

Does Politeness Theory need multi-modal expansion?

An investigation of the non-verbal multi-modal expression of politeness

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Abstract

The phenomenon of politeness and its expression in interpersonal interaction has conceived an extensive number of theoretical frameworks over the past decades. The most notable of these frameworks, Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson, suggests a multi-modal applicability which has not yet been explicitly investigated. This thesis empirically explores this possibility. Previous literature on non-verbal politeness and gaze and gesture co-occurring with speech predicted a positive effect of connected gaze and deictic, metaphoric, and iconic gestures on the perceived politeness. An experiment was conducted in which participants were presented with a videotaped request of which the non-verbal dimensions of gaze and gesture were manipulated followed by a Likert-scale questionnaire testing the perceived level of politeness. The analysis of the results with independent t-tests indicate that neither of the predictions were validated with significant differences. None of the comparisons between conditions revealed a significant result. These findings and their implications are discussed in the light of the previous literature, from which theoretical and methodological implications and suggestions arise.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Singapore, 12 June 2018. One of the most anticipated moments in political history; the president of the United States of America, Donald J. Trump, and the Supreme Leader of North Korea, Kim Jung-Un, meet at the Capella Hotel for a summit to discuss pressing international matters including security guarantees for North-Korea and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Both political leaders approached each other with respect and politeness to break the highly tense situation (Barron, 2018). The non-verbal communication of their conversational interaction was thoroughly analysed by the international press; the gestures, physical distance, use of height, and the use of time all contributed to the development and outcome of the meeting (Nederlanse Omroep Stichting, 2018; Ward, 2018). The non-verbal interaction between the two political leaders was an influential aspect of their negotiations, and the expression of verbal and non-verbal politeness appeared to be a crucial concept in this cross-cultural encounter.

The most conventional definition of politeness in societal context refers to the behaviour employed in an interpersonal interaction that shows respect and consideration to other people. Politeness literature expands on this approach and diverts from this uniform definition of politeness by making a distinction between social conventions which appeal to common sense and politeness which is indicated by specific formal features. The divergent approaches to the concepts have been felicitously summarised by Meier (1995). The first interpretation of politeness has been defined as 'first order politeness' (Watts, 1992), 'non-polite' or 'zero polite' (Ide, 1989), or 'social politeness' (Janney & Arndt, 1992). These different terminologies all refer to socially appropriate behaviour in interaction such as greetings and leaving. It is often characterised by being unmarked in interaction. The latter is often referred to as 'tact'; the realisation of politeness in interpersonal interaction (Blum-Kulka, 1989, p. 67; Janney & Arndt, 1992). Denominated by Watts as 'second order politeness', this form of politeness aims at improving the speaker's self-image in the perception of others. The perception of this self-image can simultaneously be referred to as 'face', a term which will be defined extensively in the context of the theoretical framework of this thesis. Therefore, the term 'politeness' will in this thesis refer to the tact verbally and non-verbally expressed which aims at enhancing the self-image of the speaker.

This definition of politeness introduces another terminological issue; the question of

what constitutes non-verbal communication in this context. At first sight, the answer to this question appears relatively straightforward; every aspect of communication which does not occur verbally. However, this practical definition contains some unambiguous limitations. Excluding every verbal aspect from non-verbal communication leaves salient features of speech such as intonation, pitch, and volume neglected. Furthermore, the primary distinction made between definitions of non-verbal communication is based on its function concerning verbal communication. Beattie's approach argues for a functional division of the two communicative mechanisms; language is used to convey factual and semantic information, non-verbal communication has a mainly social function (Beattie, 2008, p. 19). This interpretation implies that the two communicative systems can function in isolation of each other. Knapp, Horgan, and Hall (2014) on the other hand argue that verbal and non-verbal communication are two parts of an intricate system working together in a symbiotic manner to create meaning. This view is supported by approaches from psycholinguistic, linguistic, and pragmatic studies (Beattie & Sale, 2012; Beattie & Shovelton, 1999a, 1999b; McNeill, 1985, 2007; Moore, Hickson, & Stacks, 2014). The current study shares the view of the communicative system with the latter approach. The adopted definition of 'non-verbal' in this thesis is; every aspect in conversation which is not expressed linguistically.

Politeness and non-verbal communication are both heavily influenced by the ever-developing concept of culture. Culture is an independent variable in this study. Hofstede (2003) notes that every individual acquires patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting or reacting during their lifetime. These behaviours are what is customarily referred to as 'culture'. In his seminal work, he identifies two different types of culture; the first refers to what in Western society is denoted as 'civilization' or 'refinement of the mind', the second notion of culture refers to the collective phenomenon of behavioral patterns which distinguishes individuals from one group or category from people of another (Hofstede, 1991, p. 5). The primary distinguishing factor between these two notions of culture is that the first can be both collective and individual, whereas the latter is predominantly collective. These patterns are manifested in every human on three different levels; human nature, culture, and personality. According to Hofstede, culture is unique in this trichotomy, as it is the only aspect which is solely learned. The overarching character of the dichotomy of culture proposed by Hofstede is too vast to take into consideration in the current investigation completely. Culture in the current investigation operates on an interpersonal level, wherefore the core of the present definition of culture builds on the second notion of culture identified by Hofstede.

This view on culture is shared by Spencer-Oatey (2000), who defines culture as "a

fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioral conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behavior and each member's interpretation of the 'meaning' of other people's behavior". Similar to Hofstede's view she assumes that these behavioural patterns manifest themselves on different levels; inner core basic assumptions, outer core beliefs and social conventions, and behaviour on the surface level (p. 4). This interpretation discloses three specific characteristics of culture. In the first place, a distinct culture manifests itself within a group of society. However, this does not imply that any two individuals within the same cultural group are identical in their cultural values. In the second place, culture influences human behaviour and individuals' perception of this behaviour. 'Culture' in this thesis, therefore, will refer to the social conventions which determine the verbal and non-verbal expression in surface behaviour.

Reciprocity is fundamental within human relationships, and as a social norm creates interdependency in social relationships. The notion of reciprocity also extends to politeness; purely because people are polite to us, we are polite to them (Ohashi & Chang, 2017). This phenomenon of reciprocity in politeness appears to be culturally determined. Moreover, empirical studies have shown that reciprocity of politeness is near-universal (Hickey & Stewart, 2005; Ohashi, 2013). Reciprocity surfaces in syntax and linguistic forms in everyday communication, however, theoretical suggestions have been made that the nature of the phenomenon could be multimodal (Arndt & Janney, 1995). Ultimately, these behavioural practices can be learned via reciprocal interpersonal communication. It is this reciprocity and perception of behaviour in communicative interaction which this thesis aspires to explore.

Politeness has been a polemical subject in the academic field of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics for over four decades at this point. Many linguists have created a theoretical framework to capture the linguistic realisation of politeness in interpersonal interaction. Each of these frameworks expresses their approach to the concept with distinctive rules or norms and definitions of politeness, and a particular interpretation of the appropriate context. The most notable theories include the social norm view (Fraser, 1990), the conversational maxim view (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983), the sociolinguistic view of Watts (2009), and the face-saving view (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown and Levinson's seminal Politeness Theory (henceforth, PT) is universally lauded for its excellent heuristic value and broad scope (Goldsmith, 2013). To date, it is the most influential theoretical framework on politeness and remains "the most frequently cited publication on language and politeness" (Leech, 2007, p. 168). However, despite its prominent position in politeness literature, PT does not consider

the non-verbal communication of politeness.

This lacuna is substantiated by investigations into the ratio of verbal and non-verbal communication in interpersonal communication. Fundamental theoretical research has estimated that around 90% of communication occurs non-verbally (Knapp, 1978; Mehrabian, 1972), although these estimations have recently been adjusted to 65% after empirical investigations (Bowden, 2010; Pease & Pease, 2008). Nevertheless, the majority of expressed politeness appears to manifest itself in a dimension which has not been explained or explored by politeness research. This thesis aims to investigate this lacuna in politeness literature by determining to which extent the perceived politeness is affected by specific non-verbal expressions.

1.2 The aim of the current study

The current study aims to investigate the influence of non-verbal behaviour on the perceived politeness. The theoretical framework chosen for this topic is Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). Their theory is deemed most appropriate because of its delineation of politeness in conversational context and its excellent heuristic value regarding intra- and intercultural validity. This investigation involves a focus on the following; determining the independent variables in terms of socio-cultural context of the specific utterance under investigation, determining the relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable politeness, providing a synopsis of relevant literature on politeness and non-verbal communication, and conceiving an adequate methodological approach for investigating this phenomenon. Altogether, the study which is conceived from these aspects will address the research question;

Does non-verbal behaviour affect perceived politeness?

