

The Extent of Dutch L1 Transfer in the Acquisition of Request Strategies by Advanced EFL
learners

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“Don't think of what could go wrong, think of what could go right”

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Abstract

The present thesis investigated the extent of L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies by advanced EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. The goal of this thesis was to explore the differences between the ways L2 Dutch learners of English make request strategies with regard to the levels of directness compared to native speakers of English. Native speakers of Dutch studying English at the Radboud University of Nijmegen were compared to the control group: native speakers of English from the U.K. Both groups were tested using a c-test to measure proficiency and a judgment task to rank the given request strategies per proposed scenario. The hypothesis in this thesis proposed that there should be L1 transfer from Dutch in the acquisition of request strategies by EFL learners because of the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences between Dutch and English. This thesis, however, concluded that the EFL learners following the English programme at Radboud University of Nijmegen are beyond L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies. However, factors, such as socially acceptable behaviour, L2 exposure, an indication of the aim of the task, and the type of task, may have influenced the results.

Keywords: L1 transfer, pragmatic competence, request strategies, speech acts, English as a foreign language, second language acquisition

1. Introduction

In the past few decades, learning English as a second language has become a widespread phenomenon. Learning English takes place not only in English-speaking countries, but also in countries where English is not the dominant language. Communicating is essentially the interchange of utterances that are concepts between a speaker and a hearer (Posner, 1980). A concept is thus uttered by a speaker and the hearer interprets this concept with his or her own ideas. Learning a language includes not only acquiring linguistic competence of the language but also acquiring the communicative competence in order for the learner to become a good speaker (Song, 2012). Linguistic competence involves acquiring the rules and structures of a language. Song (2012) describes this as the “pragmalinguistics” of language where learners use the technical rules of language to bring a message across. Communicative competence and sociopragmatics involve using language in context and acquiring the pragmatic rules of a language. This context involves the norms and customs of the culture and society of a language. Acquiring both forms of competences is essential to learning a language.

Pragmatic competence is often overlooked, yet still important. When a language is acquired in a foreign context, grasping the authentic pragmatics of a language may be a challenge if learners are not exposed to authentic language as they would be if they were learning the language in a setting where the target language is predominant. Thus, L2 success may depend on exposure to authentic input. Transferring pragmatic rules from the native language into the second language may be the easiest option when the speaker does not know otherwise. Transfer from the L1 may be more acceptable especially if the native language and the target language are relatively linguistically close. Transferred utterances or rules that are accepted in the language production may affect the learner’s acquisition process in problematic ways. Language production that is influenced by negative transfer, i.e. transfer from the first language that causes errors in the second language, may hinder a learner’s acquisition process to native level proficiency. Thus, the place where the language is learned can make a difference in a learner’s acquisition of the language.

A distinction can be made between learning English as a second language (ESL) and learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The former is applicable to learners who learn the English language in a country where English is the dominant language and the latter is where English is learned in settings where English is not spoken regularly, i.e. where English is non-

dominant. Acquiring English as a foreign language in a setting where English is not predominantly spoken may lead to lesser sensitivity to pragmatic errors (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Pragmatics involves language in interaction. Due to globalisation, communication has become increasingly cross-cultural because it includes communication and interaction between people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Lack of pragmatic competence can lead to miscommunication (Yu, 2011; Song, 2012; Morand, 2003; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Tanaka & Kawade, 1990). Pragmatic failure can also reflect badly on the non-native speaker. Speech Act Theory assumes that communication amongst speakers is not based on isolated utterances but rather that communication is a coherent form of different kinds of acts, such as making statements, describing, explaining, apologizing, thanking, making requests, etc. (Searle, Kiefer & Bierwisch, 1980). We know that second language learners show transfer from their first language, pragmatics and thus speech acts are likely no different (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Pragmatic rules tend to differ per language according to the socio-pragmatic rules of the language. In order to avoid pragmatic failure, it is necessary for a learner to acquire both linguistic and contextual knowledge, which entail that the speaker knows how to produce speech acts appropriately given the context (Harlow, 1990).

Su's study (2010) illustrates the miscommunication that can be caused by speakers due to cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences. He examined Chinese EFL learners' transfer from their L1 focusing on the speech act of requests among others, such as *Could you pass the salt?* or *Would you mind opening the window?* Su examined language transfer in Chinese EFL learners, who varied in levels of proficiency by using a discourse completion task (DCT). The study found that there was indeed transfer from the first language to the second language, i.e. L1 transfer. This can be accounted for by the considerable differences between socio-linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the Chinese and English. Firstly, Chinese is a non-Western language where the customs, society and language are generally significantly different from the West. In terms of societal differences, the Chinese tend to put more emphasis on the hierarchical structure in their society and also place power distance in a different way than it is accustomed in English community. In Chinese culture, being indirect may be perceived as inappropriate, whereas in English this is usually acceptable and even expected when it comes to making requests or suggestions. In addition, Chinese and English differ greatly in linguistic aspects as well since

they come from two different language families. This can contribute to the process of recognizing and realizing request strategies as it is examined in Su's (2010) study.

The fact that English and Chinese come from different language families makes them linguistically substantially different. However, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences can also be perceived within a language family, such as differences between Dutch and English. Hendriks (2002) presents an interesting example that shows a significant difference in pragmatics between Dutch and English. "Now in Dutch one may omit the word 'please' without sounding too rude. But a harsh 'Move to the front, everybody!' through the microphone may come as a bit of a shock to the non-Dutch" (Hendriks, 2002, p.1). Although in English this may come off as rather rude, this utterance sounds perfectly fine in Dutch: "Loop naar voren (alstublieft!)", in which case the word "alstublieft" or please may be omitted. The speaker in this example is making a request to the listeners to move forward. However, because it is possible and perfectly acceptable to be more direct when making a request in Dutch, it may come off as slightly rude to an English native speaker. Even though it is completely appropriate to say "move to the front, everybody!" in Dutch, English has other pragmatic rules when it comes to making requests.

Despite the fact that Dutch and English belong to the same language family, they do have substantial linguistic and cultural differences. Although Dutch and English culture are more comparable than Chinese and English culture as Su (2010) examined, it is interesting to examine Dutch and English in terms of levels of directness in requests. The example given above suggests that pragmatic rules may be transferred from L1 Dutch to L2 English. This thesis aims to investigate this possibility more closely, by answering the following research question:

To what extent is there L1 transfer in the acquisition of speech acts, specifically in request strategies, by advanced EFL Dutch learners?

This research question addresses the interlanguage of pragmatics. The answer to this question may contribute to the comprehension of the acquisition of pragmatic competence in English as a foreign language. If there is indeed transfer from L1 Dutch, it may provide evidence for the lack of pragmatic competence in EFL learning. It is interesting to study the differences between Dutch and English, which are relatively closely related in terms of etymology and geography but

are still quite different regarding linguistic and cultural aspects, because it may give some insight into how learners acquire certain pragmatic rules that are so different from their first language.

This research question will be examined through means of a c-test, to measure the proficiency of the participants, and a judgment task. The participants will be a group of L1 Dutch learners of English (L2ers) and a control group of native speakers of English for comparison.

The remainder of this thesis is organised as follows: the next section expands on the previous studies on this topic. It elaborates on speech act theory and politeness theory, zooming in on requests. Subsequently, section 2.3 discusses learners who acquire English as a foreign language, which ends with a summary of the section. The subsequent sections of this thesis include section 3, which involves discussing the method chosen to carry out the experiment. Followed by section 4, the results of the experiment and section 5, the discussion of the results. The final section is the conclusion, which provides an answer for the research question with recommendations for further studies. This thesis ends with a list of references and the appendix.

2. Background

2.1 *Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory*

Speech Act Theory was originally introduced by J.L. Austin in 1962. The theory was further elaborated by J.R. Searle in 1969 (Searle et al., 1980). The notion of speech acts involves the performance of certain aspects of language concerning pragmatics, such as complimenting, apologizing, thanking, requesting etc. (Searle et al., 1980). This notion suggests that speakers not only formulate grammatical structures and words, but these structures and words are also meant to carry out actions. The acts of thanking, complimenting, requesting, apologising, persuading, etc. are performed through (an) utterance(s) by the speaker. These acts are known as illocutionary acts (Searle et al., 1980). An illocutionary act is usually done to achieve the effect of a perlocutionary act, which is the effect of an utterance on the hearer, “which [goes] beyond the hearer’s understanding of the utterance”, for example as in the case of convincing or annoying (Searle et al., 1980, p. vii). Moreover, it is quite often the case that speakers say something but mean something else. This phenomenon is known as implicature, where there is a mismatch between form and function.

The way that implicature is interpreted in conversation is known as the cooperative principle as proposed by Paul Grice (Davies, 2007). Grice makes a distinction between what people say and what they actually mean. Thus, when a speaker means exactly what he or she says, the illocutionary force or the intention of the utterance is clear from the linguistic structure. For example, if the speaker actually means to question someone’s ability when uttering the following question: *Can you open the window?*, the illocutionary force of this utterance is evident from its linguistic structure or propositional content, i.e. the intention of the speaker (questioning whether or not the hearer is able to open the window) is clear from the linguistic structure. This would be regarded as a simple case of meaning (Searle, 1975). On the other hand, utterances such as *Can you open the window?*, in the context where the speaker is feeling hot and would like some fresh air in the room, have a different illocutionary force, i.e. a different intention, and thus also result in a different illocutionary act.

Searle (1975) explains that an utterance such as *You’re stepping on my shoes* expresses two illocutionary forces. It is meant as a statement but it is also meant as a request. In cases like *Can you open the window?* where the speaker is wondering whether the hearer is able to open the window, the propositional content is the same as the illocutionary force, i.e. what is said is

what is meant. However, the speaker can also intend another illocutionary force with another propositional content through the same utterance (*Can you open the window?*), namely asking someone to open the window because the speaker is feeling hot. In such cases when there are two illocutionary forces, making a request is the primary intent of the speaker. This intention should be made clear by speaker.

Speech act theory makes a distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. This can be illustrated in the following example: *Can you open the window?* As mentioned earlier, this type of utterance involves two different illocutionary acts. One in which the illocutionary force is evident from its propositional content or linguistic structure, namely the hearer's ability to open the window. In this case, there is a direct relationship between the speech act and the propositional content. This is also known as a direct speech act. The other possible illocutionary act would be where the illocutionary force behind *Can you open the window?* would be a request to open the window. This is known as an indirect speech act, e.g. indirect request strategies.

