ASKING FOR FAVORS OF INCREASING IMPOSITION:

A Comparison of English Requests Strategies Produced According to Nationality and Grammatical Competence

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Abstract

As English continues to be the world's lingua franca, it is important to recognize the pragmatic norms and conventions of the language. Additionally, it is necessary to understand the norms being used by non-native speakers and how the differences may affect communication. This research focuses on how requests were produced by native and non-native English speakers. In specific, it analyzed both which strategies were utilized in forming requests as well as how many were used. The data for this research was collected using in an open role-play involving 38 female participants who had various grammatical competence and were of four different nationalities. The participants' request strategies were analyzed relative to both their grammatical competence and nationality. The first set of analyses found neither grammatical competence or nationality to a reliable predictor for which request strategies were used. A second set of analyses indicated that nation might be a predictor of a speaker's use of modal modification to a head act.

1. Introduction

Communicating proficiently in a language entails more than having the linguistic knowledge to be grammatical competent. Effective communication also relies on the pragmatic competence of the interlocutors, that is to say how speakers use both their grammatical and pragmatic knowledge to convey information and do things with words. As the world becomes increasingly more globalized, more people communicate regularly using English as the shared lingua franca (Kachru B., 1992 ; Kachru Y. & Nelson, 2006: 12). While English continues to be the global lingua franca, it is important for speakers to be aware of both grammatical rules as well as pragmatic conventions. In tandem, it is also important to asses second language speakers' pragmatic development and use of speech acts as well as how the pragmatic precedents of a speaker's first language can influence their target language. Therefore, to ensure the effective communication of second language speakers, one must understand how communication is affected by both a speaker's grammatical competence as well as their pragmatic competence.

The production and perception of speech acts, such as apologies and requests, by both native and non-native speakers has been studied extensively. However, the overwhelming majority of research on the subject has utilized only nationality as the classifying element of participants and thus has assumed nationality to be a determining factor in how speech act are realized. In contrast, this thesis explores how speakers with differing linguistic backgrounds as well as varying degrees of grammatical competence form requests in English. Participants in this study come from countries in all three of Kachru's circles of Global Englishes (Kachru, 1992) in order to compare the request strategies produced by both native English speakers and non-native speakers with different relations to English. This paper does not aim to measure the pragmatic competence of non-native speakers against native ones. Instead, the intention is to compare the realization of the speech acts by participants of different linguistic backgrounds and different grammatical proficiencies in order to determine their relationship to the speakers' request strategies.

In order to examine this topic further, this thesis outlines a theoretical framework in four sections. The first part reviews theories of pragmatics and politeness by Brown and Levinson as

well as Leech. The second explains English's current position as the global lingua franca using Kachru's model of World Englishes. The third lays out the specific structures used to form requests in English and how they are classified according to the taxonomies of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Flöck (2016). The fourth subsection explores theories in interlanguage pragmatics and reviews previous research and findings on request strategies relevant to this work.

Following the theoretical framework, Section 3 describes this work's research methodology and how the data was collected and coded. Section 4 outlines how the coded data was analyzed, while Section 5 gives an overview of the findings of these analyses. Section 6 discusses the results of these analyses and reviews them in relation to this paper's research questions. Lastly, based on these findings as well as previous literature, this thesis makes its conclusion on the subject and suggests further research in the field of interlanguage pragmatics.

2. Theoretical Background

In order to explore request strategies formed by native and non-native speakers, this chapter lays out the framework of request strategies, politeness theory, and interlanguage pragmatics. Section 2.1 gives a brief overview of theories relevant to this research, such as pragmatics and politeness to explain the pragmatic elements of requests. Section 2.2 contextualizes the role of English as a medium for intercultural communication and summarizes Kachru's model of World Englishes since the participants were chosen in accordance with this paradigm. In order to establish a unit of analysis, Section 2.3 defines and characterizes the different elements of requests in English and how they are used as well as how they can be used in tandem. Since the participants included non-native speakers, Section 2.4 describes different theories on interlanguage pragmatics such as Kasper & Rose's model, pragmatic transfer, and re-framing. Additionally, Section 2.4 provides an overview of previous research covering request production on which this paper was based. Lastly, it sets forth the research questions of this paper.

2.1 Speech Acts and Politeness Theory

Pragmatics can be considered the study of how language is used and how the context of a situation contributes to that use and understanding. This includes the use of speech acts, which can be described as how speakers do things with words that affect the world around them (Austin, 1962). Speech act theory is based on Austin's three tier structure of speech acts - locution, illocution, and perlocution (Austin, 1962: 108-9). The locution, or utterance is what is actually stated by the speaker. The illocution is the speaker's intended message and the perlocution is the result of the utterance. For example, for the sentence "do you have a pen?" the locution is the same, but the illocution might be a request for a pen, while the perlocution is the hearer giving a pen to the speaker.

A statement may be classified as true or false based on its validity, but speech acts lack truth conditions and so cannot be considered in these terms. The request "please get me some smokes" cannot be assessed as either true or false. Instead, speech acts have felicity conditions

(Austin 1975: 14). These conditions determine whether or not a speech act is genuine (felicitous) or not (infelicitous) based on the context of the situation. In the case of requests, there are several felicity conditions which must be met for the speech act to be genuine. The *sincerity condition* entails that a speaker must have a genuine desire for the hearer to perform the request. The *preparatory condition* implies that the speaker believes both that the hearer has the ability to perform the request and that the hearer would not have done so without having been asked. The *propositional content condition* states that the request is a future action of the hearer. Lastly, the *essential condition* asserts that the utterances is the speaker's attempt to illicit the action from the hearer.

Searle's work *Speech Acts* (1976) expanded on Austin's concept of speech act and redefined a speech act to refer to what Austin labeled the illocutionary act. Additionally, Searle (1976) outlines five separate illocutionary acts - assertives, directives, and commissives, expressives, and declarations. This thesis is concerned with directives, which Searle defines as a speaker using words to get a hearer to do something. Directives can appear in the form commands, advice, as well as requests. Requests are distinct from other directives as the request is only beneficial to the speaker and most often at some cost to the hearer (Trosborg, 1995: 188).

Across languages, requests conform to various degrees of politeness. Within pragmatics, there are several theories examining the pragmatic subject of politeness. While politeness in communication can be divided into linguistic aspects (word choice, morphosyntax, etc) and non-linguistic elements (body language), this thesis only concerns itself with linguistic politeness. In specific, the basis derives from the foundational work on politeness theory posited by Brown and Levinson and the notions of in/directness set forth by Leech.

2.1.1 Brown and Levinson's Notion of Face

This paper's framework on politeness theory is deeply based on the work of Brown and Levinson (1987) which outlines the role of social variables in speech acts and develops the concept of face. In the model set forth in *Politeness*: *Some universals in language usage*, the structure of a speech acts is determined by social relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

As such, when forming requests and other speech acts, speakers decide on the appropriate degree of politeness according to three varying sociological factors. These include the power relation between the interlocutors, their social distance, and the ranking of the imposition to the hearer (1987: 74). In terms of pragmatics, the imposition of a request is the degree of intrusion on the hearer's free will. According to Brown and Levinson, speakers tend to form requests with different forms and strategies depending on the social dynamics of the interlocutors as well as the degree of imposition.

The Brown and Levinson model also posits that politeness is a culturally universal principle which is bound to the sociological notion of *face*. While this concept was defined anthropologically by Goffman (1963), it was developed further and adapted as a pragmatic theory. As a pragmatic concept, face can be described as the public self-image that members of society want to claim for themselves and which is determined and maintained by one's interactions with others (1987: 61). Face exists only in a social context, in which all persons have both positive and negative face. In this model, positive face is defined as an individual's desire that their efforts and wants will be desirable to others around them (1987: 61-2). Negative face is defined as the desire of an individual to not have their freedom of action impeded upon by others (1987: 62). While Brown and Levinson claim that positive and negative face are universal, the exact ways that one's positive and negative face can be affected are specific to a given culture or social group.

When viewing requests in these terms, politeness can be considered how people maintain the face of the hearer and speaker when imposing on others. According to Brown and Levinson, certain speech acts, by their nature, threaten the face of the interlocutors. These face-threatening acts (FTA) include compliments, promises, suggestions, and requests (1987: 65-6). A request is considered face-threatening to the hearer since it can compromise their freedom from imposition. Conversely, forming a request can threaten the speaker's positive face since it exposes their need or want for something (1987: 67). In order to mitigate the imposition when forming requests, speakers regularly use a wide range of strategies which take into account both positive and negative face, often referred to as *redressive action*. Accordingly, requests of increasing

imposition require more redressive action/strategies in order to mitigate the possible burden imposed on the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) offer a bifurcated system for face-threatening acts like requests. This taxonomy classifies requests by their use of either on-record or off-record strategies. On-record requests have illocutionary transparency and makes the speaker's request unambiguous. For example "please, give me the guitar" can only be interpreted as a request and is thus considered to be on-record. These request may or may not use redressive action to lessen the imposition of the request and attempts to counteract the potential threat to the hearer's face (1987: 69) On record requests can utilize redressive action by appealing to the hearer positive or negative face by modifying or adding onto the request with strategies such as apologizing, giving deference, hedging, and minimizing the imposition. On record strategies with no redressive action are referred to as *bald requests*. These requests are direct and unambiguous and thus do not minimize the threat to the hearer's face. In English, these often come in the form of bare imperatives, such as 'do the dishes.' These requests are considered the most direct and often to be less polite.

Off-record requests ask for things in a manner in which the actual illocutionary act of an utterance must be inferred by the hearer. Requests made off record do not hold the speaker's utterance to a specific intention. Such requests can be realized as conventionally indirect forms or non-conventionally indirect forms. Conventionally indirect forms are a compromise between being indirect and unimposing and being understood. Such requests are semantically transparent because they appear in routine forms, but are less face-threatening than direct requests (1987: 70). A common example is the *preparatory request* which includes request forms which are syntactically structured as questions of ability or willingness. This includes "Can you come over in a bit?" or "Would you lend me your coat tonight?" Conversely, non-conventional indirect requests do not use formulas and rely more on context often coming in the form of hints. Hints may refer to the request proper or its imposition either indirectly or not at all and are only able to be interpreted through context (Blum-Kulka, 1984). For instance, one could say 'It sure is cold in here' as a signal to ask the hearer to close a window. These kinds of requests are often formed with rhetorical questions, understatements, tautologies, and metaphors (Blum-Kulka, 1987).

