The effect of non-native vs. native language and explanations on persuasiveness of requests in corporative settings.

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Abstract
Explanations are speech acts that are persuasive and beneficial when urging someone to comply with a request. In corporative contexts where requests are part of daily internal communication, it is essential to know how persuasive these requests can be when an explanation is provided. Additionally, due to globalisation, many organisations are multilingual; therefore, testing if these explanations for requests are more persuasive in a non-native language can improve organisational communication tactics. Therefore, this experimental study aimed to investigate the effects of non-native vs. native language and the presence vs. absence of an explanation on the persuasiveness of a request among colleagues at the same hierarchical level. So far, research has focused on the effect of accounts on communication between managers and employees; instead, this study does not include hierarchical differences. The experiment was held online with a questionnaire via Qualtrics, and the responses of 159 participants’ were analysed. The participants were asked to imagine participating in a conversation where a colleague requested them to comply with a task. Then they answered questions regarding their intention to comply with this request. The first hypothesis was that participants would rate the request more persuasive after receiving an explanation. The second hypothesis was that participants would rate the request more persuasive after receiving an explanation in a non-native language. Unexpectedly, the results were not significant, rejecting both hypotheses and concluding that regardless of the language or the presence of an explanation, the persuasion of requests is likely to be perceived equally by employees. However, it was suggested that social factors related to politeness should also be considered in the perception of explanations, which can be explored in future research. Moreover, the results aimed to provide beneficial findings for organisations where more than one language is spoken and have linear organisational structures.
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

Introduction

Explanations can be described as a speech act (Walton, 2010) that occurs as a natural way to transfer knowledge between people (Blum-Kulka et al. 2017). In literature, explanations have been linked with the term account (Orbuch, 1997) since both are recognised as statements that explain events. This current study will make use of both terms interchangeably due to their shared similarities and purposes. For instance, both might serve a variety of functions in verbal interactions, such as establishing links between speakers, creating a shared culture (Corsaro, as cited in Blum-Bulka et al. 2017), resolving conflicts (Firth, 1993) or justifying decisions (Schaubroeck et al. 1994). In addition, they help to illustrate situations and enhance effectively asking for help (Blum-Kulka et al., 2017). All the stated benefits are significant elements for effective communication, mainly in contexts where individuals must ask each other to perform tasks.

In social contexts, explanations have been shown to be a beneficial communication tool when urging someone to perform an action. For example, Langer et al. (1978) identified a positive effect in adding information that justifies a request. In their experimental research, participants that received a justification after being asked to carry out an activity were more likely to do the task than the participants that received no extra information. More recent evidence (Parry, 2009) highlights that in doctor-patient interactions, accounts effectively reduce resistance when medics ask patients to follow instructions or accept and perform specific treatments. In Baranova and Dingemanse’s study (2016), which was focused on family context, it was found that explanations accompany more than one-third of verbal requests. Furthermore, the authors discussed that when a person provides specific reasons when requesting an action, it makes the request more comprehensible and more likely to be complied by another individual. These references provide clear evidence that explanations have a persuasive effect which increases the probability of compliance when making requests.

Literature focused on accounts has demonstrated that they are not only valuable in casual interaction but also in corporate contexts. According to Schaubroeck et al. (1994), subordinates' job dissatisfaction can positively change when receiving explanations about radical organisational transformations. In a similar study, Bies et al. (1988) found that accounts efficiently reduce employees’ conflictive responses caused by executives' organizational decisions. Moreover, managerial accounts motivate employees to legitimatize their understanding of institutional transformations (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1999) and increase their perception of justice when managers deny petitions (Holtz and Harold, 2008). It has also been shown that accounts successfully reduce
anger and increase perception of fairness among employees when receiving negative feedback from their superiors (Tata, 2002). Thus far, the above discussed literature indicates that accounts have a positive effect in work interactions; the results shed light on the fact that subordinates can be persuaded and they can change their attitude, evaluations and perceptions when accounts are provided specifically by their boss. However, still little is known about the persuasive role of accounts for requests in interactions among employees who belong to the same hierarchical level.