This study is the first of its kind to empirically investigate the non-verbal expression of politeness concerning specific non-verbal articulations. This approach brings with itself theoretical and methodological difficulties. The theoretical challenge lies in identifying the non-verbal behaviours which could communicate politeness. Since no earlier research has identified specific non-verbal expressions of politeness, these will have to be derived from previous literature. Not only will this be beneficial to the methodological approach of the current research, but it will also likewise contribute to methodological considerations for future research. The identification of specific non-verbal politeness behaviours will broaden the spectrum of utterances a speaker possesses to communicate politeness. Furthermore, these

utterances will broaden the theoretical applicability of PT into the spectrum of multi-modality. Lastly, these identifications will be of great value to the investigation of (cross)cultural interaction since they can be used to analyse intra- and intercultural conversational interaction.

The methodological challenge of this thesis lies in opting for the approach most appropriate to a multi-modal investigation. The utterance will have to be presented visually and not be prone to error in repetition. The methodological approach conceived here will be of great value for future research into multi-modal investigations. Its concept and following insights can be of great value for future researchers who aim to investigate multi-modal phenomena.

1.3 Outline of the study

The study investigates the influence of non-verbal behaviour on perceived politeness in an experiment where the non-verbal behaviour will be manipulated while the linguistic expression is retained the same across the conditions.

The overall structure of the thesis is divided up into five chapters. This first chapter has introduced the topic, stated the empirical problem, and defined the two key terms 'politeness' and 'non-verbal'. Chapter two begins by presenting a concise outline of PT as well as the independent variables of the study which are deduced from this theoretical framework. This theoretical framework of politeness is then built on by a multi-modal approach to politeness and a preliminary investigation into non-verbal politeness. Subsequently, it thoroughly investigates the research paradigm of gesture and gaze co-occurring with speech to identify the influence of these non-verbal dimensions on the perception of social attitudes. This literature creates the conditions for the experiment, the tested hypothesis, and the predictions for the results. The third chapter delineates the methodological approach conceived for this research. The material, data collection, and design of a questionnaire with videotaped stimuli, between-subjects approach is described. The fourth chapter presents the results of the experiment by analysing them with the appropriate statistical tests and comparing the different sample populations on mean politeness scores. The fifth and final chapter discusses both the empirical and methodological findings, identifies the limitations of the current study, and provides suggestions for further research. This chapter then concludes with a summary of the study and practical implications of the current study.

Chapter 2: Background Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson as well as a short overview of investigations on the non-verbal expression of politeness. This is preceded by an explanation of essential terminological definitions of power, distance, and ranking of imposition is given to clarify possible inconsistencies in the literature and establish meaning in the current context. The hypothesis of this study flows from Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and the theoretical and practical implications of research into non-verbal expressions of politeness. Subsequently, an overview of the investigation of the influence of gesture and gaze on the meaning of the verbal message and the perception of the social attitude of the speaker is given. These create predictions for the hypothesis and experimental results.

2.2 Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson

“Politeness [...] goes to the foundations of human social life”; this audacious introductory statement is fundamental to Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework (1987, p. xiii). It reflects two of its most essential aspects; its interactional nature and its claim of universal validity. The groundworks of PT are based on the conversational interaction which occurs between two or more interlocutors. Without interaction there is no need for politeness, since there is no one to be polite to. The abstract nature of the most basic elements of PT allows it to be applied to languages universally. The surface form of these elements, however, differ from language to language, dialect to dialect, or even individual to individual. The theoretical framework predominantly relies on four notions; the Cooperative Principle, the notion of face, politeness strategies, and face-threatening acts (henceforth, FTAs).

The Cooperative Principle (henceforth, CP) conceived by Grice (1975) describes how two competent interlocutors normally would behave in conversation. His theoretical framework delineates the presuppositions of essential communication divided up into four maxims, which together aim to explain what is understood from each utterance. Brown and Levinson build on the CP by arguing that, in combination with the concept of ‘face’, it could provide implicatures of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 6). PT here is similar to CP in its assumption that both interlocutors in conversation cooperate to be understood in an accurate and intended fashion. The essential difference between the two theories is that where CP develops on interpersonal interaction, PT builds on the notion of ‘face’ and the mutual

effort of two interlocutors in interaction to maintain, protect, and mitigate it with politeness through different types of strategies.

The primary underlying assumption of PT is that all communicative and cooperative speakers in conversation possess a public 'face'. Initially conceived by Goffman (1967), the concept of 'face' in sociolinguistics refers to "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). The concept of face consists of two dimensions; a negative face, and a positive face. The first refers to a person's "basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e., to freedom of action and from imposition", or the right for an individual identity (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). The latter refers to a person's "positive consistent self-image [...] (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants", or the need to socially belong to and be a part of a group (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.61). According to Brown and Levinson, interlocutors engaged in conversation continually mitigate the potential danger to either of these 'faces'.

The concept of face and its implications is something which all capable adult members of any society are consciously aware of. This assumption of universal validity has been vastly criticised for its seemingly Western bias (Goldsmith, 2013; Leech, 2007). The main argument made against this assumed universality is that, through cultural context, the way people interpret the notion of face differs substantially (Katriel, 1986; Scollon & Scollon 1995; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi; 1998). This critique is affirmed by Brown and Levinson, who point out that the content of this public self-image will differ amongst cultures, but "that the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient itself to it in interaction, are universal" (p. 62). This definition implies that a socio-cultural concept of face exists in some shape or form in every individual culture, which thus far still has to be disproved (Leech, 2007, pp. 168-9). The positive and negative faces of interlocutors in interpersonal interaction are threatened continuously by utterances, which in PT are denominated FTAs.

Brown and Levinson define an FTA as "what is intended to be done by a verbal or nonverbal [*sic*] communication" (1987, p. 61). Each interaction or utterance, therefore, becomes an FTA in interpersonal interaction. Considered in relation to the notion of 'face', FTAs are a rather paradoxical phenomenon. Should a speaker opt to address the hearer's positive face by framing an FTA with positive politeness, it inherently puts the hearer's negative face in danger. The same occurs when a hearer's negative face is addressed; their positive face is threatened. Brown and Levinson continue their definition by describing that

more than one FTA can be ascribed to a single utterance. This definition builds on the Gricean notion that communicative acts are single chunks of behaviour produced by a speaker with a specific communicative intention (Grice, 1975).

The definition of an FTA applied in PT concurs with Goffman's initial account of 'facework' by which Brown and Levinson were influenced. Goffman (1967) created a theory of communication in which the 'face' and self-esteem are the essential notions which need to be safeguarded during interpersonal interaction. Goffman postulated that a significant amount of facework occurs through paralinguistic and non-verbal channels. The interpretation of the politeness of an utterance to save face therefore not only depends on the semantic and syntactic choices made; the paralinguistic, kinesic, and other non-verbal cues should be taken into account. The implication of this is that an FTA with the same semantic content could be interpreted differently regarding communicated politeness depending on the paralinguistic, kinesic, and facial context.

An additional distinction can be made between those FTAs which primarily threaten the hearer's face and those who primarily threaten the speaker's face. FTAs which threaten the negative face of H consist of the speaker (S) threatening the hearer's (H) freedom of action; S proposing to fulfill a positive future act for H, thereby incurring debt; or S pronouncing an inclination towards H or H's possessions, therefore provoking protective behavior for H. Additionally, FTAs which threaten the positive face of H consist of utterances which show a negative evaluation of S of H's positive face; or S's expression of disregard for H's positive face. FTAs which threaten the speaker's negative face include, adapted from Brown and Levinson (pp. 67-8);

- a) expressing thanks (where S accepts a debt, therefore humbling his own face)
- b) acceptance of H's thanks or apology
- c) excuses
- d) acceptance of offers (S is constrained to accept a debt)
- e) respond to a tactless act of H
- f) unwilling promises and offers

FTAs which directly threaten the speaker's positive face include;

- a) apologies (S indicates regret over prior FTA, thus damaging own face)
- b) acceptance of a compliment
- c) breakdown of physical control over the body, bodily leakage, stumbling, or falling down

- d) self-humiliation, shuffling or cowering, acting stupid, self-contradicting
- e) confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility for having done or not done an act
- f) emotion leakage, non-control of laughter or tears

The practical application of PT is that a speaker possesses a repertoire of four different politeness strategies to commit an FTA. An interaction can be performed without redressive action, or baldly; meaning, in the most unambiguous, concise, and transparent manner possible. This strategy is mostly used in specific circumstances, for instance when the context demands urgency over face needs. If redressive action is omitted, there is usually limited regard for face needs. Should the speaker add redressive action to the FTA, it can be either framed in positive or negative politeness. If performed with positive politeness, the FTA will address to the hearer's positive face. If performed with negative politeness, the FTA will be formulated in such a way that the hearer's negative face needs will be satisfied. The off-record strategy is ambiguous and uses indirect language as to reduce the possible imposition of the act. Lastly, a speaker can always opt not to perform the FTA. Figure 1 aptly summarises the politeness strategies in descending order of possible face loss (1 proposing the least, five the most).

