thus more difficult for learners to master.

No quantitative or qualitative differences were found with regard to the use of external modifiers as mitigating devices for requests. Respondents on average included two external modifiers in their requests, the most favourite external modifier being the supportive move in all groups of respondents. Other studies have reported a tendency, especially in relatively proficient learners to overuse external modifiers in particular, which has been explained as a desire on the part of the learners to 'play it safe' in terms of getting their meaning across (Edmonson & House, 1991; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). No such tendency was found in the present study, as the learners did not use more external modifiers than the native English or the native Dutch respondents.

Chapter 7

The judgement task

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of the judgement task was to examine to what extent respondents' assessments of situational variation in the request contexts may have had an influence on the way they varied the formulation of their requests. To this end, respondents were asked to give their assessments of seven dimensions related to the situational setting and the role constellation between requester and requestee in the request situations. Three of these dimensions, *authority* between speaker and hearer, *familiarity* between speaker and hearer and *formality* of context, corresponded to the independent variables underlying the construction of the situations: power (P), social distance (S) and context (C). The remaining four dimensions, *difficulty* of the request, *right* of the speaker, *obligation* of the hearer and *likelihood* of compliance were only indirectly related to the PSC variables of the production task. As was discussed earlier, these four dimensions constitute so-called request-specific dimensions. Whereas power, social distance and context can be regarded as relatively 'stable' situational variables, the other four dimensions can be regarded as more 'variable' in that they vary depending on the setting in which the request takes place and the type of request. An institutionally defined authority relationship, such as between head department and member of staff, may give a head of a department the right to make requests, but only if these requests are legitimate given the authority relationship between the head of department and the member of staff. Since the four request-specific dimensions have also been found to determine the degree of face-work that requesters may need to invest in their requests, it is likely that differences in assessments of these four dimensions may have implications for request production.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. Firstly, it will discuss if and how groups of respondents differed in their assessments of the situations for which they formulated requests. Secondly, this chapter will discuss if and how respondents' assessments of situational variation can account for similarities and differences in request behaviour as discussed in the previous two chapters.

The first step in the analysis of the results of the judgement task will be to examine whether respondents distinguished between the different situation types of the design of the study (section 7.2). Secondly, the discussion will focus on the other four dimensions of the judgement task, for which situation types were created on the basis of respondents' ratings of these dimensions (section 7.3). Subsequently, variations in assessments of individual situations for each of the seven dimensions of the judgement task will be discussed. This will involve a more fine-grained analysis of ratings on all dimensions for each of the situations separately (section 7.4). Finally, in section 7.5, the results of the judgement task will be related to results of the production task.

7.2 Authority, familiarity and formality

The purpose of this section is to examine to what extent respondents' assessments of *authority*, *familiarity* and *formality* reflect the categorisation of situations according to the PSC design. The analysis of the results of the judgement task for these three dimensions included two consecutive steps. Firstly, reliability analyses for *authority*, *familiarity* and *formality* were carried out to determine the internal consistency of the rating scales for these three dimensions. Secondly, repeated measures analyses were performed to analyse differences between groups of respondents with respect to assessments of the different situation types.

7.2.1 Reliability of authority, familiarity and formality

The reliability analyses for *authority*, *familiarity* and *formality* were performed both for all respondents and situations together, but in addition also for situation types and groups of respondents separately. The results of the reliability analyses, shown in Table 7.1, reveal that the reliability coefficients for different groups of respondents and for different situation types varied considerably.

Table 7.1 Cronbach's α for *authority*, *familiarity* and *formality*

	All respondents	NE	NNE	ND
<i>authority</i>	.50	.52	.61	.34
low speaker	.50	.33	.54	.55
status equal	.58	.60	.72	.29
high speaker	.37	.20	.57	.29
<i>familiarity</i>	.80	.53	.85	.83
acquainted	.63	.55	.68	.59
unacquainted	.82	.69	.84	.86
<i>formality</i>	.62	.65	.63	.60
non-institutional	.61	.67	.52	.58
institutional	.63	.70	.62	.59

(" > .60 printed in bold)

Overall reliability (column 2) varied from 'insufficient' (" α < .60⁸) for *authority*, to 'moderate' for *formality* (.60 < " α < .70) and 'adequate' (" α > .70) for *familiarity*. Reliability coefficients for situation types again varied considerably. As can be seen in Table 7.1, reliability was 'insufficient' for P1, P2 and P3 situations, but ranged from 'moderate' to 'good' for the S1/S2 situations and the C1/C2 situations. Separate reliability analyses were performed for different groups of respondents (for the sake of clarity only for the three 'language' groups under study). As can be observed in Table 7.1, reliability varied both across different groups of respondents and across different

⁸ For a discussion of criteria for reliability coefficients see Van Wijk (2000)

dimensions. *Authority* was rated least consistently in the native Dutch and the native English group, but more consistently in the nonnative English group. *Familiarity* was rated consistently in the nonnative English group but less so in the native English and the native Dutch group. The third dimension, *formality*, was rated most consistently in the native English group and least consistently in the native Dutch group.

Although low reliability coefficients are generally regarded as a sign of low consistency in ratings, they can also have different causes. Rietveld and Van Hout (1993, pp. 207 - 209) give three possible causes for low reliability. Low reliability may be due to a lack of correlation between the ratings of individual raters, which is an indication of inconsistency among raters. However, low reliability may also be due to a lack of variation in the ratings, such as when there is total agreement between raters. A third possible cause for low reliability is interaction between raters and object. In other words, in those instances where raters differ in their judgements due to, for example, different personal backgrounds. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide statistical evidence of the exact causes of the low reliability coefficients found for individual dimensions or individual groups of respondents. The discussion in this chapter will, first of all, focus on an analysis of ratings for situation types, which will reveal to what extent secondary school respondents and university respondents in each of the three 'language' groups differed in their assessments of the situations. In addition, and this is the procedure that is generally followed in the case of low reliability coefficients, ratings for individual items, in this case situations, will be examined separately later on in this chapter (section 7.4). Still, although a more fine-grained analysis of ratings of the dimensions may shed light on possible causes for low reliability, explanations of differences in request production resulting from ratings for those dimensions for which reliability was relatively low, will necessarily be tentative only.

7.2.2 Power vs. authority

The situations used in the production task and the judgement task were scripted to include three possible role relationships between speaker and addressee. In four situations the speaker was in a position of lower status with respect to the addressee (low speaker authority: P1); in four situations speaker and hearer were essentially status equals (status equal: P2); in four situations the speaker was in a position of higher status with respect to the hearer (high speaker authority: P3). In the judgement task respondents were asked to indicate whether speaker or addressee was in a position of authority. In addition, they were asked to indicate the degree of authority. A low rating on authority means that the hearer was felt to be in a position of authority, and conversely, a high rating means the speaker was felt to be in a position of authority.

The first question to be answered was whether respondents' assessments of authority varied across the three situation types. In Table 7.2 mean ratings and standard deviations of *authority* are displayed for all groups of respondents.

Table 7.2 Assessment of authority in different Power situations by all respondents; means and standard deviations

	native English		nonnative English		native Dutch		Total (n= 270)
	NE1 (n= 35)	NE2 (n= 24)	NNE1 (n= 53)	NNE2 (n= 46)	ND1 (n= 49)	ND2 (n= 63)	
	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)
P1: low speaker authority	3.17 (0.97)	2.69 (0.72)	2.59 (0.60)	2.44 (0.78)	2.88 (0.79)	2.48 (0.55)	2.68 (0.76)
P2: status equal	3.60 (0.78)	3.81 (0.29)	3.84 (0.54)	3.93 (0.28)	3.86 (0.38)	3.93 (0.25)	3.85 (0.45)
P3: high speaker authority	4.82 (0.42)	5.04 (0.61)	5.03 (0.77)	5.19 (0.77)	5.11 (0.63)	5.02 (0.54)	5.04 (0.66)

In overall terms, respondents can be said to have distinguished three types of situations. In the 'low speaker authority' situations (P1), the degree of authority attributed to the speaker in the situation was on average lower than in the status equal situations (P2). In the 'high speaker authority' situations (P3), the degree of authority of the speaker was on average higher than in the status equal situations. A repeated measures analysis was performed with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *power* as within-subject factor. The analysis revealed significant interactions for *power* and *language*, but also for *power* and *level* (power*language Wilks' $\eta^2 = .93$, $F(4, 498) = 4.87$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .04$; power*level Wilks' $\eta^2 = .94$, $F(2, 249) = 7.73$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .06$). However, an inspection of the means on the basis of confidence intervals indicated that the interaction between power and language was mainly due to the fact that in low speaker authority situations (P1) the native English respondents attributed significantly more authority to the speaker than the nonnative English respondents. As the interaction plot in Figure 7.1 reveals, all respondents still generally attributed the lowest degree of authority to the speaker in low speaker authority situations (P1).

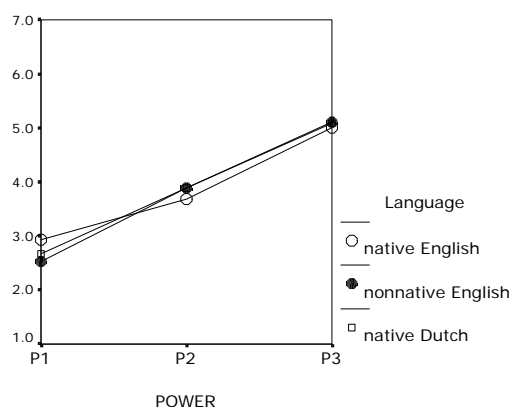


Figure 7.1 Mean ratings of *authority* of speaker for the native English, the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents

In the status equal situations (P2) respondents attributed almost equal authority to both speaker and hearer, whereas in the high speaker authority situations (P3) the speaker was clearly felt to have more authority than the hearer. Differences between P1, P2, and P3 were significant for all three groups of respondents (power Wilks' $\eta^2 = .15$, $F(2, 249) = 702.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .85$).

Similarly, the interaction plot in Figure 7.2 reveals that although interaction with *level* was significant, the secondary school respondents, like the university respondents, generally distinguished three levels of authority of the speaker in the situations. The interaction effect was mainly due to the fact that the secondary school respondents attributed slightly more authority to the speakers in the low speaker authority situations than the university respondents, whereas in the other two situation types they rated the degree of authority of the speaker as slightly lower compared with the university respondents.

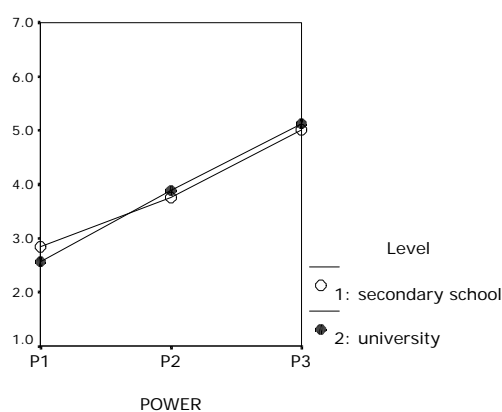


Figure 7.2 Mean ratings of *authority* of speaker for secondary school respondents and university respondents

In summary, it can be concluded that respondents distinguished three different authority relationships in the situations. In the low speaker authority situations, respondents generally attributed less authority to the speaker than in the status equal situations. In the high speaker authority situations the speaker was generally felt to have more authority than in either low speaker authority situations or status equal situations. The native English respondents judged the authority of the speaker in low speaker authority situations as slightly higher than compared with the native Dutch and the nonnative English respondents. Finally, the secondary school respondents were found to have attributed more authority to the speaker in low speaker authority situations than the university respondents.

7.2.3 Social distance vs. familiarity

A similar analysis was carried out for the dimension of *familiarity*, which corresponded to the *social distance* variable of the DCT task. Six situations involved requests between a

speaker and hearer who knew each other (S1 'acquainted' situations). The other six situations described requests between interlocutors who had never met prior to the request (S2 'unacquainted' situations). In the judgement task respondents were asked to rate the degree of familiarity between speaker and hearer on a five-point rating scale. The assumption was that in the acquainted situations the score on the familiarity dimension would be relatively high (> 3) and that in the unacquainted situations this score would be relatively low (< 3). As can be observed in Table 7.3, familiarity was generally rated as relatively high in the acquainted situations (S1) and as relatively low in the unacquainted situations (S2).

Table 7.3 Assessment of familiarity in different Social Distance situations by all respondents; means and standard deviations

	native English		learner English		native Dutch		Total
	NE1 (n= 35)	NE2 (n= 24)	NNE1 (n= 53)	NNE2 (n= 46)	ND1 (n= 49)	ND2 (n= 63)	
	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)
S1: acquainted	4.15 (0.42)	3.99 (0.35)	3.75 (0.41)	4.08 (0.43)	3.74 (0.46)	3.89 (0.39)	3.98 (0.44)
S2: unacquainted	2.60 (0.65)	2.32 (0.49)	2.46 (0.66)	3.02 (0.32)	2.42 (0.74)	2.53 (0.70)	2.56 (0.61)

A repeated measures analysis was performed with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *social distance* as within-subject factor. The analysis revealed a significant interaction for *language* and *social distance*, which means the degree of familiarity in the two situation types was interpreted differently by the three groups of respondents (social distance*language Wilks' $\eta^2 = .94$, $F(2, 259) = 8.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$).

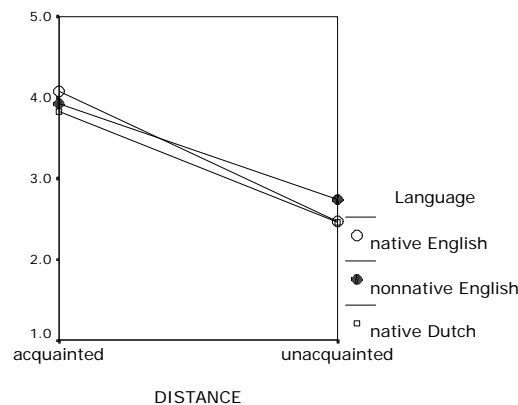


Figure 7.3 Mean ratings of *familiarity* for native English, nonnative English and native Dutch respondents

As the interaction plot in Figure 7.3 reveals, however, respondents in all three groups rated familiarity between requester and requestee higher in the acquainted situations than

in the unacquainted situations (social distance Wilks' $\eta^2 = .18$, $F(1, 259) = 1181.52$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .82$). An inspection of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed that the interaction effect was mainly due to the fact that in the acquainted situations the native English respondents rated the familiarity as higher compared with the native Dutch respondents. In the unacquainted situations a significant difference was found between the nonnative English respondents and the native Dutch respondents in that the nonnative English rated the familiarity between speaker and hearer as higher. Despite these differences, however, it can be concluded that in the acquainted situations familiarity between speaker and hearer was rated as higher than in the unacquainted situations.

7.2.4 Context vs. formality

The third dimension of the judgement task, *formality*, corresponded to the *context* variable of the design. Six requests were set in non-institutional contexts (C1), whereas the other six were set in institutional contexts (C2). In the judgement task respondents were asked to indicate the level of formality of each situation on a five-point rating scale. The assumption was that the non-institutional contexts would be rated as relatively informal (< 3) and that the institutional contexts would be rated as relatively formal (> 3). Mean assessments and standard deviations of *formality* for the two situation types are displayed in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Mean ratings of *formality* in different contexts of the native English, the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents; means and standard deviations

	native English		learner English		native Dutch		Total (n= 270)
	NE1 (n= 35)	NE2 (n= 24)	NNE1 (n= 53)	NNE2 (n= 46)	ND1 (n= 49)	ND2 (n= 63)	
	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)	0 (SD)
C1: institutional	2.40 (0.79)	1.80 (0.36)	1.88 (0.45)	1.72 (0.34)	1.91 (0.56)	1.78 (0.43)	1.89 (0.54)
C2: non-institutional	3.21 (0.71)	3.47 (0.69)	3.48 (0.61)	3.37 (0.54)	3.24 (0.65)	3.56 (0.48)	3.40 (0.61)

As can be observed from Table 7.4, respondents rated the non-institutional contexts as less formal than the institutional contexts. A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *context* as within-subject factor revealed that interaction between *language*, *level* and *context* was significant (context*language*level Wilks' $\eta^2 = .95$, $F(2, 257) = 6.47$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .05$). Interaction plots for the two types of context are displayed in Figure 7.4(a-b).

As becomes clear from the plots, respondents rated the formality of the contexts along similar lines, with the exception of the native English secondary school group. An inspection of the means on the basis of confidence intervals revealed that the native English secondary school respondents judged the non-institutional contexts as more

formal than the secondary school respondents in the other two groups, but also as more formal than any of the three university groups. Despite this difference, however, the institutional contexts were clearly felt to be more formal than the non-institutional contexts (context Wilks' $\eta^2 = .20$, $F(1, 257) = 1025.99$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .80$).

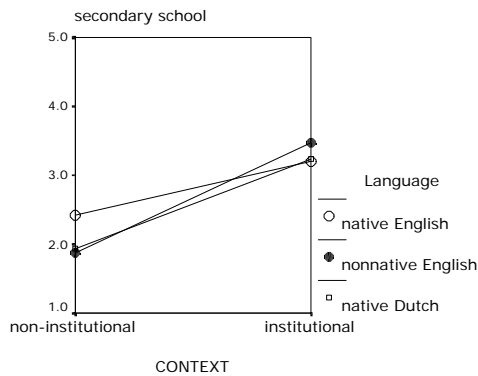


Figure 7.4a Mean ratings of *formality* for secondary school respondents

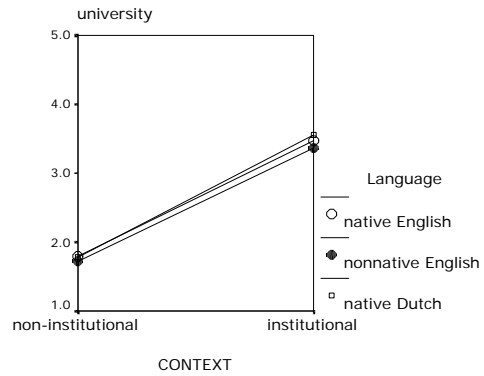


Figure 7.4b Mean ratings of *formality* for university respondents

It can be concluded that respondents generally distinguished between the situation types incorporated in the design. The degree of authority of the speaker in low speaker authority situations was judged to be lower than in the status equal situations and lower still than in the high speaker authority situations. Respondents also felt the degree of familiarity between interlocutors in the acquainted situations was higher than in the unacquainted situations. Furthermore, the institutional contexts were regarded as more formal than the non-institutional contexts. Differences between groups of respondents were found with respect to the way particular situation types had been rated. Most differences concerned the secondary school respondents and university respondents who were occasionally found to have rated the dimensions differently. Cross-cultural variation in interpretations by the native English, the native Dutch and the nonnative English respondents was rare. In interpreting the authority relationship between speaker and hearer, the nonnative English respondents assessed the low speaker authority situations differently than the native English respondents, who rated the authority of the speaker as higher compared with other respondents. Still, it remains yet to be seen to what extent the results for the rating of authority for the situation types can be used to provide plausible explanations for the results of the production task. Since reliability coefficients for *authority* were generally disappointingly low, a more detailed analysis of the ratings for individual situations might be necessary before more solid conclusions with respect to the dimension of *authority* can be drawn. The discussion of individual situations will, however, be preceded by a discussion of factors that also determine variations in request behaviour: *difficulty* of the request, *right* of the speaker to make the request, *obligation* of the hearer to comply with the request and *likelihood* of compliance with the request.

7.3 Assessments of difficulty, rights & obligations and likelihood of compliance

For the remaining four dimensions of the judgement task, *difficulty* of the request, *right* of the speaker, *obligation* of the hearer and *likelihood* of compliance, an a priori division in different situation types was not incorporated in the design. Since one of the purposes of this chapter is to examine to what extent ratings on these four dimensions might be linked to differences in request production, it was decided to create a division in situation types on the basis of factor analyses of respondents' assessments. Respondents' rating scores were used in a principal component analysis, followed by a varimax rotation. For the sake of clarity it was decided to limit the factor analyses to an extraction of two factors. New variables were computed on the basis of the factor scores, which were subsequently used as input for a series of repeated measures analyses performed to examine differences between groups of respondents.

7.3.1 Determining situation types

Firstly, this section will start with a discussion of the factor analyses performed on the ratings of *difficulty*, *right*, *obligation* and *likelihood*. For each of these dimensions a separate factor analysis was performed to examine if an underlying structure could be determined in the way the situations had been judged. As can be observed in Table 7.5 below, the analyses for three of the four dimensions, i.e. *difficulty*, *right* and *obligation*, revealed almost identical loading patterns. For all three dimensions, high loadings on the first and the second factor were found for virtually the same situations. The factor analysis for *likelihood* of compliance revealed high loadings on the first factor for exactly half the situations and high loadings on the second factor for the remaining situations.

With regard to the first three dimensions, the highest loadings on the first factor (> .6) were found for the institutional situations 'paper', 'campaign' and 'lunch'. Slightly lower, but still high loadings were found for other institutional contexts, such as 'report' and 'customs', but, in addition, also for situations where the request was clearly not work-related such as 'pensioner' and 'supermarket'. The loading pattern for the first factors implies that the institutional situations and the unacquainted situations were rated in similar ways with respect to the first three dimensions.

For both *difficulty* and *right*, the factor analyses revealed high loadings on the second factor for the situations 'homework', 'party', 'neighbour' and 'overtime'. What the first three situations have in common is that the requester and requestee know each other relatively well. Both 'homework' and 'party' are requests between parents and children, whereas in the 'neighbour' situation the interlocutors know each other well enough to pick up each other's kids from football practice.