2.1.2 Leech's Theory of (In)directness

The relationship between the indirectness of speech and its politeness was examined in Leech's *Principles of pragmatics* (1983). In speech acts, indirectness refers to the ambiguity created by what is not explicitly stated in a speaker's utterance. According to Leech's theory, when all propositional content is the same, the politeness of a speech act increases proportionally to its degree of indirectness. This theory of politeness is based on ten maxims which define the interdependent idea that "all things being equal, one should minimize impoliteness and maximize politeness" (1983: 81).

It is important to understand that while in/directness and im/politeness are unquestionably interrelated, they should not be considered to be parallel aspects of one another when discussing requests. According to Leech's framework, an non-conventionally indirect request in which the illocutionary act must be inferred by the hearer, such as a hint should be considered the most polite of all request forms. However, the clarity of the speech act is a fundamental aspect of its politeness. This is supported by the findings of Blum-Kulka (1987) which indicate that conventionally indirect requests (e.g. *can you* hand me the salt?) are perceived by native English speakers to be more polite than hints. Since preparatory requests are somewhat formulaic, they exemplify a politeness achieved by balancing the threat to the hearer's face and the need for clarity (Blum-Kulka, 1987). Additionally, the exact relationship between in/directness and im/politeness is not universal but varies according to cultural norms and linguistic structures (Takahashi, 1996; Leech, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2010; Kecskes, 2017).

2.2 English as a Medium in Intercultural Communication

Intercultural communication is defined as how speakers with different cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds communicate with one another using a shared language (Kecskes, 2017). These days, the most common language used internationally between people of different linguistic backgrounds is undoubtably English (Kachru B., 1992 ; Kachru Y. & Nelson, 2006: 12). As Crystal (1995, 2006) points out, the majority of English speakers around the world today are not

native speakers. This unprecedented dominance of English as the global lingua franca has been mentioned by countless authors (Kachru, 1992; Crystal, 2006; House, 2009). Moreover, there are multiple journals and hundreds of articles dedicated to this phenomenon in specific such as the journal *World Englishes*. With these things in consideration, it is important to analyze the language's position as the medium of intercultural communication. Moreover, it is important to understand how this position affects L2 speakers unevenly.

This research is focused on the use of request forms in English by native and non-native speakers with varying relationships with the language. In particular, it compares the relationship between grammatical proficiency and nationality and request strategies. As such, it was necessary to have a model which arranges the participants' nationalities in relation to English. For this, Kachru's model of World Englishes was chosen. Kachru's model (1992) illustrates English in three-tiered arrangement of 'world Englishes' — the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. Each tier of this model refers to the range of use and depth of social penetration of English in a given country. The groupings for participants' nationalities were selected according to this classification with at least one group representing each tier (see Section 3.1). This section outlines the linguistic situation of English according to this model.

The Inner Circle refers to the varieties of English in countries where English is both the primary language of its institutions as well as the mother tongue for the majority of the population. This includes the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, South Africa, and various territories in the Caribbean. Englishes from within the Inner Circle are described as *norm-providing* and establish the conventions of the language's grammar (Kachru, 1992). Furthermore, the varieties of English from the United Kingdom and the United States in particular, are often considered to be normative forms of the language. As such, the conventions of these varieties are regularly considered benchmarks for how English should be used (Kachru, 1992).

The next level in Kachru's model is the Outer Circle where English is spoken alongside other languages as the primary mediums of communication. In these countries, English usually has an historical precedence (often due to colonization) and is regularly used in institutions such as education, legislature, and national commerce (Kachru & Nelson, 2006: 28). At this tier,

English is not necessarily a common mother tongue of the population, but it may be used as a lingua franca within the country. Moreover, for nations in the Outer Circle, English is not only a medium of communication, but there are also cultural works produced in the language including books, film, and music. Countries within this range are often part of the New Commonwealth, like Kenya, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and the Philippines. The Outer Circle also includes nations where the official language is English but one of the spoken languages is an English-based creole, such as Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, and Singapore (Kachru, 1992).

The Expanding Circle consists of countries where English has a limited role in public life (Kachru & Nelson, 2006: 28). Countries within this circle do not use English as regular medium of communication among the nation's population or institutions, but as the primary language for international communication. This includes countries such as China, Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia and South Korea. In these countries, English is ascribed mostly for specific purposes and contexts, such as business and tourism. Kachru (1992) describes these nations' use of English as *norm-dependent,* meaning that the linguistic norms of English used are not developed within the country. Therefore, the conventions of language use in English are adopted from those of *norm-providing* nations.

2.3 Forming Requests in English

While all languages have the means of expressing requests, the actual linguistic forms that speakers use are not universal but unique to a given language (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Fukushima, 1996; Brown, 2010). Moreover, the conventions of how these forms are utilized and interpreted can be particular to a culture as even varieties of the same language may use different strategies for forming requests in identical contexts (Flöck 2016:1 ; Taguchi & Roever 2017: 253-4). This section outlines the different elements that form requests in English and the additional strategies that may accompany these forms. Additionally, it overviews how these different elements are used in native varieties of English.

Analyzing the strategies in how requests are formed in English requires a language-specific paradigm. For example, English has no pronoun system for expressing social distance

like those found in east Asian languages such as Korean or Japanese (Leech, 2007; Brown, 2010). Likewise, English does not use the TV-distinction found in other Indo-European languages, such as Russian or French. As such, the exact pragmatics of English requests are mostly signified by means of syntax and verbal morphology (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Flöck, 2016: 70). As a result, verbs take on a unique role in English for expressing different pragmatic information in requests, such as degrees of politeness and directness (Harley, 1986: 59). This is done through the choice in the actual verbs used (Flöck, 2016: 11), but also their modality and/or tense (Flöck, 2016: 71-2).

Furthermore, when speakers form requests, they regularly do so by combining multiple strategies and forms. As such, requests can be formed over multiple turns in an exchange and consist of several parts (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 85). Oftentimes the imposition of request can influence how many strategies are used outside of the head-act (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 89). This research is concerned with how speakers use these request strategies in relation to their nationality and/or grammatical competence. Therefore, it is important to have a clear paradigm and criteria for the specific elements that form a request in English. These can be categorized as either the part of the head-act, modification to the head-act, or supportive moves. The head-act of the request is defined as the aspect of the locution which contains the actual speech act (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). The request's head-act can be further adjusted with internal modification to make a request more appropriate to the situation (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Flöck, 2016: 62). Outside of the head-act, speakers also regularly utilize supportive moves (also known as external modification) in order to modify their requests according to the situation (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Taguch & Roever, 2017: 87). It is worth noting that neither internal nor external modification changes the propositional content of a request.

Additionally, modification strategies to requests can be classified as either mitigating or aggravating, with mitigating more often appealing to a hearer's positive face while aggravating strategies more often threaten the hearer's negative face (Flöck, 2016: 107). This paper is primarily concerned with mitigating strategies, since aggravating strategies usually imply an unequal power dynamic between interlocutors and this research is concerned with requests made by speakers of equal social standing.

2.3.1 Head-Acts

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain define the head-act of a request as the "minimal unit which can realize a request" (1984: 198). That is to say, the head-act is the element of the request where the speech act actually occurs. The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) identifies a total of seven possible head-acts of a request in English. These include the use of verbal mood, performative verbs as well as conventional and unconventional indirectness. This taxonomy of head-acts has been borrowed and adapted by many researchers, such as Flöck (2016) who adapted and developed these categories specifically for English requests.

This research uses Flöck's adapted taxonomy of request head-acts. These can be see in Table 1, which exemplifies each of these strategies arranged by degrees of directness. Imperatives are considered the most direct, while hints are considered the most indirect. As stated previously (see Section 2.1.2), the correlation between the in/directness and its im/politeness of a request is culture-specific (Blum-Kulka, 1987). The four most commonly used head-acts are explained in further detail.

Table 1 Request Head-acts[1]

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Mood derivable	Grammatical mood of the verb marks the utterance as a request.	"Close the door."
Obligation statement	Speaker's illocutionary intent can be inferred by the semantic meaning.	"You should/need to close the door."
Performative	The illocutionary act is named by the verb	"I'm asking you to close the door."
Want/need statement	Speaker expresses a desire for the hearer to perform a certain action.	"I'd like/ I want you to close the door."
Preparatory request	Speaker expresses illocutionary intent though conventional indirectness by referencing predatory conditions	"Could you close the door?"
Suggestory formula	Speaker uses linguistic means associated with a suggestion	"Why don't you close the door?"

[1] from *Requests in American and British English* by Flöck (2016: 101)

Hints (mild and strong)	Illusionary intent through off-record non-conventional means.	"It's really cold in here with the door open."

In English, one of the most common and formulaic request forms is the preparatory request (Flöck, 2016: 103). In terms of syntax, these appear as questions regarding the ability or willingness of the hearer to perform an action. For example "Can you hand me that pen?" and "Would you give me that bottle, please?" are both preparatory requests which refer to hearers ability and willingness respectively. Across four native varieties of English studied in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Faerch and Kasper (1989) and Barron (2008), the preparatory request was found to be used on at least 80 percent of occasions.

Pragmatically, these types of requests are considered somewhat indirect and very often start with the modal verbs *can* and *will* and their counterparts in the conditional mood *could* and *would.* Therefore, if taken literally, such questions seem to refer to Searle's preparatory condition of whether the hearer is able to perform the request (see Section 2.1). This is considered by Brown & Levinson to be a case of conventional indirectness since such a question would be an understood pragmatic norm (1987: 70). These forms' true function as requests is exemplified by the fact that semantically similar questions such as "Are you able to give me that book?" would not be understood to have the same meaning (Walker, 2013: 447). According to Flöck, when native speakers use preparatory requests, questions of ability involving *can/could* are much more common than those of willingness using *will*/*would* (2016: 121). Additionally, the preparatory head-act can refer to either the speaker or hearer of the request. Preparatory requests produced by native English speakers have a strong tendency to indicate the hearer rather than the speaker (Flöck, 2016: 124). These hearer-orientated forms are considered more polite as they portray the hearer to have the option not to comply with the request (Trosborg, 1994: 197). Table 2 exemplifies that preparatory requests can change according to the three factors of modal verb, the verbal mood, and which interlocutor is the focus of the request.