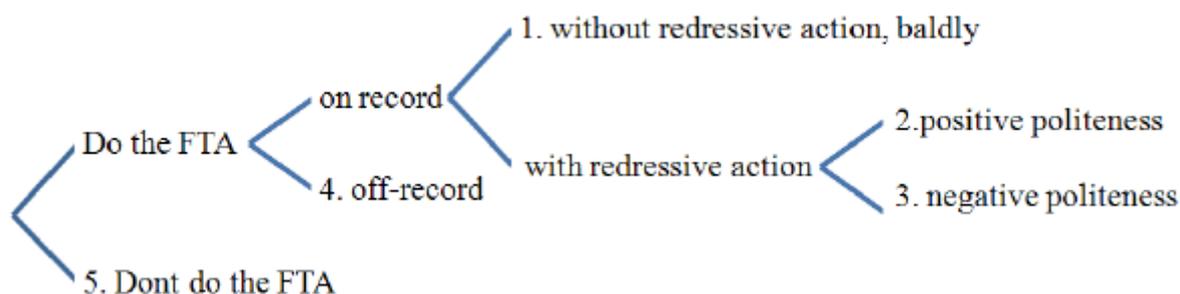


Figure 1. The possible politeness strategies a speaker can adopt to perform an FTA.

The denomination of positive and negative politeness has been criticised to possibly suggesting a bias, where positive politeness could be interpreted as 'good' and negative politeness as 'bad' (Scollon & Scollon, 2002, p. 47). This bias is here attended to by adopting an alternative terminology when referring to the politeness strategies used when an FTA is performed with redressive action; involvement and independence strategies (Scollon & Scollon, 2002, p. 48).

The theoretical framework of PT can be used for different approaches. When power, social distance, and the weight of imposition of an FTA are taken into consideration, PT could

function as a framework to predict what people would say in a specific situation.

Alternatively, PT functions as a framework for predicting the interpreted level of politeness of an FTA. The latter will be opted for in this thesis.

Brown and Levinson's seminal PT (1987) has created an immense research paradigm in and by itself. Its controversial claim of universality has generated a large body of empirical research (Caplan & Samter, 1999; Carson & Cupach, 2000; Leech, 2007; Leichty & Applegate, 1991; Rossano, Brown, & Levinson, 2009; Spencer-Oatey, 2000), methodological discussion on definition and approach (Goldsmith, 2013; Scollon & Scollon, 2002; Spencer-Oatey, 1996), and its application to specific communicative interactions such as requests, multiple forms of computer-mediated communication, and cross-cultural interactions (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Duthler, 2006; Holtgraves & Yang, 1990; Rossano, Brown, & Levinson, 2009; Taleghani-Nikazm, 2010, Wijst, 1995). Both Brown and Levinson's PT as well Goffman's original definition of facework postulate the multi-modal applicability of politeness; politeness as an interpersonal communicated phenomenon can be expressed both verbally as well as non-verbally. However, this dimension of politeness is not expressed in the theoretical or practical application of politeness as delineated in PT. This multi-modal applicability remains to be investigated, both methodologically and empirically, with regards to the core application of politeness theory in interpersonal communication; politeness strategies.

2.3 Contextual variables

The everyday interactional form of politeness surfaces predominantly in interpersonal communication. The expressions in this communication create the context of the interaction; the micro-context is talked into being (Sidnell, 2011, pp. 245-6). The characteristics of this interaction, therefore, partially define the level of politeness of the expressions in this context. The same expression might therefore be perceived as polite in one context, while it could be perceived as rude in another context or by a person unaware of said context. The perceived level of politeness of the expressions in these interactions, however, is not only defined by opting for the most felicitous politeness strategy and successfully mitigating face. The socio-cultural context of these interactions play an essential role in determining the type of strategy opted for, the lexical choices, and syntactic choices made. Brown and Levinson define these contextual factors as the variables power, distance, and ranking of imposition.

2.3.1 Power

Power is an independent variable in this study. The most conventional definition of this concept refers to the vertical disparity between two individuals who partake in a hierarchical structure which can be found in institutes, companies, and organisations. However, it is a complex dimension which has been approached by various authors in multiple research paradigms. This extensive framework has been felicitously inventoried by Spencer-Oatey (1996). What emanates from Spencer-Oatey's article is that among different authors various terminologies exist for the same concept and that the same definition can refer to different concepts. The dimension of power is most frequently referred to as 'power'; however, different definitions of the concept exist across politeness literature. The next most frequent found definition of the concept is "social power and status" (Spencer-Oatey, 1996, p.7). Furthermore, Cansler and Stiles (1981) and Brown and Levinson (1987) provide different yet interrelated interpretations of the same concept. Brown and Levinson take a socio-psychological point of view towards power and focus on "the control of another person's behaviour" (p. 77). Cansler and Stiles, on the other hand, take a sociological stance towards the concept and relate power to social rank (pp. 459-460). These approaches consider power as a non-institutionalized phenomenon, external to the influence of corporate hierarchies.

Leichty and Applegate (1991) yet present a different, institutionalised, sociological interpretation of power, "the legitimate right to exert influence". They note that the source of power can lie within social rank or status. French and Raven (1956) share this point of view on institutionalised power, although they note the importance of context; "[S]ocial status or rank can endow a person with power of control, but need not necessarily do so, as it might not be acknowledged as relevant or applicable". The following metaphor can perfectly illustrate this quote; if the chief executive officer of a multi-billion company were to have an interaction with a newly hired salesperson within the company building, their institutional and social rank would dictate the flow of conversation. However, if the same two people were to have this interaction in the middle of the Atacama desert, the power distance would merely vaporise for it is not relevant in this context.

This notion of institutional power is defined by Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996), who divide the concept of institutional power into two different facets, i.e. 'inherent status' and 'relative status'. The first facet of status concerns the position a person occupies within an institution. The second facet of status becomes evident in conversational context. The metaphorical interaction within the company building would be defined by inherent status, whereas relative status would dictate the interaction situated in the Atacama desert. Both these facets of institutional power can exist and operate in parallel within the same individual or in

conversational context, depending on the pragmatic context (Bargiela-Chappini & Harris, 1996, p. 637). The difference in the definition of power appears to be partially reflected in the taxonomical accounts given by the different authors (Spencer-Oatey, 1996). Those authors who concentrate on the socio-psychological point of view of the concept use the term 'power', i.e., Brown and Levinson, whereas those authors who take a sociological stance refer to the concept as 'status' (Baxter, 1984). Clearly, different authors emphasise various notions of the concept of power which may or may not entirely be explained by the research paradigm from which their investigation originates.

Concludingly, the experiment conducted in this thesis features the presentation of an actor to a participant in a setting where no hierarchical power distance should be conceived between these two people. Institutional power and status are, therefore, considered less important in this context than the power expressed on a personal level. 'Power' will, therefore, for the remainder of this investigation refer to the definition introduced by Brown and Levinson; the power over another person's behaviour. This definition is opted for since it is most appropriately applicable to the hypothetical situation under investigation in this study. It will be referred to as 'power' and interpreted as the social influence one person has over the perception of another, in this case, the participants.