Table 7.5 Factor loadings for *difficulty* of request, *right* of speaker, *obligation* of hearer and *likelihood* of compliance

<i>dimension</i>		factor 1	factor 2	<i>dimension</i>		factor 1	factor 2
<i>difficulty</i>				<i>right</i>			
8	paper	.70		6	campaign	.67	
6	campaign	.64		4	lunch	.63	
2	report	.59		8	paper	.61	
12	customs	.56		11	pensioner	.57	
4	lunch	.55		12	customs	.53	
11	pensioner	.48	.32	2	report	.52	
3	travel	.46	.33	7	supermarket	.50	
7	supermarket	.46		3	travel	.38	
1	homework		.73	9	party		.70
9	party		.68	1	homework		.69
5	neighbour	.32	.64	5	neighbour		.67
10	overtime		.44	10	overtime		.45
Explained variance		22.38	16.91	Explained variance		21.60	15.75
<i>obligation</i>				<i>likelihood</i>			
6	campaign	.69		6	campaign	.66	
8	paper	.67		12	customs	.62	
11	pensioner	.60		8	paper	.61	
4	lunch	.55		3	travel	.48	
2	report	.50		2	report	.43	
7	supermarket	.48	.38	10	overtime	.39	
5	neighbour	.43		9	party		.69
9	party		.69	5	neighbour		.65
1	homework		.64	1	homework		.48
12	customs	.38	-.63	11	pensioner		.47
10	overtime	.38	.44	7	supermarket		.39
3	travel			4	lunch		.33
Explained variance		22.25	13.81	Explained variance		16.49	15.27

Note: for reasons of clarity only factor loadings $> .30^*$ have been printed

What the situations also share is that they describe requests that are quite plausible and imaginable given the contexts. It is, however, more difficult to determine what these three situations have in common with the 'overtime' situation, for which a slightly lower but still significant loading was found. In the 'overtime' situation, the request is made by a head of department, clearly someone in a position of authority, to a member of staff, and the request itself is a legitimate one. A tentative explanation is that these four situations loaded onto the second factor because role relationships between interlocutors are clear and hence interlocutors know what to expect. Role relationships are clear either because familiarity is high, as in the case of 'homework', 'party' and 'neighbour', or because the authority relationship is institutionally defined as in 'overtime'. In other words, what distinguishes these situations from the situations with high loadings on the first factor is clarity and transparency of role relationships between speaker and hearer. In the situations with high loadings on the first factor, it may have been less clear what the role relationship between interlocutors was, either due to low familiarity or to uncertainty

about the authority relationship. On the basis of similarities and differences with respect to the role constellations of the situations, the first factor was labelled 'nonstandard situations', whereas the second factor was labelled 'standard situations'.

The factor analysis for *obligation* revealed a comparable, but less straightforward pattern to the one described above for *difficulty* and *right*. The situations for which high loadings on the first factor were revealed are, again, the institutional contexts and the unacquainted situations, with the exception of the 'neighbour' situation, for which high loadings on both factors were revealed. The loading pattern for the second factor is similar to the one discussed above. The situations with high loadings on the second factor are 'party' and 'homework', but also 'overtime' and 'customs', both of which received high loadings for both factors, which suggests that respondents may have been in two minds about these situations. What caused the negative factor loading for 'customs' is not clear, since although obligation was high for this particular situation, it was relatively high for all four situations. Again, the first factor was labelled 'nonstandard situations', whereas the second factor was labelled 'standard situations'.

Finally, the factor analysis for *likelihood of compliance* revealed high loadings for six situations on the first factor, 'campaign', 'customs', 'paper', 'travel', 'report' and 'overtime'. With the exception of the 'travel' situation, all these situations are institutional contexts. The 'travel' situation is perhaps ambiguous since it is a personal request from the point of view of the speaker, but a work-related request from the point of view of the addressee (the travel agent). In judging the likelihood of compliance, which involves both the speaker's and the hearer's perspective, respondents may have rated the 'travel' request like a work-related request rather than like an everyday request. The situations for which the analysis revealed high loadings on the second factor all involved non-institutional contexts, with the exception of the 'lunch' request. The 'lunch' request may have been interpreted as a personal rather than as a work-related request because the requester asks the requestee for assistance in order to be on time for lunch, which is perhaps a personal rather than a work-related matter. The first factor was labelled 'work-related situations', whereas the second factor was labelled 'everyday' situations.

In summary, the results of the factor analyses suggest, although not entirely conclusively, that two situation types can be distinguished on the basis of respondents' ratings of the difficulty of the request, the right of the speaker to make the request and the obligation of the addressee to comply with the request. The first situation type includes those situations for which role relationships appear to have been less clear than for the situations included in the second situation type. The difference between the two situation types is similar to that found in other studies between 'standard' and 'nonstandard' situations (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Hoppe-Graff, Herrmann, Winterhoff-Spurk & Mangold, 1985; House 1989).

Both Blum-Kulka and House (1989) and House (1989) reported that certain situations in the CCSARP project could be classified as either 'standard' or 'nonstandard' situations. In standard situations, where the role relationships between interlocutors are clearly established, such as for example between policeman and motorist, requesters and requestees know what to expect of each other. In nonstandard situations, characterized by

less clearly-defined role relationships, interlocutors are less certain about their rights and obligations. For the standard situations in the CCSARP project, rights and obligations were considered to be higher and requests less difficult than for the nonstandard situations. Since the results of the factor analysis suggest that the difference between standard and nonstandard situations also applies to the situations used in the present study, the next step in the analysis will be to examine whether the situation types were in fact rated differently in the judgement task.

7.3.2 Reliability for difficulty, right, obligation and likelihood

Reliability analyses were carried out for all four dimensions, both for all situations together, but also for the situation types that resulted from the factor analyses. As can be observed in Table 7.6, overall reliability for all dimensions ranged from moderate to adequate, as did reliability for all dimensions for the different groups of respondents, with the exception of the native Dutch group.

Table 7.6 Cronbach's α for *difficulty*, *right* of speaker, *obligation* of hearer and *likelihood* of compliance ($\alpha > .60$ printed in bold)

	All respondents	NE	NNE	ND
<i>difficulty</i>	.76	.78	.73	.77
nonstandard situations	.72	.72	.72	.73
standard situations	.59	.63	.56	.61
<i>right</i>	.74	.76	.79	.65
nonstandard situations	.70	.71	.79	.55
standard situations	.56	.61	.50	.58
<i>obligation</i>	.63	.75	.61	.57
nonstandard situations	.67	.74	.66	.63
standard situations	.45	.32	.46	.51
<i>likelihood</i>	.61	.65	.67	.53
work-related	.55	.49	.61	.50
everyday	.53	.63	.50	.49

In the native Dutch group, overall reliability for obligation and likelihood was found to be 'insufficient' ($\alpha < .60$). Furthermore, the analyses at the level of the situation types revealed that reliability for ratings of the nonstandard situations was generally higher than reliability for ratings of the standard situations. As was discussed earlier, low reliability may have different causes. In order to investigate whether low reliability may have resulted from variation in judgements between groups of respondents, the analysis will first examine judgements at the level of situation types. The next step will be to examine differences at the level of individual situations.

7.3.3 Difficulty, right, obligation and likelihood of compliance

The assumption was that in the standard situations the right of the speaker and the obligation of the hearer would be rated as relatively high and the difficulty of the request as relatively low. In nonstandard situations, both the right of the speaker and the obligation of the hearer were expected to receive relatively low ratings, whereas difficulty of the request was expected to receive relatively high ratings. Since for likelihood of compliance the factor analysis revealed a distinction in situation types that cut across the standard/nonstandard categories no predictions were made as to how the situations would be rated.

A repeated measures analysis was performed with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *right of the speaker* as within-subject factor. The analysis revealed that the interaction between situation type and *level* was significant, which implies that the secondary school respondents as a group interpreted the requests differently than the university respondents (*right*level* Wilks' $\eta^2 = .94$, $F(1, 257) = 15.85$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$). Contrary to assumptions, the secondary school respondents felt that the speakers in the standard situations had less right to make the request than the speakers in the nonstandard situations. More in line with the assumptions, the university respondents felt that the right of the speaker in the standard situations was highest (Figure 7.5).

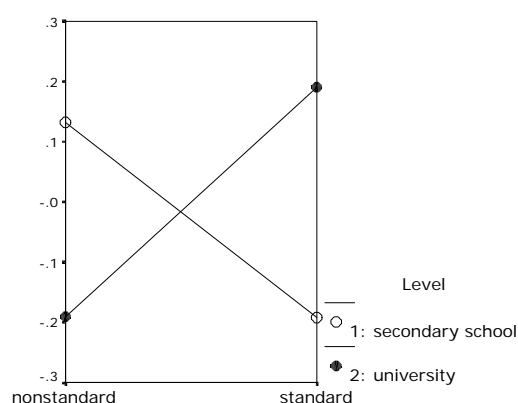


Figure 7.5 Mean ratings of *right of speaker* for *level*

A repeated measures analysis was performed with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *obligation of the speaker* as within-subject factor. The analysis revealed significant interactions for both *language* and *situation type* (*obligation*language* Wilks' $\eta^2 = .97$, $F(2, 259) = 4.62$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .03$) and *level* and *situation type* (*obligation*level* Wilks' $\eta^2 = .96$, $F(1, 259) = 12.12$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .05$). As becomes clear from the interaction plot in Figure 7.6, the native Dutch respondents judged the obligation of the addressees in the standard situations to be lower than the obligation of the addressees in the nonstandard situations. The rating pattern in the native English group and the nonnative English group was more in line with expectations, since these respondents felt that the obligation of the addressee in the standard situations was higher

than in the nonstandard situations. An inspection of the means on the basis of confidence intervals showed that differences between situation types were significant for all three groups of respondents.

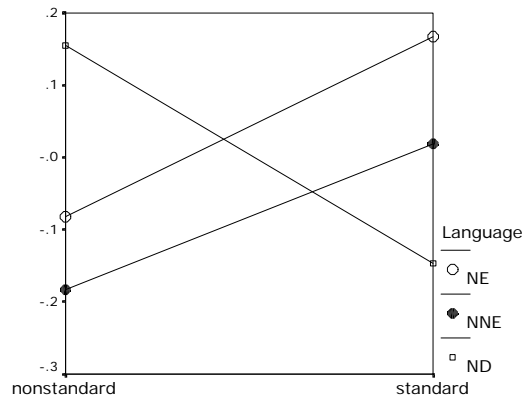


Figure 7.6 Mean ratings of *obligation of hearer* for *language*

Findings for the secondary school respondents and the university respondents, again, revealed a mixed pattern, since only the university respondents rated the obligation of the addressees in the standard situations as significantly higher than in the nonstandard situations (Figure 7.7).

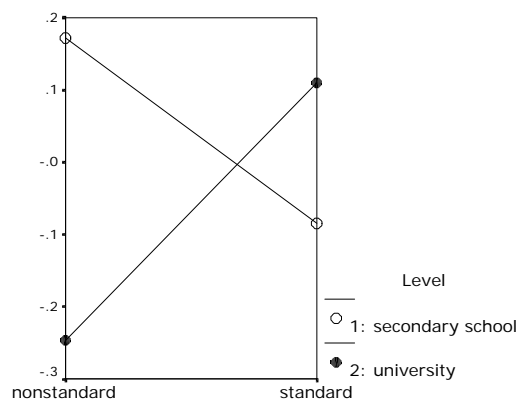


Figure 7.7 Mean ratings of *obligation of hearer* for *level*

A repeated measures analysis was performed with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *difficulty of request* as within-subject factor. The analysis for revealed a significant interaction between *level* and *situation type* ($\text{difficulty} \times \text{level}$ Wilks' $\eta^2 = .95$, $F(1, 259) = 13.11$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .05$). Since the analysis for both right and obligation revealed rather contradictory findings, it is not surprising that ratings of *difficulty* of the request were also different for secondary school respondents and university respondents. In line with the assumptions, in the standard situations the university respondents, who rated the right and obligation as relatively high, consequently rated the difficulty of the requests as relatively low. By contrast, the secondary school respondents, who rated the

right and obligation as relatively low, rated the requests in the standard situations as relatively difficult (Figure 7.8).

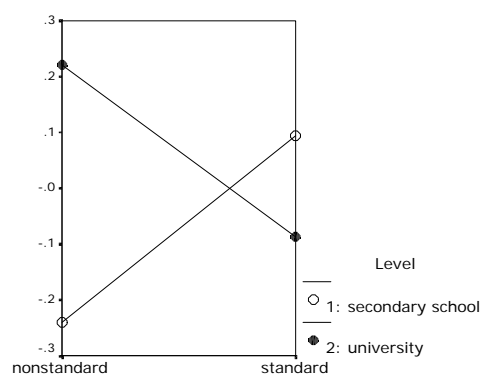


Figure 7.8 Mean ratings of *difficulty of request* for level.

Finally, a repeated measures analysis was performed with *language* and *level* as between-subject factors and *likelihood of compliance* as within-subject factor. This analysis revealed no significant differences were found with respect to the way respondents interpreted the likelihood of compliance with the request for the two situation types. So, although two situation types could be distinguished on the basis of the factor analysis, no marked differences were found with regard to the ratings of the likelihood of compliance of work-related and everyday requests.

To summarize, it appears that results for the assessment of rights and obligations of speaker and hearer and difficulty of the request are by no means conclusive. In the standard situations although the right of the speaker and the obligation of the hearer were rated as relatively high and the difficulty of the request as relatively low, this only applied to the university respondents and not to the secondary school respondents. A possible explanation for the differences between these two groups of respondents is that different 'generations' simply have different ideas about rights and obligations of speakers and hearers and consequently also difficulty of requests.

With respect to cross-cultural variation in assessments of situational factors it turned out that differences could only be observed for the dimension of obligation. The native Dutch respondents felt that the obligation of the hearer in the nonstandard situations was higher than in the standard situations. The native English and the nonnative English respondents rated the obligation of the hearer in the standard situations more in line with the assumptions.

So far, the analysis of the dimensions of the judgement task has focussed on examining differences and similarities between situation types. The next section will discuss a more fine-grained analysis of the ratings for individual situations for all dimensions of the rating task. This analysis will reveal for which dimensions and for which situations most variation was found between groups of respondents and will consequently allow for a detailed comparison between similarities and differences in judgements of situational factors on the one hand and similarities and differences in request production on the other.

7.4 A closer look at situations and dimensions

For all situations, two-way ANOVA analyses with *language* and *level* as independent variables were carried out, which revealed a large number of significant effects for both situations and dimensions. Results of the ANOVA analyses have been summarized in Table 7.7, which displays significant main effects and interactions for all situations and dimensions. Situations and dimensions have been ordered from highest to lowest number of significant effects. (Full details of the analyses have been included in Appendix E).

The picture that emerges from Table 7.7 is that some situations and dimensions clearly gave rise to more variation in interpretations than others. Most variation was observed for ratings on the dimensions *familiarity* and *formality*, for which the analysis revealed a large number of significant effects. Less, but still substantial, variation was observed in the way respondents rated the *right* of the speaker to make the request and the *obligation* of the hearer to comply with the request. Finally, respondents varied even less in rating the *authority* of the speaker and least of all in rating the *difficulty* of the request and the *likelihood* of compliance.

Findings of the analysis of individual situations partly support the distinction between standard and nonstandard situations as discussed in the previous section. Variations in ratings of individual dimensions occurred more in the nonstandard situations than in the standard situations. This suggests that role relationships between requester and requestee in the standard situations may indeed have been more clear and transparent than in the nonstandard situations. As is shown in Table 7.7, minor variations were found in the way respondents assessed the standard situations 'customs', 'neighbour', 'homework', 'overtime' and 'party'. More substantial differences in judgements were found with respect to the nonstandard situations, especially for the situations 'report', 'lunch', 'pensioner' and 'supermarket'. The first two of these nonstandard situations can both be characterized as institutional contexts where the hearer rather than the speaker occupies a position of authority, whereas the other two situations involve requests between total strangers. It might be that in institutional situations where the hearer is in a position of authority, it is less clear what kinds of requests a speaker can legitimately make. Similarly, the total lack of familiarity between interlocutors in the 'supermarket' and 'pensioner' situation may have led to variations in interpretations, because in these situations, too, it is not clear what speakers may rightfully ask of strangers.

Since the main concern of this chapter is to examine to what extent respondents' interpretations of the situations may have influenced their choice of request strategies, the discussion below will focus primarily on those dimensions and situations for which most variation was found. Respondents largely agreed on their interpretations of the *likelihood* of compliance or the *difficulty* of the requests, except in those situations rated altogether differently for most dimensions, i.e. situations 'report', 'lunch', 'pensioner' and 'supermarket'. Since variation with respect to interpretations of *difficulty* and *likelihood* was otherwise limited, these two dimensions will not be discussed in great detail in this section. Likewise, it is unlikely that plausible explanations for differences in request

production are to be found in assessments of those situations rated similarly by all respondents.

Table 7.7 Significant effects for all dimensions and all situations

	familiarity	formality	obligation	right	authority	difficulty	likelihood
2: report							
language	*			**	**	**	*
level	*	***	**	**	**	**	**
language*level	**						*
4: lunch							
language		*				*	
level		**	*	*	**	*	
language*level	**	*		*		**	
11: pensioner							
language	***	*				*	
level		**	**				
language*level		*	**	*	*		
7: supermarket							
language	**	*	*	**	**		
level	*	*	**	*	*		
language*level	**	*	**	**			
9: party							
language		*		*			
level	*	**		**			
language*level			*				
3: travel							
language	***		*		*		***
level	*						
language*level	**						
10: overtime							
language	***	*					
level			*	*	**		
language*level	**						
8: paper							
language			**	*		*	
level							
language*level							
1: homework							
language		*					**
level			*				
language*level							
5: neighbour							
language		***					
level		**					
language*level			*				
6: campaign							
language	**					**	
level							
language*level	**						
12: customs							
language	***						
level							
language*level	***						

(* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001)

As can be observed in Table 7.7 the situations 'paper', 'homework', 'neighbour', 'campaign' and 'customs' were rated similarly by respondents for most dimensions. Since these situations are of little interest in terms of offering plausible explanations for request variation, they will only be discussed summarily in this section. Consequently, the discussion below will primarily focus on those dimensions and situations for which most variation between groups of respondents were found.

7.4.1 Authority, familiarity and formality

A dimension for which relatively few differences were found was *authority*. Significant effects were found in six situations, five of which were nonstandard situations. The fact that respondents tended to agree on their judgements of authority in the standard situations lends further support to the distinction between standard and nonstandard situations. Upon closer examination, most variation in respondents' assessments of *authority* could be attributed to differences between the native English respondents and the other two groups, but also to differences between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents. Main effects for either *language* or *level* were found for the situations 'report', 'lunch', 'travel', 'supermarket', 'travel' and 'overtime'. Bonferroni post hoc comparisons revealed that the native English respondents differed significantly in their judgements of the authority of the speaker in the situations 'report' and 'travel', which are both low speaker authority situations, and in their judgement of 'supermarket', a status equal situation. In the 'report' request the native English respondents rated the authority of the trainee asking the supervisor to read a report as significantly higher than the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents. In the 'travel' request the native English respondents considered the customer asking the staff at the travel agency to change a booking to have more authority than did the other respondents. In the 'supermarket' request, the only status equal situation for which differences were found, the native English respondents attributed slightly less authority to the customer trying to jump the queue than the other respondents.

The secondary school respondents differed from the university respondents in their assessment of authority in four situations. In the 'report' request and in the 'lunch' request, the secondary school students rated the authority of the speaker significantly higher than the university respondents (report $F(1, 260) = 16.13, p < .001, O^2 = .06$; lunch $F(1, 263) = 11.42, p < .001, O^2 = .04$). Almost by contrast, in two other situations, 'supermarket' (7) and 'overtime' (10), the secondary school students assigned less authority to the speaker than did the university students (supermarket $F(1, 263) = 6.51, p < .05, O^2 = .02$; overtime $F(1, 260) = 8.26, p < .01, O^2 = .03$).

Finally, in one situation, 'pensioner', an interaction effect was found between language and level (pensioner $F(2, 263) = 3.05, p < .05, O^2 = .02$). An analysis of simple main effects revealed that the university respondents, but not the secondary school respondents, assessed the situation differently ($F(2, 264) = 4.38, p < .05, O^2 = .03$). The Dutch university respondents assessed the degree of authority of the speaker as significantly higher than the native English respondents and the nonnative English respondents.

Still, since variation in judgements of *authority* was moderate compared with variations for some other dimensions and since results of the reliability analysis cast some doubt on the consistency with which respondents rated this dimension, it is less likely that findings with respect to respondents' assessments of *authority* can be used as plausible explanations for differences in request production.

Variation in the assessment of sociocultural variables was most noticeable in the ratings of the dimensions *familiarity* and *formality*. As can be seen in Table 7.7, groups of respondents appear to have interpreted both the degree of *familiarity* between speaker and hearer and the *formality* of the context differently in a considerable number of situations.

familiarity

The analysis for familiarity revealed a large number of significant interactions between *language* and *level*, which indicates that the school respondents and university respondents in each of the three groups interpreted these situations differently (report $F(2, 264) = 8.51, p < .001, O^2 = .06$; lunch $F(2, 264) = 6.66, p < .01, O^2 = .05$; supermarket $F(2, 264) = 5.40, p < .01, O^2 = .04$; travel $F(2, 264) = 7.92, p < .001, O^2 = .04$; overtime $F(2, 263) = 5.08, p < .01, O^2 = .04$; campaign $F(2, 264) = 5.84, p < .01, O^2 = .04$; customs $F(2, 261) = 7.76, p < .001, O^2 = .06$). In fact, straightforward main effects for *language* or *level* were only found for the 'pensioner' and the 'party' situation. A main effect for *language* was found for the 'pensioner' situations (pensioner $F(2, 264) = 13.10, p < .001, O^2 = .09$). Bonferroni post hoc comparisons revealed that the nonnative English respondents felt there was more familiarity between the pensioner and the, much younger, addressee on the bus than the native English and the native Dutch respondents. In the 'party' request the difference was between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents. The university respondents felt that the degree of *familiarity* between the mother and daughter trying to deal with the aftermath of a party was higher than did the secondary school respondents (party $F(1, 264) = 5.82, p < .05, O^2 = .02$).