Regardless of the relation between the structural form and the illocutionary force, according to Grice's theory, speakers engaging in conversation try to be as cooperative as possible, i.e. communicate as efficiently as possible (Davies, 2007). Grice's cooperative theory entails that speakers adhere to this principle to communicate as efficiently as possible. In the case of indirect speech acts, such as indirect requests, the speaker communicates with the hearer by saying more than is evident from the structural form. This communication relies on the mutual background among the speaker and the hearer (Searle, 1975). The cooperative principle as defined by Grice: "make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Davies, 2007, p. 2309). Grice's theory proposes that speakers assume that everyone is cooperative, truthful and efficient in conversation. This assumption has been codified into the following maxims: quality, quantity, relations, and manner. These maxims are assumed to be followed usually subconsciously by any speaker engaging in conversation and the violation of these maxims would inadvertently lead to miscommunication or a misunderstanding between the speakers (Davies, 2007). However, Grice's cooperative principle does not include all aspects of natural language, such as when speakers may intentionally violate the maxims and when there is subsequently no miscommunication. This would, for example, hold for the case of indirect speech acts, such as requests. The utterance *Can you get off my shoes* or *Can you close the*

window implicitly means to get off the person's shoes or close the window rather than questioning someone's ability to do so. This implicature is not taken into account in Grice's cooperative principle where speakers assume that people are efficient and truthful. This is accounted for in Leech's politeness principle and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory.

Geoffrey Leech's politeness principle accounts for the fact that speakers know what they mean even if they are violating Grice's maxims (Leech, 2005). Leech claims that this principle allows speakers to assume that the interlocutor is being cooperative despite the fact that the interlocutor may be saying something and mean something else, i.e. violating Grice's maxims. Furthermore, Leech (2005) also states that speakers do not always adhere to the politeness principle since language users can be polite but also impolite.

Politeness is related to protecting face, which is explained by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. This theory states that every individual has a face "that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and [which] must be constantly attended to in interaction" (as cited in Wijst, 1996, p.79). Speakers tend to adhere to the politeness theory when maintaining face. This notion is a widespread phenomenon used often by speakers across many cultures (Wijst, 1996). A distinction can be made regarding the notion of face, namely positive and negative face. Positive face involves the self-image of an individual. This includes "the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of [by individuals of society]" (Wijst, 1996, p.79). Negative face involves "The want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (as cited in Wijst, 1996, p.80). The main aim of politeness is to avoid face-threatening acts. Face-threatening acts (FTA) occur when a speaker threatens the hearer's image or freedom, which includes positive or negative "face" (Wijst, 1996). Acts that threaten the hearer's negative face include those acts that claim the hearer's freedom, such as requests or suggestions. FTAs that threaten the hearer's positive face include acts that imply that the speaker does not take the hearer's feelings into account, such as criticizing someone publicly (Wijst, 1996). These acts are often unavoidable. When a speaker makes a request, he or she is asking the hearer to do something, which Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) state as claiming the freedom of action of the hearer (p.201). In other words, a speaker threatens the hearer's face by making a request. This is often unavoidable; however, speakers can make use of levels of directness in requests in order to minimize the degree of face-threatening acts, i.e. to protect face.

A speaker may vary their level of directness when making requests through means of varying in level of directness and politeness. People avoid face threatening acts by adhering to the politeness theory. FTAs include speech acts such as requests. In other words, since requests tend to be intrusive or demanding, speakers make use of request strategies, usually indirect strategies, in order to avoid coming off as too strong, i.e. intrusive or demanding, thereby protecting face. Many speakers tend to beat around the bush and use euphemisms in order to avoid threatening face, which essentially goes against Grice's cooperative principle. When speakers are being polite, which quite often results in indirectness, they may violate Grice's maxims of manner, quality, quantity, and relation.

Degrees of directness are available to all languages; however, the level of directness is motivated by the society of the speakers (Wijst, 1996). In addition to the degree of directness, speakers can also choose to modify or add other words, such as *please*, to the construction (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Politeness markers may affect the degree of directness of the request. For example, uttering the following request may come off as rather rude: *Pass the salt*. By adding the politeness marker *please*, the utterance automatically becomes slightly less rude and adds an element of politeness despite the fact that it is still rather direct. Thus, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is applied differently to every language according to the pragmatic rules of the language. The theory is expressed differently in every language on the basis of what is acceptable and appropriate in the given society (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984).

In this section, we discussed Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory. Cases where two illocutionary acts can be performed can be expressed by indirect speech acts. Indirect speech acts do not adhere to Grice's cooperative principle, which is explained by Leech's Politeness Principle. This principle accounts for the absence of miscommunication despite the fact that speakers violate Grice's maxims. Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory involves protecting face, i.e. self-image and want or desires to be accepted by individuals in society. The level of directness or politeness in one's speech may vary. This depends on what is deemed acceptable or polite in a certain society or culture. In English, there is a preference for specific levels of directness when it comes to performing the speech act requests; these are elaborated in the following section.

2.2 Requests

Quite often speakers may seem to say something but actually mean something else, as was mentioned earlier in the case of implicatures. This is clearly illustrated in the case of requests. For example, an utterance like *You're stepping on my shoes!* usually conveys an indirect request, namely to get off of the speaker's shoes. The intention of the speaker, of course, depends on the context. For example, in a context where person A is accidentally stepping on person B's shoes without being aware of it, person B tells person A to get off of his or her shoes by uttering an indirect request. The speaker is actually asking the hearer to get off of his or her shoes rather than stating the obvious fact of one person stepping on the other person's shoes. *You're stepping on my shoes* interpreted in isolation would be considered a declarative sentence. However, in a certain context it is interpreted as a request to the hearer with the intention for the hearer to get off of one's shoes. This request can be expressed in a number of ways as illustrated in (1).

- (1)
 - a. Can you get off my shoes?
 - b. You're stepping on my shoes
 - c. Please get off my shoes.

By uttering any of these sentences, the hearer will interpret this as a request to step away from the shoes or to get off the person's shoes. This does not, by any means, imply that there are no other ways of sending the message to get off of one's shoes. Example (1) shows three basic ways of making a request in English. Example (1a) is essentially a question about the ability of the hearer i.e. whether or not the hearer is able to step away and get off the speaker's shoes.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) propose three main request strategies that vary in level of directness, which are given in the following example:

- (2)
 - a. The direct level, which is the most explicit level. These are usually syntactically structured as imperatives, e.g. *clean up the kitchen!*, or through other means that act as requests, such as performatives.

- b. The conventionally indirect level, which refers to the context of the indirect request as coined by Searle (1975), e.g. could you clean up the kitchen? The requests at this level have been conventionalized in language.
 - c. The non-conventionally indirect level, also known as hints, e.g. what a mess here! This level relies on elements in the context that serve as clues for the request.
- (p.201)

Studies show that L1 Chinese speakers tend to use conventionally direct request strategies whereas native speakers of English use non-conventionally indirect strategies (Su, 2010; Yin, 2009). This goes back to what is acceptable in the L1 Chinese society. Examining how L1 Dutch speakers cope with these request strategies is interesting considering the example mentioned earlier in this paper “Move to the front, everybody!”, which is regarded as completely acceptable by the Dutch, whereas to an English native speaker this would come off as rather rude. Examining the effect of the different pragmatic rules of Dutch and English may contribute to the understanding of the interlanguage of pragmatics of learners of English.

In English, requests have three levels of directness or indirectness. The conventional level is the most common level in a given language, i.e. conventionalised. This level is deemed as the most acceptable level of indirectness when it comes to requests in English. Considering the tendencies of the Dutch to be more direct, there may be a case of transference of the pragmatic rules of L1 Dutch to L2 English. Thus, the pragmatic rules in a given language, may be transferred to the L2.

There are different ways of expressing indirectness in language. Hendriks (2002) explains that the level of indirectness can be modified according to speaker’s own preference on the type of request. Requests may, given the culture, be expressed rather less directly when the interlocutor is socially superior than when the interlocutor is a social inferior and vice versa (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Thus the level of directness may vary according to the language in a culture depending on the position of the addressee. This ties in with the two types of pragmatic failures explained by Thomas (1983), namely socio-pragmatic and pragmalinguistic failure, which will be elaborated in section 2.3.

Indirect request strategies in the English language can vary depending on the situation. Searle (1975) makes a distinction in the ways a speaker can standardly make indirect requests. He categorised the types of sentences used to make indirect requests in six groups:

- (3) Searle's standard indirect request categories taken from Searle (1975, p.65-66)
- a. Sentences concerning hearer's (H) ability to perform an action (A)
 - i. Can you pass the salt?
 - b. Sentences concerning the speaker's (S) wish or want that the hearer will do A
 - i. I would appreciate it if you would do it for me.
 - c. Sentences concerning H's doing A
 - i. Would you kindly get off my foot?
 - d. Sentences concerning H's desire or willingness to do A
 - i. Do you want to hand me that hammer over there on the table?
 - e. Sentences concerning reasons for doing A
 - i. Why don't you try it just once?
 - f. Sentences embedding one of these elements inside another; also, sentences embedding an explicit directive illocutionary verb inside one of these contexts
 - i. Might I ask you to take off your hat?

These categories are a representation of how native speakers of English standardly make indirect requests. In these cases the illocutionary force is not always the same as the propositional content. It should be noted that these are not the only ways in which speakers make requests. Requests can be even more indirect, which is regarded as a non-conventionally indirect strategy or hints, for example *I could use some salt!* When requests are expressed rather explicitly and directly, e.g. *Give me the salt*, speakers usually add the word *please* as to avoid coming off as too rude. Furthermore, the direct level of request strategies consist of sub strategies, namely imperatives, performatives, obligation statements, want statements, and suggestions. The conventionally indirect strategies consist of ability condition, willingness condition, and non-obviousness condition (Hendriks, 2002).

To sum up, there are three main levels of directness when it comes to performing the speech act of request. English speakers prefer to use the conventionally indirect request strategy.

According to Searle (1975), there are several categories of indirect requests commonly used by native speakers of English. Every language has its own set of rules and commonly preferred level of directness when performing the speech act of request, and this can be transferred into the target language.

2.3 Learning English as a foreign language

Speakers who learn English in a foreign context acquire the language in a setting where English is not the dominant language, e.g. the Netherlands. Learners in these situations have been known to regard pragmatic failures as less serious than grammatical failures (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Not only are grammatical failures regarded as more serious than pragmatic failures by the learners but this is also the case for the teachers (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) aimed to examine the extent of instructed L2er's awareness of the difference between pragmatic and grammatical errors. The participants were both learners and teachers of English in two countries (Hungary and the U.S.). The experiment proposed 20 scenarios in video format. The authors found that the EFL learners in their study make more pragmatic errors consistently as well as their teachers (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). Regarding pragmatic errors as less serious than grammatical errors can have an effect on a learner's pragmatic competence and thus also communicative competence. In contrast, the ESL learners and teachers showed the opposite pattern. They regarded pragmatic errors as more serious than grammatical errors. Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) discussed residency as a possible factor for how pragmatic errors were regarded by the EFL learners. Furthermore, Thomas (1983) discusses other factors that may lead to pragmatic failures, such as when speakers from different cultural backgrounds learn English.