2.3.2 Distance

Distance is another independent variable in this study. The most frequently adopted commonplace denomination is social distance and refers to the horizontal disparity between two individuals and can be observed both in everyday social interactions as well as in institutional settings. The concept is also referred to as social distance, solidarity, familiarity, and relational intimacy (Spencer-Oatey, 1996, p. 3). Social distance supposedly has a significant impact on the production and perception of language when considered in the context of politeness (Spencer-Oatey, 1996, p.1). Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 76-77) view distance as a symmetric social dimension which indicates the level of similarities and differences among interlocutors, in the case of this thesis the requester and requestee, which is based on social characteristics.

The general aspects by which the concept of social distance is defined are the social bond between two people engaged in conversation and how this manifests itself in their use of language. A pragmatic interpretation of social distance, therefore, should include those aspects which define both the micro- and macro-context of an interaction; frequency of personal contact, length of acquaintance, how much people reveal of themselves, and the type

of affect shown (Spencer-Oatey, p. 5). Brown and Levinson's (1987) interpretation of this dimension maintains a correlation with interpersonal similarities and an inverse correlation with differences; an increased amount of similarities and a decreased amount of differences lowers the effective social distance. Their definition does not explicitly mention the manifestation of social distance in context, however, its manifestation becomes apparent from the different FTAs incorporated in PT.

Many authors investigated the dimension of social distance, although the factors compromising this composite construct vary considerably among their works. The most noticeable dichotomy between factors is that of qualitative and quantitative aspects of the phenomenon. Various authors (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Slugoski & Turnbull, 1988) have argued for a distinction between distance and affect. Affect supposedly has a distinct effect on language in conversational context when compared to distance. Therefore, to conclude, this thesis will not incorporate positive or negative affect in its definition of social distance. The aspects this thesis will include in its extensive definition of social distance are the frequency of contact, length of acquaintance, reciprocal familiarity, sense of harmony, and social similarity and difference. These elements will collectively constitute the composite construct of social distance in this investigation, which will be referred to as social distance.

2.3.3 Ranking of imposition

The ranking of the imposition of an utterance is the final independent variable in this study. The weight of the threat a particular utterance poses is a summation of its threat to both the speaker's and hearer's face. Therefore, it is heavily influenced by socio-cultural and individual variation. The same FTA could be ranked as posing a higher imposition in one culture than in another. For example, a request could threaten the hearer's negative face more in an individualistic society than in a more socialistic society since freedom of imposition is valued higher in an individualistic society. Furthermore, Blum-Kulka (1987) pointed out that the length of a communicative act correlates with the ranking of imposition. Every communicative act requires a certain level of pragmatic clarity; providing less than or going beyond this length would conflict with pragmatic felicitousness and would therefore be considered less polite.

The correlation between the length of an FTA and the ranking of imposition is subject to cross-cultural variation as well. The Japanese culture values indirectness in the expression of an FTA since it is seen as a more polite way of imposing on another person (Ohashi, 2013; Ohashi & Chang, 2017). The expression of a request by a Japanese person could be perceived

as excessively lengthy by a British person. This is where cultural norms may interfere with the face wants of both interlocutors. The ranking of imposition in the context of the current experiment is considered an independent variable since it is not subject to cross-cultural or socio-cultural differences between the actor and the participant. Furthermore, the exact length of the FTA in terms of utterances is constant across all conditions.

2.4 Interpersonal and non-verbal politeness

Arndt and Janney (1985) criticised the majority of politeness theories for relying solely on the application of linguistic formulations to express different levels of politeness. Their main argument is that relying on a difference in grammatical or syntactical realisation of FTAs to indicate different levels of politeness does not reflect a pragmatically realistic account of interpersonal communication. Therefore they propose an alternative approach to the expression of politeness in interpersonal interaction which extends to multiple modalities. Similar to PT, the framework they propose builds on the Gricean notion of the Cooperative Principle and views politeness in conversation as "avoiding interpersonal conflicts" (Arndt & Janney, 1995, p. 282). However, deviating from Brown and Levinson's PT, Arndt and Janney additionally include the expression of politeness through paralinguistic and kinesic dimensions. They continue the delineation of their theory by suggesting that different politeness strategies or politeness cues which can be expressed through each of these modalities (p. 293); confidence, positive/negative affect, and involvement.

Like Brown and Levinson's PT, Arndt and Janney's framework views an FTA as a single communicative utterance. However, Arndt and Janney stress that a speaker can simultaneously communicate the FTA through multiple modalities. This multi-modal expression would allow the speaker to express politeness not only by semantic and syntactic choices but additionally via non-verbal communication. Arndt and Janney's account of interpersonal politeness and its multimodal politeness strategies in interaction revolves around the same fundamental concept as PT; a collaborative attempt to save face (p. 293-5). The expansion of Brown and Levinson's framework developed by Arndt and Janney, therefore, has a solid theoretical foundation. The methodological approach opted for, however, does not conclusively confirm their theoretical considerations.

The main body of Arndt and Janney's argumentation is derived from examples provided by the authors themselves. These examples are used to illustrate the implications the proposed approach to politeness would have. The lack of empirical evidence nevertheless weakens their argumentation. The authors admittedly confirm this lacuna in their article, but

do stress that “a unified approach to investigating speech as multimodal human [...] behavior is feasible, and that when sufficiently developed, it will provide the basis for answering a number of important questions about politeness and other nonreferential [*sic*] aspects of speech” (p. 298). An empirical investigation of the multimodal expression of politeness would, therefore, be essential to confirm their hypotheses and implications.

Ambady, Koo, Lee, & Rosenthal (1996) performed an exploratory investigation into the lacuna in PT identified above, by conducting cross-cultural experiments of non-verbal communication of politeness. This study is the first, and up until this point the only one to the author's knowledge, empirical investigation of non-verbally communicated politeness. The most prominent finding was that in both socio-cultural contexts, Korean and American, the data confirmed the hypothesis that politeness was communicated non-verbally, both when co-occurring with speech and when studied in isolation of speech. Additionally, Ambady et al. carried out a principal component analysis from which they created three composite variables as non-verbal politeness strategies; affiliative strategies, circumspect strategies, and other-oriented strategies.

The quintessential theoretical consideration was the mapping of non-verbally communicated politeness onto PT's verbal politeness strategies. Previous literature suggests that when politeness is communicated non-verbally, the politeness strategies cannot strictly map one on one with either the superstrategies or substrategies proposed in PT (Ambady et al., 1996, pp. 997-8). Ambady et al. therefore created three non-verbal politeness strategies based on the substrategies of Brown and Levinson; affiliative strategies, circumspect strategies, and other-oriented strategies. These strategies were directly related to Brown and Levinson's strategies for positive and negative politeness; affiliative strategies correspond solely to positive strategies, circumspect strategies consist of both negative and of the record strategies, and other-oriented strategies compromised both positive and negative strategies. The categorisation of these strategies was based on the social attitudes communicated. Affiliative strategies communicate an open, affiliative, and joking attitude, circumspect strategies communicate uncertainty, indirectness, avoidance, and an apologetic attitude, and other-oriented strategies communicate attentiveness, concern, agreement, encouragement, politeness, approval, deference, positiveness, empathy, and professionalism. This division of strategies deviates from Brown and Levinson's idea of politeness strategies, who supposed that all politeness strategies are oriented towards the other.

Ambady et al.'s methodological approach confirmed to the practical problems posited by the impetus of their research. The design of the experiments was aimed at answering the

cross-modal and cross-cultural hypotheses. Power, social distance, and weight of imposition were taken into account as socio-cultural contextual variables. The Korean and American sample populations were selected on the basis that they were both affected in the same way by contextual variables as predicted by PT (Holtgraves & Yang, 1992). A difference between the two populations was found in the use of non-verbal politeness strategies. Both used the strategies of affiliation and circumspection similarly, while the strategy of other-orientation was used differently. The authors interpreted this as a confirmation for the universal nature of affiliation and circumspection strategies, while other-orientation appears to be culture-specific.

However adequate the methodological considerations, a number of confounding variables could have affected the results. Ambady et al. opted for an individual role-play, where participants had to imagine the communicative situations. This methodology could have decreased the construct validity of the experiments since hypothetical versions of communicative situations do not precisely reflect the actual situation, and therefore makes the experiment subject to individual participant's limits (Sacks, 1984, p. 25). However, the system of paralinguistic, nonverbal, and facial dimensions features a complex array of communicative signals which need to be studied in isolation and experimentally controlled conditions to determine which specific non-verbal behaviours influence the interpreted politeness. Furthermore, the two sample populations selected for the experiments, American students and Korean brokers, were not identical. The micro-context of the individuals was comparable; individuals in both groups had superiors and subordinates, and the content of the message could be adapted to frequently used context. However, the generalisations extend to the macro context as well, for which they are not entirely comparable for the two populations. The analyses Ambady et al. performed allowed them to make conclusions about the general types of non-verbal strategies used for expressing politeness, but not about the specific non-verbal behaviour which expresses these. The data of Ambady et al. confirms that non-verbal behaviour can express politeness, but as stated by the authors themselves, "it would be useful to identify specific nonverbal behaviours that convey politeness and to establish whether these behaviours are universal" (p. 1010).