The persuasive effect of accounts for requests among employees can be rather complex since hierarchy, individuals’ relationships and the imposition of the request are factors that might be involved in the use of accounts. The latter can be better understood by reviewing the politeness theory stated by Brown and Levinson (1987). The authors claim that individuals tend to use polite devices, such as accounts, to reduce the negative impact of face-threatening acts (FTAs) and as part of social communication skills. The FTAs, are situations in which face, or the public self-image (Goffman, 1995), is threatened to be damaged. Thus, according to Brown and Levinson, when an individual performs an FTA, as making a request, the selection of a politeness strategy (i.e. direct or indirect) will depend on three factors: the social distance or the relationship among interactors, the power\(^1\) or hierarchy status and the level of imposition of the request. For instance, a relationship that is not close, a higher hierarchical level between individuals or a request with a high degree of difficulty (high imposition) might require the interlocutor to be less direct (see Xafizovna, 2022). In the organisational context, part of Tata’s (2002) findings can exemplify the selection of explanations, as a politeness device, based on hierarchy and social distance. Tata discusses that when an executive wants to express concern, respect and courtesy when providing negative feedback towards a subordinate, it is likely that the executive would provide more detailed and sensitive accounts. These detailed accounts tend to be more persuasive than indefinite accounts (Shapiro et al., 1994). However, the efficiency of using explanations for requests when there is no hierarchy among colleagues in a working environment is yet to be explored.

Another aspect contributing to the complexity of the persuasiveness of providing explanations for requests among colleagues could be the language spoken at the workplace. As Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999) claimed, intercultural personnel in organisations has increased due to globalisation. A culturally diverse staff is a suitable example of a scene where individuals have different

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\(^1\) According to Hofstede (1980), power distance can be defined as "the degree to which members of a society tolerate unequal power distribution in institutions and organisations" (p. 347).
communication style backgrounds and might interact in a foreign language (Rosenzweig, 1998). According to Piekkari et al. (2014), many international companies tend to establish a common language, which might not always be the native language of all employees. The authors affirm that the strategy of establishing a common corporate language could avoid linguistic differences and enhance communication comprehensibility. Moreover, Peltokorpi (2013) states that employees’ proficiency in the language spoken in a multinational corporation is crucial for a successful knowledge transfer, which in an organisational context, is the act of sharing information about abilities, skills and experience (see Peltokorpi, 2013). The author found that when the employees’ corporate language proficiency is low, they are likely to avoid exchanging information face to face which leads to poor knowledge transfer. Thus, the persuasiveness of requesting for actions with accounts, which are speech acts that tend to occur in face to face interactions, might also be affected by the individuals’ language proficiency and their language background.

There is a lack of research focused on the persuasiveness of accounts produced in a non-native language (L2). However, evidence indicates that information provided in L2 influences emotions and way of thinking, also known as attitude, towards the information differently than when provided in a native language (L1). For instance, an experimental study by de Langhe et al. (2011) found that individuals rate their emotions as more intense in rating scales displayed in English, which was the non-native language in the study, than in rating scales displayed in Dutch which was the native language. In detail, participants in de Langhe et al.’s experiment were exposed to printed advertisements of fictitious brands in English and Dutch; after being exposed to the ads, the participants were asked to rate the emotional intensity of the content with scales presented in L1 and L2. The findings showed that regardless of the ad’s language, participants rated the emotional intensity higher on the scale of questions presented in English. According to the authors, individuals perceive a decrease in emotional intensity in scales presented in L2 because emotional intensity in L1 is innately higher. Therefore, to compensate the intensity decrease individuals rate the emotions higher in L2.

In regards to the influence of a non-native language on individuals’ attitudes towards messages, van Hooft and Truong (2012) identified that individuals exposed to printed advertisements in a non-native language, perceived the product in the ad as more positive and functional than the products in the native language ads. However, the effect was observed only when the products in the presented ads were luxurious. The authors accredit the outcome to the frequent use of English in the publicity of top quality brands, resulting in an associative link between the language in which
the message was presented and the message itself. This same explanation was given by Hornikx and van Meurs (2017). They found that individuals in their experiment increased their intention to purchase an advertised product after being exposed to an ad for that product in a non-native language. The latter provides evidence that the intention or willingness to do a specific activity, such as making a purchase, is also influenced by an L2. Although the findings mentioned above point to the significant influence of a non-native language on an individual’s emotions and attitudes towards printed ads, it is unknown whether L2 can affect the persuasiveness of explanations for requests.

Part of the literature described above clarifies that explanations play an essential role in persuasion. It also has been noticed that previous studies have been mainly focused on explanations provided and received by native speakers in their native language, mainly in casual contexts but somehow limited in working settings. Additionally, studies investigating explanations in work contexts did not consider hierarchical differences between the speaker and the recipient. Therefore, this current experimental study aims to expand the literature on this topic by investigating the effect of language (English as an L2 and Dutch as an L1) and accounts on the persuasiveness of explanations for requests among colleagues operating at the same hierarchical level. Furthermore, the current study takes place in the Netherlands, which is a valuable element for this investigation. It is valuable because the Netherlands has the highest English proficiency and the highest number of individuals who speak English as a second language in Europe, according to Education First’s annual English proficiency index (2021). Moreover, it is a country where everyday multilingual and multinational workforces increase (Invest in Holland, 2021). This high familiarity with the English language and the multicultural working environment can represent a real-life working situation for the participants, which provides some ecological validity to this study that could be represented in the results.