Table 2 - Outline of Preparatory Requests

	Hearer-oriented	Speaker-oriented
Ability Indicative verb	Can you lend me some sugar?	Can I borrow some sugar?

Ability Conditional verb	Could you lend me some sugar?	Could I borrow some sugar?
Willingness Indicative verb	Will you lend me some sugar?	——
Willingness Conditional verb	Would you lend me some sugar?	——

The most direct head-act in English is the use of the imperative mood, also referred to as *mood derivable* requests. Unlike preparatory requests, mood derivables also place the focus on the hearer (Flöck, 2016: 102). However, this is not a regularly utilized strategy. In the CCSARP by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), imperatives were found to be used relatively rarely across eight languages which included three native varieties of English. When mood derivable requests are utilized in English, they imply an asymmetrical power relationship between the speaker and hearer (Flöck 2016: 15). As such, they are less commonly used between interlocutors in equal positions of power and are often accompanied by redressive action when they are used between equals.

Requests can also be formed by means of want/need statements. These are statements which declare desire, normally beginning with "I'd like you to…" "I want you to…" or "I need you to…" such as "I want you to go to the store and get some milk." Like preparatory requests, want/need statements can be formed with the main verb in either the indicative or the conditional mood. Similar to imperative requests, these are more often produced by speakers who are in higher position of power than the hearer (Flöck, 2016: 69) or between family members (Ervin-Tripp, 1976).

The most indirect head-acts used in requests are hints. Unlike other head-acts, hints do not explicitly address the action desired by the speaker or the person who is meant to perform the desired action (Flöck, 2016: 103). While preparatory requests are conventionally direct and rely on the hearer's knowledge of pragmatic conventions, hints are unconventionally indirect (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 70). As such, the hearer must depend on context in order to correctly infer the speaker's intention. Furthermore, hints are most often used in familiar contexts between speakers in which the roles of the interlocutors are understood (Flöck, 2016: 69). Therefore, depending on the situation and the relationship of the interlocutors, the same sentence can be considered either a statement or a request in the form of a hint. For example, the sentence "These pretzels are making me thirsty" could be considered a hint-request if the hearer has access to a cold drink.

However, the same sentence would be considered a statement if speaker were already holding a glass of water. In Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's work, a distinction between mild and strong hints was made. However, this research follows Flöck's (2016) taxonomy and classifies all hints as one kind of head-act since there are no clear parameters for distinguishing the two varieties.

2.3.2 Supportive Moves and Mitigation

As previously stated, requests are rarely formed by means of a single head-act without any accompanying strategies. Head-acts are often co-ocur with attempts to mitigate the imposition to the hearer, especially in situations where speakers have an equal power relationship. In addition to internal modification, speakers may use additional speech acts before and after the head-act of a request (Flöck, 2016: 106-7). These are referred to as *supportive moves* or external modification. Like head-acts, possible supportive moves have been listed in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's CCSARP, with several being added on by Breuer & Geluykens (2007) and later by Flöck (2016). Supportive moves can appeal to either the hearer's positive or negative face. This research is only concerned with supportive moves which appeal to the hearer's positive face since those appealing to the hearer's negative face imply an asymmetrical social relationship. The following table is not an exhaustive list, but identifies the supportive moves most relevant to this study, several of which are examined further.

Table 3 - Supportive Moves for Requests

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Apology	apologizing for the imposition place on the hearer	**Sorry to bother you**, could you move your bike?
Checking Ability	speaker checks on precondition for request	**Are you busy Thursday?** I need some help.
Condition	establishing a condition when the request could be realized	**If you're going to the store today**, can you pick up some ice?
Disarmer	acknowledging the imposition placed on the hearer	**I know that it's a bother** but could you get me some juice on the way?
Getting Pre-commitment	preceding act which attempts to get commitment from hearer in advance	**Can you do me a favor?** I need a ride to the airport.

Grounder	justifying the reason for the request	
(pre-head)		**I need to sign this form**, can you lend me a pen?
(post-head)		Can you lend me your pen? **I need to sign form**."
Opt-out	giving the hearer the option not to adhere to the request.	Can you pick up lunch on your way back, **it's no problem if you can't.**
Questioning Possibility	questioning the possibility of the request	**Is it possible** that you could grab some beer for tonight?
Reimbursement	offering compensation for the cost to the hearer	Can you grab some beer? **I'll pay you back Monday**.
Repetition	repeating the request in the same turn or a following turn	Can I use borrow your car Monday? **Can I borrow it?**
Reward	offering more than compensation to the hearer	Can you grab some beer? **I'll pay you back plus extra on Monday**.
Thanking	giving thanks to the hearer in advance	Can you get Jack on the way? **Thanks**.

Among these, grounders are one of most common supportive moves found in requests produced by native speakers (Flöck 2016: 109). Also referred to as justification, grounders inform the hearer of the reason for the speaker's request. These can be found both before or after the head-act, as shown in Table 3. Other supportive moves include apologies, checking availability, and questioning possibility. Apologizing as a supportive move most often occurs before the head-act of a request and both addresses for the imposition to the hearer but also asks for forgiveness (Flöck, 2016: 109). Checking availability entails asking for the hearer's ability to perform the request. Likewise, questioning possibility as a supportive move impersonally questions the ability for the request to be performed. The use of supportive moves is regularly observed in several languages in forming requests as well using multiple supportive moves as part of a single requests (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

2.3.3 Internal Modification, Politeness Markers, and Alerts

In addition to choosing the appropriate head-act, speakers may also adjust the head-act itself according to the situation by means of internal modification. Internal modifications can be classified as syntactic or lexical. This taxonomy of internal modifications used in this work was taken from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) paper on request and apologies which was later

expended on by Flöck (2016). These occur as adjustments to the head-act which can mitigate or aggravate the imposition of the request. As with supportive moves, this research will focus on only internal modification that is mitigating. The table below is not exhaustive and does not include any aggravating strategies.

Table 4 Internal Modification for Requests

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Consultive Devices	incorporating the hearer into the request	'**do you think that** you could close the door?'
Downtoner	speakers means to modulate the impact of the request, often signaling the possibility of the hearer's non-compliance	"Could you close the door **by any chance?"** 'maybe' 'perhaps' 'possibly' 'by any chance'
Hedging	avoids specification	"I would appreciate it if you could **do something** about the door.'
Politeness Marker	asks for cooperation	'Will you close the door **please**?'
Understaters	underrepresented imposition	'could you close the door **a bit**?'

Among internal modifications, Blum-Kulka (1985) identifies speech act modifiers as the most commonly used. These consist of lexical internal modification which can be omitted from a request without changing any of its content, but the inclusion of which mitigates the request. These include the use of the politeness marker '*please*' as well as downtoners and understaters which will be explained in this section.

The politeness marker *please* merits special attention for its unique role in forming requests in English. From a pragmatic perspective, the use of '*please*' with an imperative verb could be viewed as redundant. However, this actually indicates its role, since '*please*' as a politeness marker almost exclusively co-occurs with requests (Stubbs, 1983). While the imperative/mood derivable request form is rarely used in English, it is commonly used with low imposition requests when paired with '*please*' (Blum-Kulka, 1987). Conventionally indirect request strategies such as preparatory requests (*Can*/*could you*…?), can be interpreted by the hearer as a question of ability rather than as a request. However, this semantic uncertainty is completely disambiguated with the use of 'please' (Blum-Kulka, 1985). However, this use of the

politeness marker is somewhat limited. While politeness markers can be used with most types head-acts, they cannot occur with obligation statements or hints (Flöck, 2016: 17). The examples on Table 5 below demonstrate how '*please*' can be used with a question of ability to disambiguate the speaker's intention. Additionally, these examples highlight how the politeness marker cannot be used with all head-acts with unnatural speech marked with an asterisk.

Table 5 - Preparatory Requests and the Politeness Marker 'Please'

	Utterance	Interpretation
a.	Can you open the window?	question of ability OR preparatory request
b.	Can you open the window, please?	preparatory request
c.	Can you hear me, please?*	unnatural
d.	You need to clean the floor please.*	unnatural
e.	Did you know that the floor is dirty, please?*	unnatural

Additionally, syntax plays a large role in the use of the word 'please' and its perceived politeness. For example, when 'please' is placed as the first element in an utterance, the request is considered more direct and thus less polite. For example, the preparatory request 'please, can you help me?' would be considered less polite than 'can you please help me?' (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al, 2013).

Aside from the politeness marker, two of the most commonly used internal modifications in English requests are *downtoners* and *understaters*. Both are considered mitigating strategies which appeal to the hearers' negative face and address their desire to be free from imposition (Flöck, 2016: 107-8). Downtowners are used to make the imposition on the hearer less concrete and addresses the chance of non-compliance by the hearer (Fearch & Kasper, 1989). This is done by referring to the possibility of the request occurring with words such as '*maybe*' '*perhaps*' '*just*' and '*by any chance*.' In a study on request forms of native American and British English speakers, '*just*' was found to be the most commonly used downtoner (Flöck, 2016: 198).

Another mitigating strategy is employing understaters, which are used to lessen the imposition stated in the request (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). This is done by lessening the

temporal aspect, the action required, or the object of the imposition (Flöck, 2016: 136). To achieve this, speakers use qualifying words such as '*a few*' '*a bit*' '*just a moment*' to underrepresent the imposition presented to the hearer. For example, the sentence "*Could you hold this for just a second*?" uses the understater '*just a second*' to lessen the temporal imposition put upon the hearer and thus mitigates the request.