The implications of a multi-modal approach to politeness are both theoretical and empirical. Approaching politeness with the concept of face and face-saving strategies suggests that the inclusion of non-verbal behaviour is essential (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). If politeness could indeed be expressed non-verbally, this would imply that an FTA expressed through the verbal modality could be accompanied by nonverbal politeness

strategies. A theoretical exploration of the non-verbal expression of politeness was done by Arndt and Janney (1985). Their theoretical approach suggests that politeness could be expressed through different modalities of nonverbal communication, put into practice by non-verbal politeness strategies. This assumption was confirmed by the investigation done by Ambady et al. (1996), who found that politeness could be communicated non-verbal, both when co-occurring with speech and in isolation of speech. Hypothetically, politeness could, therefore, be communicated through different modalities simultaneously, therefore increasing the 'density of politeness' of an FTA/utterance. However, the conclusive data provided by Ambady et al. remain unclear as to which specific nonverbal behaviour conveys politeness.

2.5 Speech-related gesture

A dimension of non-verbal communication which has been closely linked to speech and its meaning is gesture. The first to postulate an integral connection between speech and gesture was psycholinguist David McNeill in his seminal work on speech-related gesture (1985). The main assumption he tries to disprove is that speech and gesture are two different systems operating to convey the speaker's communicative intent. His detailed theoretical analysis of gestures co-occurring with speech confirms that there are close temporal, semantic, pragmatic, pathological and developmental parallels between the two modalities. These data have led him to hypothesise that speech and gesture share the same internal computational stage, and that both modalities, therefore, express the same communicative message (p.370). The main shortcoming of his claim is that he does not provide empirical evidence.

This audacious claim conceived a whole research paradigm of speech-related gesture. Cassell, McNeill, and McCullough (1999) investigated whether or not listeners do attend to the information produced by speakers via the gestural channel. The occurrence of gestures accompanying spontaneous speech had been confirmed; however, the role of gesture in interpreting information on the side of the hearer had not yet been explored. The authors found that listeners do attend to the information given via the gestural modality. Both when the gestural information supplemented or contradicted the verbal information, the gestural information influenced the interpretation of the listener. However, the authors point out that they "do not expect gestures to have decontextualised transparent meanings" (p. 20). These findings only partially confirm the hypothesis postulated by McNeill. The initial hypothesis made by McNeill encompasses a variety of links between speech and gesture, while the data from Cassell et al. only confirm the semantic relationship between the two.

The stimuli which were presented to the participants in the experiments included

speech-gesture mismatch combinations of origo and anaphor gestures. These speech-gesture mismatches usually do not occur in ordinary adult communication (p. 5). Cassell et al. argue that considering the findings relate to both the match and mismatch conditions, the findings cannot be attributed to the artificiality of a speaker producing speech-gesture mismatches. Their conclusion builds on the notion that both speech-gesture matches and mismatches cause retelling inaccuracies, a *cum hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. The chance of confounding variables intervening with this correlation is quite large; therefore this conclusion could be deceptive.

Furthermore, the stimuli consisted of video fragments in which a native speaker retold a cartoon, while the original claim was based on spontaneous speech. This lacuna was later invalidated by Hostetter, who found that scripted gestures will produce not significantly different results to spontaneously produced gestures (2011, p. 311).

The results of Cassell et al. were replicated by Beattie and Shovelton (1999a). The original cartoons used to generate stimuli were the same; however, the conditions created were different. The stimuli of Cassell et al. consisted of different kinds of gesture-speech mismatches, while Beattie and Shovelton created speech-only, vision-only, and video stimuli with speech and co-occurring matched gestures. Their findings confirm that listeners who both heard speech and saw the gestures perform significantly better at answering questions about the semantic feature of the original cartoon story told in the experiment than those who only heard the speech. These data support McNeill's (1985) hypothesis that gestures do possess communicative meaning. Similar to Cassell et al., the findings of Beattie and Shovelton can only be generalised to the semantic communicative meaning of gestures.

The sample population employed was relatively small, only 10 participants were involved in the experiment. Beattie and Shovelton, therefore, conducted a second experiment (1999b), which included 60 individual participants. Instead of opting for a within-participants design, the authors here decided on a between-participants design with video and audio-only conditions. Through this methodology, they found that participants who saw the narration in video condition performed 17.6 % better at answering questions about the semantic features of the original cartoons. The authors suggest that this implies that iconic gestures can add something to the linguistic message conveyed, although not all iconic gestures necessarily convey additional meaning to the speech it accompanies. This implication confirms and criticises McNeill's hypothesis at the same time; iconic gestures do confer meaning, but its relation to speech needs to be specified. McNeill argues that in ordinary spontaneous speech both the gesture and the verbal expression need to be considered to perceive the complete

message of an utterance. This argument would imply that an utterance produced without gesture can never employ its full meaning. Beattie and Shovelton therefore rightly state that "we cannot simply assume that because the analyst sees something in the gesture [...] that the gesture will necessarily communicate effectively in an interpersonal context" (p. 27).

The debate on this controversial topic was felicitously summarised and analysed by Hostetter (2011), who conducted a meta-analysis on speech-related gesture research. The central research question Hostetter tries to answer is if gestures significantly aid the hearer in comprehending the communicated message. This question was answered by analysing the effect sizes of 63 articles and experiments, from which Hostetter concluded that gestures indeed provide a significant, yet moderate, effect to communication, thereby giving a definitive answer to McNeill's original hypothesis considering the semantic dimension of meaning. Hostetter continues to specify this effect further and attributes it to three salient factors. Firstly, the gesture topic influences the communicative value of a gesture. If a gesture is intended to communicate an abstract topic, the effect is less than when the gesture is intended to communicate a concrete referent. Secondly, the redundancy of the gesture in relation to the speech it accompanies influences its effect; an increasing redundancy decreases the effect of the gesture. Lastly, the effect size of the gesture is congruent with age; an increase in age decreases the communicative value of the gesture. The first effect had been indicated by the work of Beattie and Shovelton (1999a, 1999b) and Cassell, McNeill, and McCullough (1999), and appears to be definitively confirmed.

Hostetter's methodological approach allowed for an encompassing overview of the research paradigm, which in turn allowed her to analyse possible external influences on the speech-gesture relationship which could account for the entirely different stances towards the communicativeness of gestures within the paradigm. Most research into speech-gesture communication strongly advocates that gesture does have communicative meaning (Beattie & Shovelton, 1999a, 1999b; Cassell et al., 1999), while others argue that gestures add very little to communicative expressions in normal circumstances (Krauss, Morrel-Samuels, & Colasante, 1991). According to Hostetter, this appears to be profoundly influenced by the conversational context in which the gestures are studied. Studies which investigate the communicative meaning of gesture in relation to speech, therefore, have to consider the particular situation in which the conversational context occurs.

The selection criteria Hostetter used for including articles restricted the discussion and answers she could provide. The dependent variable of the included studies had to constitute of some behavioural measure of comprehension, memory, or learning. Therefore, studies

investigating the influence of gesture on social attitudes possibly conveyed by the pragmatic meaning of gestures were excluded.

The extensive body of research investigating the semantic dimension of the communicative meaning of gestures thus can be concluded. Yes, gestures do communicate information in conversational context, although the type of gesture, type of information, and communicative context have to be taken into account. Iconic gestures which convey additional semantic information to the accompanying speech or co-express the same meaning are most likely to influence the hearer's perception (Beattie & Shovelton, 1999b; Church et al., 2007). McNeill's initial hypothesis is therefore partially confirmed up until this point. The pragmatic communicative meaning of gestures has been explored and reveals interesting phenomena on the perception of communicative intent and social attitude.