In general, the outcomes of this research aim not only to contribute to the theoretical framework but also to be relevant to the practical field. In the organisational context, accounts have been proved to be helpful in mitigating conflicts, reducing negative perceptions, accepting organisational changes or persuading to comply with tasks. A better understanding of the effects of language and explanations on requests can provide multinational companies with tools to potentiate compelling and persuasive communication among employees. Therefore, the findings of this study can be highly beneficial for local and multinational organisations, mainly when a significant part of corporate interactions is based on requests to perform tasks in the workplace.
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

The current study will answer the following question: To what extent does language (native vs. non-native language) and explanations (present vs. absent) affect persuasiveness of requests for actions among employees working on the same hierarchical level?

H1: There will be an effect of explanations (present vs. absent) on the persuasiveness of the request. The groups that receive an explanation after being requested to perform a task will rate their persuasiveness level operationalized by intention to comply and attitudes towards the compliance significantly higher than those that did not receive explanations.

H2: There will be an effect of language of explanations (native vs. non-native) on the persuasiveness of the request. The groups that receive an explanation in a non-native language will rate their persuasiveness level operationalized by intention to comply and attitude towards the compliance significantly higher than the group that will receive the explanation in their second language.

Method
The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of non-native vs. native language and presence vs. absence of explanations on the persuasiveness of requests for actions in corporate settings among employees working on the same hierarchical level.

Materials
The stimulus material was presented as a text, having four versions: native language (Dutch) with explanations, native language without explanation, non-native language (English) with explanation, non-native language without explanation.

The material was presented as a text “Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work. Your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question: Can you pick up my package from the PostNL point by 16:00 hrs?”. The native language variant was the same text mentioned above but translated into Dutch. Then, for the participants in the ‘no explanation’ condition this was the end of the text. In contrast, the participants receiving the explanation condition were able to read a
justification after the above mentioned text with the request "I do not have time to run this errand by myself", the same explanation was translated into Dutch for the L1 condition.

These materials were designed by Minei et al. (2018) who performed an experimental study focused on explanations in illegitimate requests between executives and subordinates. The current study adapted their materials due to the fact that the request from the original source was based on an American context “I need you to pick up my dry-cleaning today” which is not a familiar activity in the Netherlands. Therefore, it was decided to be changed into a more suitable situation for the Dutch context “Can you pick my package from the PostNL point (...)?” In general, the experimental elements were pre-tested before usage, which allowed the present research to import a reliable material. The original texts and its translation to Dutch can be found in Appendix A of this study.

**Participants**
In this current study participated 245 native Dutch speakers. 71 Participants did not finish the questionnaire and were not taken into account for the final analysis of this study. Moreover, 12 participants indicated to have other mother tongue than Dutch, another 3 indicated they did not have working experience, therefore, were also excluded from the experiment. Lastly, a total of 159 participants’ responses were analysed in this study. All participants were voluntaries and received no financial reward for taking part in the experiment. 50.3% Of the participants were female, 47.8% were male and 1.9% preferred not to say. The average age of participants was \( M = 24.31, SD = 8.55 \), with a range of 18 -61 years old. The participant’s work experience was between less then one and 41 years \( (M = 6.53, SD = 7.30) \). Regarding the participants’ level of education, 3.8% indicated they had completed secondary school (VMBO), 11.3% had completed secondary vocational school (MBO), 7.5% had completed higher general continued education (HAVO), 17.6% had completed university of applied sciences (HBO), 37.7% had completed preparatory scientific education (VWO), 20% had completed university of research (WO), and 1.3% had completed other type of school as their highest level of education. Additionally, to check the level of comprehensibility of the English language of the participants they self-assessed their English proficiency \((M = 5.57, SD = 0.84)\) by rating their skills in speaking \((M = 5.40, SD = 0.95)\), listening \((M = 5.74, SD = 0.89)\), writing \((M = 5.33, SD = 0.98)\) and reading \((M = 5.83, SD = 0.93)\). The reliability of this items was excellent \(\alpha = .92\).
In order to identify the total distribution of participants among conditions, several tests were conducted. A chi-square test showed that gender ($\chi^2(6) = 7.18$, $p = .304$) and education ($\chi^2(18) = 20.97$, $p = .281$), and years of work experience ($\chi^2(120) = 120.24$, $p = .477$) were equally distributed among all the conditions. The background variable of work experience had three missing values that were excluded from the distribution since the participants did not answer the question correctly. Moreover, one-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) tests showed that age ($F(3, 155) = 1.39$, $p = .247$) and self-assessed English proficiency ($F(3, 155) = 1.18$, $p = .319$) were also equally distributed among all the conditions.