Syntactic internal modification is also used regularly utilized on head-acts to mitigate requests. The most common internal modifier is changing the tense or mood of the head-act's main verb. For example, the use of the irrealis/conditional verb form such as *could* and *would* are are often substituted for their indicative forms in preparatory requests (see Table 2). Preparatory requests formed with these conditional verbs are often perceived as more polite than their indicative forms (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al, 2013). Thus, the request "could you get the cat?" would be considered more polite than 'can you get the cat?" For this research, use of the conditional verb is not considered a form of internal modification but a category of its own, falling in line with Flöck's (2016) classification scheme.

In addition to politeness markers and internal modification, speakers may also use alerts when forming requests. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) define these as external modifiers which draw the hearer's attention to the speaker's forthcoming request. There are six varieties of alerts - title, first name, pronoun, attention getter, apology, and greeting. The strategies of title, first name, and pronoun all refer to a form of addressing the hearer. The use of an apology as an alert is different than an apology as a supportive move since it asks the hearer to forgive the interruption as opposed to forgive the imposition of the request. Taking this into account, the phrase '*excuse me*' could be interrupted as either a supportive move or an alert depending on context. In a study on the English request strategies produced by American L1 speakers and Mexican L2 speakers, it was found that both groups preferred titles, attention getters, and apologies more than other alerts (Flores Salgado, 2011: 107). Overall, alerts add to the repertoire of possible approach, but they do not fit in neatly with other kinds of request strategies.

2.3.4 Utilizing Multiple Strategies

As previously stated, requests rarely occur in the form of a single head-act in isolation. Often, requests are built up to over the course of multiple turns and regularly utilize some kind of internal and/or external modification and possibly alerts (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984 ; Flöck, 2016 ; Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 85). The following example demonstrates how several of these strategies may be combined over multiple turns between interlocutors in order to form a single request.

Request Example 1

A: Hey Dave. Are you free on Sunday?
B: Yeah, what's up.
A: I'm moving to a new place. So I wanted to ask if I could possibly borrow your truck. It would really help me out. But if you can't, no worries.

In example 1, the head-act "I want to ask if I could borrow your truck" is preceded and followed by several supporting strategies. Two grounders are used: one before 'I'm moving to a new place' and another after the head-act 'it would really help me out.' The request is ended with an 'opt-out' strategy as supportive move wherein the speaker offers the hearer the option not to comply with the request.

The entire request could be broken down as such:

A: [a. Hey] [b. Dave]. [c. Are you free on Sunday?]
B: Yeah, what's up?
A: [d. I'm moving to a new place.] [e. So I wanted to ask] if I could [f. possibly] borrow your truck. [g. It would really help me out.] [h. But if you can't, no worries.]

Table 6 - Classification of Requests in Example 1

UTTERANCE	ELEMENT	CATEGORY
a.	alert	attention getter
b.	alert	first name
c.	checking on availability	supportive move

d.	grounder	supportive move
e.	want statement	head-act
f.	downtoner	internal modification
g.	grounder	supportive move
h.	opt-out	supportive move

2.4 Interlanguage Pragmatics

While there are multiple strategies for making requests, utilizing them appropriately or according to conventions requires a certain degree of pragmatic competence by the speaker. Second language learning entails more than merely gaining grammatical competence in another language (Canale & Swain, 1980; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 8). In order to communicate effectively, L2 speakers must also attain pragmatic competence in the target language. The concept of pragmatic competence has originally defined as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context" (Thomas, 1983: 92). This has been added to include both understanding speech correctly as well as producing pragmatically appropriate language in a given context (Barron, 2003). As such, second language speakers need to be aware of the pragmatic conventions and expectations within a target language and its speech community (Taguchi, 2012: 28). This is important to understand implicature and, for example, distinguish literal utterances from their intended meaning. This can be difficult as pragmatic norms as well as notions of politeness can vary greatly between different languages. To compound the matter, these conventions can differ between speech communities of the same language (Kasper, 1992). This is often overlooked in second language education where the grammatical forms and structures of a language are analyzed, but there is no tradition of teaching their pragmatic use (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). However, the pragmatic aspects of second language acquisition may be viewed as more socially important, as native speakers usually consider pragmatic errors to be more serious than mistakes in pronunciation or grammar (Koike, 1995).

Furthermore, a high degree of grammatical competence in a second language does not assure that a speaker will have strong pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig 1999: 686 ; Kasper & Rose 2002: 187). That is to say, having grammatical competence in a language does not

guarantee knowing how to use it. As such, there is a wealth of research indicating that the speech acts produced by non-native speakers differ from those of native speakers (House & Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Trosborg, 1987; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi & Roever: 2017). Even with several years of experience second language speakers may still form pragmatic errors in their L2, which native speakers might perceive as off, unnatural, or inappropriate.

This gap in non-native speakers' pragmatic competence extends to face-threatening speech acts such as requests. For example, while making a request in English the use of the conditional mood in preparatory questions is often considered more polite than indicative ones (Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al, 2013). However, grammatically proficient L2 speakers may still not use this form despite being able to understand and produce the grammar (Kasper & Rose 2002: 175). Conversely, second language speakers with lower grammatical competence could also demonstrate more pragmatic competence than second language speakers with more grammatical competence (Takahashi 1996: 210). However, a speaker must understand both linguistic forms as well as contextual features in order to successfully the full pragmatic competence (Schmidt, 2001: 30). To further explore the intersection between second language learning and pragmatic competence, the next section will define the relevant theories on interlanguage pragmatics and describe previous research on the subject.

2.4.1 Theories on Interlanguage Pragmatic Competence

Second language pragmatics, also referred to as interlanguage pragmatics, concerns itself with how non-native speakers change in pragmatic knowledge toward pragmatic competence in a second language. Koike defines pragmatic competence as "the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts" (1989: 279). In regards to comprehension, it can be understood as a second language learner attaining the ability to correctly discern between an utterance's literal meaning and the intended meaning of the speaker. Linguistic ability is necessary in order to make pragmatically appropriate utterances considering that the interdependent relationship between linguistic and pragmatic ability varies according to each language (Blum-Kulka,1983).

Learning the pragmatics of a second language, like learning the grammar is a gradual process. Building on the work of Ellis (1992) and Achiba (2002), Kasper and Rose (2002) outline a trajectory of pragmatic competence for L2 learners. This paradigm describes the ability to make requests in five stages of development. This development is characterized by an overall shift from utterances which are short and dependent on context, to routine formulaic requests, and then towards the incremental use of language which is more nuanced and tailored to the specific situation (Kasper & Rose, 2002: 135).

Table 6 - Kasper & Rose's Paradigm of Pragmatic Development[2]

	STAGE	QUALITIES	EXAMPLES
1.	Pre- basic	context-dependent lacking real syntax essentially non-pragmatic no apparent politeness	'me no blue' 'sir' 'please'
2.	Formulaic	formulaic speech use of imperatives	'let's eat breakfast' 'don't look'
3.	Unpacking	change to indirectness formulae incorporated intake of social context	'can you pass the pencil, please'
4.	Pragmatic expansion	complex syntax further mitigation	'can I see it so that…reason' 'could I have this because…
5.	Fine-tuning	requests designed according to specific hearer and situation	'is there any more X?'

The pre-basic stage for forming request normally lacks actual syntax and is extremely context dependent. At this phase the use of the word '*please*' is used by speakers more as a request marker than as a mitigating politeness marker (Kasper & Rose 2002: 142). The second stage involves the use of certain formula, namely the mood derivable/imperative request forms. This is followed by the unpacking stage which includes using request strategies with a higher degree of indirectness. These include preparatory requests (see Section 2.2.1). Achiba (2002: 66-7) identifies a fourth stage during which requests become less direct and more suggestive by

[2] This table and its examples were taken from *Pragmatic Development in a Second Language* by Kasper & Rose (2002: 140)

utilizing more complex syntax and mitigation techniques. Such strategies could include the use of conditional verb forms as well as syntax such as subordinate or relative clauses. Mitigation strategies might include supportive moves such as grounders, which are used to justify or explain the reason for the request as well as apologizing for the imposition.

The final step in gaining pragmatic competence was proposed by Kasper & Rose (2002). This stage incorporates fine-tuning the request, at which point the speaker begins to make adjustments to their requests according to the particular socio-pragmatic situation. This entails knowing and utilizing the appropriate head-act as well as using internal and external modifications best suited for the sociopragmatic dimensions of the interaction. Attaining this degree of pragmatic competence has proven to be difficult for L2 learners as "even the most advanced learners continue to have difficulty with the finer points of mitigating their speech acts" (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1993: 281).

2.4.2 Pragmatic Transfer and Reframing

In addition to the difficulties mentioned previously, non-native speakers may also encounter difficulties in attaining pragmatic competence due to issues with *pragmatic transferability*. This is the phenomenon in which the pragmatic conventions of speaker's native language may influence pragmatic comprehension and production in their target language (Kasper, 1992). As such, L2 learners must not only learn pragmatic information for their target language, but they also have to organize it in relation to the socio-pragmatic paradigm of their first language. Kasper (1992) sets forth a framework involving two types of pragmatic transfer - pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatic. Sociopragmatic transfer is the transmission of pragmatic conventions based on cultural principles. Pragmalinguistic transfer occurs when L2 learners assign the linguistic forms of their target language to pre-existing structures in their native language.

Both these kinds of transfer can lead to pragmatically inappropriate utterances depending on how learners assign equivalence (Koike, 1989; Takahashi, 1996). The influence of a pragmatic convention from a speaker's L1 leading to correct use of pragmatics in their target

language is referred to as positive pragmatic transfer. Conversely, negative pragmatic transfer refers to when such influence from the speaker's native language leads to incorrect or inappropriate usage for the situation. Since pragmatic rules are not universal, negative pragmatic transfer can be a source of pragmatic errors for L2 speakers causing their speech to be perceived as inappropriate or impolite to a given situation.