Significant interactions were mainly due to differences in ratings between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents in the nonnative English group. An analysis of simple main effects revealed that the nonnative English university respondents judged the familiarity between speaker and hearer in all these situations as significantly higher compared to the secondary school respondents (report $F(1, 266) = 22.72, p < .001, O^2 = .08$; lunch $F(1, 266) = 9.08, p < .01, O^2 = .03$; supermarket $F(1, 266) = 13.37, p < .001, O^2 = .05$; travel $F(1, 266) = 19.91, p < .001, O^2 = .03$; overtime $F(1, 265) = 11.89, p < .001, O^2 = .04$; campaign $F(1, 265) = 7.79, p < .01, O^2 = .07$; customs $F(1, 263) = 17.25, p < .001, O^2 = .06$). In the native English group the only significant difference between secondary school respondents and university respondents was found in the campaign situation, where the secondary school respondents judged the familiarity to be higher than the university respondents (campaign $F(1, 265) = 5.72, p < .05, O^2 = .02$). No significant difference was found in the native Dutch group. Furthermore, for all of these situations significant differences were also found between

the three secondary school groups and/or between the three university groups. The general trend was for the native English secondary school respondents to rate familiarity as higher than the other two groups. For the university respondents, the reverse trend was found, as the native English respondents tended to rate familiarity as lower than the other respondents (full details of the analysis have been included in Appendix E)

formality

The second dimension for which respondents varied their judgements considerably was the level of *formality* of the situations. Main effects for *language* and/or *level* were found in a number of situations. Main effects for *language* were found in the 'party', 'neighbour' and 'overtime' situations (party $F(2, 264) = 3.41$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .03$; neighbour $F(2, 264) = 11.64$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .08$; overtime $F(2, 263) = 5.24$; $p < .01$, $O^2 = .04$). Bonferroni post hoc comparisons revealed that the native English respondents rated both the 'party' situation and the 'neighbour' situation, both non-institutional contexts, as more formal than the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents. In the 'overtime' situation, an institutional context, the native English respondents rated the situation as less formal than the other respondents.

In some situations differences were found between the secondary school respondents on the one hand and the university respondents on the other hand. In the 'party', 'homework' and, again, the 'neighbour' situation, all non-institutional contexts, the secondary school respondents judged the formality as higher than the university respondents (party $F(1, 264) = 21.11$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .07$; homework $F(1, 262) = 5.54$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$; neighbour $F(1, 264) = 16.75$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$). In the 'report' situation, an institutional context, the secondary school respondents rated the context as less formal than the university respondents (report $F(1, 264) = 14.60$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .05$).

Significant interactions between *language* and *level* were found for the 'supermarket', the 'pensioner' and the 'lunch' situation (supermarket $F(2, 264) = 3.22$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$; pensioner $F(2, 264) = 3.54$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .03$; lunch $F(2, 264) = 3.11$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$). Interactions were partly due to the fact that for some situations the difference between secondary school respondents and university respondents was only found in the native English group or in the native Dutch group. An analysis of simple main effects revealed that for the 'supermarket' and the 'pensioner' request, both non-institutional contexts, the secondary school respondents in the native English group felt the situation was more formal than the university students in this group (supermarket $F(1, 266) = 12.86$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .05$; pensioner $F(1, 266) = 16.43$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$). In the 'lunch' situation, an institutional context, the secondary school respondents in the native English group, but also those in the native Dutch group, felt that the situation was less formal than the university students (NE $F(1, 266) = 8.76$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .03$; ND $F(1, 266) = 20.21$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .07$). Interaction was also due to the fact that some situations were interpreted differently by the three secondary school groups. An analysis of simple main effects revealed that the 'supermarket' situation and the 'pensioner' situation were rated as more formal by the native English secondary school respondents

than by the native Dutch and the nonnative English secondary school respondents (supermarket $F(2, 265) = 6.74$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .04$; pensioner $F(2, 265) = 6.98$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .03$). The formality of the 'lunch' situation was also rated differently, but for this situation the native Dutch secondary school respondents rated the situation as less formal than both the native English and the nonnative English secondary school respondents (lunch $F(2, 265) = 4.74$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .03$).

It can be concluded that respondents varied considerably in their interpretations of the degree of *familiarity* between speaker and hearer in the situations and the *formality* of the situations. Most variation in ratings was again found for the nonstandard situations. With regard to the degree of *familiarity* between speaker and hearer in the situations the most noticeable difference was found within the nonnative English group where the university students tended to rate the familiarity between speaker and hearer in a number of situations as higher than the secondary school respondents. Results also suggest that there were a number of situations where differences occurred between the three groups of secondary school respondents and/or between the three groups of university respondents. With regard to the dimension of *formality* it can be concluded that, again, respondents varied considerably in the way they assessed the context of the requests. For this dimension, too, the most marked differences occurred between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents. The results suggest that the secondary school respondents tended to rate some of the non-institutional contexts as more formal than the university students. For some institutional contexts, however, the secondary school respondents felt that the level of formality was lower than did the university respondents.

7.4.2 Rights and obligations

right of the speaker

Two other dimensions for which considerable variation in judgements could be observed are the *right* of the speaker to make the request and the *obligation* of the hearer to comply with the request. As was discussed earlier, the analysis of situation types revealed that the secondary school respondents interpreted the two situation types, standard and nonstandard situations, differently from the university respondents. In this analysis too, it appeared that for a considerable number of situations, differences were found between the ratings of the secondary school respondents and the university respondents. Generally speaking, respondents seem to have varied more in judging the *obligation* of the addressee to comply with the request than in judging the *right* of the speaker to make the request.

First of all, main effects for *language* were found for the situations 'report', 'paper' and 'party' (report $F(2, 263) = 4.70$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .03$; paper $F(2, 264) = 3.41$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .03$; party $F(2, 264) = 3.58$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .03$). Bonferroni post hoc comparisons revealed that the native English respondents rated the *right* of the speaker differently from either the nonnative English respondents or the native Dutch respondents in 'report' and 'paper'. In the 'report' situation the native English respondents felt that the trainee asking his supervisor to look at a report had more right to do so than the

nonnative English respondents. In the 'paper' situation, the native English respondents felt that the person asking her colleague to run errands for her had less right to do so than the native Dutch respondents. Although the analysis also revealed a main effect for *language* for the 'party' request, post hoc comparisons did not reveal significant differences between the three groups.

Secondly, as was discussed earlier, the secondary school respondents rated the *right* of the speaker in standard and nonstandard situations differently compared to the university respondents. It turns out that this applied to three situations in particular. For both the 'party' and the 'overtime' request, both standard situations, the secondary school respondents felt the speaker had less right to make the request than the university respondents (party $F(1, 264) = 10.40$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .04$; overtime $F(1, 263) = 5.18$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$). In the 'report' situation, a nonstandard, low speaker authority situation, the secondary school respondents felt the trainee in the situation had more right to make the request than the university respondents (report $F(1, 263) = 15.29$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$).

Interaction between *language* and *level* was significant in three situations: 'lunch', 'supermarket' and 'pensioner' (lunch $F(2, 264) = 4.78$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .04$; supermarket $F(2, 264) = 9.04$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$; pensioner $F(2, 264) = 4.29$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .03$). An analysis of simple main effects revealed that interaction was mainly due to the fact that the secondary school respondents rated the right of the speaker as either lower or higher in comparison with the university students. The secondary school respondents in the native English group felt that the speaker in the 'supermarket' trying to jump the queue had less right to do so than did the university respondents ($F(1, 266) = 8.41$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .03$). Likewise, the secondary school respondents felt that the pensioner on the bus had less right to ask the younger addressee to give up his seat than did the university respondents ($F(1, 266) = 5.63$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$). In the nonnative English group, however, the exact opposite was found, as here the secondary school respondents rated the right of the speaker in the same situations as higher than the university respondents (supermarket $F(1, 266) = 16.21$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$; pensioner $F(1, 266) = 4.15$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$). No significant differences were found in the native Dutch group. In the 'lunch' request the pattern was slightly different. In this situation, the secondary school respondents in both the nonnative English group and the native Dutch group felt that the employee asking the head of department for assistance had more right to do so than the university respondents in these groups (NNE $F(1, 266) = 16.11$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .06$; ND $F(1, 266) = 9.50$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .03$). No significant differences were found in the native English group for this request.

obligation of the hearer

Even more variation was found with regard to respondents' opinions on the *obligation* of the hearer to comply with the requests. Significant differences were found for nine of the twelve situations, most of which were nonstandard situations. Main effects for *language* were found in the 'travel' and 'paper' situations (travel $F(2, 264) = 4.83$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .04$; paper $F(2, 264) = 5.65$, $p < .01$, $O^2 = .04$). Bonferroni post hoc comparisons

revealed that in the 'travel' situation the native English respondents rated the obligation of the staff at the travel agency to comply with a client's wish to change a reservation as higher than the nonnative English and the native Dutch respondents. In the 'paper' request the nonnative English respondents rated the obligation of the colleague to fetch some paper as significantly lower than the native Dutch respondents.

As was discussed earlier, the secondary school respondents rated the obligation of the hearer in nonstandard situations differently compared with the university respondents. This concerned the situations 'report' and 'lunch', both low speaker authority situations, in particular. In both situations the secondary school respondents felt that the obligation of the addressee of these requests was higher compared with the university respondents (report $F(1, 264) = 33.56$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .11$; lunch $F(1, 264) = 4.18$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$).

As was the case for the other dimensions, interaction between *language* and *level* again turned out to be significant in a number of situations: 'pensioner', 'supermarket', 'party', 'homework' and 'neighbour'. A closer analysis of these situations revealed that no specific pattern could be detected in the ratings of the different groups. For some requests, the secondary school respondents and university respondents in one or two groups varied in their interpretation of the obligation of the hearer. In other situations differences were found between the three secondary school groups and/or the three university groups. An analysis of simple main effects revealed that for the 'pensioner' request and the 'supermarket' request only the secondary school respondents in the nonnative English group rated the obligation of the hearer as higher than the university respondents in this group (pensioner $F(1, 265) = 14.59$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .05$; supermarket $F(1, 266) = 24.84$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .08$). This, of course, is in line with what was discussed above in relation to the right of the speaker in these requests, where the secondary school respondents also felt the speaker had more right to make the request in the first place. In the 'neighbour' request, the secondary school respondents in the nonnative English group rated the obligation of the neighbour to pick up the kids from football practice as lower than the university respondents (neighbour $F(1, 266) = 4.58$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$). In another situation, 'party', the secondary school respondents in both the nonnative English and the native Dutch group differed from the university respondents. For this request, too, the secondary school respondents rated the obligation of the hearer as lower than the university respondents. In 'homework' the secondary school respondents in the native English group rated the obligation of the father to help his son finish his homework as higher than the students in this group (homework $F(1, 265) = 4.00$, $p < .05$, $O^2 = .02$).

In addition to differences between respondents within the same language group, differences were also found between the three groups of secondary school respondents (in 'supermarket' and 'party') or the three groups of university respondents (in 'pensioner' and 'party'). An analysis of simple main effects revealed that for the 'supermarket' request the nonnative English secondary school respondents felt the addressee of the request was more obliged to allow the speaker to jump the queue than the secondary school respondents in the other two groups ($F(2, 265) = 8.02$, $p < .001$, $O^2 = .03$). In

the 'party' situation, however, the difference was between the native English and the native Dutch secondary school respondents, the latter of which felt that the obligation of the daughter to her mother was much lower ($F(2, 265) = 3.60, p < .05, O^2 = .03$). The 'party' request gave rise to different interpretations of the obligation of the hearer anyway, since it was also judged differently by the three groups of university respondents. The university respondents in the native English group rated the obligation of the daughter to help her mother clean up after a party as lower than the university respondents in the two other groups ($F(2, 265) = 5.71, p < .01, O^2 = .04$). Another request that the students seemed to disagree on was the 'pensioner' request. For this request, however, the native Dutch university respondents differed from the other two groups in that they rated the obligation of the person being asked to give up a seat on the bus as higher ($F(2, 265) = 14.26, p < .001, O^2 = .09$).

In summary, considerable variation was found with respect to respondents' assessments of the *right* and *obligation* of speakers and hearers in individual situations. Significant differences sometimes involved the three 'language' groups, but at other times involved differences between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents. More often than not, however, differences in ratings only applied to secondary school respondents and the university respondents in one particular group. The results suggest that in judging low speaker authority situations, the secondary school respondents rated the right of the speaker as higher, and the obligation of the hearer as lower, compared to the university students. Conversely, in some high speaker authority situations, the secondary school respondents generally tended to rate the right of the speaker as lower, and the obligation of the hearer as higher, compared to the university students. Other than this, however, variations did not follow any particular pattern.

standard and nonstandard situations

As has become clear from the discussion above, for some situations more differences were found than for others. Respondents varied most in their interpretations of the nonstandard situations, especially situations 'report', 'lunch', 'pensioner' and 'supermarket'. The first two of these are situations where the addressee, rather than the speaker, is in a position of authority, whereas in the other two situations the respondents are total strangers. For these situations, interaction between *language* and *level* was often highly significant, which means that groups of respondents in one or two of the 'language' groups interpreted the situation differently. In fact, the only situation for which a majority of main effects was found was the 'report' request. In this request, in particular, differences involved the native English group, the nonnative English group and the native Dutch group and/or the secondary school respondents and the university respondents.

Least variation was found for the standard situations, which suggests that in these situations the role relationship between speaker and hearer was clearer than for the other situations. Although respondents were largely in agreement with respect to the standard situations, the 'party' situation, which describes a request between mother and daughter, was interpreted differently by the secondary school respondents and university

respondents. This may have been due to the fact that university students, who are older and usually no longer live at home, might simply have a different relationship with their parents than secondary school pupils.

7.5 Situational variation in relation to request production

This final section will discuss the results of the judgement task in relation to request behaviour as discussed in earlier chapters. The first part of this section will concentrate on a discussion of those variables that have commonly been found to play a crucial role in determining the formulation of requests: *authority*, *familiarity* and *formality*. The second part of this section will examine if and how assessments of the remaining four dimensions of the judgement task, *difficulty* of request, *right* of the speaker to make the request, *obligation* of the hearer to comply with the request and *likelihood* of compliance can be found to have determined respondents' use of request strategies.

Firstly, it appeared that in rating the *authority*, *familiarity* and *formality* of the situations, respondents distinguished between the different situation types. By and large, respondents judged the degree of *authority* of the speaker in low speaker authority situations to be lower than in the status equal situations and lower still than in the high speaker authority situations. In general terms the increasing degree of authority in the three situation types is reflected in the way respondents varied their use of request strategies in the production task. Results of the production task showed that in the low speaker authority situations, respondents used relatively high proportions of very indirect strategies. Conversely, in high speaker authority situations, where speakers can afford to formulate relatively direct requests, respondents were found to have used more direct strategies and fewer highly indirect strategies.

Even though in general terms groups of respondents were largely in agreement about the degree of authority of the speaker, this is not to say that no variation was found at all. The native English respondents were found to have attributed more authority to the requester in the low speaker authority situations than the other two groups. The analysis at the level of individual situations revealed that this concerned the requester in the 'report' situation and the 'travel' situation in particular. This suggests that the nonnative English respondents may have misjudged the authority in these situations according to native English standards. The difference in assessment was not, however, reflected in the way requests were formulated. No differences were found between the native English and the nonnative English respondents with regard to the use of request strategies in low speaker authority situations. In other words, although the nonnative English respondents interpreted the authority relationship between speaker and hearer in these situations differently from the native English respondents, this was not reflected in the way they formulated their requests.

In addition, the secondary school respondents as a group were found to have attributed slightly more authority to the speaker in low speaker authority situations, in particular in the 'report' and 'lunch' situation, than the university respondents. This might mean that the secondary school respondents may have been inclined to use slightly more direct

requests in low speaker authority situations. However, there is no evidence in the results of the production task to suggest that this was in fact the case. No marked differences between the two groups of respondents were found, either with respect to the use of request strategies or with respect to the way requests were modified.

Individual situations and dimensions

With respect to individual situations, it turned out that again the secondary school respondents varied from the university respondents in their interpretations of the authority of the speaker in a number of situations. Most variation in perception of speaker's authority was found for what the factor analysis revealed to be nonstandard situations. Few differences were found in perception of authority between the native English, the native Dutch and the learners. If differences were revealed among the three 'language' groups, these generally involved the native English respondents who interpreted the authority differently compared to the native Dutch and the nonnative English respondents.

In judging the degree of *familiarity* between speaker and hearer in the situations, respondents felt there was more *familiarity* between interlocutors in the acquainted situations than between interlocutors in the unacquainted situations. In the production task, however, respondents were not found to have used more direct requests in acquainted situations. In fact, respondents tended to use relatively more indirect strategies in these situations. However, the difference in familiarity was to some extent reflected in the way respondents modified their requests. Syntactic modification of requests was more abundant in requests in the 'unacquainted' situations than for the requests in the 'acquainted' situations. In other words, in those situations where respondents felt there was a high degree of familiarity between interlocutors, they used fewer indirect strategies but at the same time more syntactic modifiers than in situations where familiarity was felt to be relatively low.

In addition, the results regarding the assessment of *familiarity* indicated that the native English respondents judged the degree of *familiarity* in the acquainted situations as higher than the native Dutch respondents. There is no evidence in the production task results, however, to suggest that the native English respondents were also inclined to formulate more direct requests in these situations.

Finally, ratings for the dimension of *formality* showed that the institutional contexts were regarded as more formal than the non-institutional contexts. Since formality can be regarded as one of the determining factors in influencing speakers' choice of request strategy, this might mean that respondents also chose to formulate more indirect strategies in formal, institutional contexts. This is only partly what happened, though. Respondents used a relatively high proportion of indirect strategies in addition to fairly elaborate request modification in requests in institutional contexts. They also, admittedly, used a relatively high proportion of direct strategies in these contexts. The results from the judgement task do not offer any explanations for this.

An additional difference with respect to judgements of formality occurred between the secondary school respondents in the native English group and the secondary school respondents in the other two groups. The secondary school respondents in the native

English group felt that the non-institutional contexts were relatively formal compared to the other respondents. This might mean that this group in particular formulated relatively more polite requests in these situations. In the production task, however, no differences were found among the three groups of respondents in the way they formulated their requests.

With regard to the remaining four dimensions of the judgement task, judgements of the likelihood of compliance with the request varied marginally. Although the factor analysis revealed that two types of requests could be distinguished, work-related and everyday requests, no significant differences were found in respondents' judgements of this dimension. In the analysis of individual situations, too, variations on this dimension rarely occurred.

On the basis of ratings for the other three dimensions, *difficulty* of the request, *right* of the speaker and *obligation* of the hearer two situation types could be distinguished: standard and nonstandard situations. Standard situations are those situations where the role relationships between speaker and hearer were well defined, either on the basis of clear authority relationships, or on the basis of high familiarity between interlocutors and where the request is a legitimate one, given the role relationship. Nonstandard situations are those situations for which role relationships between speaker and hearer are less clear and where there is more uncertainty about the legitimacy of the request. Other studies have reported that in standard situations rights and obligations of speaker and hearer are generally assessed as higher and consequently requests as less difficult than in nonstandard situations (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; House, 1989). These findings can only partly be supported by results from the present study, since only the university respondents rated the standard situations in the predicted way. The analysis of individual situations revealed that respondents varied more in their judgements of situational factors in the nonstandard situations than in the standard situations. Here again, most differences were found between the secondary school respondents and the university respondents, rather than among the three 'language' groups.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will return to what the present study ultimately set out to do, to gain insights into what might be a potentially difficult area of L2 pragmatic competence for Dutch learners of English: formulating requests. Observed similarities and differences in request production and sociopragmatic perceptions will be reviewed in terms of what they reveal about the pragmatic competence of Dutch learners of English. The main findings will be reviewed against the wider perspective of what ILP research has revealed about the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge by L2 learners, which will make it possible to draw conclusions about the pragmatic competence of the learners, in terms of problematic and less problematic areas of their pragmatic knowledge. This will point to those areas that might require further investigation, but, equally importantly, it will also point to those areas in the learners' pragmatic competence that might require extra attention in the form of teaching.

The chapter will start with a brief review of the theoretical background and design of the study in sections 8.2 and 8.3, respectively. This will be followed by a discussion of the main findings of the study (8.4). The chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research and a section discussing possible implications for teaching.

8.2 Indirectness and politeness in interlanguage pragmatics

In brief, this study was motivated by an increasing number of ILP studies that have attempted to investigate how learners acquire pragmatic competence in a second language. Since pragmatic failure, more than perhaps linguistic failure, can have damaging consequences for learners' communicative success than linguistic failure (Thomas, 1983, 1984) second language researchers have increasingly come to investigate how second language learners manage to 'do things with words' in languages other than their native language. As was discussed in Chapter 1, a large number of ILP studies have been concerned with one particular domain of pragmatic competence: the ability to understand and produce speech acts.

ILP studies have investigated production and comprehension in two areas of learners' pragmatic competence: sociopragmatic competence, the ability to vary language according to sociocultural factors, and pragmalinguistic competence, the ability to encode pragmatic intent in language. ILP studies have amply documented that learners are quite capable of understanding and using speech acts in the target language, but also that learners often differ from native speakers of the target language in a number of respects. Learners have, for example, been found to differ from native speakers in their

perceptions of indirectness and politeness levels of speech act strategies, in their assessments of sociopragmatic factors, and with respect to both patterns of distribution and form of speech act strategies. ILP studies have also increasingly been concerned with the investigation of factors that facilitate or impede learners' development of pragmatic competence, such as the role of pragmatic universals and L1 pragmatic knowledge, positive and negative transfer of L1 pragmatic knowledge, the effect of linguistic proficiency and/or length of stay in the target speech community and the role of input in the development of pragmatic competence.

As has become clear from the literature review in Chapter 1, a central role in ILP (and cross-cultural pragmatics) research has been occupied by learners' development of the ability to comprehend and use indirect and polite language. However, the notions of indirectness and politeness have not always been applied consistently in ILP studies. In order to clarify the relationship between indirectness and politeness, it was necessary to examine how these concepts have been defined in speech act theory and politeness theory.

The approach adopted in the present study has been to regard indirectness and politeness as separate, but highly related notions. Indirectness, following Leech's (1983) interpretation of indirectness as a 'means-end analysis', is regarded as the inferential steps made by speaker and hearer to arrive at the illocutionary force of an utterance while observing the Tact Maxim. Politeness, following Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) interpretation of politeness as the protection of face-wants, is regarded as the prime motivator for indirectness. Politeness and indirectness are related in the sense that indirectness is one type of politeness strategy that speakers can resort to in attempting to protect a hearer's face.

8.3 Design of the study

As was outlined above, the main aim of the study was to investigate what might be a potentially problematic area for Dutch learners of English in intercultural communication: making requests. In order to investigate similarities and differences with respect to the use of requests between Dutch learners of English, native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch, two tasks were constructed: a production task and a judgement task.

The production task was an adapted (oral) version of the DCT as used in earlier request studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989a). The primary aim of the study was to arrive at a diagnostic picture of problematic areas in terms of request strategies and modification in relation to sociopragmatic variation. This would have been difficult to achieve with 'natural' data collection methods, which do not allow for sufficient control of situational variation.

In order to examine learners' use of request strategies and request modification, two groups of learners at different levels of proficiency (secondary school pupils and university students) were asked to formulate (oral) requests in response to situations that varied along three dimensions: power distance, social distance and context.