Thomas (1983) makes a distinction between two types of pragmatic errors that speakers make with regard to communicative competence, namely sociopragmatic failure and pragmalinguistic failure. These two types of pragmatic failure can also be seen as cross-cultural pragmatic transfer. Thomas (1983) describes cross-cultural pragmatic failure as a mismatch in cultural and linguistic background between the speakers.

Sociopragmatic failure concerns the cultural background of the speaker (Thomas, 1983). This includes social distance, social power, obligations, etc. This type of failure essentially entails that pragmatics of a language are culturally specific. Thomas (1983) proposes three main

stems of sociopragmatic failure, namely the following: The size of imposition, i.e. what is “freely available” in a given culture, e.g. inquiring about personal details like age or religion especially when speaking to a stranger is regarded as rude in British culture. On the other hand inquiring about these topics, e.g. age, religion, etc., in another culture may not come off as rude at all and may be completely acceptable (Thomas, 1983). Another stem of sociopragmatic failure is taboos. These differ per culture and one can imagine that a speaker from another culture speaking about taboos openly may come off as rather rude or disrespectful. Lastly, sociopragmatic failure may stem from cross-culturally different assessments of relative power or social distance. A speaker from a culture where social hierarchy is crucial may behave differently as would be expected. For example, in Chinese society, there is an emphasis on relational hierarchy within family and society. An elderly person in the family would be treated with extreme respect. Su (2010) states that in cases where someone is speaking to someone of a higher societal ranking, i.e. someone who should be treated with respect, it is common for speakers to be direct in their manner of speaking. If a speaker were to be indirect, it would come off as disrespectful and inappropriate. This situation translated into English society would come off as rather inappropriate. Thus, if an English speaker is direct in his or her way of speaking with someone with authority, he or she would most likely come off as being rude.

The other type of pragmatic failure is pragmalinguistic failure, which is essentially transfer from the L1 to the L2 (cf. (4)). This type of failure occurs when the illocutionary force behind the utterance is different from what is usually intended by native speakers (Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistic failure can be induced by transfer from the L1, i.e. inappropriate transfer from the native language to the target language, where the utterances are linguistically and syntactically correct but have a different interpretation in the target language. Thomas (1983) elaborates on this with examples from Russian. In English, *of course* can be used as an enthusiastic way of saying yes in the following context:

(4) A: Are you coming to my party?

B: Of course. [Gloss: Yes, indeed/it goes without saying/I wouldn't miss it for the world!]

(Thomas, 1983, p.102)

Not only is *of course* interpreted as an affirmative in English, but it can also be interpreted as rather sarcastic as in the following excerpt:

(5) A: Is it a good restaurant?

B: Of course. [Gloss: What a stupid question!]

(Thomas, 1983, p.102)

In Russian, however, the word *of course* can be interpreted as “yes, (indeed) it is”. In other words, both (4) and (5) would be interpreted the same by a Russian speaker. Example (5) would not come off as sarcastic to a Russian speaker. Thus, an L1 Russian learner of English may be susceptible to this kind of error where the non-native speaker regards the *of course* as a word for “yes (indeed) it is” in both (4) and (5) instead of interpreting person B in (5) as being sarcastic. This may be an example of pragmalinguistic failure.

Thomas (1983) states that pragmalinguistic failure is often caused by inappropriate transfer of speech acts from the L1, in this case Russian. Thus, although the Russian speaker thinks he or she is being appropriate, it can actually come off as rude to the English ear (Thomas, 1983). The Russian speaker uses a direct speech act whereas a native English speaker would adhere to politeness theory and use an indirect speech act in order to avoid face-threatening acts. Inappropriate pragmalinguistic transfer can occur especially with EFL speakers because of the difference in linguistic and cultural background between the two languages, namely the native and target language. This likely also holds for Dutch speakers learning English in the Netherlands, as illustrated in the following example:

(6) A (L1 English): You must come for dinner sometime.

B (L1 Dutch): Thank you! Let me check my schedule.

In this case, the native speaker of English is just being polite rather than actually inviting person B over for dinner. As a native speaker of Dutch, person B interprets person A’s manner of merely being polite as an actual invitation. The Dutch can be rather blunt in their manner of speaking as was illustrated in the example by Hendriks (2002), which could unintentionally come off as rude to a native English speaker, whereas the Dutch may not intend to be rude but

rather direct and honest. Considering these differences between Dutch and English, this thesis proposes the following hypothesis:

As a result of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences, L1 Dutch speakers of English will opt less frequently for the indirect request strategies rather than the direct request strategies. This may be a result of transference from L1 Dutch to L2 English.

To sum up, learning English in a foreign setting may have an effect on the acquisition of communicative competence. An EFL learner may not acquire communicative competence as thoroughly as a learner who acquires English in a setting where the language is predominantly spoken. Lack of communicative competence may be caused by socio-pragmatic failure or pragmalinguistic failure. This can be induced by the learner's different cultural and linguistic background.

2.4 Summary

Overall, L2ers make pragmatic errors especially in a foreign language learning context as shown by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). The lack of communicative competence in EFL learners may lead to miscommunication among speakers. Socio-pragmatics involve, among other things, adhering to the politeness theory where speakers avoid face-threatening acts caused by speech acts. Moreover, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is applied differently in every language according to the pragmatic rules of the language. These rules may be transferred into the target language, which may lead to miscommunication. The present study was designed to examine pragmatic transfer from L1 Dutch to L2 English in a foreign context specifically for requests. Based on research demonstrating the disadvantage of EFL learners (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998) and differences between Dutch and English, it is expected that the L1 Dutch learners acquiring English as a foreign language will opt significantly less for the non-conventionally indirect strategies as opposed to a native speaker of English. Although the Dutch learners are advanced learners of English, they are likely to hold on to their Dutch tendencies. The remainder of this thesis discusses the methodology and results of the experiment, which is followed by an analysis and discussion of the data proceeded by a conclusion.

3. Methodology

The question explored in this thesis is the extent to which there is L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies in English, by advanced EFL Dutch learners. In order to explore this question, two groups of participants were recruited, native speakers of English and Dutch EFL learners at an advanced level. These subjects were tested on their proficiency and they were also presented with a judgment task in which they ranked request strategies in English according to their preference.

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 33 L1 Dutch students of English language and culture at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. The institutionally defined proficiency level of these participants should be between CEFR levels B2 and C2. Level B2 states that a learner at this level "...understands the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization" (Using CEFR, 2011, p.8). This learner is fluent and can interact with native speakers without much difficulty. A learner at C2 level is a learner who has mastered the language. This learner "can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read" and "can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations" (Using CEFR, 2011, p.8). The beginners should be CEFR B2 and the third year students should be CEFR C2. However, since there is considerable variation as a result of a range of individual factors, it is not always certain that these students are surely at the CEFR level as institutionally defined. Thus, in order to determine the level of English proficiency of the participants of this experiment, they will be examined through means of c-tests, which will be explained later in this section. Three of Keijzer's (2007) English c-tests were used in this study to measure proficiency. These c-tests in this experiment have different degrees of difficulty, the first one being the easiest and the third being the most difficult. Furthermore, there were two groups of participants in this experiment. One group consisted of Dutch native speakers studying English at an advanced level (L2ers). These speakers were exposed to the English language regularly. The L2ers were compared to the control group, who were native speakers of English. As the level of proficiency of an individual is not necessarily defined by the institution, the c-tests will give an indication of the participant's level of proficiency.

The most advanced students aim to be at C2 level; however, these students have not obtained their degree yet, which may mean that they have not reached the institutionally defined native level yet. Thus, these advanced L2ers, even at advanced levels (C2), are expected to show transfer at pragmatic level especially given that they are acquiring English in a foreign language context. Part of this transfer may result from cross-cultural differences, which would be hard to ignore as a learner.

The second group of participants was the control group. In order to confirm that there is indeed transfer from L1 Dutch, the Dutch participants, i.e. L2ers, were compared to native speakers of English. The native speakers were also tested on their proficiency levels with the same c-test that was presented to the L2ers in order to compare proficiency levels between the two groups. The c-test scores of the natives will be compared to those of the L2ers to see whether the L2ers reach these scores. If the L2ers come close to the c-test scores of the native speakers, it would mean that the level of proficiency of the L2ers is high. Therefore, the L2ers will be compared with the native speakers group.

3.2 Materials

The data in this study were obtained through means of c-tests in order to test the proficiency levels of the participants, and a judgment task. The judgment task examined the participants' preference regarding making requests. Furthermore, before the C-test and judgment task the L2ers were presented with five questions regarding their native language, second language(s), time of acquiring English, age, and year of BA programme and the native speakers were asked to note their native language, second language(s) and age. Lastly, after the participants completed the judgment task they were presented with a final question with regard to their thoughts on the motives of the task. The final question was to check whether the participants had figured out the filler items and knew what the main aim of the task was. This can affect their answers and subsequently the analysis of this experiment.

3.2.1 The c-test

C-tests have been widely used for language assessment and language testing for a variety of languages since the 1980s (Eckes & Grotjahn, 2006). The c-test is a variant of the cloze test. The

c-test is an economic way of assessing someone's general language proficiency level. It usually consists of five to six short texts with the first sentence intact to help the reader determine the topic of the text. Each text has a certain amount of gaps, which need to be filled in by the reader. The last few letters, depending on the size of the word, are left out of the text. The reader would have to determine what lexical or functional word fits into the gap (cf. Appendix 2). Native speakers should have no difficulty with a task like this because these speakers have an internalized grammar, which leads to certain lexical or grammatical expectations beforehand (Keijzer, 2007). Three of the five c-tests used in Keijzer (2007) were used in the present study. Since the ultimate aim of this study is not proficiency levels, it was opted for only three of the five c-tests. Keijzer's (2007) c-tests touch upon a range of topics. The c-tests in this task were chosen on the basis of the topics and difficulty level. The topics that seemed most likely to be relatable to the general audience were chosen. Moreover, cloze tests are known to be a quick way of assessing a speaker's proficiency level. These are widely used because they are easily prepared, easily scored and function well as a predictor of proficiency level in a second language (Heilenman 1983). C-tests are a variant of cloze tests. Since the main aim of this experiment was to examine the way that L1 Dutch speakers make requests in L2 English, there was little focus on the c-tests. The c-tests were purely to measure the proficiency level since this study is looking at advanced speakers of English. Their level of proficiency is actually already determined by the institution through the CEFR scale. However, every speaker is unique and has their own pace of acquisition. So although the speakers should be around B2-C2 level, it is always prudent to measure proficiency levels individually.