Maricchiolo, Gnisci, Bonaiuto, & Ficca (2009) investigated the effect of main hand gesture categories on the perception and evaluation of a speaker and the communicative intent of the verbal message. Their approach is rooted in Mehrabian's (1972) theoretical framework and tests the hypothesis that manipulating a speaker's gestures influences the perception of the hearer. The main findings include the confirmation that hearers do attend to the gestures a speaker produces and that the produced gestures influence the perception of the speaker by the hearer. The latter effect was found to be significant for both ideational and conversational gestures, although the effect was more substantial for ideational gestures.

Participants viewed a video clip of a professional actress performing a speech accompanied by five different types of gestures; ideational, conversational, object-adaptor, self-adaptor, and no gesture. Subsequently, they had to fill in a questionnaire aimed at different social and verbal dimensions of the speaker and the message conveyed. One-way ANOVAs suggest that the manipulation of gesture type has a significant influence on perception of specific social attitudes and judgment. The participants were not asked about their perception of the specific social attitude of the speaker, indicating an indirect manner of testing.

Furthermore, the type of gesture seemed to influence the level of affecting the perception of the speaker. Maricchiolo et al. categorised iconic, metaphoric, and deictic gestures as ideational, and cohesive and beat gestures were classified as conversational gestures. An additional experiment was carried out to identify gesture as the locus of the effect. This experiment featured an audio-only version of the five videos, followed by the same questionnaire. No significant effects on any of the variables were found. Additionally, the absence of gestures significantly negatively influenced the perceived dimensions of

warmth and competence of the speaker (p. 253, p. 257). This finding implies that if gestures co-occur with speech, this should positively influence the perceived warmth and competence. If no gestures are accompanying the speech, there is no speech-gesture interaction, leaving the hearer with only the linguistic content of the interaction to be interpreted. The ideational gestures showed the most substantial effect on hearer perception of the evaluation and social attitude of the message (p. 253). This finding would imply that, all other variables being equal, these types of gesture could influence these social attitudes in conversational context. Consequently, Maricchiolo and her colleagues suggest that gesture could influence this dimension of communication.

Beattie and Sale (2012) similarly investigated the interactional link between speech and co-occurring gesture in a conversational context. Both speech-gesture matches and mismatches were investigated. Cassell et al. (1999) investigated speech-gesture mismatches with anaphor, origo, and manner gestures. These types of gestures are substantially less common in everyday interpersonal interaction, wherefore Beattie and Sale investigate the influence of metaphoric speech-gesture mismatches. The first experiment confirmed that hearers attend to the information contained in metaphoric gesture and use this information alongside verbal information. Subsequently, the authors tested whether hearers use these metaphoric speech-gesture mismatches to judge the social attitude of the speaker. The data they provide confirm that recipients do combine the information contained in metaphoric gestures with that in speech and that the interpretation of the utterance is demonstrably affected in the case of a speech-gesture mismatch. Furthermore, speech-gesture matches were found to affect the likeability and integrity of the speaker positively, whereas a speech-gesture mismatch negatively affected these dimensions. This led the authors to conclude that gesture affects social attitude.

The experimental design of the second experiment is limited in a number of ways. The questionnaire reveals the purpose of the research by explicitly stating the investigated variables of likeability and integrity. This could present bias in the data due to participants' awareness of the aim of the study. No gender distribution is given for the sample population, whereas the female actor in the stimuli video could cause a gender bias for the likeability variable. The number of stimuli presented in each trial is 5, although from a statistical point of view this was levelled with the number of participants, 20 for each condition. The second experiment featured two different conditions; a matched and mismatched condition. Either condition consisted of 5 stimuli in that condition. Regarding the mismatch condition, this does not reflect any account of natural communication (Cassell et al., p. 5). The extent to which

these results can be generalised to spontaneous speech, therefore, needs to be approached cautiously.

Arndt and Janney (1996) postulated that gesture could signal politeness as being an involvement strategy (p. 286). According to the authors, gestures enable a hearer to “to make inferences not only about the literal meaning of what is said but also about its possible interpersonal implications” (p. 287). If gestures indeed allow the hearer to infer pragmatic meaning from a speaker’s utterance, this would imply that politeness could be communicated through gestures co-occurring with speech.

Research into the influence of gesture on the perception of communicative expression has investigated the influence of gesture on both the semantic (Beattie & Shovelton, 1999a, 1999b; Cassell et al., 1999; Hostetter, 2011) and pragmatic (Beattie & Sale, 2012; Maricchiolo et al., 2009) aspects of communication. Metaphoric as well as deictic and iconic gestures have been confirmed to positively influence the perception of the communicated dimensions of likeability and warmth. Hearers commonly perceive these social attitudes as empathy, which has been confirmed to be a non-verbal other-oriented politeness strategy (Ambady et al., 1996). Although it is clear that the socio-cultural and conversational context needs to be taken into consideration when interpreting data provided by empirical experiments, the influence of gesture on the perception of communicative meaning and social attitude is evident.

2.6 Speech-related gaze

Eye contact or gaze is essential in everyday interpersonal interaction; it functions as a signifier for turn-taking, it displays reciprocity, and can even be a deciding factor on whether or not an interaction is going to take place (Kidwell, 2013; Moore, Hickson, & Stacks, 2014; Rossano, Brown, & Levinson, 2009). Neuro-linguistic and psycholinguistic investigations even suggest that gaze or eye contact could be the most salient factor in nonverbal communication (George & Conty, 2008; Senju & Johnson, 2009). Its role in conversational interaction has been thoroughly explored, although its influence on the perception of the social attitude of the speaker remains relatively uninvestigated.

The importance of gaze in interpersonal communication was noticed by Mason, Tatlow, and Macrae (2005), who investigated the modulation of perception of social attitude by gaze. Listener’s evaluation of the social attitudes likeability and attractiveness was indeed significantly “moderated by the direction of gaze shifts” (p. 236). Speakers were evaluated to be both more likeable and more attractive when connected gaze was employed in interaction

rather than gaze shifts. The latter was only found when a gender bias was included in the sample population; the actor in the stimuli was female, and a significant effect for connected gaze in the attractiveness dimension was only found in the male sample population. The authors concluded from their data that gaze shifts could have a significant impact on the evaluation of person and social attitude.

Arndt and Janney (1995) considered eye contact as an involvement strategy in their cross-modal framework (p. 293). Involvement is a social attitude which affirms a hearer's positive face, which was confirmed by the principal component analysis of Ambady and his colleagues (1996, p. 1002). Arndt and Janney pointed out that eye contact or gaze as such could function as a non-verbal strategy to communicate politeness. An FTA with the same semantic and paralinguistic content could, therefore, be accompanied with or without additionally communicated politeness. If the speaker applied a connected gaze, this could add a non-verbal politeness strategy when performing an FTA.

The influence of gesture on verbal communication has been demonstrated by the various studies covering speech-gesture mismatches (Beattie & Sale, 2012; Cassell et al., 1999). The influence of gaze on gesture has been similarly investigated, although the current view on this connection is not conclusive. Stefani, Innocenti, Secchi, Papa, & Gentilucci (2013) investigated the influence of the type of gesture, valence, and gaze on the behaviour of the hearer. They found that gaze influenced gesture when co-expressed, increasing the effect caused by the gesture. However, Maricchiolo et al. (2009) did not find any significant effect for gesture on a speaker's other communicative styles including gaze (p. 249). This incongruence could be explained by the type of data analysed in both studies. Stefanie and his colleagues analysed recorded movements of participants which were videotaped, a methodology prone to interpretation errors. Maricchiolo and his colleagues used measure scales which determined the value of the investigated social dimensions. This method is somewhat reliable since no interpretation of the data is needed for analysis. The methodological design of the current study resembles that of Maricchiolo et al., wherefore no significant effect of gaze on gesture or vice versa is assumed.

Research into the influence of gaze in conversational context has provided revolutionary insights on the function of gaze (George & Conty, 2008; Kidwell, 2013; Moore et al., 2014; Rossano et al., 2009; Senju & Johnson, 2009) and its influence on the perception of the speaker (Beattie, 2007; Mason et al., 2005). The social attitudes of likeability, warmth, and attractiveness were significantly positively influenced by connected gaze, while the absence of connected gaze, or averted gaze, does not yield the same effect. As previously

mentioned, these social attitudes are commonly perceived as empathy by hearers in interaction (Ambady et al., 1996). The influence of gaze on social attitudes then is assumed to be evident, although further investigation needs to proceed carefully.