In order to examine whether observed differences and similarities might be attributable to respondents' differential assessments of sociopragmatic factors, respondents were also

asked to complete a judgement questionnaire in which they were asked to give their judgements on seven dimensions that have been found to determine linguistic variation in the formulation of requests: the authority relationship between speaker-hearer, degree of familiarity between speaker-hearer, right and obligation of speaker and hearer, difficulty of the request and estimated likelihood of compliance with the request.

As the main question was to what extent learners approximate native speakers in their speech act behaviour, a group of native speakers of English, likewise composed of secondary school pupils and university students, were asked to participate in the production task and the judgement task. Since L1 pragmatic knowledge is considered an important factor in determining variation in L2 speech act behaviour, a group of native speakers of Dutch, composed of secondary school pupils and university students, participated in a Dutch version of the two tasks.

8.4 Pragmatic competence of Dutch learners of English

This section will discuss what the results of the present study reveal about one particular area of pragmatic competence of Dutch learners of English, formulating requests. It will start with a brief overview of what ILP research to date has revealed about the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence, which will sketch the background against which the findings will be interpreted.

Research on L2 pragmatic knowledge has provided ample evidence that (adult) learners' development of L2 pragmatic competence is affected by the fact that they are pragmatically competent speakers of their native language. Two aspects of learners' L1 pragmatic competence have been found to affect their development of L2 pragmatic knowledge: pragmatic universals and L1-specific pragmatic knowledge.

Firstly, although the status of some pragmatic universals has been more contested than others, it is generally assumed that knowledge of pragmatic universals, such as the use of indirectness to communicate pragmatic intent, or the effect of situational variation on linguistic variation, is developed during the acquisition of L1 pragmatic competence and consequently does not need be 'relearned' in the acquisition of L2 competence (for a review of universal and ethnolinguistic pragmatic knowledge see Kasper 1996a, 1997). Adult L2 learners can apply the universal pragmatic knowledge they already possess, 'free knowledge' to use Kasper's (1997) terms, to communicate pragmatic intent in L2, provided they have attained an adequate level of linguistic proficiency.

In addition, a second source of 'free' information is provided by the learners' language-specific L1 pragmatic knowledge, which, at least in the case of correspondence between L1 and L2 pragmatic conventions, can often be transferred to L2. This second source is more variable, since what is free, and hence transferable, is determined by the degree of similarity between L1 and L2. Thus, the learners have two possible sources of free information, universal pragmatic knowledge and L1-specific pragmatic knowledge. However, as evidenced from ILP speech act studies, reviewed in Chapter 1, learners do not always make full use of the knowledge they already have, or as Kasper puts it, "... learners do not always make use of their free ride." (1997: 2). Kasper claims that the free

information that learners do not seem to use points to problematic areas of pragmatic competence. It is these areas in particular that might need to be addressed in, for example, L2 instruction.

So, in order to locate problematic areas for Dutch learners of English it is necessary to determine what the free rides are, both in terms of pragmatic universals and in terms of pragmatic correspondence between Dutch and English, and to determine to what extent the learners made use of their free rides.

8.4.1 Request strategies

The main finding is that the English native speakers, the Dutch native speakers and the Dutch learners of English were very much alike in their choice of request strategies, but varied in the way they modified their requests. In addition, respondents varied their requests along similar lines relative to situational variation. The overall picture that emerged from the data was that, although respondents used the full range of request strategies available for making requests, they clearly preferred highly indirect, safe strategies. In addition, all respondents used syntactic, lexical/phrasal and external modifiers to modify the impact of their requests, but varied with respect to both total amount and types of request modification they included in their requests. At a more detailed level of analysis, differences were observed with respect to degree of conventionality of means and linguistic forms used in requests, as well as range and linguistic form of request modification.

So, what can be concluded about the acquisition of pragmatic competence of the Dutch learners of English? Firstly, at the most general level the learners are able to communicate pragmatic intent indirectly and are able to vary the directness level of their requests by using the major realization strategies for requests in English. In addition, they are able to use syntactic and lexical/phrasal means to modify the impact of requests and are also able support their requests with external modifiers such as justifications or cost minimizers. Finally, they are able to vary the directness level and the request modification of their requests relative to differences in situational variables such as authority, social distance and context. In the light of what was discussed above, this is perhaps not surprising. The learners are at a level of linguistic proficiency that can be characterized as upper-intermediate to advanced and their proficiency clearly allows them to apply knowledge they already have about how to make indirect speech acts and how to vary the directness level of their strategies according to situational variation. That these learners should be capable of doing this, is not surprising, since learners at lower levels of proficiency and learners with L1s that are less similar to English, such as Spanish or Japanese, have been found to be quite successful at communicating requestive intent at this general level. Le Pair (1997), for example, found that his Dutch learners of Spanish, who were considerably less proficient in their L2 than the Dutch learners of English in the present study, used the full range of request strategies in Spanish and modified their requests with internal and external modifiers. It comes as no surprise, then, that this is 'free' information that Dutch learners know how to put to good use.

At a more language-specific level of pragmatic knowledge, what are the other free rides that Dutch learners seem to get? First of all, English and Dutch were found to be highly similar with respect to the degree of conventionality of the use of strategies referring to preconditions to formulate indirect requests, but differed with respect to the degree of conventionality of substrategies and the linguistic forms that are commonly used to formulate requests. In other words, in this respect, although the learners had a free ride for part of the way, at the level of substrategies of conventional indirectness they had to rely on their knowledge of English.

At the overall level of choosing the right level of indirectness, the learners of English were found to have behaved no differently from those respondents who were formulating requests in their native language. The learners mainly formulated requests with conventional indirect strategies, just like the native speakers of Dutch and just like the native speakers of English.

At the level of substrategies, it can be concluded that despite observed differences between Dutch and English with regard to the degree of conventionality of substrategies and linguistic forms, the learners generally seemed to have chosen substrategies and linguistic forms that fitted the native English request pattern.

First of all, Dutch and English appeared to be relatively similar with regard to the high degree of conventionality of querying an addressee's ability as a means to formulate indirect requests, although ability strategies appeared to be slightly more conventional in English than in Dutch. In addition, English and Dutch share the highly conventional use of modal 'can' and 'kunnen' as the preferred linguistic form in the realization of ability strategies. A similar high preference for ability strategies and modal verb 'can' was observed in the English requests produced by the learners. Whether this resulted from positive transfer or the learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge is not clear. The fact that the learners used more ability strategies than the native speakers of Dutch, suggests that their high use of ability strategies resulted from their knowledge of English requests, rather than from positive transfer from L1.

Secondly, differences between Dutch and English were found with respect to conventionality of means and forms for the other two substrategies of conventional indirectness. These were only partially and differentially reflected in the way the learners formulated their requests. In English, strategies referring to the non-obviousness condition appear to be a more conventional means of making an indirect request in English than in Dutch. Both groups of learners seem to have been aware of this, as their use of non-obviousness strategies was similar to that of the native speakers of English. They must have done this on the basis of their knowledge of English, since non-obviousness strategies are rarely used in Dutch, which seems to rule out transfer.

In Dutch, willingness strategies appear to be far more conventional than in English, and in addition, appear to be more commonly realized by making reference to the hearer's will or willingness with the verb 'willen' ('want'). In English, willingness strategies appear to be more commonly realized by questioning the hearer's objections such as with the verb 'mind'. The learners seem to be aware of the low degree of conventionality of willingness strategies in English. In addition, the learners seem to have

been less aware of the most conventional form used to realize willingness strategies. Although both groups of learners, like the native speakers of English, used 'to mind' to realize these strategies, they also used forms that were less commonly found in English such as 'want' or 'would like' to question the addressee's willingness and the highly formal request formula, 'would you be so kind as to', all of which were rare in the English data. In other words, although the learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge at the level of conventionality of strategies seems to have been accurate, as they refrained from transferring these strategies from Dutch, their L2 pragmatic knowledge regarding linguistic forms was less accurate.

8.4.2 Request modification

Whereas Dutch and English appear to be relatively similar with respect to conventionality of both request strategies and linguistic forms used to realize these request strategies, more cross-cultural variation was observed for the way requests are modified, especially with respect to internal modification of requests.

First of all, Dutch and English appear to be similar in the way requests are modified with external means, both in terms of total amount of external modification, but also with regard to the types of modifiers speakers use to as supportive moves for their request. For the Dutch learners the use of external modifiers in English clearly provides a free ride, and judging from the way the learners modified their requests with external means, a free ride that they used. The fact that the learners in the present study were no different from the native speakers in their use of external modifiers is somewhat surprising, since other studies have repeatedly reported a tendency for intermediate and advanced learners in particular to be overly explicit in supporting their requests with justifications, reasons and other types of external modifiers (e.g., Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Edmonson & House, 1991; House & Kasper, 1987). A number of (often related) explanations have been offered for the tendency of learners towards 'verbosity' in formulating speech acts. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1986) suggest that learners' overuse of external modifiers should be interpreted as a signal of their uncertainty about the effectiveness of their speech acts. In other words, because learners are not sure whether they have phrased their speech acts clearly and/or appropriately, they tend to overindulge in the use of external modifiers as a kind of 'better be safe than sorry' strategy. In a similar vein, Edmonson and House (1991) suggest that learners overuse external modifiers because they have not (yet) fully integrated routine speech act formulas into their interlanguage system. In other words, learners' uncertainty is caused by their incomplete control of conventionalized requests. Although Edmonson and House's 'non-integrated hypothesis' plausibly explains why learners may tend to resort to elaborate modification, it is not clear whether the reverse also applies. Or to put it differently, it is not clear whether an absence of elaborate modification in learners' speech acts, such as in the present study, implies that learners have in fact achieved full mastery of routinized request formulas. In the present study the requests produced by the learners appeared relatively routinized. The problem is, however, that they seem to have latched onto one

particular routine request formula, ability strategies with a standardized modification pattern. Although the requests could in this respect be called routinized, they were at the same time less varied than the requests produced by the native speakers of English. Still, however, the use of this routinized formula may well have made them feel confident enough to refrain from an overuse of external modifiers.

Clearly, however, most cross-cultural variation between Dutch and English was observed in the way requests are commonly modified with syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers. The English requests generally included more syntactic modification and, in addition, more different types of syntactic modifiers than the Dutch requests. The native speakers of English made frequent use of past tense modals, which also appeared to be the most frequent syntactic modifiers in Dutch requests, but in addition, also used other types of syntactic modifiers, such as negation, tag questions and aspect.

Furthermore, Dutch and English appear to be quite similar in the amount of lexical/phrasal modification commonly use in requests, but different with respect to commonly used types of lexical/phrasal modifiers. The native speakers of English made frequent use of politeness marker 'please', understaters and subjectivizers to modify their requests. In Dutch, however, the most frequent modifiers were clearly understaters and downtoners. Although politeness markers and subjectivizers also occurred, they were clearly less frequent than in the English requests.

So, the net result of the cross-cultural comparison is that with respect to internal modifiers Dutch and English seem to share function-form mapping, but not distributional equivalence. The free information for the learners, then, mainly specifies which types of modifiers are available in English. The learners have less free information about how elaborately requests should be modified or about the degree of conventionality of different types of modifiers. The question, then, is to what extent this was reflected in the way the learners modified their requests.

First of all, learners appeared to have undermodified their requests with respect to both syntactic as well as lexical/phrasal modification. In addition, they used a relatively narrow range of modifiers compared with the native speakers. In general, the learners appear to make use of what might be called a standard pattern of modification consisting of past tense modals and politeness marker 'please', which they seem to routinely apply in the reduction of the impositive force of their requests. Comparable findings with respect to learners' underuse of modification and limited range of modifiers have been reported by a number of studies (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). First of all, overuse of 'please' as a routine politeness marker has been particularly well documented, since it is a recurrent feature in the interlanguage of learners from different backgrounds and at different levels of proficiency (e.g., House, 1989). As was discussed earlier, politeness markers such as 'please' make for ideal modifiers in the sense that they convey both requestive intent, but also mark an utterance as polite, and rather explicitly at that. So, in effect, they allow a learner to kill two pragmatic birds with the same modifying stone. And the additional third bird thrown into the bargain is that politeness markers are less syntactically complex and as such require less careful planning and, consequently, make fewer demands on learners'

processing capacity than other types of modifiers (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). It is unlikely that overuse of 'please' is caused by transfer, since overuse has even been reported for learners with L1s that have no functional equivalent for 'please', such as Danish (Faerch & Kasper, 1989). In the present study, too, since politeness marker 'alsjeblieft' was not commonly used in Dutch, it is unlikely that the overuse of 'please' by the learners may have been due to interference from L1. It is quite likely, then, that the explanations mentioned above can also be put forward for the overuse of 'please' in the present study. It is an easy politeness strategy to use, which is, admittedly, frequently used in English, but not to the extent that learners used it. The fact that the less advanced learners were more inclined to overuse 'please' than the advanced learners suggests that overuse of politeness markers tends to decrease in favour of other modifiers as proficiency increases, presumably because learners become more aware of other types of modifiers.

Secondly, learners' overuse of the past tense modal as syntactic modifier may have been partly transfer-induced, since it was by far the most commonly used syntactic modifier in Dutch. On the other hand, however, as this is a proficient group of learners, it is quite plausible that the learners have sufficient knowledge to know that English requests can be made more polite by including past tense modals. The learners, and the secondary school group in particular, seem to have less mastery of other types of syntactic modifiers that are also typically used in English. Again, learners' limited range of syntactic modifiers has also been revealed by other studies (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987; Trosborg, 1995). Underuse has been attributed to the fact that syntactic modifiers are generally relatively complex and opaque markers of politeness, which, like lexical/phrasal modifiers require more careful planning than, for example, external modifiers, or explicit politeness markers such as 'please' (e.g., Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987). In addition, what may have caused the Dutch learners of English to rely almost exclusively on the use of past tense modals is the fact that this was clearly the syntactic marker that is most commonly used in Dutch, where speakers tend to rely more on lexical modification for the reduction of impositive force. The fact that the more advanced learners were found to have used slightly more varied patterns of syntactic modification than the less advanced learners, suggests that learners learn to use more varied patterns of modification as their proficiency increases.

Thirdly, the fact that learners did not use more varied types of lexical modifiers, such as understaters or downtoners is somewhat surprising, considering that downtoners appear to be relatively common modifiers in English. A number of plausible explanations can be put forward for learners' apparent lack of variation in lexical modification. One is, as was discussed above, the fact that other types of lexical modifiers are more complex and mark politeness less explicitly than, for example 'please'. A second explanation may be that learners feel that Dutch modifiers, and combinations of downtoners and understaters in particular, are language-specific and can thus not readily be transferred to English. Other ILP studies have shown that learners' perceptions of universality versus language specificity of L1 pragmatic features may determine whether transfer occurs (e.g., Olshtain, 1983). Similar findings with regard to the role of learners' perceptions of L1-specificity have been reported for lexical transfer (Kellerman, 1983, 1986, 1995).

However, although this might explain why learners might feel reluctant about transferring modifiers that they feel are specifically Dutch, it does not explain why they fail to use modifiers that are specifically English, such as subjectivizers or typically English downtoners such as 'possibly'. One explanation might be found in Schmidt's (1993, 1995) noticing hypothesis, the basic tenet of which is that a prerequisite for learners' acquisition of L2 features is that these features must be, first of all, be noticed by learners. In other words, if L2-specific pragmatic information goes unnoticed, learners will not acquire this knowledge. The question then is why Dutch learners of English, highly proficient learners, fail to 'notice' these modifiers. A possible explanation is that the learning environment of these learners is a foreign language environment rather than a second language environment, which may offer them little opportunity to use their English outside the classroom. Although difference in learning environment has been found to influence pragmatic success in L2 (e.g., Kitao, 1990; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), it is hard to believe that this would be the sole cause, however, since Dutch learners of English get plenty of exposure to English in their daily lives by, for example, watching television or listening to the radio. Still, amount of exposure to English might account for part of the problem, but is unlikely to be the sole cause of the problem. Another explanation is that the class of internal modifiers, apart from the notable exception of 'please', does not comprise of highly salient markers of politeness. Faerch and Kasper (1989) claim that even native speakers often seem to fail to notice the role and function of internal modifiers, so in that respect learners are simply no different from native speakers. Also, because native speakers are not aware of the role and function of internal modifiers, learners do not generally get feedback about the use of modifiers in interaction with native speakers.

Yet another, albeit tentative, explanation might be offered for what may be called learners' 'failure' to notice particular English modifiers. Although the data offer no conclusive and/or statistical evidence, findings suggest that Dutch learners may have problems noticing, or perhaps identifying, what may be typically English politeness strategies. Two particular types of modifiers that were rare in the learner data, but occurred frequently in the native English data, are modifiers that Brown and Levinson's (1987) categorized as examples of the 'be pessimistic' strategy. One of the options that a speaker has to protect a hearer's face is to "Assume H[earer] is not likely to do A[ct]" (1987: 131), in other words to be pessimistic. Typical examples of 'pessimism' markers in English are the use of negation (plus tag), as in 'You couldn't help me, could you' or the use of a 'pessimistic' subjectivizer (plus tag), such as 'I don't suppose you could help me, could you?'. As was discussed earlier, these modifiers were not frequently used by the Dutch learners. They were also, however, rare in the Dutch data, which suggests that 'being pessimistic' is not a strategy that is commonly used in Dutch. In Dutch there appears to be a clear preference for politeness strategies that 'minimize the imposition' in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, in the form of understaters, in combination with 'hedges' in the form of downtoners. In other words, part of the 'noticing' problem of learners may also be caused by the fact that Dutch and English, to some extent at least, seem to differ in the way negative face wants are protected.

In other words, learners' failure to notice L2 modifiers may be due to the low salience and complexity of modifiers, but in addition may also be due to differences between L1 and L2 with respect to the way the protection of face is achieved. Although this is obviously something that would need to be investigated further, some evidence is provided by Van der Wijst (1996), who found that French and Dutch native speakers used different types of politeness strategies. His French native speakers more typically used strategies that conferred deference on the addressee of the request, whereas Dutch native speakers frequently resorted to understaters and downgraders. Consequently Dutch learners of French, who infrequently resorted to deferential address terms in French, were often regarded as relatively blunt by French native speakers, not so much because they used fewer strategies, but because they used politeness strategies that the French native speakers did not recognize as such.

8.4.3 Situational variation

Findings in the present study suggest that Dutch and English are relatively similar with respect to the way situational variables determine variation in request behaviour. Admittedly, however, none of the situational variables were found to have had a very profound impact on linguistic variation, witness the high preference for conventional indirectness irrespective of situational variation. In the absence of cross-cultural differences between Dutch and English with respect to the influence of situational variation, it is perhaps not surprising that the learners of English were found to have varied their requests along similar lines across contexts as the other respondents. In addition, no major differences were found with respect to the way respondents assessed situational dimensions in the judgement task. Differences that did occur were usually due to the fact that the university students and the secondary school groups, irrespective of 'language' group, had assessed situations differently. Generally speaking though, it was a free ride for most of the way for the Dutch learners.

Although all respondents displayed a marked preference for conventional indirect strategies, variations in request behaviour that did occur were most notably attributable to shifts in the authority relationship between requester and requestee and much less to variations in social distance or context. This is perhaps not surprising since power distance is generally regarded as one of the most influential factors in determining the degree of face-saving that speakers need to resort to (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Generally speaking, respondents varied their request behaviour in line with Brown and Levinson's politeness formula, which predicts that the need for face-saving strategies increases with an increase of the degree of (relative) power of the addressee. Although, in broad terms, this is corroborated by findings from the present study, findings also indicate that speakers tended to include more modification (and hence more face-saving) in those situations where requests were directed at status equal addressees. In addition, whereas Brown and Levinson's formula predicts that weight of imposition of an FTA and thus the need to enhance the hearer's face increases with social distance, respondents unexpectedly used relatively high proportions of direct strategies when addressing

strangers. These findings then, seem to be at odds with Brown and Levinson's predictions. They do, however, seem to support Wolfson's (1988), who found that the way speakers vary their linguistic action relative according to variations in social distance (and also power distance) could be characterized as 'bulge' shaped. Wolfson found that speech act behaviour was remarkably similar for situations where the role relationship between interlocutors could be characterized as located at either extreme of the social distance scale. In other words, speech act behaviour in interaction between close intimates was similar to speech act behaviour in interaction between strangers. In those situations where the relationship between speaker and addressee is located in the middle section of the social distance scale (e.g., acquaintances) speech act behaviour was found to be much more varied (which creates the 'bulge'). The explanation for this behaviour is that the role relationships at the extreme ends of the scale are relatively fixed, which allows interlocutors to act with (relatively) less care and negotiation. In the middle section of the scale, however, because role relationships are less fixed, speakers need to exercise more care in interaction. The same principle applies to the dimension of power distance, where the two extremes of the scale are status unequal relationships (with high speaker authority relationships at one end and low speaker authority relationships at the other end) and where status equal relationships represent the middle section. Again, in interaction between status equal interlocutors more caution is required because the roles of interlocutors are less fixed than in relationships where either interlocutor occupies a position of authority. Wolfson's Bulge theory has been supported by findings from a number of studies investigating speech acts such as compliments, apologies and refusals (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Holmes, 1990; Wolfson & Manes, 1980; Wolfson et al., 1989).

Findings in the present study, seem to partially support Wolfson's theory in that respondents used relatively high proportions of direct strategies in addressing total strangers, so at the 'unacquainted' end of the social distance scale. In addition, findings with respect to modification of requests indicate that respondents were more cautious in formulating requests in status equal situations, where role-relationships may be less clear, than in low or high speaker authority situations.

As for the third situational variable, context, it was expected that respondents would vary their requests relative to the type of context of the situation (institutional versus non-institutional). The influence of context on request behaviour turned out to be less noticeable than for the other two situational variables, for one thing because the expected difference between the two types of contexts was only faintly noticeable in the native English groups and the nonnative English groups only. The learners seem to have varied their strategies similarly to the native English respondents, which suggests that they are aware of differences imposed by situational formality. Findings also indicate that the secondary school learners may have slightly more problems in adjusting their strategies in the right direction since they produced relatively direct requests in institutional contexts. As was discussed earlier, the secondary school learners may have been less sociopragmatically competent compared with the more advanced group of learners, who

were all business communication students who can quite plausibly be expected to be more aware of situational demands of work-related requests.