3.2.2 *The ranking task*

The data in the main experiment of this study were obtained through means of a ranking task, i.e. judgment task. The task contained 20 items of which 12 were filler items. These 20 questions were created according to Searle (1975)'s five groups of indirect directives. These groups represented five different types of situations wherein the speaker would have to respond with a request. The five groups represent conventional situations wherein making a request is the most appropriate response. Each question in this task proposed a hypothetical scenario in which a request would be the most appropriate response. The participant was presented with four different options. Each option belonged to a different category or level of requests (cf. (7)).

Option (b), the Dutch translation of a request, is literally translated from the way a Dutch speaker would make a request in Dutch. In example (7), this translates from “Mag ik de zout, alstublieft?”

(7) *Scenario from the Judgment Task*

You're sitting at the dinner table. You take a bite from the food on your plate. Unfortunately, the food is a little bland for your taste. You look for the salt but it's all the way at the other end of the dinner table next to your friend. You ask for the salt. What do you say?

- a. Can you pass me the salt please? (conventionally indirect request strategy)
- b. Can I have the salt please? (Dutch translation of a request)
- c. I could really use some salt! (non-conventionally indirect request strategy)
- d. Pass the salt, please (direct request strategy)

Ranking option (b), which is a direct translation from Dutch, frequently as number one may be an effect of cross-linguistic influences from Dutch. Whereas ranking option (d), direct strategy, as high on the list may indicate cross-cultural differences.

The scenarios were inspired by the categories presented by Searle (1975). These categories were grouped into sentences that are conventionally used when people make requests. These groups were the following: (1) sentences concerning the hearer's ability to perform an action, (2) sentences concerning speaker's wish or want that hearer will do an action, (3) sentences concerning hearer's doing an action, (4) sentences concerning hearer's desire or willingness to do an action, (5) sentences concerning reasons for doing an action (p.65-66). Searle (1975) also proposed a sixth group: “sentences embedding one of these elements inside another; also, sentences embedding an explicit directive illocutionary verb inside one of these contexts” (p.66). This group is rather large and is a mixture of elements that are permitted in the other groups as well. In order to analyse the core of the request that speakers make, this last group was left out. It is important to note that Searle's (1975) categories were utilised to design the items of the task; however, differences between these categories are not expected and thus are not analysed separately.

3.3 Design of Study

The variables in this analysis were the four request strategies presented per scenario. This was the within-subjects variable and the two groups, i.e. native speakers and L2ers, were the between-subjects variables. In other words, we wanted to see whether the native speakers and advanced L2ers rank the four strategies differently. Furthermore, each individual from both groups was presented with the same scenarios and subsequent options. The only difference per individual was that the options per scenario were randomized. Thus there was no specific order in which the request strategies were presented to the participants to prevent a clear pattern from forming for the individuals.

3.4 Procedure

The questionnaire started off with a number of questions regarding the demographic information of the individual (cf. Appendix 1). This was followed by the c-tests and the ranking task. The entire questionnaire was presented to the individuals through the Qualtrics Survey Software. An anonymous link was provided through this software, which was distributed through social media and emails. The surveys were recorded by the Qualtrics Survey Software.

3.5 Data Analysis

The present study aims to investigate the extent of L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies in English by Dutch EFL learners. A paired-samples t-test was utilised in order to establish whether there was a significant difference between the average c-test scores of the native speakers and the L2ers. The ranking of the request strategies per scenario was measured by a mixed-design ANOVA in order to examine whether there was a main effect of group (i.e. native speakers and L2ers), a main effect of request strategy (i.e. (A), conventional request strategy, (B) Dutch translation, (C), non-conventional request strategy, and (D) direct request strategy), and most importantly an interaction between the request strategies and the two groups, (i.e. the way native speakers rank the four request strategies compared to the way the L2ers do it). This was followed by a paired-samples t-test, which was conducted as a follow-up analysis to the ANOVA.

4. Results

The results for the c-tests are presented in section 4.1. The results for the overall findings for the ranking task on group level are presented in section 4.2, with a separate analysis for the overall findings for each item of ranking task in section 4.2.2. Finally, a summary of the findings is given in section 4.3.

4.1 C-test

The c-tests scores represent the participant's level of English proficiency.

Table 1: Results C-tests

	Average	Range	SD
<i>Native Speakers</i>	53.10	42-58	3.99
<i>L2ers</i>	52.85	46-58	3.28

The scores for both the native speakers and the L2ers coincide. Both groups come down to an average of 53 with a .25 difference (cf. Table 1).

An independent-samples t-test indicated that scores were not significantly different for native speakers ($M = 53.11$, $SD = 3.99$) and L2ers ($M = 52.85$, $SD = 3.28$), $t(49) = 0.13$, $p=0.90$.

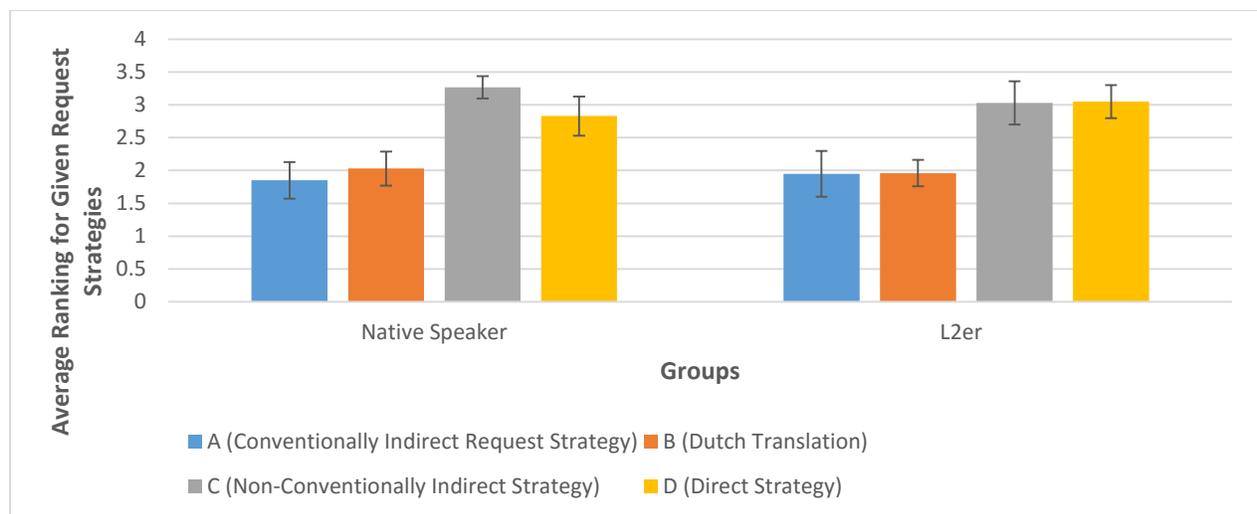
4.2 Overall findings on group level

Native speakers of English were compared to Dutch second language learners of English in how they rank the given request strategies. The request strategies were the following: conventionally indirect request strategy (A), a request translated from Dutch to English (B), non-conventionally indirect strategy (C), and direct strategy (D). Table 2 shows the average or mean of how each option was scored, what the range is of those scores and a standard deviation. The means and SD per group are illustrated in Figure 1. N.B. the lower the score of the request strategy, the higher it is ranked.

Table 2: Results request strategies per group

	Native Speaker			L2er		
	Mean	Range	SD	Mean	Range	SD
A	1.85	1.50-2.40	0.28	1.95	1.30-2.70	0.35
B	2.03	1.65-2.60	0.26	1.96	1.50-2.35	0.20
C	3.27	2.95-3.50	0.17	3.03	2.15-3.55	0.33
D	2.83	2.20-3.30	0.30	3.05	2.45-3.60	0.25

Figure 1: Results request strategies per group with SD



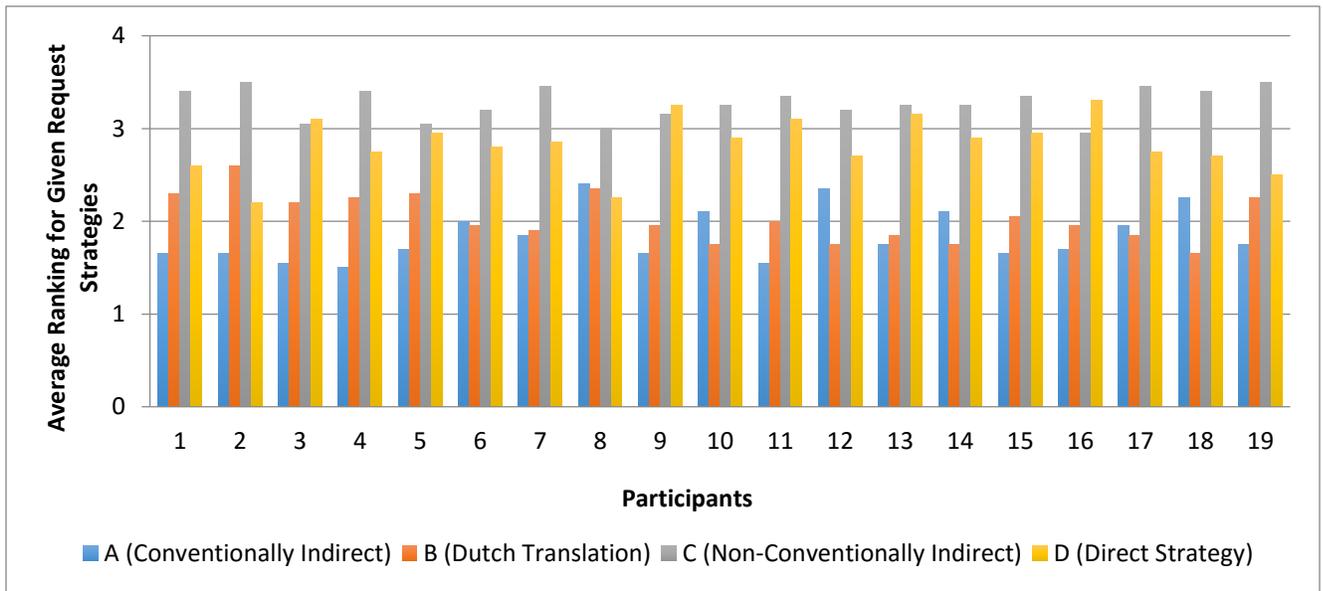
A cursory glance of Figure 1 suggests that speakers of both groups ranked option (A) and (B) higher than option (C) and (D). Data were analysed using a mixed-design ANOVA with request strategy (A vs. B vs. C vs. D) as within-subjects factor and group (native speakers vs. L2ers) as between-subject factor. There was a significant main effect of request strategy, $F(3,48) = 192, p < .001$ but not of group, $F(1,51) = .030, p = .86$, but there was a significant interaction between the two, $F(3,48) = 4.77, p = .003$.