**Design**

This design used for this study was a 2x2 factorial between-subjects experimental design. One independent variable was the language (Dutch and English) in which the request and explanations were given. The second independent variable was the presence or absence of the explanations after the request. The dependent variable was the persuasiveness of the request measured by the participants’ intention to comply with the request and the attitude towards the request presented to them.

![Analytical model of the relationship between independent and dependent variables.](image)

**Figure 1.** Analytical model of the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

**Instruments**

The dependent variable was the persuasiveness of the request. This was operationalised by measuring the participants' intention to comply and attitude towards the request. According to Fishbein
and Ajzen (2010), behavioural intention can be measured using a seven-point Likert scale. Therefore, the participants were asked to score their intention to comply by rating the statements "I intend to pick up the colleague’s package from the PostNL point", "I will pick up the colleague’s package from the PostNL point", "I am willing to pick up the colleague’s package from the PostNL point" and "I plan to pick up the colleague’s package from the PostNL point" on a 7 point Likert scale having as anchor points completely disagree (1) to completely agree (7). The reliability of these items was excellent α = .91.

Additionally, Fishbein and Ajzen highlight that attitude towards a message can be measured with five items and semantic differentials in a seven-point Likert scale with the items and counterpoles as anchor points. Therefore, the participants were indicated to state their attitude towards the request with the statement "Me picking up the colleague's package at the PostNL point is" and rating it as good (1) - bad (7), unpleasant (1) – pleasant (7), harmful (1) - beneficial (7), interesting (1) – boring (7), wise (1) – unwise (7). The second and third measures were reversed coded. The reliability of these items was poor α = .63. It was found that the item “interesting-boring” decreased the reliability, therefore it was excluded from the calculation. The reliability was acceptable α = .77.

The reliability of ‘persuasiveness’ comprising all the items mentioned above was good α = .88. Consequently the mean for all the items was used to calculate the compound variable “persuasiveness” which was used to conduct further analyses.

**Procedure**

The participants were cordially invited to participate in the study via online and they received a link of Qualtrics with the questionnaire. In the questionnaire a short text informed the participants about the aim of the research without being given much detailed information in order to avoid bias. In this text the participants were also explained that their participation was voluntary, that they were able to stop at any moment and that it would take them three minutes to participate. Information about a contact person was displayed in case any of the participants wanted to inquire more about the study or their participation. Additionally, they were also asked to confirm to had understood the information, to be older than 18 years old and to give consent of their participation. Then, the participants were asked to answer some general questions (age, gender, work experience, self-assessed English language proficiency, level of education). Then Qualtrics randomly assigned the participants to one of the four conditions. They were instructed to read the material and answer
some questions about the situation (report their intention to comply and attitude towards the situation). Moreover, an optional open question was displayed in case they had any comment or remarks about the questionnaire. Once they answered and clicked on finish a "thank you for your participation in this experiment" note appeared on the screen. At the same time, the results of all the questionnaires were automatically saved and processed by the Qualtrics website. Afterwards, the average of time spent in the experiment was calculated. In average the participants spent three minutes and 58 seconds filling in the questionnaire (M= 3.58, SD= 17.9, range 0.88 – 193.78). The questionnaire and its conditions translated in Dutch can be found in Appendix B.

**Statistical treatment**

This study was a two factorial between-subjects design study and two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. One test for each independent variable.

**Results**

Two one way analysis of variance tests were conducted in order to identify if there was an effect of the presence of an explanation and non-native language on the persuasiveness of a requests for an action in a corporative context. The first one way ANOVA test showed no significant effect of presence vs. absence of explanation ($F(1, 157) = 1.48 p = .226$) on the persuasiveness of the requests. The second one way ANOVA showed no significant effect of native vs non-native language ($F(1, 157) = .627 p = .430$) on the persuasiveness of the requests.

**Discussion and conclusions**

This study aimed to investigate the effect of native vs. non-native language and the presence vs. absence of explanations/accounts on the persuasiveness of requests for actions among employees working at the same hierarchical level. After conducting the statistical treatment of data, the results showed no significant effect, rejecting the two hypothesis previously proposed in this study. This indicates that in the experiment neither language nor the presence of explanations/accounts could influence the persuasiveness of explanations for requests among colleagues in a corporate setting. Nevertheless, the reasons for these results must be carefully analysed and interpreted with caution.
Effect of explanation

As a first hypothesis (H1), this study expected that subjects who received an explanation would have rated the persuasiveness of the request higher than those who received no explanation. This H1 was based on previous evidence indicating that the presence of an explanation increases the chances of people complying with a request (Langer et al., 1978; Parry, 2009; Baranova & Dingemans, 2016) and positive attitudes towards organisational situations (Bies et al., 1988; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). However, for the results of this study that was not the case. In other words, participants rated the persuasiveness of the request “Can you pick my package from the PostNL point?” in the same way, regardless of the presence or absence of an explanation for that request. One possible reason for these results is that the explanation, “I do not have time to run this errand myself”, did not provide the subjects with enough detailed information justifying why the colleague did not have time to do their errands. Thus the subjects could have perceived the account as not detailed enough and, therefore, less persuasive (Shapiro et al., 1994).