8.4.4 Sociopragmatic perceptions

A number of studies have found that nonnative speakers' sociopragmatic perceptions sometimes tend to vary from those of native speakers, which may result in differences in linguistic production. Contextual factors that have been found to play a role in determining request behaviour, in addition to power distance and social distance, are difficulty of request, right of the speaker to make the request, obligation of the hearer to comply with the request and estimated likelihood of compliance with the requests. For example, Blum-Kulka and House (1989), who examined the influence of these factors by means of a rating task similar to the one used in the present study, found that cross-cultural differences in request behaviour of particular situations used in the CCSARP studies were due to different interpretations on these context-internal dimensions. The most important factors affecting the level of directness of requests were obligation, relative dominance, right of speaker and estimated likelihood of compliance. Difficulty of request and social distance were not important factors in determining request behaviour.

As was discussed in Chapter 7, the judgement task used in the present study has revealed few differences in sociopragmatic perceptions between the learners of English and the two groups of native speakers. In addition, observed differences were not generally reflected in the way respondents formulated their requests. Although the absence of major cross-cultural differences in sociopragmatic perceptions suggests a high degree of cross-cultural similarity between the two native speech communities, it seems too early to draw this conclusion in view of the problems encountered in the analysis of the judgement task. Scoring on the rating task turned out to be highly inconsistent for a number of dimensions, most conspicuously so for degree of authority, especially in the native Dutch group. It is not clear whether inconsistency in ratings on this dimension was due to the format of the judgement task, or whether it should be interpreted as evidence that authority as a dimension is perhaps an unstable notion in people's perceptions. The second explanation is perhaps less plausible, since, as was noted in Chapter 2, authority has turned out to be a relatively stable attribute of role relations in other studies. As was also observed in Chapter 2, however, conceptualisations of authority, and other dimensions of role relations, have been conceptualized in different ways (Spencer-Oatey, 1997), so just how sociopragmatic perceptions should be measured clearly requires further investigation.

Most variation in perceptions of respondents was found with respect to the right of the speaker to make the request, the obligation of the hearer to comply with the request and difficulty of the requests. The way these dimensions were rated suggests that a distinction can be made between two types of situations, standard situations, where role relationship between speaker and hearer are relatively fixed and non-standard situations where role relationship between speaker and hearer are less fixed. Other studies have reported a similar distinction in standard and nonstandard situations, and have generally found that

request strategies in standard situations were generally characterized by more directness (Blum-Kulka et al., 1985; House, 1989). Differences with respect to directness of strategies were not, however, corroborated by findings from the present study.

Differences between age groups

An unexpected finding was that a number of differences were observed both in request production, but perhaps more clearly so in sociopragmatic perceptions between the secondary school respondents on the hand and the university respondents on the other hand. In some instances the difference between pupils and students was restricted to one or two of the groups under study, but more often than not, it affected pupils and students across all groups of respondents. For the Dutch learners' group in particular this meant that it was often difficult to determine to what extent differences in either production or assessments may have been due to a difference in linguistic proficiency or to a difference in age and/or educational background of respondents.

This was most obviously the case in the way the students and the secondary school respondents judged the two types of situations, standard and nonstandard, with respect to right of the speaker, obligation of the hearer and difficulty of the requests. Clear examples of the way age differences may have factored into the way school pupils and students formulated requests are provided by the 'homework' and the 'party' situations, both of which involve parent-child relationships. It is quite plausible that university students, who are older and generally tend to live away from home, have different sociopragmatic perceptions about parent-child relationships and consequently formulate different requests than secondary school pupils. Finding evidence to support this is difficult, as most ILP studies have analysed speech act behaviour of adults (often university students). Neither Trosborg (1995) nor Van der Wijst (1996), two studies that also included secondary school pupils, reported on an age group effect.

8.4.5 Concluding the findings

The danger of a study examining L2 learners' performance is that although the aim is to look at differences and similarities of learners' speech act behaviour compared to native speakers, most attention is given to what learners cannot do, rather than to what they can do in L2 (present company not excluded). At the end of this section, in which more attention has yet again been directed at discussing differences, it is therefore time to redress the balance. The final conclusion can perhaps only be that the Dutch learners in the present study have no problems in communicating requestive intent in English, either at the pragmalinguistic end or at the sociopragmatic end of the pragmatic competence scale, and can as such be classified as highly competent speakers of English. Although there are differences in pragmalinguistic realization if their requestive behaviour is compared with the requestive behaviour of native speakers of English, it remains to be seen whether these differences would actually affect these learners' communicative success in English. In other words, the question remains to what extent these differences

might result in pragmatic failure. Another question is whether it is possible (or desirable) to attend to these problematic areas in teaching.

8.5 Limitations of the study & suggestions for further research

As was discussed in Chapter 3, the scope of the study was limited to the investigation of one particular aspect of pragmatic competence, requests, and limited to an analysis of request performance for three groups of speakers, native speakers of (British) English, native speakers of Dutch and Dutch learners of English. The study was also limited to the request performance of learners of English at two different proficiency levels.

An obvious area of further investigation would be the analysis of other speech acts, such as complaints, apologies or refusals for the same groups of speakers. In view of findings reported in the present study, a fruitful approach would be to focus on potentially problematic areas as revealed by the present study, such as conventionality of means and form of speech act strategies and preferences in overall politeness strategies for other types of speech acts.

Another area of further investigation would be to include learners at more different levels of proficiency, especially less advanced learners, but also learners from different educational backgrounds. Findings in the present study suggest, for example, that the less proficient learners may have been less aware of differences in conventionality of request strategies than the advanced learners. In other words, this might be something that learners do not acquire until a relatively late stage in their L2 development. Also, the university students who participated in the present study were all enrolled in a Business Communication programme, where appropriateness of language use receives a great deal of emphasis. A follow-up study including learners at different levels of proficiency and learners from different educational backgrounds might provide more insights on these matters.

As was discussed in Chapter 3, the oral data collection method used in the study has not been entirely without controversy, but was selected because it was the best possible option for our purpose. Based on our experience with this elicitation method, we can suggest a number of aspects that might be refined through further study.

An aspect that warrants further investigation is the scripting of the situational prompts in DCT-type data collection methods. If prompts are phrased explicitly, the danger is that respondents will adopt the phrasing in their requests. If the prompts are phrased implicitly, the danger is that respondents may not be prompted to formulate requests, as happened to some extent in the present study. As research into different formats of the DCT has shown that the way prompts are scripted or the inclusion or exclusion of different types of prompts has an effect on linguistic variation (e.g., Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Johnston et al. 1998, see also Chapter 3), it is important that this aspect of the DCT is further refined.

A second aspect related to the prompts in the tasks concerns the difference in situational prompts between the production task and the judgement task. As was explained in Chapter 4, in the production task, situational prompts were scripted from the

perspective of the respondents in the sense that respondents were addressed with 'you' and were asked to imagine themselves in a particular situation. In the rating task, however, the situations were scripted from a neutral requester - requestee perspective and respondents were asked to assess these role sets on a number of dimensions. It is not clear to what extent this change in scripting may have affected respondents' judgements on the rating task. A future study could address this by comparing the effect of different types of scripting on respondents' perceptions.

A further area of investigation is related to the tasks is the choice of types of situations to reflect different dimensions of power, social distance and context. For some situations, the 'travel' situation in particular, respondents used different request strategies, because the situations called for service-encounter requests, whereas in other situations, such as the 'supermarket' situation, respondents opted for permission requests. In hindsight, it might have been better if we had restricted ourselves to one particular type of request in the present study, although it is obviously preferable, in the long run, to investigate the full range of request types.

In order to determine to what extent type of request situation affects linguistic variation, a systematic approach to the construction of situations (and tasks) as taken by Hudson et al. (1992, 1995) would be the first step. Hudson et al. (1992, 1995) report on the development of prototypic methods for measuring cross-cultural pragmatics. Hudson et al. developed a DCT version for contrasting English and Japanese speech act realization for three speech acts, requests, refusals and apologies. Situations were constructed which varied along three dimensions, power, social distance and imposition of the speech act, and piloted and revised on the basis of rating tasks and production tasks carried out by native and nonnative speakers.

A related area that seems to call for further methodological investigation is suggested by the problems encountered with the judgement task. As was reported in Chapter 7, reliability coefficients for some dimensions, notably authority, were particularly low, which suggests that respondents did not rate this dimension very consistently. Other studies using similar rating tasks have not reported problems with internal reliability on these dimensions (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). Although a number of studies have investigated methodological problems relating to elicitation methods for speech act production and speech act perception (cf. Chapter 3; see also Kasper & Dahl, 1991 for review of data collection methods) the development for methods measuring sociopragmatic perceptions, seems to have lagged behind. Further study is, however, clearly needed on measuring sociopragmatic perceptions. This type of research might benefit from methods used in research measuring cross-cultural value research, where concepts such as power distance have figured prominently (e.g., Pollay, 1983; Schwartz, 1994).

A suggestion for a follow-up study based on the findings of the present study would be the investigation of the communicative effect of the observed differences in learners' request behaviour. A first step in this direction would be to investigate to what extent undermodification of requests, for example, can be seen to affect the overall politeness level as perceived by native speakers of English. A second, related area would be to

investigate whether the observed difference between Dutch and English in preferred use of strategies to redress face wants can be supported with further evidence, either in subsequent request studies, but also in studies investigating other types of speech acts. Since, as evidenced by Van der Wijst's (1996) findings, differences in addressing face wants might be potentially damaging in cross-cultural and intercultural contacts, more insights in cross-cultural differences and the problems these might cause for L2 learners are clearly needed.

8.6 Implications for teaching

As was discussed above, the problem of L2 learners is that in developing L2 pragmatic competence they need to learn how to put free information to good use and, in addition, that they need to acquire new L2-specific knowledge. Findings in the present study suggest that Dutch learners of English are no exception in that they sometimes do not put free L1-based information to good use in English, but also that they lack English-specific pragmatic knowledge. The question, then, is to what extent these potentially problematic areas can and should be addressed in English language teaching.

Firstly, whether these areas are indeed 'problematic' partly depends on what future research might reveal about the communicative effect of learner-specific requests. After all, even though learners formulate requests, or other speech acts for that matter, differently from native speakers, these differences might not affect their communicative success negatively. A recent study investigating genres and discourse strategies in written English produced by Dutch businessmen working in multinational corporations found that many of the Dutch writers were able to communicate appropriately and effectively, despite the fact that they at times used different discourse strategies (Nickerson, 2000). Further research might however be necessary to shed light on the influence of specific characteristics of learner English.

Still, assuming for the time being that these areas might be problematic, the question remains if and how learners' acquisition of competence might benefit from instruction. The answer to the first part of the question is that instruction can help learners develop their competence, but that pragmatic competence as such cannot be taught. However, language teaching can play a facilitating role in the development of pragmatic competence (Kasper 1997, 2001). The answer to the second part of the question, the 'how', requires a more detailed answer. Research into the role of input and instruction in the acquisition of L2 competence is a relatively new area in ILP, with only a few studies having addressed what pragmatic aspects can benefit from instruction and which teaching approaches might be most suitable (cf. Kasper & Rose, 2001).

First of all, a prerequisite for the development of pragmatic competence is that learners notice the information they need, but also that they are given the opportunity to apply this information (Schmidt, 1993). In order to make learners notice the information they need two types of activities are required, activities aimed at raising learners' pragmatic awareness and activities offering learners the opportunities to practise (Kasper, 1997).

Consequently, for Dutch learners of English, at least advanced learners, any teaching approach hoping to enhance the pragmatic competence of Dutch learners of English should pay attention to differences and similarities between English and Dutch with respect to conventionality of substrategies, types of modification and, in particular, linguistic forms used to encode politeness, not just in relation to requests, but also in relation to other speech acts. This can be done through explicit instruction and the use of pragmatic observation tasks in which students are asked to observe how native speakers of English vary their performance of speech acts relative to situational variation.

An obvious problem is that Dutch learners need to develop their English pragmatic competence in a foreign language environment that offers limited contacts with native speakers and limited opportunities to observe authentic interaction between native speakers. This means teachers will for the main part have to rely on taped sources with authentic input. Even so, since learners also need to become aware of the way they use pragmatic knowledge in their native language, observation tasks aimed at discovering how Dutch native speakers apply the rules of polite language use may serve as a good starting-point in raising students' awareness.

Secondly, learners need to be given the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice. This can be achieved through all types of student-centred activities that require learners to perform communicative acts, actively engage in discourse management and interact with other participants. An approach that has recently been adopted in the department of Business Communication at the University of Nijmegen has been to reorganize all foreign language courses into content-based student-centred courses that require students to complete a number of projects throughout the year. In the course of each project students need to carry out a variety of task-based activities that requires them to communicate in their L2 with native speakers (usually by e-mail) and with their fellow-students in running meetings, negotiations and presentations. An important element of the course is that students are required to observe and evaluate their own and their fellow students' performance, which allows them to reflect on matters such as the use of direct and indirect language, conversation management and strategic competence in general.

Finally, as comparisons of textbooks and authentic data have revealed that textbooks are not always very accurate reflections of language use in interaction (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991), L2 learners might, in the long run, perhaps benefit most from what research into L2 pragmatic competence might contribute to research-based teaching materials. In other words, Dutch learners of English may benefit most from more research on 'Dutch English'.

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Appendix A: DCT situations and judgement task

Part 1: situations DCT

a Situations DCT - Dutch version

Situation type Situation label	Description of situation
1 P1-S1-C1	
Huiswerk 1	1. De huiskamer Je bent boven op je kamer bezig met je wiskunde- huiswerk maar je snapt de sommen niet. Je hebt hulp nodig. Je gaat naar beneden. In de huiskamer zit je vader naar een documentaire op tv te kijken. Wat zeg je tegen je vader?
Huiswerk 2	2. De huiskamer Je bent boven op je kamer. Je komt net tot de ontdekking dat je morgenochtend een werkstuk af moet hebben. Je hebt er tot nu toe weinig tijd aan besteed en dus heb je je vader's hulp nodig om het af te maken. Je gaat naar beneden. In de huiskamer zit je vader naar een documentaire op tv te kijken. Wat zeg je tegen je vader?
2 P1-S1-C2	
Stagerapport 1	1. De PR-afdeling Je bent student en loopt stage bij een bedrijf. Je hebt de afgelopen zes maanden op de PR-afdeling gewerkt. Als onderdeel van je stageopdracht heb je een verslag moeten schrijven over je werkervaringen. Dit verslag moet morgen ingeleverd worden bij je stagebegeleider op de universiteit. Peter Hendriks, het hoofd van de PR-afdeling en tevens je begeleider binnen het bedrijf, zal het verslag moeten lezen en goedkeuren vóór je het in kunt leveren. Als hij het verslag vanavond nog zou lezen, zou je het morgenochtend in kunnen leveren. Peter Hendriks, je begeleider, komt net je kantoor binnen. Wat zeg je tegen je begeleider?
Stagerapport 2	2. De PR-afdeling Je bent student en loopt stage bij een bedrijf. Je hebt de afgelopen zes maanden op de PR-afdeling gewerkt. Als onderdeel van je stageopdracht heb je een verslag moeten schrijven over je werkervaringen. Dit verslag moet morgen ingeleverd worden bij je stagebegeleider op de universiteit. Het hoofd van de PR-afdeling, Peter Hendriks, die je begeleider was binnen het bedrijf, zal een korte samenvatting van je verslag moeten lezen en goedkeuren vóór je het in kunt leveren. Als hij de samenvatting vanavond zou lezen, zou je het verslag morgenochtend in kunnen leveren. Peter Hendriks, je begeleider, komt net je kantoor binnen. Wat zeg je tegen je begeleider?
3 P1-S2-C1	
Reisbureau 1	1. Het reisbureau Vorige week heb je een directe vlucht van Amsterdam naar Australië geboekt. Nu wil je die boeking zodanig wijzigen dat je een tussenstop in Singapore kunt maken om daar wat vrienden te bezoeken. Je zult je vrienden vanavond moeten bellen om te zeggen of je wel of niet komt. Vijf minuten voor sluitingstijd loop je het reisbureau binnen. Alleen de manager is nog aanwezig. Wat zeg je tegen de manager?
Reisbureau 2	2. Het reisbureau Vorige week heb je bij het plaatselijke reisbureau een vlucht geboekt van Amsterdam naar Londen. Je vertrekt morgen maar hebt zojuist ontdekt dat je eigenlijk een vlucht eerder zou moeten hebben, omdat je anders te laat bent voor je afspraak in Londen. Vijf minuten voor sluitingstijd loop je het reisbureau binnen. Alleen de manager is aanwezig. Wat zeg je tegen de manager?
4 P1-S2-C2	
Lunch 1	1. De postkamer Vandaag is je eerste werkdag in de postkamer van de PTT. Het is bijna lunchtijd en je bent er net achter gekomen dat je nog drie pakketten moet inpakken voordat je naar de kantine kunt gaan. Al je collega's zijn al naar de kantine. Je baas, Heleen Brugman, komt net binnenlopen. Als ze je zou helpen, zou je nog tijd hebben om te gaan lunchen in de kantine. Wat zeg je tegen je baas?

Situation type Situation label	Description of situation
Lunch 2	2. De postkamer Vandaag is je eerste werkdag in de postkamer van de PTT. Het is bijna lunchtijd en je komt er net achter dat je nog vijftig pakketten moet inpakken voordat je naar de kantine kunt gaan. Al je collega's zijn al naar de kantine. Je baas, Heleen Brugman, komt zojuist binnenlopen. Als ze je zou helpen, zou je nog tijd hebben om te gaan lunchen in de kantine. Wat zeg je tegen je baas?
5 P2-S1-C1	
Buren 1	1. Het huis van je burens Je hebt je buurvrouw, Joyce de Bruin, beloofd om met jouw en haar kinderen naar de MacDonald's te gaan en om ze mee te nemen naar de bioscoop waar een leuke film draait. Maar je hebt net gehoord dat je naar een belangrijke vergadering moet. Iemand anders zal de kinderen dus mee moeten nemen. Je hebt de kaartjes voor de film al gekocht; de kinderen zitten te wachten in de auto. Je loopt naar het huis van je burens en belt aan; Joyce de Bruin doet open. Wat zeg je tegen je buurvrouw?
Buren 2	2. Het huis van je burens Je hebt je buurvrouw, Joyce de Bruin, beloofd om jouw en haar kinderen na de voetbaltraining op te halen bij het sportcentrum. Maar je hebt net gehoord dat je naar een belangrijke vergadering moet. Je gaat naar het huis van je burens en belt aan; Joyce de Bruin doet open. Wat zeg je tegen je buurvrouw?
6 P2-S1-C2	
Reclamecampagne 1	1. De reclame-afdeling Jij en je collega, John Molenaar, zijn allebei reclame-manager en werken momenteel voor dezelfde klant. Jullie klant heeft een korte presentatie georganiseerd om een nieuw produkt te introduceren; de presentatie vindt morgen plaats. Het is van belang dat één van jullie naar die presentatie gaat. Je hebt het erg druk deze week en bent niet in staat om zelf te gaan. Wat zeg je tegen je collega?
Reclamecampagne 2	2. De reclame-afdeling Jij en je collega, John Molenaar, zijn allebei reclame-manager en werken momenteel voor dezelfde klant. Volgende week moeten jullie een reclamecampagne voor deze klant afgerond hebben. Hoewel jij aangewezen bent om deze campagne alleen op te zetten, besef je nu dat je het volgende week te druk zult hebben met een andere klant en daarom niet in staat zult zijn om aan deze campagne te werken. Je wilt eigenlijk dat John de campagne voor je afmaakt. Wat zeg je tegen je collega?
7 P2-S2-C1	
Supermarkt 1	1. De supermarkt Je staat in de rij voor de kassa met een boodschappenkarretje vol met boodschappen. Je bent al laat voor een belangrijke vergadering. Er staat één man voor je. Wat zeg je tegen de man voor je?
Supermarkt 2	2. De supermarkt Je staat in de rij voor de kassa om een pak melk af te rekenen. Je bent al laat voor een belangrijke bijeenkomst. Er staat één man voor je in de rij. Hij heeft een boodschappenkarretje vol met boodschappen. Wat zeg je tegen de man voor je?
8 P2-S2-C2	
Papiervoorraad 1	1. De printkamer Je bent één van de twee nieuwe werknemers in de printkamer. Je bent vandaag met dit werk begonnen. Je hebt je collega, Susan Drost, nog nooit eerder ontmoet. Het is bijna lunch-tijd en je komt er net achter dat het papier op is. Eén van jullie zal een nieuwe voorraad papier uit de voorraadkamer aan het einde van de gang moeten halen. Je hebt het té druk om het zelf te doen. Wat zeg je tegen je nieuwe collega?