4.2.1 Results request strategies per individual

On average, the native speakers rank option (C) and (D) lower than option (A) and (B) (cf. Figure 2). Option (A) is ranked the highest at an average of 1.85 (cf. Table 1). The lowest ranking is option (C) with an average of 3.27 per participant. N.B. the higher the average score

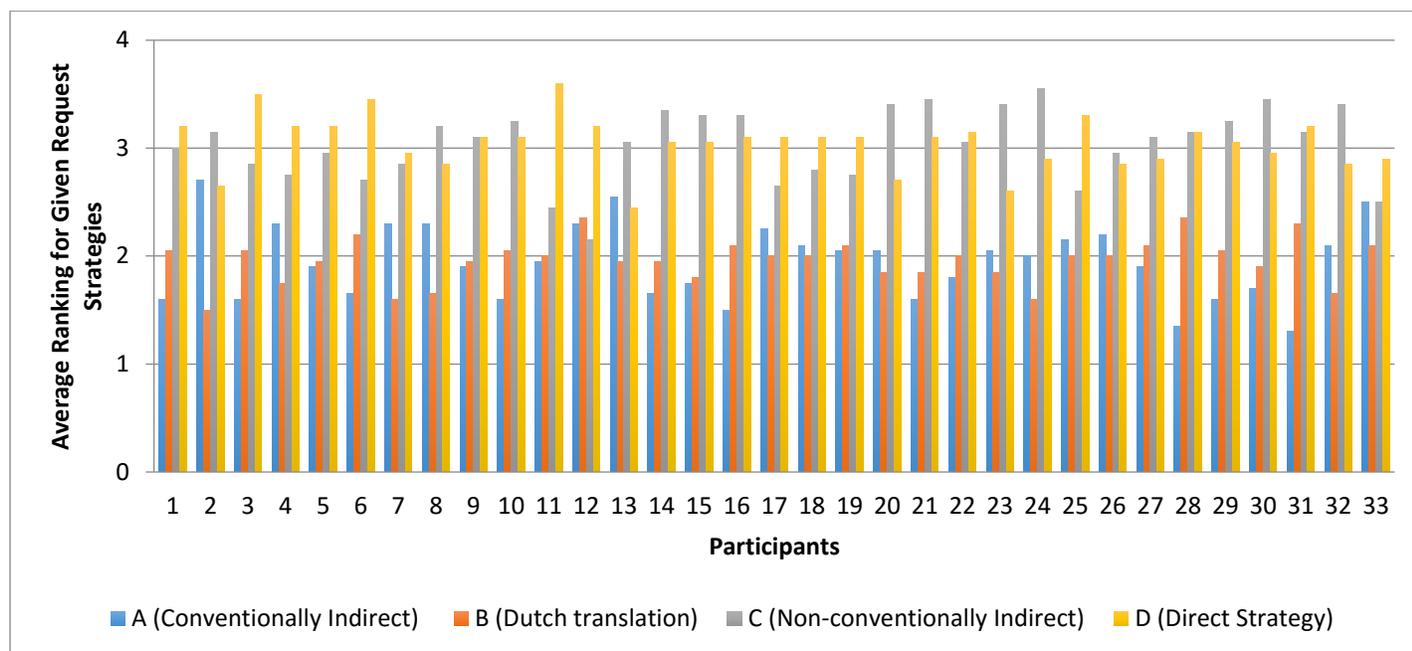
of the request strategies, the least it is preferred and the lower the score for the request strategy, the more it is preferred when opting for a request strategy in a given scenario. Individual results are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Individual results for native speakers



The relative ranking scores for the L2ers, given below in Figure 3, is similar to that of the native speakers. The scores from the judgment task show that the L2ers rank option (C) and (D) lower than option (A) and (B) (cf. Table 2 and Figure 1) The L2ers rank option (A) and (B) at almost the same at an average of 1.95 and 1.96 per participant. Options (C) and (D) are also ranked almost the same at an average of 3.03 and 3.05 per participant.

Figure 3: Individual results for L2ers



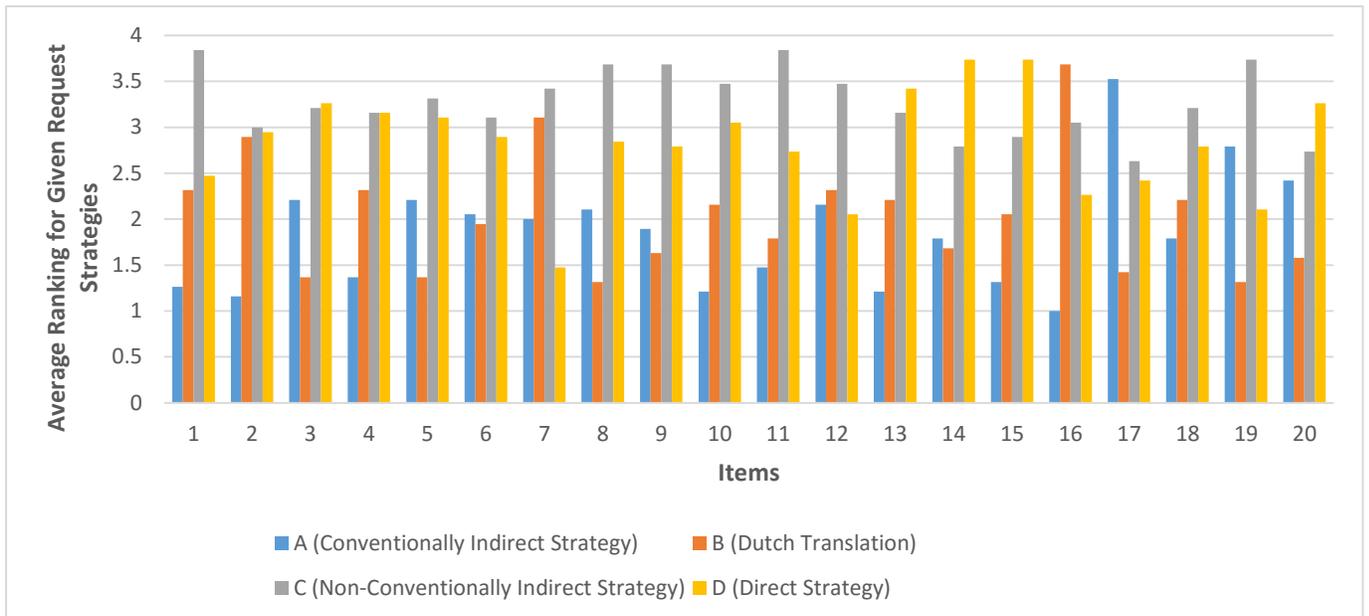
4.2.2 Results request strategies per item

There were a total of 20 items excluding 12 filler items. The average ranking of the items by native speakers is illustrated in Figure 4. These results show that with the exception of items 3, 13 through 17, and 20, the native speakers ranked option (C), non-conventionally indirect strategy, lowest across all items as can be seen in Figure 4. In general, option (C), non-conventionally indirect strategy, and (D), direct strategy, are ranked lowest across all items. However, item 16 and 17 show different results compared to the rest of the items. These rank option (B), Dutch translation, and (A), conventionally indirect strategy, as lowest, whereas options (C) and (D) were ranked lowest in all the other items. Moreover, it can be noted that option (C) and (D) are ranked roughly equally low in items 13 and across items 2 through 6. Thus, in overall, native speakers rank (A) and (B) higher than (C) and (D). To confirm whether it is indeed the case that native speakers do not distinguish between (A) and (B) on the one hand, and (C) and (D) on the other hand, a paired-samples t-test was utilised.

A paired-samples t-test indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between option (A) ($M = 1.85$, $SD = .28$) and option (B) ($M = 2.03$, $SD = .26$), $t(18) = -1.78$, $p = 0.09$. However, there was a statistical significance between option (C) ($M = 3.27$, $SD = .17$) and option (D) ($M = 2.83$, $SD = .30$), $t(18) = 4.81$, $p < .001$. In other words, there is a significant difference between the way that (C), non-conventionally indirect strategy, and (D), the direct

strategy, were ranked by the native speakers. However, there was no significant difference between the way in which (A), conventionally indirect strategy, and (B), the Dutch translation, were ranked in the ranking task performed by the native speakers.

Figure 4: Results for request strategies per item for native speakers



The results for the L2ers is illustrated below in Figure 5. Option (C) and (D) are scored higher and are thus ranked lower almost consistently across all items with the exception of item 17 where option (A) is ranked lowest and item 7 and 16 where option (B) is ranked lowest. Thus, in these cases, options (C) and (D) were much rather preferred. Option (C) and (D) are ranked equally only in item 8. In general, options (C) and (D) were preferred the least by the L2ers and thus (A) and (B) were the most preferred request strategies in the given scenarios.

Figure 5: Results for request strategies per item for L2ers



A cursory glance at Figure 5 suggests that L2ers rank option (A) and (B) higher and option (C) and (D) lower. A paired-samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the highest ranked options and lowest ranked options. There was no significant difference between the scores for options (A) ($M = 1.95$, $SD = .35$) and (B) ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .21$), $t(32) = -.13$, $p = .90$ or between (C) ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .33$) and (D) ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .25$), $t(32) = -.19$, $p = .85$. In other words, unlike the natives, the L2ers do not make a distinction between strategies (A) and (B) and strategies (C) and (D), that is, there was no significant difference between request strategies (A) and (B) or between (C) and (D) for the L2ers.

4.3 Summary

The results for the c-test show no significant differences between the scores for the native speakers and the L2ers. The results from the ANOVA indicate that there is an interaction between the request strategies and the two groups, that is, there was a difference between the way in which native speakers rank (C) and (D) compared to the way L2ers rank (C) and (D). The t-tests indicate that (A), the conventional strategy, and (B), the Dutch translation of a request were scored lower. Thus (A) and (B) were ranked higher, i.e. preferred, when opting for a request strategy in the given scenarios for both groups, i.e. native speakers and L2ers. Option

(C), the non-conventional strategy, and (D), the direct strategy, were ranked lower in both groups. However there is a significant difference between the way that these two strategies, (C) and (D), are ranked in the native speakers group.

5. Discussion

This study utilised a ranking task to examine the extent of L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies in English as a foreign language by advanced Dutch learners studying English at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. Although the target group is expected to be advanced, there is always the case of individual variation. Thus, a c-test was utilised to measure proficiency of each individual. This group was compared to a group of native speakers through means of a t-test. Furthermore, the ranking task was measured through a mixed-design ANOVA, which was followed by another t-test. The results for the c-tests show no significant differences between the two groups indicating that the two groups were relatively comparable. The results from the ANOVA for the ranking task indicate an interaction between the request strategies in the two groups. The native speakers ranked options (A) and (B) higher than options (C) and (D). The t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between (A) and (B). However, there was a significant difference between the way the native speakers ranked (C) and (D), with (D) being ranked higher than (C). The L2ers showed a similar pattern in ranking the request strategies; however, no significant difference was found between (A) and (B), and (C) and (D).