Another potential cause of these results could be that the material used in this experiment lacked relevant information that might influence the perception of accounts. For instance, the closeness of the relationship between the requestee and the requester was not described to the subjects. This is relevant because the use and perception of explanations as polite devices depends on the distance in relationships between interactors, according to Brown and Levinson (1987). Another factor that might have not been clear to the participants was the level of imposition of the request, which can make the request more polite and acceptable (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In this research’s material, the request based on Minei et al. (2018) was illegitimate and not related to work, therefore its rank of imposition could have been perceived equally or not so important for the participants.

Another element of politeness strategy related to the results is the power difference between the interactors. Even thought this was not an independent variable in the study, it was indicated to the subjects that there was no hierarchical difference between them, as requestees, and the requester. So far, previous studies have established that explanations are effective in work contexts between managers and subordinates (Tata, 2002; Holtz & Harold, 2008). It has also been claimed that employees are more likely to comply with requests when the requestee has a higher hierarchical level. Therefore, it could have been the case that the subjects’ indifference in their attitudes and intention to comply with the request was related to the lack of hierarchical difference in this experiment.
Based on the discussed results, it can be concluded that explanations do not affect how persuasive a request is among employees at the same hierarchical level. Moreover, it can be suggested that requests are equally likely to be carried out regardless of whether they are followed or not by an explanation. In addition, the above discussed reasons for the results might shed light on the factors of politeness (i.e. relationship between the colleagues) that, even though, were not investigated, can be explored in further research.

Non-native vs. native language

The second hypothesis of this study was based on previous work focused on the effects of a second language on the persuasiveness of ads. For instance, findings claim that advertisements in non-native languages persuade individuals to increase their purchase intention (Hornikx & van Meurs, 2017) and positive attitudes towards the message or ad itself (van Hooft & Truong, 2012). Moreover, individuals tend to rate the emotional intensity of ads higher on scales presented in L2 (de Langhe et al., 2011). Therefore, since explanations also function as persuasive elements (Langer et al., 1978; Parry, 2009), like advertisements, the present study was expected to obtain the same effects as the studies mentioned above. Hence, the hypothesis that participants exposed to the account in L2 would rate the persuasiveness of the request higher than participants exposed to the explanations in L1. However, the results indicate that participants assessed the persuasiveness equally regardless the language in which the explanation and request were presented; rejecting the H2.

A possible explanation for the results in this study is that even though advertisements and accounts are persuasive elements, they differ in nature. Advertisements represent ideas, products, and their place of origin, which individuals associate with the language in which the ad is presented. This association provokes more positive attitudes and intentions towards ads in L2 (van Hooft & Truong, 2012). In contrast, explanations do not represent commercial concepts; instead, they are speech acts that depend on social aspects (Brown & Levinson, 1987) as relationships or status. It may be the case that these social factors involved in using accounts are less likely to produce an associative link to the language in which the accounts are provided. Thus, this lack of association between explanations and language might have led subjects in this experiment to rate its persuasiveness in L2 as they would have done it in their native language.

Furthermore, the participant’s familiarity with the English language could have made them process the explanations for requests in L2 similarly to their L1. The participants self-assessed their
English proficiency as intermediate on average ($M=5.57$, $SD = 0.84$, 7 Likert scale). Although the subjects’ English proficiency can not be described as advanced, it might have been high enough to make the participants understand the request and explanation as they would have in their native language.

In addition, the results seem to contradict de Langhe et al.’s (2011) findings, which state that when the emotional intensity of an ad has to be rated in a second language, individuals perceive a decrease in the intensity since they compare it with the emotional intensity they feel in their native language. Thus, to compensate for the unequal intensity of emotions felt between languages, subjects tend to rate emotions higher in the L2. However, this was not the case in this study. One main explanation for this dissimilarity is that the entire questionnaire of this study, meaning the request, explanation as well as scale questions, was presented to the subjects either completely in the L1 or the L2. Therefore, they could not have experienced the mentioned emotional intensity decrease between languages. Moreover, the participants did not evaluate any intensity of emotions, they rather evaluated the persuasion of requests with accounts. And requests, as mentioned previously in this study, are face-threatening acts more related to politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

In general, the second hypothesis was rejected, leading to the conclusion that the language in which the accounts for requests are produced might not influence the persuasiveness of the request. Furthermore, the results suggest that processing explanations/accounts for requests in an L2 could be the same as in an L1, primarily when an average proficiency in L2 has been achieved.