Situation type Situation label	Description of situation
Papiervoorraad 2	2. De printkamer Je bent één van de twee nieuwe werknemers in de printkamer. Je bent vandaag met dit werk begonnen. Je hebt je collega, Susan Drost, nog nooit eerder ontmoet. Het is bijna lunch-tijd en je komt er net achter dat het papier op is. Eén van jullie zal naar een ander gebouw op het industrieterrein moeten lopen om een nieuwe voorraad papier te halen. Je hebt het té druk om het zelf te doen. Wat zeg je tegen je nieuwe collega?
9 P3-S1-C1 Feestje 1	1. De huiskamer Je hebt een feest gegeven. Het is al laat op de avond en je laatste gasten zijn net pas vertrokken. In huis is het één grote puinhoop. Overal liggen glazen, kapotte slingers en resten van hapjes en er staat afwas voor een hele week. Je hebt er een hekel aan om 's ochtends wakker te worden in een rommelig huis maar je bent moe en wilt eigenlijk naar bed. Je dochter Manon is nog op. Wat zeg je tegen je dochter?
Feestje 2	2. De huiskamer Bij je thuis is een feestje aan de gang. Op een gegeven moment stoot iemand een glas wijn om. Je bent met een vriend in gesprek die je al jaren niet meer hebt gezien. Je dochter Manon staat naast je. Wat zeg je tegen je dochter?
10 P3-S1-C2 Overwerken 1	1. De marketing-afdeling Je bent hoofd van de marketing-afdeling. Je assistent, Sandra Coenders, is net klaar met het materiaal dat je morgenochtend nodig hebt voor een presentatie. Het is half zes en je komt er net achter dat één van de stencils veranderd moet worden. Als je assistent een half uur langer zou blijven, zou ze het stencil voor je kunnen veranderen. Wat zeg je tegen je assistent?
Overwerken 2	2. De marketing-afdeling Je bent hoofd van de marketing-afdeling. Je assistent, Sandra Coenders, is net klaar met het materiaal dat je morgenochtend nodig hebt voor een presentatie. Het is half zes en je komt er net achter dat alle stencils (30 in totaal) veranderd moeten worden. Als je assistent een paar uur langer zou blijven, zouden de stencils vanavond nog klaar kunnen zijn. Wat zeg je tegen je assistent?
11 P3-S2-C1 Bejaarde 1	1. In de bus Je bent een bejaard persoon. Je hebt de hele dag boodschappen gedaan en bent nu op weg naar huis. Je stapt de bus in en ziet dat alle zitplaatsen bezet zijn. Op een stoel vlakbij je, zit een jongen een tijdschrift te lezen. Wat zeg je tegen de jongen?
Bejaarde 2	2. In de hal Je bent een bejaard persoon. Je hebt boodschappen gedaan bij Albert Heijn en bent met drie zware tassen vol met boodschappen naar huis gelopen. Als je de hal van je flatgebouw binnenloopt, ontdek je dat de lift die je naar je flat op de vijfde verdieping zou moeten brengen, kapot is. Een jongen komt net de hal binnenlopen. Wat zeg je tegen de jongen?
12 P3-S2-C2 Douane 1	1. Bij de douane Je bent douane-beambte op Schiphol. Je denkt dat de jonge vrouw die op het punt staat de douane te passeren, te veel belasting-vrije artikelen heeft gekocht. Het lijkt je verstandig om haar bagage even te controleren. Wat zeg je tegen de vrouw?
Douane 2	2. Bij de douane Je bent douane-beambte op Schiphol. Je afdeling is bezig een nieuwe methode te ontwikkelen om het aangeven van belasting-vrije artikelen te vergemakkelijken. Je hebt een groep reizigers nodig om een vragenlijst in te vullen. Het invullen van deze vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 30 minuten. Je hebt nog één persoon nodig voor je onderzoek. Een vrouw komt net de douane-hal binnenlopen. Wat zeg je tegen de vrouw?

b Situations DCT - English version

Situation type Situation label	Description of situation
1 P1-S1-C1 Homework 1	The living room. You were in your room upstairs doing your maths homework but you could not do the sums. You need some help. You go down to the living room where your dad is watching a documentary on television. What do you say to your dad?
Homework 2	The living room. You are upstairs in your room. You have just realized that you need to finish your school project by tomorrow morning. So far you have not done much work on it and you need your dad to help you finish it. You go downstairs to the living room where your dad is watching a documentary on television. What do you say to your dad?
2 P1-S1-C2 Report 1	The PR department. You are a student-trainee who has been working in the PR department for the past six months. As part of your traineeship you have had to write a report about your work experience. This report is to be handed in to your university tutor tomorrow. The head of the PR department, Peter Hopkins, who was your supervisor at work, will have to read and approve a short summary of the report before you can hand it in. If he read the summary tonight, you would be able to hand in the report tomorrow morning. Peter Hopkins, your supervisor has just walked into your office. What do you say to your supervisor?
Report 2	The PR department. You are a student-trainee who has been working in the PR department for the past six months. As part of your traineeship you have had to write a report on your work experience. This report is to be handed in to your university tutor tomorrow. The head of the PR department, Peter Hopkins, who was your supervisor at work, will have to read and approve the report before you can hand it in. If he read the report tonight, you would be able to hand it in tomorrow morning. Peter Hopkins, your supervisor has just walked into your office. What do you say to the head of the department?
3 P1-S2-C1 Travel 1	The travel agency. Last week you booked a flight from London to Amsterdam at your local travel agency. You have just discovered that you need to reschedule to an earlier flight, or you would be late for your meeting in Amsterdam tomorrow. You walk into the travel agency five minutes before closing time. Only the manager is present. What do you say to the manager?
Travel 2	The travel agency. Last week you booked a direct flight from London to Jakarta. You now want to change your booking completely so you can make a stop-over in Singapore to visit some friends. You will have to phone your friends tonight to tell them if you are coming. You walk into the travel agency five minutes before closing time. Only the manager is still around. What do you say to the manager?
4 P1-S2-C2 Lunch 1	The mailroom Today is your first day at work; you have started working in the mailroom. It is nearly time for lunch and you have just realized that you need to pack three more parcels before you can go down to the canteen. All your colleagues have gone down to lunch. Your boss, Helen Blackwell, has just walked in. If she gave you a hand you would still have time to go down to the canteen for lunch.

Situation type Situation label	Description of situation
Lunch 2	<p>The mailroom. What do you say to your boss? Today is your first day at work; you have started working in the mailroom. It is nearly time for lunch and you have just realized that you need to pack fifty more parcels before you can go down to the canteen. All your colleagues have gone down to lunch. Your boss, Helen Blackwell, has just walked in. If she gave you a hand you would still have time to go down to the canteen for lunch. What do you say to your boss?</p>
5 P2-S1-C1 Neighbour 1	<p>Your neighbour's house. You had promised your neighbour, Joyce Brown, to pick up both your own and her children from football practice at the local sports centre. However, you have just heard that you have to attend an urgent meeting. You walk to your neighbour's house and ring the doorbell; Joyce Brown answers the door. What do you say to your neighbour?</p>
Neighbour 2	<p>Your neighbour's house. You had promised your neighbour, Joyce Brown, to take both your own and her children for a hamburger and then to the local cinema to see a film. However, you have just heard that you have to attend an important meeting, so someone else will have to take the children out. You have already bought the tickets; the kids are all waiting in the car. You walk to your neighbour's house and ring the doorbell; Joyce Brown answers the door. What do you say to your neighbour?</p>
6 P2-S1-C2 Campaign 1	<p>The advertising department. You and your colleague, John Martin, are advertising managers and are at present working for the same client. Your client has organised a short presentation to introduce a new product; the presentation is to take place tomorrow. It is essential that either you or your colleague go to the presentation. You are very busy this week and are unable to go yourself. What do you say to your colleague?</p>
Campaign 2	<p>The advertising department. You and your colleague, John Martin, are advertising managers and are at present working for the same client. You were supposed to have finished an advertising campaign for this client by next week. Although you were assigned to do this particular campaign on your own, you now realize that you will be too busy with another client and will therefore not be able to work on the campaign next week. You would like John to finish the campaign for you. What do you say to your colleague?</p>
7 P2-S2-C1 Supermarket 1	<p>The supermarket. You are waiting in line at the checkout to pay for a bottle of milk. You are late for an important meeting. There is one man in front of you with a shopping trolley full of groceries. What do you say to the man in front of you?</p>
Supermarket 2	<p>The supermarket. You are standing in line at the checkout with a shopping trolley full of groceries. You are late for an important meeting. There is one man in front of you. What do you say to the man in front of you?</p>
8 P2-S2-C2 Paper 1	<p>The printroom. You are one of two new employees in the printroom. You have started work today. You have never met your colleague, Sharon Downing before. It is nearly lunchtime and you have just realized that you have run out of paper. Either you or Sharon will have to get a new supply of paper from the storeroom at the end of the corridor. You are too busy to do it yourself. What do you say to your colleague?</p>

Situation type Situation label	Description of situation
Paper 2	The printroom. You are one of two new employees in the printroom. You have started work today. You have never met your colleague, Sharon Downing before. It is nearly lunchtime and you have just realized that you have run out of paper. Either you or Sharon will have to walk to another building on the industrial estate to get a fresh supply of paper. You are too busy to do it yourself. What do you say to your colleague?
9 P3-S1-C1 Party 1	The living room. There is a party going on at your house. At one point, someone knocks over a glass of wine. You are talking to a friend you have not seen for years. Your daughter Mallory is standing next to you. What do you say to your daughter?
Party 2	The living room. Today is your birthday. It is late in the evening and you have just shown your last guests out. The house is a mess. There are glasses, streamers and left-overs in almost every room, and there is about a week's washing-up to do. You hate waking up in the morning to a messy house but you are tired and want to go to bed. Your daughter, Mallory, is still up. What do you say to your daughter?
10 P3-S1-C2 Overtime 1	The marketing department. You are head of the marketing department. Your assistant, Sandra Collins, has just finished the material you will need for a presentation tomorrow morning. It is half past five and you have just realized that one of the overhead sheets will have to be changed. If your assistant stayed on for half an hour she could change the sheet for you. What do you say to your assistant?
Overtime 2	The marketing department. You are head of the marketing department. Your assistant, Sandra Collins, has just finished the material you need for a presentation tomorrow morning. It is half past five and you have just realized that all the overhead sheets (30 in total) will have to be changed. If your assistant stayed on for a couple of hours you might be able to get them done tonight. What do you say to your assistant?
11 P3-S2-C1 Pensioner 1	The bus You are a pensioner. You have been out shopping all day and you are now on your way home. You have just got onto the bus to find that there are no free seats left. In a seat near to you a young man is reading a magazine. What do you say to the young man?
Pensioner 2	The hall You are a pensioner. You have been out shopping at Sainsbury's and have walked all the way home with three heavy bags full of groceries. When you walk into the entrance hall of your block of flats you find that the lift that is supposed to take you up to your flat on the fifth floor is out of order. A young man has just walked into the hall. What do you say to the young man?
12 P3-S2-C2 Customs 1	At customs. You are a customs official at Heathrow airport. You suspect that the young woman who is about to walk through customs has bought too many duty-free goods. You feel you had better check her luggage. What do you say to the woman?
Customs 2	At customs. You are a customs official at Heathrow airport. Your department is in the process of developing a new method to facilitate the declaration procedure for duty-free goods. You need a cross-section of travellers to fill out a questionnaire. Filling out the questionnaire takes around 30 minutes. You need one more traveller to complete the questionnaire for you. A young woman has just walked into the customs area. What do you say to the woman?

Part 2: judgement task

a Example judgement task - Dutch version

Stel je de volgende situatie voor:

De PR-afdeling

John Walraven is student en loopt stage bij een bedrijf. Hij heeft de afgelopen zes maanden op de PR-afdeling gewerkt. Als onderdeel van zijn stage heeft John een verslag moeten schrijven over zijn werkervaringen. Dit verslag moet morgen bij zijn stagebegeleider op de universiteit ingeleverd worden. Peter Hendriks, het hoofd van de PR-afdeling en tevens zijn begeleider binnen het bedrijf, zal een korte samenvatting van het verslag moeten lezen én goedkeuren voordat John het in kan leveren. Als Peter Hendriks de samenvatting vanavond zou lezen, zou John het verslag morgenochtend in kunnen leveren. Peter Hendriks komt net John's kantoor binnen. John vraagt hem de samenvatting van zijn verslag vanavond te lezen.

Wat vind je:

1. Heeft één van deze twee personen gezag over de ander of zijn ze gelijk?
 - ' de spreker heeft gezag over de hoorder • een beetje • tamelijk veel • veel
 - ' de hoorder heeft gezag over de spreker • een beetje • tamelijk veel • veel
 - ' de spreker en hoorder zijn gelijk

2. Is dit een formele situatie?

nee, helemaal niet |__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __| ja, heel erg

3. Is de verhouding tussen spreker en hoorder vriendschappelijk?

nee, helemaal niet |__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __| ja, heel erg

4. Heeft de spreker het recht dit verzoek te doen?

nee, helemaal niet |__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __| ja, heel erg

5. Is het moeilijk voor de spreker om dit verzoek te doen?

nee, helemaal niet |__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __| ja, heel erg

6. Vind je dat de hoorder verplicht is om aan dit verzoek te voldoen?

nee, helemaal niet |__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __| ja, heel erg

7. Denk je dat de kans groot is dat de hoorder aan dit verzoek zal voldoen?

nee, helemaal niet |__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __|__'| __| ja, heel erg

a *Example judgement task - English version*

Imagine the following situation:

The PR department.

John Wilkins, a student-trainee has been working in the PR department for the past six months. As part of his traineeship John has had to write a report on his work experience. This report is to be handed in to his university tutor tomorrow. The head of the PR department, Peter Hopkins, who was his supervisor at work, will have to read and approve a short summary of the report before he can hand it in. If Peter Hopkins read the summary tonight, John would be able to hand in the report tomorrow morning. Peter Hopkins has just walked into John's office. John asks him to read the summary of his report tonight.

In your opinion:

1. Does one of the two people in this situation have authority over the other, or are they equals?

- ' the speaker has authority over the hearer • a little • a fair amount • a lot
 ' the hearer has authority over the speaker • a little • a fair amount • a lot
 ' the speaker and hearer are equals

2. Is this a formal situation?

not at all |__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' | very much

3. Are the speaker and hearer on friendly terms?

not at all |__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' | very much

4. Does the speaker have the right to make the request?

not at all |__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' | very much

5. Is this a difficult request for the speaker to make?

not at all |__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' | very much

6. Does the hearer have the obligation to comply with this request?

not at all |__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' | very much

7. Is it likely that the hearer will comply with this request?

not at all |__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' __|__' | very much

Appendix B: Chi-square analyses request strategies

Table 1 Request strategy * Language Crosstabulation

request strategy		Language			Total
		NE native English	NNE nonnative English	NNE native Dutch	
direct	Count	50	128	83	261
	% within language	7.4%	11.2%	6.8%	8.6%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.2	4	-2.9	
non-obviousness	Count	44	97	7	139
	% within language	5.2%	8.5%	.6%	4.6%
	Adjusted Residual	0.9	8	-8.7	
willingness	Count	183	250	516	949
	% within language	27.2%	21.9%	42.1%	31.2%
	Adjusted Residual	-2.5	-8.6	10.6	
ability	Count	404	665	620	1689
	% within language	60.1%	58.3%	50.6%	55.6%
	Adjusted Residual	2.7	2.4	-4.6	
Total	Count	672	1140	1226	3038
	% within language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

language P^2 (6, $n = 3038$), $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .249$

Table 2a Request strategy * Level Crosstabulation: Native English

request strategy		Level		Total
		secondary school	university	
direct	Count	23	27	50
	% within level	5.7%	10.1%	7.4%
	Adjusted Residual	-2.1	2.1	
non-obviousness	Count	27	8	35
	% within level	6.7%	3.0%	5.2%
	Adjusted Residual	2.1	-2.1	
willingness	Count	102	81	183
	% within level	25.2%	30.3%	27.2%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.5	1.5	
ability	Count	253	151	404
	% within level	62.5%	56.6%	60.1%
	Adjusted Residual	1.5	-1.5	
Total	Count	405	267	672
	% within level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Level NE P^2 (3, $n = 672$) = 10.92, $p \# .05$, Cramer's $V = .127$

Table 2b Request strategy * Level Crosstabulation: Nonnative English

request strategy		Level		Total
		secondary school	university	
direct	Count	82	46	128
	% within level	13.2%	8.8%	11.2%
	Adjusted Residual	2.3	-2.3	
non-obviousness	Count	69	28	97
	% within level	11.1%	5.4%	8.5%
	Adjusted Residual	3.5	-3.5	
willingness	Count	134	116	250
	% within level	21.6%	22.3%	21.9%
	Adjusted Residual	-0.3	0.3	
ability	Count	335	330	250
	% within level	54.0%	63.5%	21.9%
	Adjusted Residual	-3.2	3.2	
Total	Count	620	520	1140
	% within level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Level NNE P^2 (3, $n = 1140$) = 20.17, $p \# .001$, Cramer's $V = .133$

Table 2c Request strategy * Level Crosstabulation: Native Dutch

request strategy		Level		Total
		secondary school	university	
direct	Count	45	38	83
	% within level	8.2%	5.6%	6.8%
	Adjusted Residual	1.8	-1.8	
non-obviousness	Count	2	5	7
	% within level	.4%	.7%	.6%
	Adjusted Residual	0.9	0.9	
willingness	Count	237	279	516
	% within level	43.3%	41.1%	42.1%
	Adjusted Residual	0.8	-0.8	
ability	Count	263	357	620
	% within level	48.1%	52.6%	50.6%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.6	1.6	
Total	Count	547	679	1226
	% within level	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Level ND $P^2(3, n = 1226) = 5.40, p = .145, \text{Cramer's } V = .066$

Table 3a Request strategy * Power Crosstabulation

request strategy		Power			Total
		P1 low speaker authority	P2 status equal	P3 high speaker authority	
direct	Count	75	65	121	261
	% within power	7.4%	6.6%	11.6%	8.6%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.6	-2.7	4.3	
non-obviousness	Count	44	32	63	139
	% within power	4.4%	3.2%	6.1%	4.6%
	Adjusted Residual	-.4	-2.4	2.8	
willingness	Count	175	401	373	949
	% within power	17.3%	40.6%	35.9%	31.2%
	Adjusted Residual	-11.7	7.7	4.0	
ability	Count	717	490	482	1689
	% within power	70.9%	49.6%	46.4%	55.6%
	Adjusted Residual	12.0	-4.6	-7.4	
Total	Count	1011	988	1039	3038
	% within power	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

power $P^2(6, n = 3038) = 189.15, p < .001; \text{Cramer's } V = .176$

Table 3b Request strategy * Power * Language Crosstabulation: Native English

request strategy		Power			Total
		P1 low speaker authority	P2 status equal	P3 high speaker authority	
direct	Count	13	11	26	50
	% within power	6.0%	5.3%	12.2%	7.8%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.2	-1.7	2.9	
willingness	Count	38	76	69	183
	% within power	17.7%	36.4%	32.4%	28.7%
	Adjusted Residual	-4.4	3.0	1.4	
ability	Count	164	122	118	404
	% within power	76.3%	58.4%	55.4%	63.4%
	Adjusted Residual	4.8	-1.8	-3.0	
Total	Count	215	209	213	637
	% within power	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

power by language $P^2(4, n = 637) = 30.811, p < .000, \text{Cramer's } V = .156$

Table 3c Request strategy * Power * Language Crosstabulation: Nonnative English

request strategy		Power			Total
		P1 low speaker authority	P2 status equal	P3 high speaker authority	
direct	Count	34	37	57	128
	% within power	9.8%	10.6%	16.3%	12.3%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.7	-1.1	2.8	
willingness	Count	53	109	88	250
	% within power	15.3%	31.3%	25.2%	24.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-4.6	3.9	.7	
ability	Count	259	202	204	665
	% within power	74.9%	58.0%	58.5%	63.8%
	Adjusted Residual	5.3	-2.7	-2.5	
Total	Count	346	348	349	1043
	% within power	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

power by language $P^2(4, n = 1043) = 36.021, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .131$

Table 3d Request strategy * Power * Language Crosstabulation: Native Dutch

request strategy		Power			Total
		P1 low speaker authority	P2 status equal	P3 high speaker authority	
direct	Count	28	17	38	83
	% within power	6.9%	4.3%	9.2%	6.8%
	Adjusted Residual	.1	-2.5	2.4	
willingness	Count	84	216	216	516
	% within power	20.7%	54.1%	52.2%	42.3%
	Adjusted Residual	-10.8	5.8	5.0	
ability	Count	294	166	160	620
	% within power	72.4%	41.6%	38.6%	50.9%
	Adjusted Residual	10.6	-4.5	-6.1	
Total	Count	406	399	414	1219
	% within power	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

power by language $P^2(4, n = 1219) = 130.701, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .232$

Table 4a Request strategy * Social distance Crosstabulation

request strategy		Social distance		Total
		S1: non-strangers	S2: strangers	
direct	Count	162	99	261
	% within social distance	10.6%	6.5%	8.6%
	Adjusted Residual	4.0	-4	
non-obviousness	Count	84	55	139
	% within social distance	5.5%	3.6%	4.6%
	Adjusted Residual	2.5	-2.5	
willingness	Count	325	624	949
	% within social distance	21.4%	41.2%	31.2%
	Adjusted Residual	-11.8	11.8	
ability	Count	951	738	1689
	% within social distance	62.5%	48.7%	55.6%
	Adjusted Residual	7.7	-7.7	
Total	Count	1522	1516	3038
	% within social distance	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

social distance $P^2(3, n = 3038) = 142.31, p < .001; \text{Cramer's } V = .216$

Table 4b Request strategy * Social distance * Language Crosstabulation: Native English

request strategy		Social distance		Total
		S1: non-strangers	S2: strangers	
direct	Count	29	21	50
	% within social distance	9.3%	6.5%	7.8%
	Adjusted Residual	1.3	-1.3	
willingness	Count	48	135	183
	% within social distance	15.3%	41.7%	28.7%
	Adjusted Residual	-7.3	7.3	
ability	Count	236	168	404
	% within social distance	75.4%	51.9%	63.4%
	Adjusted Residual	6.2	-6.2	
Total	Count	313	324	637
	% within social distance	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

social distance by language $P^2(2, n = 637) = 53.912, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .291$

Table 4c Request strategy * Social distance * Language Crosstabulation: Nonnative English

request strategy		Social distance		Total
		S1: non-strangers	S2: strangers	
direct	Count	77	51	128
	% within social distance	15.1%	9.6%	12.3%
	Adjusted Residual	2.7	-2.7	
willingness	Count	70	180	250
	% within social distance	13.7%	33.8%	24.0%
	Adjusted Residual	-7.6	7.6	
ability	Count	363	302	665
	% within social distance	71.2%	56.7%	63.8%
	Adjusted Residual	4.9	-4.9	
Total	Count	510	533	1043
	% within social distance	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

social distance by language $P^2(2, n = 1043) = 58.798, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .237$

Table 4d Request strategy * Social distance * Language Crosstabulation: Native Dutch

request strategy		Social distance		Total
		S1: non-strangers	S2: strangers	
direct	Count	56	27	83
	% within social distance	9.1%	4.5%	6.8%
	Adjusted Residual	3.2	-3.2	
willingness	Count	207	309	516
	% within social distance	33.7%	51.2%	42.3%
	Adjusted Residual	-6.2	6.2	
ability	Count	352	268	620
	% within social distance	57.2%	44.4%	50.9%
	Adjusted Residual	4.5	-4.5	
Total	Count	615	604	1219
	% within social distance	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

social distance by language $P^2(2, n = 1219) = 41.580, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .185$

Table 5a Request strategy * Context Crosstabulation

request strategy		Context		Total
		C1: non-institutional	C2: institutional	
direct	Count	102	159	261
	% within Context	6.8%	10.3%	8.6%
	Adjusted Residual	-3.4	3.4	
non-obviousness	Count	75	64	139
	% within Context	5.0%	4.1%	4.6%
	Adjusted Residual	1.2	-1.2	
willingness	Count	530	419	949
	% within Context	35.5%	27.1%	31.2%
	Adjusted Residual	5.0	-5.0	
ability	Count	787	902	1689
	% within Context	52.7%	58.4%	55.6%
	Adjusted Residual	-3.2	3.2	
Total	Count	1494	1544	3038
	% within Context	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

context $P^2(3, n = 3038) = 33.32, p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .105$