We predicted that the L2ers will rank (B), the Dutch translation, and (D), direct strategy higher than the other two strategies because of transfer from the L1. The results show that this prediction is not borne out. The hypothesis proposed that there will be transfer from L1 Dutch to L2 English because of the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences between Dutch and English. It was expected that EFL Dutch learners would opt significantly less for categories (A), conventionally indirect request strategy, and (C), non-conventionally indirect request strategy, and rather prefer category (B), which is a direct translation from Dutch, and category (D), the direct request strategy. Moreover, it was also expected that the control group would show the opposite pattern, namely preference for (A) and (C) rather than (B) and (D) because it is more common to use indirectives rather than directives (Searle, 1975). Surprisingly, this did not turn out to be the case. The non-conventional strategy (C) and the direct strategy (D) were ranked lowest and thus least preferred when it came to opting for a request strategy in a given scenario. Furthermore, there was also a significant difference between options (C) and (D) for native speakers.

The remainder of this section discusses Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's study (1998) with regard to the tendencies of EFL learners to make more pragmatic errors as compared to ESL

learners, and the possible factors and explanations that may account for the results shown in this thesis.

Unlike previous studies (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998), the results of the present thesis show evidence for EFL learners showing similar pragmatic competence to native speakers of English even though EFL learners tend to be less exposed to the English language than ESL learners. However, 12 of the 33 L2 English participants were students who may have spent time abroad in the U.K. for at least one semester. These were the third and fourth year students of the English language and culture programme at Radboud University of Nijmegen (cf. Appendix 1b). In the third year of the English programme, there is an option to study abroad in the U.K. for at least one semester. Thus, these particular students may not fully adhere to learning English as a foreign language but rather they may have learned English as a second language during their stay in the U.K. Although these learners have other factors contributing to their English proficiency, namely spending time in the U.K. and thereby becoming ESL learners, the majority of the participants (21) did not have the option to study abroad. These learners by and large are consistent with an EFL profile and provide evidence against Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) claims, although the first and second year students cannot be ruled out because they may have spent some time in the U.K. in the past; however, this cannot be said for certain. If these students have not spent much time in the U.K., the results in this thesis may indicate that the English programme at Radboud University of Nijmegen spends enough time on the pragmatics of the language for the learners to be so similar to the native speakers of English regarding the production of requests.

Previous studies (Su, 2010; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Searle, 1975) have claimed that conventionally indirect request strategies are the most common in a given language. This would mean that native speakers should rank option (A), which is the conventionally indirect strategy in English, highest. The results bear out this claim. Non-conventionally indirect strategies, albeit uncommon, are indirectives as previous studies (Searle, 1975; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) have claimed. Indirectives are a more common way of making requests in English in order to maintain face as proposed by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (Wijst, 1996). However, the results also show that native speakers prefer direct strategies over non-conventionally indirect strategies (cf. Figure 1). Native speakers seem to significantly prefer the direct strategy (D) over the non-conventionally indirect strategy (C). This result might be

explained by the infrequency of the non-conventional strategy. Thus, although this strategy is an indirective, which is usually preferred over directives to avoid face threatening acts, it is still extremely indirect since this strategy essentially involves hints, such as “I could really use some salt!” or “I can’t seem to reach the top shelf”. Hints may be a little too indirect when it comes to making a request, which essentially involves the speaker wanting something from the hearer, whereas directives state the request directly. Scrutinizing this discrepancy between the non-conventional indirect strategy and the direct strategy in native speakers of English may be an option for further studies. Examining how and when native speakers use the non-conventionally indirect strategy may account for the surprisingly low ranking of this strategy in the results of the ranking task.

The results for the native speakers also indicated that they preferred option (B), which is a direct translation from Dutch, over options (C) and (D). An explanation for this result might be that some of the options in this category were somewhat similar to the conventionally indirect strategy, such as “Can I have the salt, please?” and “Can you give me the money you owe me?”. The difference between the options in this category, (B), and the conventional strategy (A) is a matter of perspective. In the case of category (B), the role of the speaker is emphasized rather than the role of the hearer, e.g. *can I* have the salt, please?

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) claim that a speaker can manipulate his or her utterance by emphasizing either the speaker or the hearer. An example of emphasizing the hearer would be the conventionally indirect strategy “Can *you* pass me the salt, please?” or “Are *you* able to reach the product on the top shelf?” Thus the fact that a part of the options in the Dutch translation category has similar elements to the conventionally indirect strategy, such as the element of inquiring ability, e.g. “Can I”, may account for the higher ranking for option (B). However, not all options in this category pertained to similar elements to the conventional strategy. Some options were quite different, such as “Clean up your mess, please!” or “You owe me”, which were more similar to the direct strategy. The item analysis shows that there was no significant difference between the way category (A) and (B) were ranked. This may be caused by the proximity in terms of structure between (A) and (B), which could be solved by adding more ways of making a request as translated from Dutch. Expanding category (B) in terms of providing more alternatives for the Dutch translation per given scenario may be an option for further studies. Providing more options as translations from Dutch may reflect the way requests

are made in Dutch better. Thus, offering only one option as the translation from Dutch may have influenced the results because there are evidently more ways of making a request in Dutch than the options given in category (B) in the experiment of this thesis. Offering more alternatives in this category in the ranking task may lead to different results.

Categories (C), non-conventionally indirect request strategy, and (D), direct strategy, were at the opposite ends of an extreme, which may have also influenced the fact that there was no significant difference between the manners in which these were ranked by the L2ers in contrast to the significant difference between these categories by the native speakers. The non-conventionally indirect strategy (C) is a strategy in which speakers use hints to achieve the outcome they desire, e.g. “I’m having trouble focusing” or “It’s really loud in here!”. This may have been a little too indirect for the L2ers, which may be why they did not prefer this category over the other ones. The direct strategy (D), e.g. “Please stop humming” or “Please turn the music down”, may have come across as too direct as compared to category (B), the Dutch translation. The discrepancy between (C) and (D) is illustrated in the following example as taken from the ranking task:

- (8) You’re at the supermarket and there is a product on the top shelf that you can’t seem to reach. You look around for a member of staff, but there is no one in sight. There is however a tall gentleman standing next to you. You ask the man to get the product from the shelf for you. What do you say?
- a. Are you able to reach the product on the top shelf?
 - b. Can you help me, please?
 - c. I can’t seem reach the top shelf
 - d. Please get the product from the top shelf for me

On the one hand, as can be seen in (8), option (C) is quite indirect, especially compared to option (A), which is indirect in terms of asking if the person is able to reach the shelf. However, option (A) is not as indirect as option (C), where the speaker merely states that he or she cannot reach the shelf and thereby requesting for the hearer to do something for him or her. On the other hand, option (D) is quite direct especially compared to the rest of the options available. Thus, option (C) and option (D) are two ends of an extreme in terms of levels of directness, which may have

influenced the way that L2ers ranked the request strategies. Moreover, since the L2ers recruited in the experiment of this thesis were students studying English, they may have also been aware of the fact that the English usually are not direct in their manner of speech. This may have also influenced their responses and subsequently led to the lack of preference for option (D). Thus, option (C) may have been too indirect and option (D) may have been too direct for the L2ers. Furthermore, no significant difference was found between the ways in which these two categories, namely (C) and (D), were ranked. This might be because the two categories may have been too extreme whereas category (A) and (B) are somewhat milder in terms of request strategies.

An interesting outcome of the present study was that the L2ers had relatively the same c-test scores as the native speakers and their preference in request strategies was very similar to the way the native speakers ranked the request strategies. This contradicts the hypothesis proposed in this thesis because it was expected that there would be transfer from the L1, which would result in preference for the Dutch translation (B) and direct strategy (D). The L2ers did prefer option (B) over (C); however, as stated earlier, a part of option (B), albeit not all options in this category, was similar to the conventionally indirect strategy (A). In other words, the explanation put forward for the natives might also hold for the non-natives, that is, some of the structures of category (A) and (B) may have had similar elements, which may have resulted in the preference for categories (A) and (B). Furthermore, there was no significant difference between the ranking of (A) and (B), which, to a certain extent, can be explained by the similarity between the two categories. The results indicate that the L2ers show similar patterns in ranking the request strategies to the native speakers, which would mean that the non-natives in this thesis may be beyond transfer from L1 Dutch in the acquisition of request strategies in EFL. However, there are a number of possible factors that can be taken into account for these results.

One factor that may play a role in the results of the L2ers is political correctness or socially acceptable behaviour. The participants may have resorted to being politically correct when ranking the request strategies in a given scenario. In fact, feedback received from certain participants from both groups indicated that they indeed struggled with answering the most acceptable answer, thus ranking the option that seems the most appropriate higher. This may have been the case for multiple participants, which may have influenced the results. The conventionally indirect strategy may have seemed as the strategy that is most appropriate and

polite because of its indirectness, which avoids face-threatening acts. This may account for the higher ranking of conventionally indirect strategy (A) and also for category (B) since this category contained, to a certain extent, similar elements to category (A).

Another factor that may have contributed to the outcome of the results for the L2ers is the level of proficiency of the L2ers. The participants selected in this study were all students of English at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. This implies that these L2ers are highly exposed to the English language compared to the general Dutch public. The English programme at Radboud University also offers exchange programmes for third year students. Thus, the proficiency of the learners who have stayed abroad is likely to be higher as well. Furthermore, there are courses in the English language and culture programme dedicated to the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences between English and Dutch, thus these learners are highly aware of the differences between the two languages. These learners are thus expected to be aware of the differences and apply them in their use of language as well. This expectation could have also contributed to the outcome of the results, namely the preference for the conventionally indirect strategy over the direct strategy. In addition, the participants were asked whether they had any idea of the motives of the task. The native speakers in general did not know what the task was about; however, some of the L2ers did have some understanding of the aim of the task. This may have also influenced the way they answered the questions, which subsequently may have influenced the results.

A possible factor may have also been the fact that the participants could fill out the survey at their leisure. This may have led to the participants to double check their answers and dwell on them too long. In reality, there is not so much time between a scenario and the response. The ranking task is based on intuition and should represent how they would react in reality. However, the participants had ample of time to dwell on each question, which may have resulted in less than realistic responses. Furthermore, the ranking task presented to the participants was a written task. A written task may take away the effect of reality in terms of making it less realistic and thus making it easier to re-think answers and respond in ways that one would not usually respond. An alternative for this could be opting for an interview with each individual. This may result in more realistic answers because there would be limited time for the participant to respond and it may also seem more realistic to the participant.