Occasionally, L2 speakers may find the pragmatic conventions of their L2 to be in conflict with their own cultural values and therefore resist using the appropriate forms (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 59-60). For example, the work of Olshtain (1983) indicates that due to negative pragmatic transfer non-native speakers of Hebrew would overuse apologies when speaking English in ways that native speakers perceived as odd or inappropriate. In a similar vein, House & Kasper (1981) found that German speakers used the politeness marker '*bitte*' in German more often and differently than British English speakers use '*please*.' In later research comparing the English request strategies of native British speakers and German L2 speakers, it was found that German participants used '*please*' more often than their British counterparts (House, 1997).

Furthermore, L2 speakers may also produce speech acts which are not appropriate in both their native language and the target language (Blum-Kulka, 1983). While pragmatic transfer may occur in some cases, non-native speakers will often not transfer their L1 pragmatic knowledge if they perceive a structure to be specific to a language (Takahashi, 1996). On the whole, negative pragmatic transfer can lead second language speakers to use pragmatic conventions different from both the speakers L1 and those of native-speakers.

Brown's (2010) concept of *re-framing* also attempts to explain the interrelation between the pragmatics of a speaker's L1 and L2. Re-framing refers to the process of L2 speakers learning how and when to produce appropriate speech acts in certain situations in their second language. According to this notion, L2 speakers do not create their schemes of politeness from scratch (Brown, 2010). Instead, the process of re-framing entails transferring and re-analyzing their knowledge of politeness, speech acts, and contextual appropriateness from their first language onto the target language. Additionally, these new pragmatic norms of a learner's L2 are maintained and mediated through repetition and exposure (Brown, 2010). Since these norms are not created from scratch, it seems unlikely that an L2 speaker's pragmatic competence would

develop evenly. This is supported by Koike (1989) which indicated that the pragmatic competence of a second language speaker does not necessarily progress in a linear fashion., However, since the frames of L2 speaker are constructed in relation to their native language, the norms and constructions of one's L1 may influence to the L2 in a variety of ways.

2.4.3 Prior Research and Research Questions

English language request strategies by both native and non-native speakers are a well studied subject. Overall, research indicates that even when non-native speakers have attained grammatical competence and are able to fine-tune their requests to a given situation, there are still differences between the realization of requests by native and non-native speakers. This asymmetry in request forms manifests as a difference in verbosity (Takahashi, 1996) as well as the use of head-acts (Rintell, 1981; Blum-Kulka, 1982) and supportive strategies such as politeness markers (House, 2010) and internal modification.

One distinction between speech acts realized by native and non-native speakers is the length of utterance. For example, requests made by non-native speakers often include greater verbosity compared to those of native speakers as they use more supportive moves and recycling (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989: Rose & Dahl, 1991: 34). The reasoning for this strategy is supported by the findings of Taguchi and Roever which indicate that longer utterances tend to be perceived by hearers as more polite (2017: 23).

Additionally, second language speakers with high grammatical competence tend to produce utterances that utilize more politeness strategies than native speakers. Takahashi (1996) refers to this over-extension of politeness as the 'playing-it-safe' strategy due to the fact that being too polite is less likely be a source of conflict than not being polite enough. This is supported by the findings of Brown (2012) which state that L2 speakers would opt for "safer" pragmatic choices when they are unsure of the expectations of a given situation. However, this can sometimes lead to utterances that are unlike those produced by native speakers (Taguchi & Roever 2017: 111).

Non-native speakers are also found to use supportive moves and head-acts during requests in different frequency than native speakers. For example, Taguchi and Roever's findings indicate that as second language speakers gain competence, they tend to use more supportive moves and politeness markers before making the head-act of a request (2017: 114). The same research also found that as second-language speaker's grammatical proficiency increased, so did their use of supportive moves (2017: 138). Likewise, Hill (1997) observed that advanced non-native English speakers often used mitigating strategies in their requests, but less frequently than native speakers. This is supported by Taguchi's research which indicates that pragmatic competence in forming requests which require more mitigation take more time to develop than those for low imposition requests (2012: 134).

Conversely, non-native speakers also demonstrate the use of request strategies that are consistent with those of native speakers. For example, the work of Rose (2000) indicates that non-native English speakers show a strong preference for grounders when using supportive moves. This is consistent with Flöck's work on requests by native English speakers from the United States and Britain, which indicated a strong preference for grounders as a supportive move in both populations (2016: 137).

This research is concerned with the production of requests by native and non-native speakers and thus draws from previous studies on the subject. There is a wealth of research on the request forms produced by one variety native speakers (García, 1993) as well as those by native speakers of different varieties of English (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984 ; Flöck, 2016). The CCSARP by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain has been preeminent in laying out the foundation for how request strategies should be grouped and categorized in a comparable way. Flöck's *Requests in American and British English is* one of the most extensive studies of English request forms, which compares requests made by native speakers of different varieties of English by analyzing spontaneous speech of British and American English-speakers. In a similar vein, there is a multitude of research which has collected data on the request strategies of non-native speakers in English. These include Hill (1997), Al-Ali & Alawneh (2010), Brubæk (2012), and Kuriscak (2015).

Additionally, much work has been carried out which compares the perception and/or production of requests by native and non-native speakers. The perception of request formed by both native and non-native speakers has been studied and compared by Koike (1989). Takahashi (1996) studied pragmatic transferability testing Japanese students' ability to produce request forms in English and ascribe Japanese equivalents. Other work has focused exclusively on comparing the request forms of native and non-native English speakers (Rintell, 1981; Takahashi, 1993; Trosborg, 1994; Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017). However, little research has been done comparing the English request strategies of non-native speakers. This includes Woodfield's (2010) comparison of requests produced by Japanese and German ESL speakers.

The present research was both inspired and modeled on previous works which explored and analyzed the request strategies used by both native and non-native English speakers. These influences extend to the theoretical framework, methodology, and how the request strategies are counted and classified. The two largest of these are Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's CCSARP (1984) and Flöck's study of English language request. The specific categorization of head-acts, internal modification, supportive moves, and other request strategies was based on Flöck's (2016) paradigm which was based on the paradigm in the CCSARP. The system for coding participant's responses for analysis was also based on the Flöck's model. The choice to compare the request forms of non-native English speakers according to nationality was borrowed from numerous papers mentioned previously, and the decision to compare non-native speakers' requests was based on the work of Woodfield (2010). The method of collection was partially borrowed from Schauer's (2004) longitudinal of English requests made by German L2 speakers. Lastly, the decision to focus on requests made by interlocutors of equal social standing was based on the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

That being said, there is a gap in research for comparing the request strategies used by multiple non-native groups alongside native English speakers. In sum, while the requests produced by native and non-native speakers are well documented, there is relatively little work which compares the request strategies of multiple groups of non-native speakers and native speakers. Moreover, there is little research done on the subject which utilizes an oral method of data collection. As such, this research finds itself grounded in previous work on interlanguage

pragmatics, but not treading over the same paths. Furthermore, the majority of the previous research mentioned has assumed participants' nationality to be a determining factor in their production of speech acts. In contrast, this research presupposes that there is a relationship between speakers' request strategies in accordance to their nationality as well as their grammatical proficiency. With that in consideration, this research aims to answer the following questions:

R1. What is the correlation between the head-act of request and a speaker's nationality and/or grammatical competence?

R2. What is the correlation between the use of non head-acts and a speaker's nationality and/or grammatical competence?

R3. Are nationality and grammatical competence equally significant in predicting a speaker's choice of head-acts and non head-acts when forming requests?

3. Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to compare request strategies made in English by participants according to both their degree of grammatical competence in the language as well as their linguistic backgrounds. In order to make this comparison, participants were selected according to factors such as their nationality, level of grammatical proficiency in English, as well as gender. Each participant was asked to participate in a role-play in which they were given three scenarios, each of which prompted them to make a different request. Participants were also asked to complete a survey regarding their linguistic background and their experience with English specifically. Each role-play was then transcribed and coded according to how the requests were structured. The codings of each participants' requests were matched and collated with their background information collected by the questionnaire. These combined data were then evaluated using two statistical treatments in order to determine a possible relationship between request strategies and the participants' nation and/or their degree of grammatical proficiency.

3.1 Participants

This study involved a total of 38 participants between the ages of 19 and 40 who were living in the Netherlands at the time the data was collected (spring 2018). As explained by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, individuals within the same speech community "might differ in their speech act realization patterns, depending on personal variables such as sex or level of education" (1984). As such, participants were selected for this study with several factors being taken into account, specifically - gender, level of grammatical proficiency, linguistic backgrounds, and nationality.

The aspect of linguistic background was selected in accordance with Kachru's three-tier model of World Englishes (see Section 2.2). Each level of Kachru's model is represented by at least one group in this study, with the exact number of participants displayed in Table 7. Accordingly, the participants came from four different countries. Participants from the United Kingdom and India represented the Inner Circle and Outer Circle respectively, while German and Chinese participants were used to represent the Expanding Circle. Nationality was chosen as a

variable as opposed to participants' native language based on prior research by Woodfield (2010). This comparison of English requests produced by Japanese and German L2 speakers indicated nationality to be a likely indicator of request strategies produced by non-native speakers.

In the case of the Chinese and Indian participants, nationality was chosen over language. China and India are linguistically diverse countries with over one hundred distinct languages spoken natively in both. As such, a citizen's home language can often be different than the nation's official language or its internal lingua franca. Sridhar's (1991) investigation of English request strategies produced by Indian nationals included participants with various home languages. This include participants who spoke languages from the Indo-European and Dravidian language families. Sridhar's work indicated that Indian nationals formed their English language requests more in accordance with the given social context and situation than in relation to their home language. Taking this into consideration, it made sense to chose participants according to nationality rather as opposed to native language.

In addition to selecting participants according to nation, it was paramount to this research to find participants with a strong command of English grammar. This was achieved through a brief interview of sociolinguistic background and guaranteed through the questionnaire that the participants were asked to complete (see Section 3.2.2). Additionally, at the time the data was collected, the majority of participants were or had been students in university programs where English was the sole language of instruction. Furthermore, all participants indicated that they had at least one year of experience with English as the primary language of communication in either a school or work environment. Table 7 displays the self-reported grammatical proficiency of the 38 participants based on scale between 1 and 10. Interestingly, several native speakers from the United Kingdom reported their grammatical competence in English as less than ten.