Limitations and recommendations

The most important limitation was the stimuli material used in the experiment. A few aspects were not considered when selecting and adapting Minei et al.’s (2018) stimuli text. Firstly, as previously discussed, the material did not describe the relationship between the requester and the requestee. Secondly, the requester’s explanation after asking to comply with its request was not informative enough. Thirdly, the request was not work-related but it was a personal errand. These three points could have played a role in the participants’ responses since all three are social factors functioning in politeness strategies that influence how explanations and requests are used and perceived. Based on these observations, this study recommends further research to adapt the materials. For example, indicate in the text that the relationship between the interactors was friendly, provide an ample reason why the requester does not have time to pick up the package or make use of a legitimate work-related request with a high level of imposition. This recommendation aims not only to
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

improve the materials but also to expand the research on the persuasiveness of explanations for requests, considering the social elements of politeness strategy as variables in future investigations.

Another potential limitation of this study that an uneven number of responses per condition were analysed, which could have affected the results. In the final analysis 89 participants were exposed to the L1 condition whereas 70 were exposed to the L2. This difference in responses occurred due to the fact that, as mentioned in the method section, 71 participants left the questionnaire before finishing it. Unfortunately, the reasons why these subjects left the experiment are still unclear. However, to prevent this phenomenon from happening in other studies, providing a price or financial reward for finishing the questionnaire could offer a solution. This reward can function only as an incentive to complete the experiment since individuals are always allowed to leave at any moment and can not be obliged to finish.

In essence, this study provides new insights into understanding the impact of accounts and language on the persuasiveness of requests. It was expected that a non-native language and the presence of explanations affected the persuasiveness of requests among colleagues at the same hierarchical level. However, the results showed no difference in the subjects’ responses towards the persuasiveness of the request; regardless of the language or the existence of an explanation. Although these outcomes were unexpected, the discussion of this study’s results implies that social factors could be involved in the persuasiveness of requests. This aspect was not included in this work but is recommended to be explored in further research.

Furthermore, although the findings were insignificant, they can be beneficial for internal communication tactics, mainly in organisations with linear organisational structures, where there is no hierarchical difference among employees. Additionally, in corporations where more than one language is spoken, it is practical to know that the language in which they make requests as a sole factor is not likely to influence the colleagues’ intention to comply with the investigated type of requests. Similarly, the outcomes can help companies to tailor better explanations for requests in the workplace.

Finally, the hope is that this investigation adds new variables to the growing body of literature on explanations and language and that practical knowledge was provided for organisations.
References


Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests


Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests


Appendix A

A.1. Original materials from Minei et al. (2018) experiment

The description: “S.J. works as an administrative assistant. S.J. has 10 years’ experience on this job and is proud of the hard work that is put into the job every day. S.J.’s primary work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work.”. Request: “Today, one of the executives that S.J. works for requests that S.J. run a personal errand, saying “I need you to pick up my dry-cleaning today by 4 p.m.”. Justification for request: “I don’t have time to run this errand myself.”

A.2. Materials edited for this study Dutch and English

“Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work. Your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question: Can you pick up my package from the PostNL afhaalpunt voor 16:00? -I do not have time to run this errand by myself”.

“Beeld u in dat u als administratief assistent werkt in een multinationale organisatie in Nederland. U heeft 10 jaar ervaring in deze functie en bent trots op het harde werk dat u iedere dag levert. Uw werkzaamheden betreffen het voorbereiden van documenten, rapporten, en brieven; het beantwoorden en doorverbinden van telefoongesprekken; het bijwonen van vergaderingen, het notuleren van vergaderingen, het begroeten van bezoekers en bepalen of zij toegang krijgen tot bepaalde personen; het bijhouden van de boekhouding; en het verrichten van algemene kantoorwerkzaamheden. Uw collega met dezelfde functie en ervaring als u benadert u met de volgende vraag: “Kun je mijn pakketje ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt voor 16:00? -Ik heb geen tijd om dit klusje zelf te doen”.

“Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work. Your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question: Can you pick up my package from the PostNL point by 16:00 hrs? -I do not have time to run this errand by myself”.

19
Appendix B

B.1. Condition  English with an account.