The fact that there was no room for another answer or individual interpretation may have suggested a pattern to the participants, which could have also influenced to the outcome. Allowing the participant to write his or her own version of a request strategy may result in a different outcome. Thus an alternative for the ranking task would be a discourse completion task (DCT), which was also used by Su (2010) in examining cross-cultural differences between English and Chinese where he concluded that there was transfer from the L1. Su's (2010) DCT questionnaire contained nine different request situations and other speech act situations. This task involved a proposed scenario where a participant is forced to respond in a particular way. In a written DCT, the participant writes whatever he or she would say in a given situation. An example of a question in a DCT used in (Su, 2010) is given in (9):

- (9) You are doing your homework on the computer, but suddenly the computer crashes. You don't know how to fix the computer. Luckily, your roommate is around and is very good at computer stuff. If you ask for help, what would you say?

You say, “ _____ ”

(p.91)

As illustrated in (9), the DCT allows more room for interpretation in contrast to a ranking task. The participant has the option to write their own response in a given scenario, which may help form a better representation of the way individuals respond in reality. Having the participant write their own response rather than picking one from a list may lead to different results and interpretations of the given scenario. The ranking task provided a limited amount of alternatives as responses in a given scenario in contrast to a DCT. The results from a DCT may lead to different levels of directness as compared to the restricted options in a ranking task.

To sum up, the native speakers prefer conventionally indirect strategies (A) and the Dutch translation (B), which may have been slightly similar to (A) in certain aspects. A significant difference was found between the preferences for (C) and (D), where (D) was preferred over (C). This discrepancy can be explained by the uncommonness of category (C). The non-conventionally indirect strategy may prove to be too indirect when making a request, even though face-threatening acts are taken into account. This can be examined in further detail by conducting a study on the way native speakers make requests. The hypothesis proposed in this

thesis was not borne out in terms of the L2ers showing preference for category (A) over (D). This can be accounted for by multiple possible factors, namely socially acceptable behaviour, the amount of exposure to L2 English, level of proficiency, a relative understanding of the aim of the task, relatively unlimited time for making the task, and the type of task. Furthermore, the results of this thesis may provide evidence against Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) claim that EFL learners lack pragmatic awareness and also make more pragmatic errors than ESL learners. The results in this thesis show that this is not the case; however, some of the L2ers (L2 participants) may have spent some time in the U.K. and thus making them ESL learners for a period of time rather than EFL learners. This may account for their high levels of proficiency and similar tendencies to native speakers regarding making requests.

6. Conclusion

The present thesis contributes to the understanding of the interlanguage of pragmatics in the acquisition of request strategies in English as a second language in a foreign context by advanced Dutch learners. Unlike previous studies (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998), the present thesis offers evidence for EFL learners having similar pragmatic competence to native speakers of English regardless of the fact that EFL learners tend to be less exposed to the language than ESL learners. However, it is possible that some of the L2ers who participated in the experiment, albeit only 12 out of 33 participants, may have spent some time in the U.K. as part of the English language and culture programme at the Radboud University of Nijmegen and thus may account for the similarity in the results of the ranking task and c-tests between the L2ers and the native speakers.

The present thesis aimed to examine the extent of L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies by EFL learners. The L2ers included Dutch participants studying English language and culture at the Radboud University of Nijmegen, who were compared to a group of native speakers of English. The students included first years but also included older year students, none of which had completed the programme. Both groups were presented with the same tasks, which involved three c-tests to measure proficiency, and a judgment task, where participants were asked to rank the request strategies from most preferred to least preferred. The results from the c-tests showed that there was no significant difference in proficiency between the two groups, which made the groups very comparable. The results of the judgment or ranking task imply that the interlanguage of pragmatics regarding request strategies of L1 Dutch EFL learners at the university following the English programme is at its final stage. Although there were differences in the ways the native speakers and the L2ers ranked the request strategies in a given scenario, the differences across all participants were statistically insignificant. Thus, the answer to the research question proposed in the present thesis is the following: the EFL learners following the English programme at the Radboud University of Nijmegen are beyond L1 Dutch transfer in the acquisition of request strategies. However, it is worth noting that there may have been a number of possible factors that may have influenced the results of the L2ers, such as socially acceptable behaviour, level of proficiency, the amount of L2 exposure, a slight indication of the aim of the task, the amount of time to fill out the survey, and the type of task.

This may be further investigated in detail by utilising a DCT instead of a ranking task and possibly carrying out the DCT in person with the participants.

There was a significant difference between the native speaker's preference for the non-conventionally indirect request strategy and the direct strategy. The native speakers ranked the direct strategy higher than the non-conventionally indirect request strategy showing a clear preference for the direct request strategy. According to previous studies (Searle, 1975; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) there is a preference for indirectives over directives because indirectives are more successful in avoiding face-threatening acts than directives. Speakers usually avoid face-threatening acts by using indirect strategies, which would predict that the non-conventionally indirect strategy would be ranked higher than the direct strategy. However, this was not the case with the native speakers. This discrepancy may be further investigated by examining the way native speakers make requests in detail through a DCT carried out individually in person.

Despite its shortcomings, the present thesis has provided evidence for pragmatic competence in EFL learners, comparable to native speakers of English. Despite that a number of participants may have spent a few months studying in the U.K., the high pragmatic awareness found in the EFL learners in this thesis may indicate that the English programme at the Radboud University of Nijmegen draws enough attention to pragmatic competencies for the learners to be highly aware of the differences between their native language and their L2, namely English. This may be the case if most of the L2ers did not spend time abroad; however, this remains unclear. Further research may take any stay in the U.K. into account. The next step to further investigate the L2 acquisition of pragmatic competence regarding request strategies and at the same time using a questionnaire including information about the participants' stay in the U.K. Furthermore, conducting a DCT experiment individually that involves an interlocutor and the learner in person may also provide further insight into how learners make requests in their L2, namely English. Finally, the present thesis has found that, despite what theory predicts, native speakers prefer to be direct rather than indirect. This may also be a start for further research in request strategies in native speakers of English.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Demographic information

Appendix 1a: Demographic information for the native speakers

Participants	Native Language	Second Language	Age
Participant 1	English	-	62
Participant 2	English	Sindhi	42
Participant 3	English	-	22
Participant 4	English	Hindi	44
Participant 5	English	-	21
Participant 6	English	-	28
Participant 7	English	-	19
Participant 8	English	Spanish	22
Participant 9	English	Spanish	21
Participant 10	English	Irish	22
Participant 11	English	-	18
Participant 12	English	French, Spanish, Italian	25
Participant 13	English, French, Italian	Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese	23
Participant 14	English	Irish	22
Participant 15	English	-	21
Participant 16	English	-	71
Participant 17	English	-	21
Participant 18	English	-	21
Participant 19	English	Gujrati, Hindi	56

Appendix 1b: Demographic information for the L2ers

Participants	Native Language	Time of acquiring English	Second Languages	Age	BA
Participant 1	Dutch	Primary School	French, German	20	1
Participant 2	Dutch	Secondary School	French, German	21	2
Participant 3	Dutch	Primary School	French, German	22	2
Participant 4	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Spanish	20	2
Participant 5	Dutch	Primary School	German	19	1
Participant 6	Dutch	Primary School	German	19	2
Participant 7	Dutch	Primary School	French, German	19	1
Participant 8	Dutch	Primary School	French, Spanish	19	1
Participant 9	Dutch	Primary School	German	20	2

Participant 10	Dutch	Age 8-10	French, German, Latin, Greek	19	2
Participant 11	Dutch	Primary School	German	18	1
Participant 12	Dutch	Secondary School	French, German, Latin, Greek	20	1
Participant 13	Dutch	Primary School	German	20	2
Participant 14	Dutch	Primary School	French, German	21	1
Participant 15	Dutch	Primary School	French	21	2
Participant 16	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Spanish	18	1
Participant 17	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Spanish	19	2
Participant 18	Dutch	Primary School	French	21	2
Participant 19	Dutch	Secondary School	-	21	3
Participant 20	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Latin, Greek	22	3
Participant 21	Dutch	Primary School	-	20	3
Participant 22	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Chinese	22	3
Participant 23	Dutch	Primary School	German	22	4
Participant 24	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Spanish	21	4
Participant 25	Dutch	Primary School	German (Polish?)	21	3
Participant 26	Dutch	Primary School	German, Irish	23	3
Participant 27	Dutch	Primary School	-	25	3
Participant 28	Dutch	Primary School	German	23	3
Participant 29	Dutch	Primary School	German	22	1
Participant 30	Dutch	Secondary School	-	25	2
Participant 31	Dutch	Secondary School	French	22	3
Participant 32	Dutch	Primary School	French, German, Frisian	24	1
Participant 33	Dutch	Primary School	French, German	21	3

Appendix 2: C-tests

On the next pages you find 3 small English texts. Each text contains gaps, but rather than whole words having been deleted, parts of words have been left out. Please try to fill in the gaps. The first sentence has been left intact in each text to make things easier for you.

1.

We all live with other people's expectations of us. These are a refl (1)
 of th (2)trying to under (3)us; th (4)
are predict (5)of wh (6)they th (7)
we will think; d (8)and feel. Gene (9), we acc
 (10)the sta (11)quo, but these expec (12)can
 be ha (13)to han (14)when they co (15)from
 our fami (16)and can be diff (17)to ign (18),
 especially wh (19) they come from our (20)

2.

The decision to remove soft drinks from elementary and junior high school vending machines is
 a step in the right direction to help children make better choices when it comes to what they eat
 and drink. Childhood obe (21)has bec (22)a ser (23)
problem in th (24)country a (25)children cons
 (26)more sugar-based fo (27)and sp (28)less ti
 (29)getting the nece (30)exercise. Many par (31)
have quest (32)schools' deci (33)to al (34)
vending machines which disp (35)candy and so (36)
drinks. Many schools, th (37), have co (38)to
 re (39)on the mo (40)these machines generate through
 agreements with the companies which make soft drinks and junk food.

3.

In the last federal election, 61% of eligible voters cast a ballot. That's a fright (41)lack of inte (42)by the elect (43), but is not (44)compared to the turn (45)in provi (46)and munic (47)elections, which s (48)even lo (49)turnouts. It's diff (50)to bel (41)there's so lit (52)interest in elections. In Canada, we're fort (53)to have pol (54)stations wi (55)a short wa (56)or dr (57) There are volun (58)more th (59)willing to pro (60)rides to someone unable to walk or who doesn't have a car.