Selecting grammatically proficient speakers ensured that their range of request strategies would not be limited by grammatical inability or unfamiliarity with a request structure. Furthermore, it made sure that participants would be able to produce requests at all five stages of Kasper & Rose's model of second language pragmatic development. Likewise, grammatical competency ensured that participants would be a able to form requests using any of the seven

request strategies established by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) as well as various request modification strategies such as internal modification and supportive moves (see Section 2.3).

Table 7 - Nationality and Linguistic Background of Study Participants

Factor	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Nationality		
Chinese	7	18.4 %
German	13	34.2 %
Indian	6	15.8 %
United Kingdom	12	31.6 %
Grammatical Proficiency		
≤ 7	4	10.5 %
8	11	28.9 %
9	10	26.3 %
10	13	34.2 %

Apart from the 12 native speakers from the United Kingdom, 21 of participants stated that they had studied abroad in an English-dominant country. However, pragmatic competence cannot be predicted by a second language speaker's length of residence in a community of target language speakers (Kasper & Rose, 2002: 231). With that in mind, the participants' length of residence in an Anglophone community was not tested as a variable in this study.

All participants in this study were also chosen according to gender. The topic of gender and language use is complicated and often specific to a given culture (Lakoff, 1973; Harooni & Pourdana, 2017). This complexity is compounded further when taking into account differences in levels of education and experience with a language, as well as the matter of pragmatic transferability. While there is much research on the gendered use of language, there is relatively little on pragmatic competence according to gender (Harooni & Pourdana, 2017) and less regarding the formation of requests. With this in mind, it was decided to only use female participants in this study in order to avoid introducing gender as a possible variable.

Lastly, the participants and the researcher had no common languages between them other than English. This ensured that discussion before the role-play would be in English, thus cutting down on pragmatic transference during the actual role-play. Also, this made the use of English medium of conversation more instinctive, thus eliciting more naturalistic data.

3.2 Procedure

The procedure for collecting the data occurred in three stages. The first of these was the open role-play, in which participants were prompted to a make a total of three requests, each one of differing imposition. The second aspect was a questionnaire which participants were asked to complete. This was used to collect information on the participants' nationality, linguistic background, as well experience, grammatical competence, and usage of English. Lastly, all the collected data were coded according to structure of the request so that they could undergo statistical treatment.

3.2.1 Open Role-play

The procedure consisted of prompting the participants to form three requests during three different scenarios. In order to gather the data on how participants would form these requests, an open role-play was used. The researcher asked participants to engage in a role-play exercise in which they were told to imagine that the researcher was a friend of theirs and to speak to him as such. This was meant to maintain the same degree of social distance for each role-play. Participants were not told what aspect of the role-play was being analyzed or tested in an effort to avoid the Observer's Paradox. Additionally, the microphone used in the data collection was multi-directional and did not need to be held or spoken into by participants.

Participants were then given a tablet computer which presented them with a series of slides. Each slide had a picture and text prompting them to ask for three favors. This was based on the method of eliciting requests used by Schauer (2004). The requests that participants were prompted to form were of increasing imposition to the hearer. These included asking to use a pen, asking to borrow a book, and asking for help moving next Sunday. There exact wording of each appears on Table 8. This was done so that data could be collected for multiple requests produced by each participant. This ensured that the strategies used for requests could be compared for each individual scenario. Additionally, the sum total of the request strategies could also be analyzed.

Table 8 - Role-Play Prompts

Slide 1	You need to sign something, and want to borrow your friend's pen.
Slide 2	You need to borrow a textbook from a friend for a week
Slide 3	You're moving to a new apartment next Sunday and you're asking a friend for help.

Open role-play was chosen as the method for data collection as a compromise between data that was controlled and easily comparable and the need for more authentic and naturalistic speech samples. Methods which are closest to spontaneous speech have a higher chance of revealing the implicit knowledge of participants (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). For example, Taguchi and Roever found that elicitations collected during open role-play consisted of more verbose utterances than those of closed role-plays (2017: 91). Additionally, Kasper and Rose found that such elicitations contain more varied strategies outside of the head-act than those in DCTs or closed role-plays (2002: 89). This indicates that open role-play is better suited for eliciting strategies from participants such as supportive moves, internal modifiers, alerts, as well as the politeness marker 'please.'

Much of the research on how requests are formed by both native and non-native speakers has used discourse completion tests (DCT) as their method of data collection (see Section 2.4.4). These present participants with a written scenario or prompt and ask the participants to write in how they would respond or react to it. While DCTs have the ability to gather larger sample sizes, they are constrained by their nature. For example, discourse completion tasks are static and not done in real time and therefore might not elicit how a participant would respond spontaneously to a situation, but instead can elicit how participants think they would respond to given scenario. For example, Edmonson and House (1991) found that when presented with discourse completion tests, second language speakers produced longer utterances than native speakers, but not during live role-plays. Likewise, Rose & Dahl (1991) found that DCTs often elicited overly polite request strategies when compared to research done using oral methods.

For similar reasons, closed role-plays were not chosen for this research due to their constraining structure. While closed role-plays allow for more natural responses than written

methods, they are not an ideal choice for comparing requests. Both discourse completion tasks and closed role-play are one-sided and thus they only give participants a single turn to pose their request (Félix-Brasdefer, 2010). However, giving participants one turn to form a request could lead to unnatural responses since requests are more likely to contain multiple turns that build on one another (Taguchi & Roever, 2017: 85). This indicated that allowing participants a single turn to form would be unnatural and thus unsuited for eliciting natural request patterns.

As stated previously, the open role-play was chosen for its flexibility in allowing for more naturalistic settings for conversation. Since open role-play allows for multiple turns, participants have the ability to extend the conversation by asking questions, making comments, and seeking agreement (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Furthermore, having multiple turns available allowed participants to use *steering moves* which are used by the requesting party to direct the conversation towards their intended goal (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 19).

With such possible variation, several trial role-plays were conducted by the researcher with English speakers from the United States, Indonesia, and the Netherlands who were not participating in the study. This was done in order to anticipate the preliminary turns participants might make before their forming their requests. By performing these trial role-plays, the researcher could give identical responses to turns taking before the head-act of the request and in doing so maintain consistency for each role-play. However, conversations are unpredictable and not every conversational possibility could be anticipated, so the researcher had to be ready to engage in totally unscripted conversation. In Transcription 1 below, the participant used several preliminary moves, some of which were not anticipated. The researcher's prepared responses are in brackets [] while the unprepared responses are off set by asterisks.

Transcription 1 Thelma, UK, age 35

Thelma	Can I ask a big favor of you?
A	[Yes, of course.]
Thelma	Are you free, over the week? Next week?
Researcher	[I'm free free then.]
Thelma	How's your back?
Researcher	*It's good I suppose.I've been gyming.*
Thelma	I've got a few boxes, all it's gonna be is helping me bring them down the stairs. So, do you mind giving me a hand?
Researcher	[Of course not. I'll be there.]

Thelma	And there'll be drinking.
Researcher	*Oh coo-*
Thelma	And I might even stretch for dinner.
Researcher	*Well, awesome. That sounds great.*
Thelma	So can I put you down as a fact?
Researcher	*Yes.*
Thelma	OK. Sunday next week?
Researcher	[I'll be there.]
Thelma	You're gonna help me carry some furniture downstairs. Great.

It is worth noting that the researcher during all of the role-plays was a native English speaker. Some research indicates that such a presence may elicit more native-like pragmatic structures (Schauer, 2004). As such, this may have prompted some participants to use requests that were more native-like than they would have in the presence of a different researcher.

3.2.2 Questionnaire

After the three role-play scenarios were recorded, participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire which asked them about their linguistic background as well as their comfort, grammatical competence, and relation with English. This form (see Appendix) was a modified version of the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q) made by Marian, Blumenfield, & Kaushanskaya (2007). Questions on the survey asked participants to self report personal information such as nationality and cultural background as well as their self-perceived linguistic ability. The questionnaire asked participants about their regular use of English and through what means they had learned the language. Additionally, it asked what other languages the participants spoke and in what context. This allowed participants' data to be grouped according to factors such as a nationality and grammatical competence. In specific, participants were asked about their degree of grammatical proficiency for speaking, understanding and reading English. There grammatical competence was assigned based on their reported grammatical proficiency in speaking English. This help ensure that the data of participants who did not fit the criteria needed for this study would not be used.

Additionally, the original questionnaire was altered to remove certain questions unrelated to this study. For example, on the original form question 8 asks participants about their immigration into the United States. Likewise, question 9 involved participants physical

disabilities. Since all of the role-plays were done in the Netherlands, question 8 was deemed inapplicable and question 9 was considered irrelevant to the study. Thus both were removed. On the LEAP-Q, there is also a section for each of the languages spoken by the participants. The form leaves the language itself to be written in by the participant. On the modified version the first language is labeled 'English' to ensure that participants would report their grammatical proficiency in English.

3.2.3 The Coding Scheme

After the recordings were collected, they were transcribed, and then coded. Using the responses collected from the modified LEAP-Q form, each participant was categorized according to their nationality and assigned their reported grammatical competence level as a continuous variable. These data on personal linguistic information were then collated with the data collected from the recordings.

The codings for the recorded data came in two parts. The first broke each request into categorical parts i.e. head-act, supportive move, as so forth. The second aspect was numerical and totaled the use of categorical acts. The overall coding was based on the classification scheme posited by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) as well as several expansions to the list of supportive moves and internal modifications set forth in *Requests in American and British English* (Flöck, 2016). No new categories were added to these taxonomies.