Dear participant,

We are a group of students, currently studying International Business Communication at Radboud University in Nijmegen. We would like to invite you to participate in an experiment we conduct for our Bachelor Thesis. The goal for this experiment is to study interactions in workplace settings. You will be asked to read a short description of a work situation, followed by a few questions about this situation. Taking part in this study will approximately take 3 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this experiment is voluntary and you are able to stop your participation at all times during the experiment. All your answers will be stored confidentially and anonymously. This means your answers will not be traced back to you. The collected research data will be stored according to guidelines set by Radboud University. If you have any questions or remarks, please contact us via alesso.dibinoudis@ru.nl

I have read and understood the above information

☐ Yes

☐ No

I agree to participate in this study

☐ Yes

☐ No

I am 18 years or older

☐ Yes

☐ No
Before starting, we would like to ask you some general questions.

What is your native language/mother tongue?

- Dutch
- Other

What is your work experience (part-time or full-time) in years?

(Please provide your answer in numbers. If you had several (side)jobs for 1 year, then your answer here is 1. If you had 1 or more (side)jobs for 1 month, then your answer here is 1/12.)


Before starting, we would like to ask you some general questions.

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

What is your age?


Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- [ ] Vmbo
- [ ] Havo
- [ ] Vwo
- [ ] Mbo
- [ ] Hbo
- [ ] Wo
- [ ] Other

Please indicate your English proficiency on the following aspects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Extremely bad</th>
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<td>Speaking</td>
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Below, a work situation is presented to you. Please read it carefully, you will have to answer some questions about the situation.

Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

directing phone calls, attending meetings, taking notes during meetings, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work.

Your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question. "Can you pick up my package from the PostNL point by 16:00? I don't have time to run this errand myself."

Below, you see some questions regarding this situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

Me picking up the colleague's package at the PostNL point is:

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________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

B.2. Condition English without an account

Dear participant,

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Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

I have read and understood the above information

○ Yes

○ No

I agree to participate in this study

○ Yes

○ No

I am 18 years or older

○ Yes

○ No

Before starting, we would like to ask you some general questions.

What is your native language/mother tongue?

○ Dutch

○ Other

Before starting, we would like to ask you some general questions.
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

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_____________________________________________________________

Before starting, we would like to ask you some general questions.

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

○ Prefer not to say

What is your age?

______________________________________________

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Vmbo

○ Havo

○ Vwo

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○ Hbo

○ Wo

○ Other
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

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Me picking up the colleague’s package at the PostNL point is:
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

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</tr>
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</table>

Do you have any comments or remarks about the questionnaire? If not, you can skip this question.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

B.3 Condition  Dutch with an account

Beste participant,

Wij zijn een groep derdejaars studenten International Business Communication aan de Radboud Universiteit. Wij zouden u willen uitnodigen om deel te nemen aan een onderzoek dat we uitvoeren in het kader van onze Bachelorscriptie. In dit onderzoek bestuderen wij interactie op de werkvloer. U zult worden gevraagd om een korte beschrijving van een werksituatie te lezen en er een aantal vragen over te beantwoorden. Het invullen van de vragenlijst zal ongeveer 3 minuten in beslag nemen.

Uw deelname is vrijwillig en u kunt op ieder moment stoppen met deelnemen. Al uw antwoorden blijven vertouwelijk en anoniem, dit wil zeggen dat uw antwoorden niet naar u persoonlijk te herleiden zullen zijn. Onderzoeksdata zullen opgeslagen worden volgens de richtlijnen van de Radboud Universiteit. Mocht u vragen of opmerkingen hebben, neem dan contact op met ons via alesso.dibinoudis@ru.nl

Ik heb de bovenstaande informatie gelezen en begrepen

○ Ja

○ Nee
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

Ik stem in met deelname aan de studie

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

Ik ben 18 jaar of ouder

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

Voordat het onderzoek begint, willen we u een paar algemene vragen stellen.
Wat is uw moedertaal?

☐ Nederlands

☐ Anders

Voordat het onderzoek begint, willen we u een paar algemene vragen stellen.

Wat is uw werkvaring (deeltijd of voltijd) in jaren?

(Geef a.u.b. uw antwoord in cijfers. Als u meerdere (bij)banen voor 1 jaar had, dan is uw antwoord 1. Als u 1 of meerdere (bij)banen voor 1 maand had, dan is uw antwoord 1/12.)

__________________________________________________________________________
Voordat het onderzoek begint, willen we u een paar algemene vragen stellen.

Wat is uw geslacht?

- Man
- Vrouw
- Anders
- Zeg ik liever niet

Hoe oud bent u?

Wat is uw hoogste afgeronde opleiding?

- Vmbo
- Havo
- Vwo
- Mbo
- Hbo
- Wo
- Anders
Hieronder wordt u een werksituatie voorgelegd. Lees deze alstublieft aandachtig door, u zult enkele vragen over deze situatie moeten beantwoorden.