C-test answers:

Text 1:

1) reflection; 2) them; 3) understand; 4) they; 5) predictions; 6) what; 7) think; 8) do; 9) generally; 10) accept; 11) status; 12) expectations; 13) hard; 14) handle; 15) come; 16) family; 17) difficult; 18) ignore; 19) when; 20) parents;

Text 2:

61) obesity; 62) become; 63) serious; 64) this; 65) as; 66) consume; 67) food(s); 68) spend; 69) time; 70) necessary; 71) parents; 72) questioned; 73) decisions; 74) allow; 75) dispense; 76) soft; 77) though; 78) come; 79) rely; 80) money;

Text 3:

81) frightening; 82) interest; 83) electorate; 84) nothing; 85) turnouts; 86) provincial; 87) municipal; 88) see; 89) lower; 90) difficult; 91) believe; 92) little; 93) fortunate; 94) polling; 95) within; 96) walk; 97) drive; 98) volunteers; 99) than; 100) provide.

Appendix 3: Ranking task

In this task you're presented with a number of scenarios in which you need to make a request. There are four different ways in which you respond in the given scenarios.. We want you rank these four options from (a) the one you're most likely to use to (d) the one you're least likely to use. Drag the options to create your ranking. There is no right or wrong answer. Simply answer as truthfully as possible, i.e. how you would most likely respond to someone in a given situation. Thank you!

1. You're sitting at the dinner table. You take a bite from the food on your plate. Unfortunately, the food is a little bland for your taste. You look for the salt but it's all the way at the other end of the dinner table next to your friend. You ask for the salt. What do you say?
 - a. Can you pass me the salt please?
 - b. Can I have the salt please?
 - c. I could really use some salt!
 - d. Pass the salt, please

2. You check your wallet and you see that you haven't got enough money to get the drink you ordered. You decide to ask your friend behind you for an extra euro, which is just the amount you need to get your drink. What do you say?
 - a. Have you got a euro I could borrow, please?
 - b. Do you have a euro for me?
 - c. I haven't got enough money for my drink...
 - d. Give me a euro, please

3. You're at the supermarket and there is a product on the top shelf that you can't seem to reach. You look around for a member of staff, but there is no one in sight. There is however a tall gentleman standing next to you. You ask the man to get the product from the shelf for you. What do you say?
 - a. Are you able to reach the product on the top shelf?
 - b. Can you help me, please?

- c. I can't seem reach the top shelf
 - d. Please get the product from the top shelf for me
4. You're in the quiet carriage of the train. There are two girls sitting opposite you chattering away. You've got a bit of a headache and would appreciate some silence. You ask the two girls to be quiet. What do you say?
 - a. Could you keep it down, please?
 - b. I don't know if you've noticed but this is the silent section
 - c. We're sitting in the quiet carriage
 - d. Be quiet, please
5. You lent your friend 20 euros two months ago but he/she still hasn't paid you back. You really want your money back since you could really use some more money this month. You ask for your money. What do you say?
 - a. I'd be very much obliged if you would pay me the money back soon
 - b. Can you give me the money you owe me?
 - c. I could use some money right now
 - d. Give me my money back, please
6. You are organizing a party for a friend. It turns out that you don't have enough time to go and get the cake and need someone to do this for you. You ask another friend to go and get the cake. What do you say?
 - a. I would appreciate it if you could get the birthday cake for me
 - b. Can you get the cake?
 - c. I don't have enough time to go and get the cake!
 - d. Go and get the cake for me, please
7. Your roommate keeps leaving dishes in the sink and lets it stay for days. You like to keep the kitchen clean, considering the small space. You tell her to stop leaving dishes in the sink. What do you say?
 - a. I'd rather you didn't leave the dishes in the sink anymore

- b. Clean up your mess, please!
 - c. The kitchen looks quite messy
 - d. Please stop leaving your dishes in the sink
8. You're struggling with some homework. Your roommate happens to be great at that particular subject. You ask her to help you out. What do you say?
- a. I would be really grateful if you would help me out
 - b. Can you help me with this, please?
 - c. This subject is so difficult!
 - d. Please help me with this subject
9. You're trying to study but the music in your sibling's room is too loud. The music is affecting your concentration badly and the test is tomorrow. You go over to your sibling and ask him/her to turn the music down. What do you say?
- a. Will you turn the music down, please?
 - b. Can you turn it down, please?
 - c. It's really loud in here!
 - d. Please turn the music down
10. You have spent all day preparing dinner for your friend. You've set the table and are ready to eat. You've already begun eating because you were really hungry. Your friend doesn't seem to feel the same way. You want your friend to eat as well. What do you say?
- a. Aren't you hungry?
 - b. Eat something
 - c. I'm starving!
 - d. Please eat
11. You're working on a project that requires arts and crafts. Your friend has come over to your place to keep you company and help you out when necessary. You need the scissors and ask your friend to give them to you. What do you say?

- a. Will you hand me the scissors, please?
- b. Can you give me the scissors, please?
- c. I need to cut this!
- d. Please give me the scissors

12. You're taking a walk in the park with your friend. Your friend keeps bumping into you. Your friend thinks he's being funny. You ask him to stop. What do you say?

- a. Will you quit doing that?
- b. Stop it
- c. I'm going to fall
- d. Please stop bumping into me

13. You were ill last week and missed an important class. You need to borrow someone's notes but you don't know anyone in that class so well. You decide to just pick one of your classmates and ask him or her for their notes. What do you say?

- a. Would you mind lending me your notes?
- b. Can I copy your notes, please?
- c. I was ill during that class we have together...
- d. Lend me your notes, please

14. You'd like to make an appointment with a colleague next Wednesday, what do you say?

- a. Would it be convenient for you to meet me next Wednesday?
- b. Can we meet next Wednesday?
- c. I'm free next Wednesday
- d. Meet me next Wednesday

15. You're applying for a job. A letter of recommendation from your teacher may be just what you need to land this job. You go over to your teacher to request for a letter of recommendation. What do you say?
- Would you be willing to write me a letter of recommendation for my job application?
 - Could you write a letter of recommendation for me, please?
 - I'm applying for a job and a letter of recommendation may just help me land this job
 - Write me a letter of recommendation for my job application, please
16. You cooked some dinner for a friend a while back. You had both decided that your friend would pay you half of the costs for the dinner. You would like to have your money back by next week. What do you say?
- Would you mind paying me the money back next week?
 - You owe me money
 - I could use some money next week
 - Please pay me the money next week
17. You are trying to focus on your work but your roommate's constant humming is irritating and troubling you from focusing on your work. You want your roommate to stop humming, what do you say?
- Must you continue humming that way?
 - Can you stop making that noise, please?
 - I'm having trouble focusing
 - Please stop humming
18. You're at your favourite restaurant with some friends. One of your friends is a picky eater. She refuses to try the dish you ordered, which happens to be your favourite dish. She thinks it looks weird but you're sure she will love it. You urge her to try it, what do you say?
- Why don't you try it just once?

- b. Just taste it
 - c. I love this dish!
 - d. Please try it
19. Your sister is going out. You noticed that she is wearing your mum's top. Your mum had explicitly said not to touch her clothes. You tell her not to wear that top, what do you say?
- a. Should you be wearing mum's top?
 - b. Didn't mum say you shouldn't be wearing her clothes
 - c. Nice top you're wearing!
 - d. You shouldn't be wearing mum's clothes
20. You're having dinner with a friend. Your friend has type 1 diabetes and should stay away from sugary sweets. You notice he is eating a lot of chocolate cake tonight – more than he should. You're worried he might get sick and tell him to stop eating. What do you say?
- a. Ought you to eat so much chocolate cake?
 - b. Should you be eating that?
 - c. That's a lot of cake, isn't it?
 - d. Please stop eating that cake

Filler items:

21. Your friend just got a new haircut. She looks really different now but you think it looks nice. Others seem to disagree with you with their jokes about her hair. You think it looks nice. What do you say to your friend?
- a. Did you get a haircut?
 - b. Have you been to the salon?
 - c. Your hair looks nice!
 - d. I like your hair!
22. Your teacher is helping you out with a problem you couldn't solve. You're not sure you understand the answer. What do you say?

- a. Could this be the answer?
- b. Is this the answer?
- c. I think this may be the answer
- d. This is the answer

23. You're at work and notice that one of your colleagues seems a little down. What do you say?

- a. Are you well?
- b. Is everything going well?
- c. I hope everyone is well today!
- d. I don't think you're doing well

24. You bought a new pair of shoes and you are about to wear them for the first time.

You take them out of the shoebox and see that they are damaged. You decide to go back to the shop to get a refund. You enter the shop but there is no one in sight. You call out. What do you say?

- a. Is there anyone here?
- b. Can someone help me?
- c. Isn't there anyone here who can help me?
- d. I guess there's no one here!

25. You're meeting up with a friend for lunch. After chatting a little, you decide to order something to eat. Your friend orders just coffee. You wonder why your friend isn't eating. What do you say?

- a. Aren't you eating?
- b. Why aren't you eating?
- c. Is everything okay?
- d. You're not eating

26. You've found a great deal through a travel agency to go to Australia. In order to book the tickets, you need a friend to go with you so he/she can pay the other half of the deal. You ask a friend to go with you. What do you say?
- Would you like to join me on a trip to Australia?
 - Do you want to join me on a trip to Australia?
 - Australia seems like fun!
 - Come with me to Australia!
27. You made some cake today. A friend passed by your place for a visit. You decide to offer your friend some cake. What do you say?
- Would you like some cake?
 - Do you want some cake?
 - Do you like cake?
 - Don't you just love cake?
28. You notice your friend just got new glasses. What do you say?
- Are those new glasses?
 - Did you get new glasses?
 - You got new glasses!
 - Can you see well now?
29. You are telling a suspenseful story to a friend. You're getting to the end of the story but your friend seems to be getting distracted. What do you say?
- Don't you want to know what happens?
 - Would you like to know what happens?
 - I'm getting to the end!
 - Won't you listen to the end?
30. Your roommate seems to be looking for his keys. You can see that they're just on the table in front of you. What do you say?
- Aren't these your keys?

- b. Were you looking for these?
- c. Here are your keys!
- d. Your keys are right here

31. Your roommate is going to the supermarket. Your roommate owes you some groceries and decides to get them on his trip to the supermarket. You tell him a few things that you need from the supermarket. Your roommate tends to forget things easily so you tell him to write the items down. What do you say?

- a. Aren't you going to write that down?
- b. Should I write it down?
- c. You may want to write that down
- d. Don't forget!

32. You pass by a friend's place for the first time. Your friend makes some tea while you sit at the table where there is a huge vase with flowers. You feel your allergies start to kick in. What do you say?

- a. Do you mind putting the vase somewhere else?
- b. I'm allergic to these flowers
- c. That's a lot of flowers!
- d. I think I'm allergic to your flowers