The categorical codings first classified each request by its head-act according to the taxonomy used in the CCSARP with one exception. Bulka-Kulka & Olshtain delineate the head act of hints into two categories - *mild hints* and *strong hints*. However, these labels are given without a clear demarcation between them. As such, the two categories of *mild hint* and *strong hint* in were considered as one head-act as they were in Flöck (2016). This left a total of seven possible head-act categories. A full list of these head-acts can be found on Table 1 (Section 2.3.1). The types of internal modification were also coded as outlined by the CCSARP. Likewise, the CCSARP describes numerous kinds of supportive moves when forming requests, including

apologizes, obtaining pre-commitment, questioning possibility, and grounders/justifications. This research uses Flöck's enlarged classification of supportive moves as well as the choice to consider grounders that occurs before and after the head-act as one supportive move. In addition, each transcription was also coded to indicate the presence or absence of other request strategies. These codings included the use or non-use of internal modification, modal verbs in the head-act, politeness markers, alerts, and supportive moves.

After each transcription was delineated into its component parts, certain request strategies were coded for how often they were used. This included alerts, politeness markers, modal modification, internal modification and supportive moves. Additionally, the sum of these were added together in order to assign a value for the total number of request strategies used other than the head-act.

Transcription 2 below demonstrates how the transcriptions of each scenario were broken down into the individual components of a request. Additionally, this example displays how these transcription break-downs were coded both by categorical and numerical information in order to be used as data for the two statistical treatments.

Transcription 2 - Sonja, German, 23

"Hey, so you have this- this textbook, no? Could I have it for a week or so? Could I borrow it?"

Break-down of Transcription 2

Utterance	Request Strategy	Classification
Hey	Alert	Attention Getter
so you have this- this textbook, no?	Supportive Move	Seeking Confirmation
Could I have it for a week or so	Head-act	Preparatory Request
[Could]	Modal Modification	
Could I borrow it?	Supportive Move	Repetition

Categorical Codings

Head-act	preparatory request
Internal Modification	none
Presence of Alerts	yes
Presence of Politeness Markers	no
Presence of Modality	yes
Presence of Internal Modification	no
Presence of Supportive Moves	yes

Numerical Codings

Total Supportive Moves	2
Alerts	1
Politeness Markers	0
Modal Modification	1
Internal Modification	0
Total Non Head-act Moves	**4**

4. Analysis

After each of the role-plays was recorded, they were then transcribed and coded (see Section 3.2.3). These coded data were then analyzed with two statistical treatments - a multinomial logistic regression and a univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA). The multinomial logistic regression was selected in order to determine the possible correlation between the participants' nationality and grammatical competence with their choice in specific head-acts and internal modifications. The regression analysis was done for each of the three role-play scenarios. A series of ANOVA test were performed to find the correlation between the total number of specific request strategies across the three scenarios used by participants relative to their nationality and their proficiency. A brief summary of the variables which were tested for can be found on Table 9 below.

Table 9 - Variables Given Statistic Treatment

Independent Variables	Nominal Dependent Variables	Numerical Dependent Variables
Nation	Type of Head-act	Total Number of Supportive Moves
Grammatical	Type of Internal Modification	Total Number of Alerts
Competence	Presence of Alerts	Total Number of Politeness Markers
	Presence of Politeness Markers	Total Number of Modal Modifications
	Presence of Modal Modification	Total Number of Internal Modification
	Presence of Internal Modification	Total Number of Non Head-act Moves
	Presence of Supportive Moves	

The multinomial logistic regression was selected to analyze the collected categorical data. These tested for both binary and non-binary categories using nationality as a categorical variable and grammatical proficiency as the covariate. Logistic regressions tested which head-acts and internal modifications were used in specific by the participants during the three role-plays. The use of specific supportive moves were not analyzed due to huge variation used by participants. This led to six multinomial logistic regressions for the non-binary categories.

Further treatments were also performed for binary possibilities for each scenario. These

included the presence or absence of supportive moves, internal modification, conditional verbs, alerts, politeness markers, leading to fifteen tests. Using the nationality and grammatical proficiency as the independent variables, these nominal categories were tested by logistic regression. Furthermore, all of these dependent variables were tested for each of the three request role-plays, resulting in fifteen regressions. For these regressions to be considered statistically significant, their Pearson Chi-square value needed to be greater than .05 and the Standard Error needed to be less than .5. With those conditions met, an independent variable found meeting that condition can said be statistically significant if the value of the likelihood ration test (p) is less than .05.

Alongside evaluating the categorical data, a series of ANOVA tests were used to compare the numerical data that was collected. Unlike the nominal variables, the ANOVA was used to compare the total number of a given request strategy that a participant used over the course of the three role-plays. This type of data included the number of supportive moves, internal modifications, modal modifications, politeness markers, and alerts. This also included the total number of strategies used in the requests which were not head-acts, resulting in a total of six ANOVA tests. As with the multinomial logistic regression tests done on nominal variables, these treatments were done with the participants' nationality and grammatical proficiency used as independent variables, with nationality being a categorical variable and proficiency being a continuous one. Similar to multinomial logistic regressions, an ANOVA can only be considered significant when there is a significance value (p) of less than .05.

5. Results

This section presents the data collected and describes the results of the two statistical analyses. These include a series of multinomial logistic regressions for categorical data and several analysis of variance tests for numerical data.

5.1 Data

The data collected can be divided into two components - the categorical data and the numerical data. The categorical data includes which head-acts and internal modifications were used. Table 10 below demonstrates the percentage that each of the head-acts were used in each scenario.

Table 10 - Head-acts Used by Scenario

Head-act	Pen	Textbook	Moving	Total
Mood Derivable	0	0	0	0
Obligation Statement	0	0	0	0
Performative	0	0	0	0
Preparatory Request	97.4	81.6	81.6	86.8
Want/Need Statement	2.6	15.8	2.6	7
Suggestory Formula	0	0	2.6	.8
Hints	0	2.6	13.2	5.3
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

For head-acts overall, participants demonstrated an overwhelming preference for preparatory request over any other strategy. Requests were also formed using *want/need* statements and hints in nearly equal amounts. Interestingly, the use of hints was clustered around the request of highest imposition while want/need statements were utilized for lower imposition requests. The suggestory formula was used, but only for the highest imposition scenario. In none of the three role-ploy scenarios did any of the participants opt to use mood derivables, obligation statements or performative requests.

The total number of head-acts were also compared in relation to participants' nationality and grammatical competence. There data are shown below in Tables 11 and 12. Table 11 demonstrates that participants from the UK were the least inclined to use preparatory requests, while Indian participants used this head act almost exclusively.

Table 11 - Total Head-acts According to Nationality

Head-act	China	India	Germany	UK
Preparatory Request	85.7	94.4	89.7	80.6
Want/Need Statement	4.8	0	7.7	11.1
Suggestory Formula	0	0	0	2.8
Hints	9.6	5.6	2.6	5.6
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 12 - Total Head-acts According to Proficiency Level

Head-act	≤7	8	9	10
Preparatory Request	83.3	81.8	96.7	84.6
Want/Need Statement	8.3	9.1	0	10.3
Suggestory Formula	0	3	0	0
Hints	8.3	6.1	3.3	5.1
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The use of internal modification was also codified and compared, as seen in Table 13. For all three scenarios, participants utilized only two types of internal modification with their requests - downtoners and understaters. On the whole, most participants formed their requests without using any kind of internal modification whatsoever. However, when participants did chose to use the strategy, they demonstrated a preference for understaters over downtoners.

Table 13 - Internal Modification Used by Percentage

Internal Modification	Pen	Textbook	Moving	Total
None	73.7	81.6	63.2	72.8
Downtoner	5.3	5.3	15.8	8.8
Understater	21.1	13.2	21.1	18.4
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

The last data sets presented here display the total number of non-head act moves that participants used relative to their nationality (Table 14) and grammatical competence (Table 15).

Table 14 - Total Number of Non Head-Act Strategies According to Nationality

	Nationality			
Number of Strategies	China	India	Germany	UK
2	0	0	15.4	0
3	28.6	16.7	15.4	0
4	28.6	33.3	7.7	0
5	42.9	33.3	15.4	25
6	0	0	15.4	8.3

7	0	0	7.7	25
8	0	0	15.4	16.6
9	0	16.7	0	16.6
10	0	0	7.7	0
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 15 - Total Number of Non Head-Act Strategies According to Grammatical Competence

	Grammatical Competence				
Number of Strategies	6	7	8	9	10
2	0	0	9.1	10	0
3	0	0	27.3	20	7.7
4	50	50	9.1	10	7.7
5	50	50	27.3	20	23.1
6	0	0	0	20	7.7
7	0	0	9.1	10	15.4
8	0	0	9.1	0	23.1
9	0	0	0	10	15.4
10	0	0	9.1	0	0
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

5.2 Predicting Types and Presence of Strategies

In order to compare the different categorical variables of this research, a total of twenty-one multinomial logistic regressions were performed. Each of these used the participants' fours nationalities and grammatical proficiency as independent variables. The kinds of supportive moves and internal modification were both tested for as well as the presence of other request strategies for all three scenarios. The results were only considered statistically significant if they had a p-value of less than .05.

Overall, these treatments found no correlation between the choice of head-act or internal modification in relation to nationality and grammatical competence for any of the three role-play scenarios. However, a correlation was found between the presence of some strategies and the independent variables. For the first role play scenario (asking to use a pen) there was indication of a correlation between nation and the presence of modal modification and the presence of alerts. For the second scenario (borrowing a textbook), the regression test found a correlation between both nation and grammatical competence and the presence of internal modification. For the third scenario (asking for help to move house) neither nationality or proficiency proved to be

significant predictors for any of the dependent variables.

However, issues were found for the four multinomial logistic regressions which displayed significance. For each regression with a p-value less than .05, the degree of standard error for the regression test was higher than .5. With the standard error of theses analyses outside of normally accepted parameters, the findings in Table 16 are inconclusive as to whether nationality or grammatical proficiency are reliable predictors of these attributes.

5.3 Predicting the Number of Strategies

Since the results of the multinomial regression were inconclusive and could not predict any correlations per role-play scenario, a total of six ANOVA tests were also done to analyze the numerical variables collected across all three scenarios. The variables which were tested for included the total number of supportive moves, alerts, politeness markers, modality, internal modification as well as the total number of strategies that participants utilized other than the head-act. All of these dependent variables were tested with nationality and grammatical proficiency used as independent variables. The model for the total number of modal modifications used in the three role-plays was found to be significant (df error = 4, F = 3.081, p = 0.029). It found that the participants' nationality was a significant predictor of their total number of modal modification (df error = 1, F = .156, p = .015). The exact results are outlined on Table 18 in which the ANOVA test used United Kingdom as the nation by which other values were compared. As the table indicates, relative to participants form the UK, Chinese speakers were less likely to use modal verbs. Conversely, Germans were the most likely to use modal modification.