2.7 Conclusion literature, hypothesis, and predictions

Politeness as a socio-linguistic phenomenon which manifests itself in conversational interaction has been studied extensively. The majority of these investigations rely on or are heavily influenced by Brown and Levinson's seminal Politeness Theory. Politeness Theory posits that politeness in FTAs can be expressed both verbally as well as non-verbally. However, non-verbal politeness strategies which apply to conversational context are not explicitly mentioned. This lacuna was observed by Arndt and Janney (1995), who additionally proposed that communication occurs through multiple modalities and suggested that politeness could also be expressed cross-modally. Though theoretically sound, their account lacks empirical evidence of non-verbally communicated politeness. An empirical investigation into non-verbally communicated politeness was conducted by Ambady and his colleagues (1996), who concluded that politeness could indeed be communicated via non-verbal channels. However, their analysis did not identify distinct non-verbal communicative acts which conveyed politeness. Cross-modal expression of politeness could, therefore, be confirmed if the perceived level of politeness between conditions with averted or connected gaze would differ.

Research into gestures co-occurring with speech has thus far identified a significant influence on the perception of semantic and pragmatic meaning conveyed in speech. Furthermore, gesture-speech matches have been shown to positively influence the perception of social attitudes, whereas speech-gesture mismatches have been shown to affect positive social attitudes negatively. Gaze has been investigated in the context of conversational context and has theoretically been suggested as a politeness strategy. This thesis, therefore, aims to investigate nonverbal communication of politeness by empirically exploring gesture and gaze as nonverbal politeness strategies by testing the following hypotheses:

H₀: Gesture and gaze are non-verbal politeness strategies which communicate empathy and as such increase the perceived politeness level of an FTA.

H₁: Gesture and gaze are not a non-verbal politeness strategy and do not communicate empathy, wherefore they do not affect the perceived politeness level of an FTA.

If the socio-cultural and conversational context is appropriately taken into account, the following predictions could be made for the influence of gaze and gesture on the perception of politeness by the hearer;

Prediction 1: politeness rating in conditions with connected gaze is higher than in conditions with averted gaze (Ambady et al., 1996; Arndt & Janney, 1985; Brown & Levinson, 1978; Mason et al., 2005)

Prediction 2: politeness rating in conditions with deictic, metaphoric, or iconic gestures is higher than in conditions without gesture (Ambady et al., 1996; Arndt & Janney, 1985; Brown & Levinson, 1978; Maricchiolo et al., 2009)

Prediction 3: politeness rating in conditions with a mismatch between verbal and non-verbal information is lower than in 'normal' condition (Arndt & Janney, 1985; Brown & Levinson, 1978; Beattie & Sale, 2012)

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the details of the conducted experiment by justifying the choices made for the design, participant criteria, and methodological approach. This study is the first of its kind to the authors knowledge, wherefore every aspect of conducting an experiment had to be considered. The majority of the methodology is based on pragmatic approaches to investigating multi-modal phenomena. However, the answer to some of the theoretical considerations on behavioural aspects of the experiment were found in sociolinguistics and psychology. The procedure of creating the material and description of the different conditions are included in order to ensure the exact replicability of the experiment.

3.2 Design

This experiment was designed to investigate the influence of specific non-verbal behaviour on perceived politeness in an empirical setting. The perceived level of politeness is the dependent variable of this study. The selected methodology is a Likert-scale questionnaire with a videotaped request stimulus. This approach is considered the most appropriate since it allows a researcher to quickly gather an extensive amount of quantitative data while accurately controlling for the manipulation of the non-verbal behaviour presented in the stimuli. Including videotaped stimuli is an excellent way to ensure that every individual participant is presented with the exact same request FTA in terms of verbal and non-verbal expressions apart from the manipulated non-verbal behavior. One of the major advantages of combining a video stimulus with a Likert-scale questionnaire immediately following it is that no confounding factors disturb the methodological design (Kaspar & Rose, 2002).

The experiment consisted of an introductory text, a presentation of a video stimulus in which the non-verbal behaviour was manipulated, and a questionnaire with Likert-scale type questions. The experiment features a between-subject design aimed at testing the perceived politeness levels of requests performed with different non-verbal behaviour. The introductory text is aimed at delineating the socio-cultural, conversational, and individual context of the request action performed in the material and can be found in Appendix A. The request was presented in 4 different conditions following from a 2x2 design of gesture and gaze manipulations; no gesture x averted gaze, no gesture x connected gaze, gesture x averted gaze, and gesture x connected gaze. The questionnaire with Likert-scale type questions delineates

the concept of politeness and how it is perceived as a social attitude in interaction.

Additionally, four questions were added to the questionnaire to gather metadata on the participants' age, gender, education, and awareness of the aim of the study.

The combination of an online questionnaire with integrated video material is an effective way of gathering a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data. Rather than opting for a role-play where participants have to imagine a communicative situation (Ambady et al., 1996), the integrated video material allows the researcher to present controlled manipulations of non-verbal behavior and create a naturalistic as possible request interaction while still being able to increase the statistical power of the data due to the sheer number of responses. The use of a pre-recorded request allows for multi-modal non-verbal dimensions to be independently manipulated while keeping the semantic, syntactic, and paralinguistic content the same (Bonaccio et al., 2016; Jewitt, 2012). Subsequently presenting the participant with a questionnaire outlining the construct of politeness via theoretically validated aspects of politeness ensures the assessment of this social attitude in the data.

One argument which can be raised against this approach is that the participant's emotions will not be significantly affected by presenting a video stimulus, and, therefore, a difference in perceived empathy cannot be detected. Previous research which adopted a similar methodological approach, investigating an effect of video-based stimuli on participant's emotions, conclusively found that video-based stimuli did influence participant's attitudes and emotions (Argyle et al., 1970; Lang et al., 1996). Furthermore, Argyle et al. found that verbal and non-verbal cues elicited identical effects on the perception of social attitudes. Grahe and Bernieri (1999) found that participants managed to accurately judge the rapport of dyadic interactions when presented with only the non-verbal cues. Additionally, presenting the complete communicative spectrum did not significantly improve the judgment (p. 264). These findings suggest that, all other factors being equal, verbal and non-verbal utterances would elicit an equivalent effect on the perception of empathy even when presented through video-based stimuli. The presentation of the stimuli through a digital medium is, therefore, assumed to not interfere with indicating a possible effect of non-verbal behaviour on perceived politeness.

An additional argument against using online video stimuli is the possibility that the quality of the video might influence the participant's ability to identify emotional cues and spatial manipulations. This hypothetical argument was investigated by Wallbott (1992), who presented 14 different emotions in videos with declining quality in an experiment. The declining quality was created by either increasing the spatial distortion by reducing the

amount of pixels, or by increasing the temporal distortion by removing a predetermined amount of frames from the video. The data from this experiment indicate that a resolution of 75 x 75 pixels or fewer significantly affects the participants' ability to accurately identify the correct emotion (p. 14). Similarly, removing any of the frames from a 25 frames/second quality video significantly influenced the recognition of any of the emotions (p. 16). Cautious of these distortions, the current stimuli were filmed with the camera of a Huawei P10 Lite smartphone with 12-megapixel and 30 frames/second (no additional zoom was used).

The independent variables are the socio-cultural aspects which determine the context of the request FTA; power, social distance, weight of imposition, and gender. Dutch business culture is described to be a solidarity politeness system, characterised by a –P / -D relationship between colleagues (Hofstede, 2003; Ulijn, 1995). The power dimension was controlled for by indirectly describing the relationship between the actor and participant as equal. This relationship is affirmed by the semantic and syntactic wording of the request; the participant is addressed as *jij* ('you') indicating – P. The age criterion of the participants was aimed at not creating a perceived power difference from age difference alone. Furthermore, the speaker dressed casually to not ascribe any social status on the basis of clothing. The weight of imposition of an FTA is determined by the relationship between the speaker and the hearer concerning power and social distance, and additionally, a culturally determined ranking of imposition for the specific FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 76). No individual cross-cultural variation was therefore allowed.