Beeld u in dat u als administratief assistent werkt in een multinationale organisatie in Nederland. U heeft 10 jaar ervaring in deze functie en bent trots op het harde werk dat u iedere dag levert. Uw werkzaamheden betreffen het voorbereiden van documenten, rapporten, en brieven; het beantwoorden en doorverbinden van telefoongesprekken; het bijwonen van vergaderingen, het notuleren van vergaderingen, het begroeten van bezoekers en bepalen of zij toegang krijgen tot bepaalde personen; het bijhouden van de boekhouding; en het verrichten van algemene kantoorwerkzaamheden. Uw collega met dezelfde functie

<table>
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<th>Extreem slecht</th>
<th>Zeer slecht</th>
<th>Slecht</th>
<th>Noch slecht noch goed</th>
<th>Goed</th>
<th>Zeer goed</th>
<th>Extreem goed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spreken</td>
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</table>
en ervaring als u benadert u met de volgende vraag: “Kun je mijn pakketje ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt voor 16:00? Ik heb geen tijd om dit klusje zelf te doen.”

Hieronder ziet u een paar vragen over deze situatie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volledig mee eens</th>
<th>Oneens</th>
<th>Enigszins mee oneens</th>
<th>Neutraal</th>
<th>Enigszins mee eens</th>
<th>Eens</th>
<th>Volledig mee eens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ik neem mezelf voor om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ik zal het pakketje van de collega ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ik ben bereid het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ik ben van plan om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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Als ik het pakketje van mijn collega ophaal bij het PostNL afhaalpunt is dat:

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Heeft u vragen of opmerkingen over de vragenlijst? Zo niet, kunt u deze vraag overslaan.

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

B.4 Condition Dutch without an account

Beste participant,

Wij zijn een groep derdejaars studenten International Business Communication aan de Radboud Universiteit. Wij zouden u willen uitnodigen om deel te nemen aan een onderzoek dat we uitvoeren in het kader van onze Bachelorscriptie. In dit onderzoek bestuderen wij interactie op de werkvloer. U zult worden gevraagd om een korte beschrijving van een werksituatie te lezen en er een aantal vragen over te beantwoorden. Het invullen van de vragenlijst zal ongeveer 3 minuten in beslag nemen.

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Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

Ik heb de bovenstaande informatie gelezen en begrepen

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

Ik stem in met deelname aan de studie

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

Ik ben 18 jaar of ouder

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

Voordat het onderzoek begint, willen we u een paar algemene vragen stellen.

Wat is uw moedertaal?

☐ Nederlands

☐ Anders

Voordat het onderzoek begint, willen we u een paar algemene vragen stellen.

Wat is uw werkervaring (deeltijd of voltijd) in jaren?

(Geef a.u.b. uw antwoord in cijfers. Als u meerdere (bij)banen voor 1 jaar had, dan is uw antwoord 1. Als
Voordat het onderzoek begint, willen we u een paar algemene vragen stellen.

Wat is uw geslacht?

- Man
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Hoe oud bent u?
Non-native Language and Explanations Effect on Requests

Wat is uw hoogste afgeronde opleiding?

- Vmbo
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Geef aan hoe goed uw Engels is op de volgende gebieden

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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Hieronder wordt u een werksituatie voorgelegd. Lees deze alstublieft aandachtig door, u zult enkele vragen over deze situatie moeten beantwoorden.

Beeld u in dat u als administratief assistent werkt in een multinationale organisatie in Nederland. U heeft 10 jaar ervaring in deze functie en bent trots op het harde werk dat u iedere dag levert. Uw werkzaamheden betreffen het voorbereiden van documenten, rapporten, en brieven; het beantwoorden en doorverbinden van telefoongesprekken; het bijwonen van vergaderingen, het notuleren van vergaderingen, het begroeten van bezoekers en bepalen of zij toegang krijgen tot bepaalde personen; het bijhouden van de
boekhouding; en het verrichten van algemene kantoorwerkzaamheden. Uw collega met dezelfde functie en ervaring als u benadert u met de volgende vraag:

“Kun je mijn pakketje ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt voor 16:00?”

Hieronder ziet u een paar vragen over deze situatie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volledig mee oneens</th>
<th>Oneens</th>
<th>Enigszins mee oneens</th>
<th>Neutraal</th>
<th>Enigszins mee eens</th>
<th>Eens</th>
<th>Volledig mee eens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ik neem mezelf voor om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ik zal het pakketje van de collega ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ik ben bereid het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ik ben van plan om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Als ik het pakketje van mijn collega ophaal bij het PostNL afhaalpunt is dat:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goed</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slecht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onaangenaam</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aangenaam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schadelijk</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gunstig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interessant</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verstandig</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Onverstandig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heeft u vragen of opmerkingen over de vragenlijst? Zo niet, kunt u deze vraag overslaan.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________