Table 16 - ANOVA Test for Number of Modal Modifications

Source	df	F	Significance
Corrected Model	4	3.081	.029
Proficiency	1	.225	.638

Nationality	1	.156	.015

Parameter	B	Std. Error	Significance
United Kingdom	0	-	-
India	.737	.449	.733
Germany	.931	.386	.826
China	-.124	.427	.152

6. Discussion

In this study, the different strategies used in forming English-language requests have been compared according to both the speakers' nationality and their level of grammatical competence. While there is a wealth of research available which explores interlanguage pragmatics, there are certain gaps in regards to studying request strategies. Firstly, most research which compares request strategies relies on response methods which are one-sided or allowed only a single conversational turn for collecting data, such a DCTs or a closed role-play. Furthermore, much of the research on request strategies made by non-native speakers often uses the requests made by native speakers as a litmus by which to compare others. This research has filled these gaps by using a method which captures more naturalistic speak patterns as well as using more than one group of non-native speakers.

6.1 Main Findings

In determining the relationship between nationality and grammatical proficiency, the results of the multinomial regressions do not suggest a correlation between these variables and one's choice in head-acts or internal modification.

Collectively, findings of this study are rather narrow as only one statistical treatment indicated a significant correlation - the ANOVA test which tested the total number of modal modification in terms of participants' grammatical competence and nationality. This ANOVA test indicated that there is a statistically significant correlation between the nationality of the speaker and their uses of modal modification as a type of internal modification. Specifically, it found that speakers from the United Kingdom were the least likely to use modal modifiers. Conversely, speakers from Germany were shown to favor the use of modal modifiers in their requests.

6.2 Research Questions and Implications

The findings of this research show an unclear relationship between participants' nationality,

linguistic experience, and choice of specific request strategies. Given these results, this section will address this paper's research questions.

R1. What is the relationship between the head-act of request and a speaker's nationality and/or grammatical competence?

Overall, this research found no statistically significant correlation between which head-acts and which internal modification used by speaker's in relation to either their proficiency or their nationality. Statistically significant correlations which were found seem inconclusive.

R2. What is the correlation between the use of non head-acts and a speaker's nationality and/or grammatical competence?

For the majority of non head-acts (total number of alerts, politeness markers, and internal modification), no significant correlation was found between their use and nationality or grammatical competence. However, there is evidence that nationality may be a viable predictor for speakers' use of modal modification to a the main verb.

R3. Are nationality and grammatical competence equally significant in predicting a speaker's choice of head-acts and non head-acts when forming requests?

From the findings of this research, it is difficult to say if nation and grammatical competence have an equal influence on the speaker's choice of head-act. In regards to non head-acts, this research indicates that a speaker's nationality is a better predictor of speakers' choice of non-head acts. In specific these findings imply that nation has particularly strong correlation to the presence or absence of modal modification to the head act of the request.

6.3 Findings Compared to Previous Research

The corpus of research already done regarding the request patterns of native and non-native speakers is vast. The overall preference for the preparatory request as a head act falls in line with

previous research on native speakers (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Faerch and Kasper, 1989; Barron, 2008). Likewise this preference matches the findings of English requests produced by L2 speakers such as Flores Salgado (2011) as well as Taguchi and Roever (2017) However, the absence of mood derivable requests runs contrary to the finding of Flöck (2016:121) who noted its use by native speakers at similar frequencies as preparatory requests. In a similar vein, when participants utilized internal modification, they demonstrated the largest preference for understaters followed by downtowners. These findings and the lack of other internal modification differ from the Flöck's work which indicates the largest preference for downtowners, followed by specification and then understaters.

This works findings which predict a correlation between a speaker's nationality and their use of modality markers do not align with some previous research. For example, previous research on other face threatening acts points to a stronger relation between modality makers and grammatical competence such as work of Trosborg (1987) which indicated an increase in modality markers proportional to L2 English speakers' grammatical proficiency.

6.4 Research Limitations and Possible Improvements

This research into request strategies and their relation with speakers' grammatical proficiency and nationality was constrained by several limitations. These issues and their possible improvement solicit further investigation on the subject. Primary among these limitations was the relatively low sample size of participants. With a pool of 38 participants in total, certain statistical treatments could not be used to analyze the data. For example, other comparisons of request strategies have used chi-squared tests to compare the choice of head-acts and supportive moves such as Flöck (2016). However, since this research categorized participants into four groups (according to nationality) a chi-squared test was not appropriate without more data. Furthermore, Fisher's exact test, which smoothes smaller datasets could not be used when there are more than two categories. Undoubtedly, this research would benefit from a larger sample size on all accounts.

Additionally, there were difficulties in the role-play procedure regarding social distance.

Each of the role-play scenarios prompted participants to ask a friend for the various impositions. During the role-plays several participants inquired about the specific degree of closeness with the hypothetical friend, stating that their request forms would change accordingly. While perceived closeness can elicit less polite responses, the participant's perceived social distance with the researcher can lead to overly polite and/or unnatural responses (Kasper & Dahl, 1991: 34). As such, some role-plays may have been affected by the social dynamics perceived by the participants.

Problems were also present in determining the participants' linguistic backgrounds through the LEAP-Q as participants occasionally took issue with the questionnaire on the subject. When asked which language they would choose to speak in a given situation, several cited that context would be their determining factor above anything else. Several participants expressed uncertainty as the whether their home language should be considered a distinct entity or a variety of a more recognized language. This question arose for participants considering regional dialects of German relative to German and Cantonese relative to Mandarin. One Indian participant had difficulty with the question stating that the language she spoke with her husband would be a blend of English, Hindi, and Assamese.

In a similar vein, participants found it difficult to define what constituted an English speaking country. This research was carried out in the Netherlands and several participants stated that they considered the Netherlands to be an English speaking country, despite its placement in the Expanding Circle of Kachru's model. This perception was compounded by the fact that most of the participants were students in a university program at a Dutch university where English was the sole language of instruction. Likewise, opinions of participants from India were ambivalent as to whether or not India should be considered as an English speaking country. This highlights that the notion of an 'English-speaking country' and Kachru's three-tier model of English varieties may no longer be compatible with this research.

Perhaps most importantly, due to certain constraints, this research relied on self-report to determine the participants' level of grammatical competence in English. This could have affected how the participants were arranged as each participant could understand the notion of grammatical proficiency differently. This is exemplified by the fact that several native English

speaker from the United Kingdom were unwilling to say that they had 10/10 grammatical competence.

Overall, this work recognizes its own gaps in studying request strategies and opportunities for expansion. Further research could be conducted to determine a possible relation between the number of turns taken in forming requests, or the verbosity of each request in relation to nation and grammatical competence. Additionally, participants could be chosen within the same rank of Kachru's model or from different varieties of English.

7. Conclusion

This research set out to examine the possible relationship between the nationality and grammatical competence of native and non-native speakers in relation to their choice of strategies when forming requests in English. In order to do this, it has discussed several aspects of request strategies and the intersection between language acquisition and pragmatics. In specific, it has laid out the foundations in politeness theory, such as face and indirectness and explained English's role as a global lingua. Furthermore, it has delineated and classified the possible elements available when forming request in English. Additionally, it has reviewed relevant theories as to how native and non-native speakers acquire pragmalinguistic competence and how non-native speaker's speech production can be affected by pragmatic transference.

This study selected participants according to gender, nationality, and grammatical competence in English. Participants took part in a series of role-play scenarios in order to elicit requests. The specifics of the requests they produced were coded with the participants' information. These data were analyzed to compare the structures of participants' head acts according to their nationality and grammatical competence.

In these analysis, no correlation could be determined between speakers' choice of specific head-acts or internal modification and their nationality or grammatical competence. However, the findings indicate that the speaker's nationality may be a predictor for the use of modal modification in the request's head-act. In sum, this indicated that the speakers' nation was a significant predictor of their use of modal verbs in the series of requests. However, more research must be conducted to determine more about this correlation.

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Appendix

Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q)

First & Last Name	Date of Birth	Age	Today's Date

(1) Please list all the languages you know **in order of dominance**:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

(2) Please list all the languages you know **in order of acquisition** (your native language first):

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

(3) Please list what percentage of the time you are *currently* and *on average* exposed to each language.
(*Your percentages should add up to 100%*):

List language here:					
List percentage here:					

(4) When choosing to read a text available in all your languages, in what percentage of cases would you choose to read it in each of your languages? Assume that the original was written in another language, which is unknown to you.
(Your percentages should add up to 100%):

List language here					
List percentage here:					

(5) When choosing a language to speak with a person who is equally fluent in all your languages, what percentage of time would you choose to speak each language? Please report percent of total time.
(*Your percentages should add up to 100%*):

List language here					
List percentage here:					

Language : English

(1) Age when you…

began acquiring	*became fluent*	*began reading*	*became fluent reading*

(2) Please list the number of years and months you spent in each language environment:

	Years	Months
A country where English is spoken		
A family where English is spoken		
A school and/or working environment where English is spoken		

(3) On a scale from zero to ten, please select your *level of grammatical competence* in speaking, understanding, and reading English:

Speaking		Understanding spoken language		Reading	

(4) On a scale from zero to ten, please select how much the following factors contributed to you learning:

Interacting with friends		Language tapes/self instruction	
Interacting with family		Watching TV	
Reading		Listening to the radio	

(5) Please rate to what extent you are currently exposed to English in the following contexts:

Interacting with friends		Listening to radio/music	
Interacting with family		Reading	
Watching TV		Language-lab/self-instruction	

(6) In your perception, how much of a foreign accent do you have in English ? (scale 0-10)

(7) Please rate how frequently others identify you as a non-native speaker based on your <u>accent</u> in English. (scale 0-10)