Table 5b Request strategy * Context * Language Crosstabulation Native English

request strategy		Context		Total
		C1: non-institutional	C2: institutional	
direct	Count	20	30	50
	% within Context	6.4%	9.2%	7.8%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.3	1.3	
willingness	Count	111	72	183
	% within Context	35.7%	22.1%	28.7%
	Adjusted Residual	3.8	-3.8	
ability	Count	180	224	404
	% within Context	57.9%	68.7%	63.4%
	Adjusted Residual	-2.8	2.8	
Total	Count	311	326	637
	% within Context	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

context by language $P^2(2, n = 637) = 14.759, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .152$

Table 5c Request strategy * Context * Language Crosstabulation: Nonnative English

request strategy		Context		Total
		C1: non-institutional	C2: institutional	
direct	Count	41	87	128
	% within Context	8.0%	16.4%	12.3%
	Adjusted Residual	-4.1	4.1	
willingness	Count	157	93	250
	% within Context	30.6%	17.5%	24.0%
	Adjusted Residual	4.9	-4.9	
ability	Count	315	350	665
	% within Context	61.4%	66.0%	63.8%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.6	1.6	
Total	Count	513	530	1043
	% within Context	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

context by language $P^2(2, n = 1043) = 34.489, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .182$

Table 5d Request strategy * Context * Language Crosstabulation: Native Dutch

request strategy		Context		Total
		C1: non-institutional	C2: institutional	
direct	Count	41	42	83
	% within Context	6.9%	6.7%	6.8%
	Adjusted Residual	.1	-.1	
willingness	Count	262	254	516
	% within Context	44.0%	40.7%	42.3%
	Adjusted Residual	1.2	-1.2	
ability	Count	292	328	620
	% within Context	49.1%	52.6%	50.9%
	Adjusted Residual	-1.2	1.2	
Total	Count	595	624	1219
	% within Context	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

context by language $P^2(2, n = 1219) = 1.537, p = .464, \text{Cramer's } V = .036$

Appendix C: Chi-square analyses request strategies * design factors

Table 1a
Power * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Direct strategies

Power		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
P1: P(s) < P(h)	Count	13	34	28	75
	% within Language	26.0%	26.6%	33.7%	28.7%
	adjusted residual	-0.5	-0.8	1.2	
P2: P(s) = P(h)	Count	11	37	17	65
	% within Language	22.0%	28.9%	20.5%	24.9%
	adjusted residual	-0.5	1.5	-1.1	
P3: P(s) > P(h)	Count	26	57	38	121
	% within Language	52%	44.5%	45.8%	46.4%
	adjusted residual	0.9	-0.6	-0.1	
Total	Count	50	128	83	261
	% within Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Power by language $P^2(4, n = 261) = 3.148, p = .533$; Cramer's $V = .078$

Table 1b
Social Distance * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Direct strategies

Social Distance		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
S1: non-strangers	Count	29	77	56	162
	% within Language	58.0%	6.2%	67.5%	62.1%
	adjusted residual	-0.7	-0.6	1.2	
S2: strangers	Count	21	51	27	99
	% within Language	42.0%	39.8%	32.5%	37.9%
	adjusted residual	0.7	0.6	-1.2	
Total	Count	50	128	83	261
	% within Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Social Distance by language $P^2(2, n = 261) = 1.579, p = .454$; Cramer's $V = .078$

Table 1c
Context * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Direct strategies

Context		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
C1: non-institutional	Count	20	41	41	102
	% within	40.0%	32.0%	49.4%	39.1%
	adjusted residual	0.1	-2.3	2.3	
C2: institutional	Count	30	87	42	159
	% within	60.0%	68.0%	50.6%	60.9%
	adjusted residual	-0.1	2.3	-2.3	
Total	Count	50	128	83	261
	% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Context by language $P^2(2, n = 261) = 6.400, p = .041$; Cramer's $V = .157$

Table 2a
Power * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Willingness strategies

power		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
P1: P(s) < P(h)	Count	38	53	84	175
	% within Language	20.8%	21.2%	16.3%	18.4%
	adjusted residual	0.9	1.3	-1.9	
P2: P(s) = P(h)	Count	76	109	216	401
	% within Language	41.5%	43.6%	41.9%	42.3%
	adjusted residual	-0.2	0.5	-0.3	
P3: P(s) > P(h)	Count	69	88	216	373
	% within Language	37.7%	35.2%	41.9%	39.3%
	adjusted residual	-0.5	-1.5	1.8	
Total	Count	183	250	516	949
	% within Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Power by language $P^2(4, n = 949) = 5.073, p = .280$; Cramer's $V = .052$

Table 2b
Social Distance * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Willingness strategies

Social Distance		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
S1: non-strangers	Count	48	70	207	325
	% within Language	26.2%	28.0%	40.1%	34.2%
	adjusted residual	-2.5	-2.4	4.2	
S2: strangers	Count	135	180	309	624
	% within Language	73.8%	72.0%	59.9%	65.8%
	adjusted residual	2.5	2.4	-4.2	
Total	Count	183	250	516	949
	% within Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Social Distance by language $P^2(2, n = 949) = 17.450, p = .000$; Cramer's $V = .136$

Table 2c
Context * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Willingness strategies

Context		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
C1: non-institutional	Count	111	157	262	530
	% within	60.7%	62.8%	50.8%	55.8%
	adjusted residual	1.5	2.6	-3.4	
C2: institutional	Count	72	93	254	419
	% within	39.3%	37.2%	49.2%	44.2%
	adjusted residual	-1.5	-2.6	3.4	
Total	Count	183	250	516	949
	% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Context by language $P^2(2, n = 949) = 12.001, p = .002$; Cramer's $V = .112$

Table 3a
Power * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Ability strategies

power		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
P1: P(s) < P(h)	Count	164	259	294	717
	% within Language	40.6%	38.9%	47.4%	42.5%
	adjusted residual	-0.9	-2.3	3.1	
P2: P(s) = P(h)	Count	122	202	166	490
	% within Language	30.2%	30.4%	26.8%	29.0%
	adjusted residual	0.6	1	-1.5	
P3: P(s) > P(h)	Count	118	204	160	482
	% within Language	29.2%	30.7%	25.8%	28.5%
	adjusted residual	0.3	1.6	-1.9	
Total	Count	404	665	620	1689
	% within Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

power by language P^2 (4, $n = 1689$) = 10.299, $p = .036$; Cramer's $V = .055$

Table 3b
Social Distance * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Ability strategies

Social Distance		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
S1: non-strangers	Count	236	363	352	951
	% within Language	58.4%	54.6%	56.8%	56.3%
	adjusted residual	1	-1.1	0.3	
S2: strangers	Count	168	302	268	738
	% within Language	41.6%	45.4%	43.2%	43.7%
	adjusted residual	-1	1.1	-0.3	
Total	Count	404	665	620	1689
	% within Language	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Social Distance by language P^2 (2, $n = 1689$) = 1.585, $p = .453$; Cramer's $V = .031$

Table 3c
Context * Language * Request strategy Crosstabulation: Ability strategies

Context		Language			Total
		NE: Native English	NNE: Nonnative English	ND: Native Dutch	
C1: non-institutional	Count	180	315	292	787
	% within	44.6%	47.4%	47.1%	46.6%
	adjusted residual	-0.9	0.5	0.3	
C2: institutional	Count	224	350	328	902
	% within	55.4%	52.6%	52.9%	53.4%
	adjusted residual	0.9	-0.5	-0.3	
Total	Count	404	665	620	1689
	% within	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Context by language P^2 (2, $n = 1689$) = .899, $p = .638$; Cramer's $V = .023$

Appendix D: Repeated measures analyses request modification

Table 1 Repeated measures analysis for total modification with between-subjects factor *language* and within-subject factors *power*, *social distance*, *context* and *modifier*

total modification	Wilks' 8	F	df	p	O ²
language		23.32	(2, 269)	.000	.149
power	0.873	19.42	(2, 268)	.000	.127
power * language	0.927	5.17	(4, 536)	.000	.037
social distance	0.982	4.94	(1, 269)	.027	.018
social distance * language	0.929	10.36	(2, 269)	.000	.071
context	0.815	60.96	(1, 269)	.000	.185
context * language	0.989	1.43	(2, 269)	.240	.011
modifier	0.286	334.04	(2, 268)	.000	.714
modifier * language	0.631	34.67	(4, 536)	.000	.206
power * modifier	0.631	39.96	(4, 266)	.000	.369
power * modifier * language	0.844	5.88	(8, 532)	.000	.081
social distance * modifier	0.958	5.95	(2, 268)	.003	.042
social distance * modifier * language	0.955	3.14	(4, 536)	.014	.023
context * modifier	0.914	12.68	(2, 268)	.000	.086
context * modifier * language	0.959	2.84	(4, 536)	.024	.021
power*social distance * modifier	0.712	26.96	(4, 266)	.000	.288
power*social distance * modifier * language	0.907	3.33	(8, 532)	.001	.048
power * context * modifier	0.808	15.84	(4, 266)	.000	.192
power * context * modifier * language	0.948	1.79	(8, 532)	.077	.026
social distance * context * modifier	0.622	81.54	(2, 268)	.000	.378
social distance * context * modifier * language	0.974	1.80	(4, 536)	.127	.013

Table 2 Repeated measures analysis for *syntactic modification* with between-subjects factor *language* and within-subject factors *power*, *social distance* and *context*

syntactic modification	Wilks' 8	F	df	p	O ²
language		64.14	(2, 269)	.000	.323
power	0.888	16.99	(2, 268)	.000	.112
power * language	0.87	9.66	(4, 536)	.000	.067
social distance	0.952	13.49	(1, 269)	.000	.048
social distance * language	0.925	10.88	(2, 269)	.000	.075
context	0.874	38.65	(1, 269)	.000	.126
context * language	0.962	5.33	(2, 269)	.005	.038
power * social distance	0.993	0.99	(2, 268)	.372	.007
power * social distance * language	0.972	1.89	(4, 536)	.111	.014
power * context	0.985	1.99	(2, 268)	.139	.015
power * context * language	0.939	4.29	(4, 536)	.002	.031
social distance * context	0.747	91.11	(1, 269)	.000	.253
social distance * context * language	0.949	7.22	(2, 269)	.001	.051
power * social distance * context	0.956	6.11	(2, 268)	.003	.044
power * social distance * context * language	0.963	2.58	(4, 536)	.037	.019

Table 3 Repeated measures analysis for *lexical modification* with between-subjects factor *language* and within-subject factors *power*, *social distance* and *context*

lexical modification	Wilks' 8	F	df	p	O ²
language		33.53	(2, 269)	.000	.200
power	0.871	19.90	(2, 268)	.000	.129
power * language	0.956	3.07	(4, 536)	.016	.022
social distance	0.989	2.96	(1, 269)	.087	.011
social distance * language	0.963	5.19	(2, 269)	.006	.037
context	0.99	2.78	(1, 269)	.097	.010
context * language	0.992	1.14	(2, 269)	.322	.008
power * social distance	0.779	38.10	(2, 268)	.000	.221
power * social distance * language	0.87	9.67	(4, 536)	.000	.067
power * context	0.99	1.35	(2, 268)	.262	.010
power * context * language	0.987	0.86	(4, 536)	.491	.006
social distance * context	0.977	6.33	(1, 269)	.012	.023
social distance * context * language	0.962	5.32	(2, 269)	.005	.038
power * social distance * context	0.878	18.60	(2, 268)	.000	.122
power * social distance * context * language	0.961	2.71	(4, 536)	.030	.020

Table 4 Repeated measures analysis for *external modification* with between-subjects factor *language* and within-subjects factors *power*, *social distance* and *context*

external modification	Wilks' 8	F	df	p	O ²
language		0.38	(2, 269)	.682	.003
power	0.79	35.60	(2, 268)	.000	.210
power * language	0.973	1.82	(4, 536)	.123	.013
social distance	0.998	0.67	(1, 269)	.413	.002
social distance * language	0.983	2.27	(2, 269)	.105	.017
context	0.877	37.80	(1, 269)	.000	.123
context * language	0.998	0.29	(2, 269)	.750	.002
power * social distance	0.811	31.18	(2, 268)	.000	.189
power * social distance * language	0.963	2.54	(4, 536)	.039	.019
power * context	0.798	33.96	(2, 268)	.000	.202
power * context * language	0.965	2.38	(4, 536)	.051	.017
social distance * context	0.792	70.56	(1, 269)	.000	.208
social distance * context * language	0.987	1.81	(2, 269)	.166	.013
power * social distance*context	0.866	20.81	(2, 268)	.000	.134
power * social distance * context * language	0.99	0.70	(4, 536)	.595	.005

Table 5 Repeated measures analysis for total modification of request strategies with between-subjects factor *language* and within-subjects factors *power*, *social distance*, *context*, *strategy* and *modifier*

	Wilks' 8	F	df	p	O ²
language		23.62	(2, 269)	.000	.148
power	.871	19.77	(2, 268)	.000	.129
power*language	.936	4.52	(4, 536)	.001	.033
social distance	.975	7.03	(1, 269)	.009	.025
social distance * language	.966	4.67	(2, 269)	.010	.034
context	.841	50.98	(1, 269)	.000	.159
context * language	.984	2.18	(2, 269)	.115	.016
strategy	.247	407.43	(2, 268)	.000	.753
strategy * language	.727	23.18	(4, 536)	.000	.147
modifier	.292	324.88	(2, 268)	.000	.708
modifier * language	.643	33.07	(4, 536)	.000	.198
power * social distance	.930	10.11	(2, 268)	.000	.070
power * social distance * language	.961	2.68	(4, 536)	.031	.020
power*context	.886	17.19	(2, 268)	.000	.114
power*context*language	.948	3.66	(4, 536)	.006	.027
power *strategy	.637	37.68	(4, 266)	.000	.363
power*strategy*language	.857	5.35	(8, 532)	.000	.074
social distance*context	.782	74.84	(1, 269)	.000	.218
social distance*context* language	.955	6.40	(2, 269)	.002	.045
social distance*strategy* language	.919	5.75	(4, 536)	.000	.041
social distance * modifier	.972	3.80	(2, 268)	.024	.028
social distance * modifier * language	.952	3.36	(4, 536)	.010	.024
context * strategy	.838	25.85	(2, 268)	.000	.162
context * strategy * language	.931	4.88	(4, 536)	.001	.035
strategy * modifier	.597	44.85	(4, 266)	.000	.403
strategy * modifier * language	.703	12.79	(8, 532)	.000	.161
power * social distance * strategy	.669	32.93	(4, 266)	.000	.331
power * social distance * strategy * language	.974	0.87	(8, 532)	.544	.013
power * context * strategy	.783	18.43	(4, 266)	.000	.217
power * context * strategy * language	.911	3.17	(8, 532)	.002	.045
social distance * context * strategy	.963	5.21	(2, 268)	.006	.037
social distance * context * strategy * language	.874	9.30	(4, 536)	.000	.065

Appendix E: Unianova analyses situations judgement task

	authority				familiarity				formality			
	df	F	p	O ²	df	F	p	O ²	df	F	p	O ²
1: homework												
language	2, 262	0.09	.915	.001	2, 263	1.27	.283	.010	2,262	2.51	.084	.019
level	1, 262	0.67	.415	.003	1, 263	0.13	.724	.000	1,262	5.54	.019	.021
language*level	2, 262	0.23	.793	.002	2, 263	1.88	.155	.014	2,262	0.52	.594	.004
2: report												
language	2, 260	6.39	.002	.047	2, 264	4.59	.011	.034	2,264	1.16	.316	.009
level	1, 260	16.13	.000	.058	1, 264	3.87	.050	.014	1,264	14.60	.000	.052
language*level	2, 260	0.54	.583	.004	2, 264	8.51	.000	.061	2,264	0.00	.998	.000
3: travel												
language	2, 263	4.23	.016	.031	2, 264	7.17	.001	.052	2,263	0.26	.773	.002
level	1, 263	0.98	.323	.004	1, 264	6.21	.013	.023	1,263	0.59	.442	.002
language*level	2, 263	0.14	.874	.001	2, 264	7.92	.000	.057	2,263	0.17	.491	.005
4: lunch												
language	2, 263	2.72	.067	.020	2, 264	2.58	.078	.019	2,264	3.06	.049	.023
level	1, 263	11.42	.001	.042	1, 264	0.01	.941	.000	1,264	26.27	.000	.091
language*level	2, 263	1.43	.241	.011	2, 264	6.66	.002	.048	2,264	3.11	.046	.023
5: neighbour												
language	2, 264	2.50	.084	.019	2, 264	0.60	.549	.005	2, 264	11.64	.000	.081
level	1, 264	0.28	.595	.001	1, 264	0.12	.733	.000	1, 264	16.75	.000	.060
language*level	2, 264	0.60	.548	.005	2, 264	1.34	.264	.010	2, 264	2.21	.111	.016
6: campaign												
language	2, 263	0.08	.919	.001	2, 263	5.60	.004	.041	2, 263	0.09	.916	.001
level	1, 263	1.19	.276	.005	1, 263	0.02	.895	.000	1, 263	0.27	.607	.001
language*level	2, 263	0.30	.744	.002	2, 263	5.84	.003	.043	2, 263	1.40	.248	.011
7: supermarket												
language	2, 263	7.39	.001	.053	2, 264	6.84	.001	.049	2, 264	3.67	.027	.027
level	1, 263	6.51	.011	.024	1, 264	3.77	.053	.014	1, 264	6.49	.011	.024
language*level	2, 263	1.10	.333	.008	2, 264	5.40	.005	.039	2, 264	3.22	.041	.024
8: paper												
language	2, 262	0.19	.826	.001	2, 264	0.35	.704	.003	2, 264	0.25	.777	.002
level	1, 262	1.84	.176	.007	1, 264	1.57	.211	.006	1, 264	0.00	.965	.000
language*level	2, 262	2.14	.120	.016	2, 264	1.01	.365	.008	2, 264	1.25	.287	.009
9: party												
language	2, 262	2.44	.089	.018	2, 264	0.34	.671	.003	2, 264	3.41	.035	.025
level	1, 262	0.51	.476	.002	1, 264	5.82	.017	.022	1, 264	21.11	.000	.074
language*level	2, 262	0.67	.512	.005	2, 264	1.19	.305	.009	2, 264	2.33	.099	.017
10: overtime												
language	2, 260	0.88	.416	.007	2, 263	9.50	.000	.067	2, 263	5.24	.006	.038
level	1, 260	8.26	.004	.031	1, 263	3.31	.070	.012	1, 263	2.10	.149	.010
language*level	2, 260	1.20	.303	.009	2, 263	5.08	.007	.037	2, 263	2.26	.106	.019
11: pensioner												
language	2, 263	1.74	.178	.013	2, 264	13.10	.000	.090	2, 264	3.98	.020	.029
level	1, 263	0.41	.523	.013	1, 264	0.98	.324	.004	1, 264	10.94	.001	.040
language*level	2, 263	3.05	.049	.023	2, 264	1.99	.139	.015	2, 264	3.54	.030	.026
12: customs												
language	2, 257	0.21	.808	.002	2, 261	7.00	.001	.051	2, 261	0.36	.696	.003
level	1, 257	0.16	.690	.001	1, 261	3.68	.056	.014	1, 261	2.64	.105	.010
language*level	2, 257	0.05	.952	.000	2, 261	7.76	.001	.056	2, 261	2.49	.085	.019

	difficulty				right			
	df	F	p	O ²	df	F	p	O ²
1: homework								
language	2, 263	0.17	.848	.001	2, 263	0.34	.715	.003
level	1, 263	0.32	.573	.001	1, 263	0.02	.890	.000
language*level	2, 263	0.28	.754	.002	2, 263	1.78	.171	.013
2: report								
language	2, 264	5.85	.003	.042	2, 263	4.70	.010	.034
level	1, 264	37.10	.000	.123	1, 263	15.29	.000	.055
language*level	2, 264	0.01	.994	.000	2, 263	1.21	.301	.009
3: travel								
language	2, 264	1.32	.270	.010	2, 264	1.14	.321	.009
level	1, 264	0.65	.420	.002	1, 264	0.01	.908	.000
language*level	2, 264	2.50	.084	.019	2, 264	1.01	.364	.008
4: lunch								
language	2, 264	5.17	.006	.038	2, 264	2.89	.058	.021
level	1, 264	5.43	.021	.020	1, 264	9.21	.003	.034
language*level	2, 264	7.43	.001	.053	2, 264	4.78	.009	.035
5: neighbour								
language	2, 264	0.66	.517	.005	2, 264	0.69	.504	.005
level	1, 264	2.77	.097	.010	1, 264	2.45	.119	.009
language*level	2, 264	1.00	.371	.007	2, 264	0.74	.479	.006
6: campaign								
language	2, 263	0.60	.550	.005	2, 263	1.05	.352	.008
level	1, 263	8.23	.004	.030	1, 263	0.96	.329	.004
language*level	2, 263	0.60	.551	.005	2, 263	1.21	.300	.009
7: supermarket								
language	2, 264	0.05	.951	.000	2, 264	7.51	.001	.054
level	1, 264	1.08	.301	.004	1, 264	1.79	.183	.007
language*level	2, 264	0.54	.581	.004	2, 264	9.04	.000	.064
8: paper								
language	2, 264	0.97	.379	.007	2, 264	3.41	.034	.025
level	1, 264	4.16	.042	.015	1, 264	0.46	.496	.002
language*level	2, 264	0.38	.687	.003	2, 264	1.67	.189	.013
9: party								
language	2, 264	0.79	.453	.006	2, 264	3.58	.029	.026
level	1, 264	2.46	.118	.009	1, 264	10.40	.001	.038
language*level	2, 264	0.46	.632	.003	2, 264	0.35	.704	.003
10: overtime								
language	2, 263	0.44	.647	.003	2, 263	1.35	.260	.010
level	1, 263	0.24	.627	.001	1, 263	5.18	.024	.019
language*level	2, 263	0.46	.629	.004	2, 263	1.66	.192	.012
11: pensioner								
language	2, 264	4.83	.009	.035	2, 264	0.64	.530	.005
level	1, 264	0.06	.810	.000	1, 264	0.20	.659	.001
language*level	2, 264	0.81	.444	.006	2, 264	4.29	.015	.031
12: customs								
language	2, 261	0.54	.585	.004	2, 260	1.05	.352	.008
level	1, 261	0.19	.662	.001	1, 260	0.54	.465	.002
language*level	2, 261	0.26	.774	.002	2, 260	0.28	.755	.002

	obligation				likelihood			
	df	F	p	O ²	df	F	p	O ²
1: homework								
language	2, 263	2.39	.094	.018	2, 263	5.19	.006	.038
level	1, 263	0.43	.541	.002	1, 263	2.53	.113	.010
language*level	2, 263	3.51	.031	.026	2, 263	2.68	.071	.020
2: report								
language	2, 264	1.76	.174	.013	2, 264	3.13	.045	.023
level	1, 264	33.56	.000	.113	1, 264	13.83	.000	.050
language*level	2, 264	2.47	.087	.018	2, 264	3.24	.041	.024
3: travel								
language	2, 264	4.83	.009	.035	2, 264	9.28	.000	.066
level	1, 264	1.59	.209	.006	1, 264	3.39	.067	.013
language*level	2, 264	0.45	.640	.003	2, 264	0.78	.460	.006
4: lunch								
language	2, 264	0.26	.775	.002	2, 264	0.65	.525	.005
level	1, 264	4.18	.042	.016	1, 264	1.55	.214	.006
language*level	2, 264	2.41	.092	.018	2, 264	0.54	.581	.004
5: neighbour								
language	2, 264	1.70	.185	.013	2, 264	0.38	.681	.003
level	1, 264	0.31	.576	.001	1, 264	0.64	.426	.002
language*level	2, 264	3.45	.033	.025	2, 264	0.46	.630	.003
6: campaign								
language	2, 263	1.75	.176	.013	2, 263	0.58	.559	.004
level	1, 263	1.26	.263	.005	1, 263	0.08	.779	.000
language*level	2, 263	0.99	.373	.007	2, 263	1.20	.304	.009
7: supermarket								
language	2, 264	4.10	.018	.030	2, 264	0.52	.593	.004
level	1, 264	11.91	.001	.043	1, 264	0.01	.939	.000
language*level	2, 264	6.81	.001	.049	2, 264	2.58	.078	.019
8: paper								
language	2, 264	5.65	.004	.041	2, 264	1.00	.369	.008
level	1, 264	0.98	.324	.004	1, 264	1.24	.267	.005
language*level	2, 264	2.53	.081	.019	2, 264	0.58	.561	.004
9: party								
language	2, 264	2.67	.071	.020	2, 264	2.19	.114	.016
level	1, 264	3.10	.079	.012	1, 264	1.37	.243	.005
language*level	2, 264	5.45	.005	.040	2, 264	1.70	.184	.013
10: overtime								
language	2, 263	0.07	.931	.001	2, 263	1.37	.257	.010
level	1, 263	1.59	.208	.006	1, 263	0.68	.410	.003
language*level	2, 263	3.04	.050	.023	2, 263	0.23	.793	.002
11: pensioner								
language	2, 264	11.31	.000	.079	2, 264	1.26	.285	.009
level	1, 264	7.27	.007	.027	1, 264	2.30	.131	.009
language*level	2, 264	6.79	.001	.049	2, 264	1.03	.359	.008
12: customs								
language	2, 261	1.14	.323	.009	2, 261	0.16	.857	.001
level	1, 261	1.76	.186	.002	1, 261	0.49	.483	.002
language*level	2, 261	0.35	.707	.003	2, 261	0.44	.643	.003

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Inleiding

Wie een willekeurig Engelstalig boek openslaat over omgaan en communiceren met Nederlanders zal passages tegenkomen waarin op vaak anekdotische wijze verslag wordt gedaan van de ervaringen van in Nederland wonende Engelstalige buitenlanders met wat vaak *Dutch directness* wordt genoemd. Maar hoe direct zijn Nederlanders nu eigenlijk wanneer ze in het Engels communiceren?

In dit proefschrift wordt verslag gedaan van een onderzoek naar de manier waarop moedertaalsprekers Nederlands, moedertaalsprekers Engels en Nederlandse leiders van het Engels verzoeken formuleren en in het bijzonder naar de manier waarop deze groepen sprekers in hun formuleringen variëren in 'indirect taalgebruik'.

Een centrale vraag binnen het onderzoek is de mate waarin situationele kenmerken (machtsafstand en sociale afstand tussen spreker en aangesprokene, en de context van het verzoek) van invloed zijn op de manier waarop verzoeken geformuleerd worden. In een experimentele setting zijn aan respondenten situaties aangeboden waarin (mondelijke) verzoeken moesten worden geproduceerd. In een beoordelingstaak werd aan proefpersonen gevraagd een aantal kenmerken van de verzoeksituaties te beoordelen.

Eén van de doelstellingen van het onderzoek was inzicht te verkrijgen in de mate waarin verzoeken, geformuleerd door Nederlandse leiders van het Engels, overeenkomsten en verschillen vertonen met verzoeken zoals die geformuleerd worden door moedertaalsprekers Engels en moedertaalsprekers Nederlands. Een tweede doelstelling van het onderzoek was inzicht te verkrijgen in de manier waarop de drie groepen respondenten oordeelden over uiteenlopende verzoeksituaties.

Het uitgangspunt voor het onderzoek werd gevormd door de volgende onderzoeksvragen:

- Welke verschillen en overeenkomsten bestaan er in het gebruik van verzoekstrategieën en verzoekmodificatie door Nederlandse leiders van het Engels, moedertaalsprekers Engels en moedertaalsprekers Nederlands?
- In hoeverre kunnen verschillen en overeenkomsten in het gebruik van verzoekstrategieën en verzoekmodificatie door Nederlandse leiders van het Engels, moedertaalsprekers Engels en moedertaalsprekers Nederlands een verklaring vinden in pragmalinguïstische verschillen tussen het Nederlands en het Engels?

- In hoeverre kunnen verschillen en overeenkomsten in het gebruik van verzoekstrategieën en verzoekmodificatie door Nederlandse leeders van het Engels, moedertaalsprekers Engels en moedertaalsprekers Nederlands een verklaring vinden in verschillen en overeenkomsten in inschattingen van situationele kenmerken door de drie proefpersoongroepen?
- Wat zijn verschillen en overeenkomsten tussen gevorderde en vergevorderde leeders van het Engels met betrekking tot het gebruik van verzoekstrategieën en verzoekmodificatie en/of inschattingen van sociopragmatische factoren?

Indirectheid en beleefdheid in *interlanguage pragmatics*

Het onderzoek sluit aan bij eerder onderzoek op het gebied van de *interlanguage pragmatics* (ILP), een onderzoeksterrein waarbinnen de ontwikkeling van pragmatische competentie door leeders van een vreemde taal centraal staat. Meer in het bijzonder sluit het onderzoek aan bij studies waarin de vaardigheid van leeders om taalhandelingen, zoals verzoeken, klachten of verontschuldiging te begrijpen en te formuleren (bijv. Blum-Kulka e.a., 1989). Een centraal thema binnen dit type ILP studies is in hoeverre leeders van een vreemde taal in staat zijn om bij het formuleren van taalhandelingen hun taalgebruik te variëren afhankelijk van variatie in socioculturele factoren zoals bijvoorbeeld verschillen in machtsafstand of sociale afstand tussen gesprekspartners. Enerzijds is het onderzoek gericht op het in kaart brengen van de sociopragmatische competentie van leeders, oftewel de mate waarin leeders zich bewust zijn van en om kunnen gaan met de socioculturele regels van de taalgemeenschap. Anderzijds is het onderzoek gericht op het in kaart brengen van de pragmalinguïstische competentie van leeders, oftewel het vermogen van leeders om hun taalgebruik te variëren al naar gelang de vereisten van de situatie.

Binnen het onderzoek naar de pragmatische competentie van leeders van een vreemde taal is een belangrijke rol weggelegd voor de analyse van indirect en beleefd taalgebruik. De vraag die hierbij onmiddellijk rijst is wat precies verstaan wordt onder indirectheid en beleefdheid in relatie tot taal. Uit het literatuuroverzicht in hoofdstuk 1 blijkt dat het niet eenvoudig is om tot een eenduidige operationalisatie van deze begrippen te komen. In dit onderzoek is ervoor gekozen om wat betreft de analyse van de verzoeken aan te sluiten bij de interpretatie van indirectheid en beleefdheid zoals die zijn af te leiden uit de taalhandelingstheorie van Searle (1969, 1975, 1976) en de beleefdheidstheoriën van Leech (1983) en Brown en Levinson (1978, 1987).

Toegepast op de analyse van de verzoeken die in dit onderzoek verzameld zijn betekent dit dat verzoeken allereerst beschouwd worden als 'gezichtsbedreigende' taalhandelingen (Brown en Levinson, 1978, 1987). Bij het doen van een gezichtsbedreigende taalhandeling kunnen sprekers hun toevlucht nemen tot allerlei 'gezichtsbeschermende' maatregelen, die tot doel hebben de 'gezichtsbedreiging' voor de aangesprokene tot een minimum te beperken. Zo kan een spreker bij het formuleren van een verzoek een keuze

maken uit verschillende verzoekstrategieën, variërend in directheid en er bijvoorbeeld voor kiezen om het verzoek te omkleden met redenen of verklaringen.

Uit cross-cultureel onderzoek is gebleken dat de manieren om een verzoek te formuleren in verschillende talen sterk overeenkomen, maar dat wat een gepaste manier is om een verzoek te formuleren in verschillende talen sterk uiteen kan lopen. Voor het formuleren van verzoeken zijn sprekers aangewezen op een beperkt aantal verzoekstrategieën, die geordend kunnen worden in een toenemende mate van indirectheid. Indirectheid wordt hierbij geïnterpreteerd als de ‘tactvolle’ opties die een spreker in een verzoek inbouwt om de aangesprokene een kans te geven onder het verzoek uit te komen en die de lengte bepalen van het inferentiële pad, het aantal stappen dat nodig is om van de letterlijke betekenis van een uiting te komen tot de bedoelde betekenis (Leech, 1983).

De taxonomie van verzoekstrategieën die in het onderzoek gebruikt wordt komt in belangrijke mate overeen met indelingen zoals die in eerdere studies gebruikt zijn (Blum-Kulka e.a., 1989; Trosborg, 1995), hoewel de daarin voorgestelde categorieën op een aantal punten zijn aangepast.

Tabel 1 Verzoekstrategieën in oplopende mate van indirectheid

strategie	voorbeeld
1. imperatief	Ruim die rommel op.
2. performatief werkwoord	Ik vraag je die rommel op te ruimen
3. statement van verplichting	Je moet die rommel opruimen
4. statement van wil of wens	Ik wil dat je die rommel opruimt
5. suggestie	Waarom ruim je die rommel niet op?
6. refereren aan precondities	
a. <i>non-obviousness</i>	Ruim je die rommel op?
b. bereidheid	Wil je die rommel opruimen?
c. mogelijkheid	Kun je die rommel opruimen?
7. hint	Ik ben ontzettend moe ...

Los van de keuze voor een bepaalde strategie, die de kern van het verzoek vormt, kan een spreker er bovendien voor kiezen de ‘belasting’ van het verzoek voor de aangesprokene te verminderen met behulp van zogeheten externe en interne markerings. Onder externe markerings wordt verstaan alles wat zich in de verzoekuiting buiten de kern van het verzoek bevindt, zoals verklaringen en redenen voor het verzoek. Onder interne markerings wordt verstaan alle syntactische en lexicale markerings die een spreker binnen de kern van het verzoek zelf gebruikt. Zo kan een spreker er voor kiezen om de moeite die het kost om aan een verzoek te voldoen ogenschijnlijk te verkleinen door het gebruik van zogeheten *downtoners* zoals het Nederlandse ‘eventjes’ in een verzoek als ‘Kun je me eventjes helpen?’.

Onderzoeksmethode

Binnen het onderzoek is gekozen voor twee onderzoeksinstrumenten: een mondelinge productietaak, een zgn. Discourse Completion Task (DCT) en een beoordelingstaak. Het gemeenschappelijke element in beide onderzoekstaken bestond uit een set van 12 situatiebeschrijvingen die onderling van elkaar verschilden m.b.t. situationele factoren: machtsafstand tussen spreker en aangesprokene, sociale afstand tussen spreker en aangesprokene en context van het verzoek. De mogelijke waarden van deze factoren zijn:

- P: P1 $P(s) < P(h)$ (hoorder heeft autoriteit over de spreker)
 P2 $P(s) = P(h)$ (spreker en hoorder zijn statusgelijken)
 P3 $P(s) > P(h)$ (spreker heeft autoriteit over de hoorder)
- (19) S1 lage sociale afstand; spreker en hoorder kennen elkaar (redelijk) goed, hun relatie kan redelijk vriendschappelijk genoemd worden.
 S2 hoge sociale afstand; spreker en hoorder kennen elkaar niet; ze hebben elkaar nooit eerder ontmoet voorafgaande aan het verzoek
- (3) C1 alledaagse context
 C2 zakelijke, alledaagse context

In de productietaak kregen de proefpersonen situaties voorgelegd die varieerden op de factoren zoals hierboven geschreven en werd hen gevraagd mondelinge verzoeken te produceren. In de situatiebeoordelingstaak kregen de proefpersonen dezelfde situaties voorgelegd en werd hen gevraagd om middels beoordelingsschalen hun oordeel te geven over de relatie spreker-hoorder, de formaliteit en zwaarte van het verzoek, en de kans op succes van het verzoek.

Aan het onderzoek namen drie groepen proefpersonen deel:

- 101 Nederlandse leeders Engels, waarvan 55 middelbare scholieren en 46 universitaire studenten
- 59 moedertaalsprekers Engels, waarvan 35 middelbare scholieren en 24 universitaire studenten.
- 112 moedertaalsprekers Nederlands, waarvan 49 middelbare scholieren en 63 universitaire studenten.

Resultaten

Nederlandse en Engelse verzoeken

Het algemene beeld dat uit de resultaten van de productietaak naar voren komt is dat moedertaalsprekers Engels, moedertaalsprekers Nederlands en leeders van het Engels in belangrijke mate gebruik maken van hetzelfde type verzoekstrategieën, maar dat er duidelijke verschillen zijn tussen de drie groepen wat betreft het gebruik van interne markeringsen. Uit de resultaten bleek ook dat sprekers op identieke wijze hun verzoeken

en markeringen varieerden naarmate de machtsafstand of sociale afstand tussen spreker en hoorder en de context van het verzoek varieerden, waarbij de machtsafstand tussen spreker en hoorder het meest bepalend was voor verschillen in formuleringen.

Alle respondenten vertoonden een duidelijke voorkeur voor het gebruik van betrekkelijk indirecte verzoekstrategieën, waarbij veelvuldig gebruik werd gemaakt van interne en externe markeringen. Verschillen tussen respondentengroepen werden met name geconstateerd wat betreft het type markeringen (syntactisch of lexicaal) en wat betreft de mate van conventionaliteit van de formuleringen. Zo werden de verzoeken die geproduceerd werden door moedertaalsprekers van het Engels bij voorkeur geformuleerd met behulp van strategieën waarbij aan de mogelijksconditie gerefereerd werd (m.b.v. *can*) en bij voorkeur verzacht met behulp van syntactische markeringen, zoals modale werkwoorden, *tag questions* en *negation*.

Ook bij het formuleren van Nederlandse verzoeken hadden sprekers een duidelijke voorkeur voor de mogelijksconditie, hoewel in de Nederlandse verzoeken ook vaak aan de bereidheid van de aangesprokene (met 'willen') gerefereerd werd. Opvallend was dat de Nederlandse verzoeken veelal met behulp van lexicale markeringen, zoals *downtoners* als 'misschien' en *understaters* als 'even' werden verzacht en in mindere mate met behulp van syntactische markeringen.

De Nederlandse leeders van het Engels, zo blijkt uit de analyse van de verzoeken in deze groep, beschikken over een redelijk hoog niveau van pragmatische competentie. Beide groepen leeders, middelbare scholieren en universitaire studenten, beschikken over voldoende taalvaardigheid om verzoeken te produceren in het Engels en zijn in staat om hun verzoekstrategieën aan te passen aan variatie in socioculturele factoren van de verzoeksituaties. Verder zijn ze in staat om hun verzoeken te verzachten met behulp van interne en externe markeringen.

Op zich is het niet vreemd dat deze leeders in staat zijn om hun bedoelingen in de vreemde taal goed onder woorden te brengen. Ook uit eerder onderzoek is gebleken dat leeders bij de verwerving van een tweede taal gedeeltelijk kunnen bouwen op de pragmatische competentie die ze al hebben ontwikkeld in de moedertaal, maar ook dat leeders handig gebruik kunnen maken van overeenkomsten in pragmatische conventies tussen moeder- en doeltaal, in dit geval Nederlands en Engels.

Op een meer gedetailleerd analyseniveau zijn echter wel duidelijke verschillen te constateren tussen de Engelse verzoeken van de moedertaalsprekers Engels en de verzoeken van de leeders. Zo blijkt uit de analyse van de verzoekmarkeringen dat de leeders minder vaak gebruik maakten van interne markeringen dan de moedertaalsprekers Engels. Ze gebruikten significant minder syntactische markeringen en namen ook minder vaak hun toevlucht tot het gebruik van lexicale markeringen bij formuleren van hun verzoeken. Daarbij komt nog dat zo de leeders interne markeringen gebruikten, ze bijna uitsluitend gebruik maakten van *past tense modals* en beleefheidsmarkering *please*.

Nederlandse en Engelse verzoeksituaties

Uit de resultaten van de beoordelingstaak bleek dat er geen grote verschillen bestonden in de manier waarop proefpersoongroepen de verschillende situaties beoordeelden. Over het algemeen werden de factoren machtsafstand, sociale afstand en formaliteit van de context door proefpersonen beoordeeld volgens de indeling in situatietypen zoals die in het onderzoeksdesign was geoperationaliseerd. Wel bleek dat met name de factor machtsafstand door proefpersoongroepen onderling niet altijd eenduidig beoordeeld werd.

De voornaamste verschillen in beoordelingen werden gevonden bij de dimensies recht van de spreker, verplichting van de aangesprokene en zwaarte van het verzoek. Een opvallend resultaat hierbij was dat in alle respondentengroepen de middelbare scholieren deze dimensies anders beoordeelden dan de universitaire studenten.

Conclusie en vervolg

Zijn Nederlanders die in het Engels communiceren 'Dutch direct'? Op basis van de resultaten van dit onderzoek kan deze vraag niet bevestigend beantwoord worden. De leerders in het onderzoek bevinden zich op een hoog taalvaardigheidsniveau en zijn zeer goed in staat om uiteenlopende verzoeken te formuleren in het Engels. De leerders zijn linguïstisch competente sprekers die zich redelijk bewust zijn van verschillen en overeenkomsten tussen het Engels en het Nederlands wat betreft het formuleren van verzoeken. Verschillen in de manier waarop de leerders en de moedertaalsprekers Engels verzoeken in het Engels formuleren lijken met name te liggen op het vlak van de linguïstische middelen die sprekers gebruiken om hun verzoeken te verzachten. De leerders lijken 'te kort te schieten' in het gebruik van markeringsen en maken bovendien minder gebruik van typisch Engelse syntactische markeringsen zoals die gebruikt werden door de moedertaalsprekers Engels. Het algemene beeld is dat de leerders zich beperken tot het gebruik van een standaard verzoekformule, waarbij vooral markeringsen als *past tense modals* en beleefdheidsmarkeringsen *please* veelvuldig gebruikt worden. Een mogelijke verklaring hiervoor kan gevonden worden in mogelijke cross-culturele verschillen tussen het Engels en het Nederlands ten aanzien van de manier waarop verzoeken conventioneel verzacht worden. Het lijkt erop dat Nederlandse verzoeken vaker gemodificeerd worden door de 'belasting' van het verzoek zelf te verkleinen. Kenmerkend voor Engelse verzoeken is dat sprekers een pessimistische houding aan te nemen ten aanzien van eventuele inwilliging van het verzoek, bijvoorbeeld door het gebruik van ontkenningen. Het zou kunnen zijn dat cross-culturele verschillen tussen de twee talen met betrekking tot het realiseren van 'gezichtsbescherming' de oorzaak zijn van de door Engelsen gepercipieerde 'Dutch directness'.

Vervolgonderzoek zou zich onder meer kunnen en moeten richten op het verkrijgen van meer inzicht in verschillen en overeenkomsten tussen het Engels en het Nederlands wat betreft manieren om beleefdheid in de betekenis van gezichtsbescherming te realiseren, om te beginnen in andere taalhandelingen dan verzoeken. Een andere lijn van vervolgonderzoek is die waarbij onderzocht wordt wat het communicatieve effect is van

eventueel 'afwijkend' strategiegebruik. Dit onderzoek zou gericht moeten zijn op het in kaart brengen van de perceptie van door Nederlandse leiders geformuleerde Engelse verzoeken.

Wat betreft het onderwijs Engels in Nederland kan op basis van de resultaten van dit onderzoek voorzichtig geconcludeerd worden dat redelijk gevorderde leiders goed in staat zijn om hun communicatieve bedoelingen in het Engels te verwoorden, maar dat eventuele winst voor de leiders te halen valt in het zich meer bewust worden van verschillen en overeenkomsten tussen het Nederlands en het Engels met betrekking tot nuanceverschillen in beleefd en indirect taalgebruik. Het onderwijs zou hierbij in belangrijke mate gevoed kunnen worden door meer onderzoek naar verschillen en overeenkomsten tussen het Engels en het Nederlands, en onderzoek naar wat kenmerkend is voor Dutch English.

Curriculum Vitae

Berna Hendriks was born on 24 April 1961 in Amersfoort, the Netherlands. In 1978 she received her Athenaeum diploma from the Isala College in Silvolde and went to the University of Nijmegen to study English language and literature. In 1981 - 1982 she studied Linguistics at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, where she also taught Dutch. From 1985 until 1987 she worked as a teaching assistant in the Department of English at the University of Nijmegen. In 1987 she graduated in English language and literature from the University of Nijmegen.

In August 1987 she was appointed junior lecturer (part-time) at the Department of English, University of Nijmegen. She also worked as a (part-time) free-lance language trainer for Van Dale Talen in Bilthoven. In 1992, she joined the Department of Business Communication Studies at the University of Nijmegen, where she still is. She teaches a variety of courses and participates in a number of research projects into aspects of (English) Business Communication.