3.3 Participants

The criteria for selecting the participants were based on a number of factors influencing the socio-cultural context of the relationship between the speaker and the participant. All participants were native speakers of Dutch. A pilot study was conducted prior to the actual experiment to check whether participants would be aware of the aim of the study. Ten participants who met the criteria were randomly selected. Only 1 out of 10 provided an answer indicating awareness of the aim of the study as indicated above. This response was taken to indicate that the construct validity of the design was at least sufficient. The participants for the actual experiment were recruited online through social media. A request for participation was posted asking participants between 20 and 30 years who had not spent more than one year in a foreign country due to possible interference of culturally different non-verbal behaviour to participate. The latter criterion was added to prevent the non-native non-verbal behaviour from interfering (Seegerstrale & Molnár, 1997). A lottery was added to

the questionnaire in order to increase the incentive for participation. By taking part in this lottery, participants could win 30 euros.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions and quotas were set in Qualtrics to keep track of the number of male and female participants whom each had completed the survey. Once the target sample population was reached ($n = 120$), the dataset was downloaded and checked. 44 entries did not finish the questionnaire (ranging from 3% to 83% complete). The most completed entry (83%) did not finish the Likert-scale questions on the politeness dimension and did not provide any metadata. Each of these entries was excluded for analysis and a total of 44 new participants were recruited. A second recruitment session was initiated online via personal communication. The same criteria were applied. This resulted in a total number of 130 completed responses. 12 of these had to be excluded on the basis of participants' awareness of the aim of the study since their answers to the question of ; 'body language', 'non-verbal communication', 'gaze', or 'gesture'. This resulted in the following sample population composition, grouped per condition;

Connected gaze x gesture	15M/15F
Connected gaze x no gesture	15M/17F
Averted gaze x gesture	13M/14F
Averted gaze x no gesture	15M/14F

Age range was 19 to 43, mean age was 24,8. Five outliers were noticed (19, 19, 31, 35, and 43 years old), although each of these indicated at least a score of 'moderately agree' to the statement 'I could identify myself with this person', wherefore these data were included into the analysis despite not meeting the age criterion. The number of male and female participants per condition was counterbalanced to avoid a gender bias within conditions.

An argument against counterbalancing the sample population for gender is that female participants might be more skilled at consciously decoding non-verbal communication. This assumption was investigated and confirmed by Hall (1978). The effect was found for messages which were perceived through audio-only, video-only, and video-plus-audio presentation, however, the effect was largest for stimuli presented in video-plus-audio presentation. Hall's explanation for the stability of the occurrence of the effect over all studies is based on a rather outdated set of socio-cultural norms and values, but the provided data are convincing nonetheless. This suggests that the female participants might have an advantage in identifying the non-verbal manipulations in the current experiment. Although Hall's conclusive results provide a convincing argument for a gender bias in perceiving non-verbal

cues, this bias is not expected to surface in a questionnaire aimed at investigating the perceived level of politeness (Mills, 2003). A possible difference in perceived level of politeness between genders within conditions will nevertheless be investigated.

3.4 Experiment

The questionnaire was available through an anonymous link, provided by Qualtrics. The link lead participants to a consent form stating the anonymous treatment of their data as well as a short description and instructions for the survey. Subsequently, the participants viewed the videotaped request, the questionnaire with Likert-scale type questions about politeness, and the metadata questions. A force response rule ensured that every single question was answered. Once the participants had finished the Likert-scale questionnaire and the metadata questions a link was presented at the end of the survey to lead the participants to another form where they could fill in their personal details to participate in the lottery. The link between the two surveys was made untraceable in order to ensure anonymity of the participants. The winner of the lottery was randomly chosen by entering the relevant data of the second form into Excel. All participants were linked to a number and then a first place was selected with the randomise function of Excel. The winner was contacted via their email address and the lottery prize was transferred.

3.4.1 Videotaped request

The videotaped stimuli were created in collaboration with an amateur actor who agreed to perform on a voluntary basis. The materials were recorded in a total of three recording sessions. After each recording session, the material was discussed with the thesis supervisor, and lead to a final selection of 1 video for each condition. A soundtrack with office sounds was edited in at 20% of the volume level of the video with Adobe Photoshop CC 2017 in order to create a more naturalistic interaction. The non-verbal behavior was the manipulated factor in this video. The focus lies with individual display of non-verbal behavior whilst the non-verbal behavior will be studied in a macro-context. It is the partial composites of the non-verbal behavior of the actor, gaze and gesture, which are expected to influence the dependent variable politeness (Bonaccio et al., 2016).

The material aimed to present the participants with a naturalistic as possible request interaction while manipulating the non-verbal behaviour. The experimental design aimed to maintain the non-verbal behaviour as the only manipulated aspect across the conditions. The actor was provided with a scripted request to keep the semantic and syntactic content identical

in each condition. The original scripted text in Dutch as well as an English translation can be found in Appendix B. The lexical content of the request was aimed at indicating the relationship between the actor and participant regarding power and social distance (-P / -D) and indicated the weight of imposition of the request (Ulijn, 1995). Additionally, the actor was instructed to keep the paralanguage, pitch, tone, volume, tempo, and intonation, the same in each condition to avoid either of these becoming a confounding variable.

The gesture manipulation was realised by asking the actor to use those gestures which would come naturally to him when performing the request. This method resulted in the following three gestural movements in chronological order, described according to McNeill's terminology (2007, p. 29-42). The first gestural movement is generally seen as a shrug of the shoulders; the rest position of both arms is stretched alongside the body in a relaxed manner. This pose was followed by the preparation phase where both arms move away from the body in an upwards and forwards motion. This movement was directly followed by the retraction phase, where both arms return to the rest position. This gesture does not have a stroke phase, wherefore it cannot be considered a full gesture. It is therefore likely that no meaning should be ascribed to it.

The second gestural phrase could generally be seen as a pointing movement towards the participant, co-expressed with *jij* ('you'). The rest position is both arms stretched alongside the body in a relaxed manner. In the initiating preparation phase, the arm performing the gesture (left arm in the connected gaze x gesture condition, right arm in the averted gaze x gesture condition). The stroke phase features the elbow at an almost 90-degree angle with the body, the underarm stretched forward, and the hand was pointing at the participant. This phase was immediately followed by the retraction phase, where the arm returns to the rest position next to the body.

The third gestural phrase is a movement of the right hand towards the speaker himself, co-expressed with *mij* ('me'). The rest position is identical to the previous gestural phrase. The preparation phase features the right hand moving in a sideways upward motion across the front of the speaker's torso. In the stroke phase, the right hand is placed on the left chest at the height of the heart, creating a 45-degree angle of the elbow. Subsequently, a poststroke hold phase occurs in the pause between *mij* and *even*. The gesture is then terminated by a retraction phase where the arm returns to its resting position.

Gesture literature has long regarded the gesture types of iconic, metaphoric, deictic, and beat as definite and isolated categories (Beattie & Shovelton, 1999a, 1999b, 2002; Cassell et al., 1999; Kendon, 2004; McNeill, 1985). The ambiguity of these gestures, however, often

puts them in multiple categories. Recent developments in gesture terminology, therefore, argue for using these categories as dimensions rather than isolated definitions (McNeill, 2007; Knapp, Hall, & Horgan, 2014). The second and third gestural phrase described above will be considered as being expressed in both the deictic and beat dimensions. They consist of a gesture pointing at visible entities which emphasises the simultaneously occurring speech *mij* and *jij*.

The gaze manipulation was realised by asking the actor to maintain eye contact for the connected gaze condition and inconspicuously averting his gaze for the averted gaze condition. The balance considered here was making the gaze aversion as explicit as possible while not making the manipulation too visible. This approach resulted in three gaze aversions for the duration of the video, an average of 14 aversions per minute. A typical realisation of the aversion can be found in Appendix D. The conditions where there is a mismatch between the verbally employed politeness strategy and hypothetically employed non-verbal politeness strategy will be considered the mismatch condition. This definition applies to the no gesture and averted gaze condition.

3.4.2 Likert-scale questionnaire

A questionnaire with Likert-scale type questions followed the videotaped request. This questionnaire was divided up into two parts; the first part consisted of 10 questions which will investigate the participant's attitude towards the perceived value of politeness of the request, the second part consisted of 4 questions aimed at collecting metadata. When testing for sociopragmatic composite constructs, it is of paramount importance that the constructs are divided up into their underlying aspects (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The questionnaire is designed to fulfil these requirements and presents ten items delineating the construct of politeness. These underlying aspects were derived from involvement and independence strategies signalling politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 71-4; Scollon & Scollon, 2002, pp. 50-1). The Likert scale was designed in such a way that a higher score would indicate a higher level of politeness. Both involvement and independence strategies were included to increase the construct validity of the questionnaire (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). The Likert-scale was reversed for aspects derived from the independence strategies wherefore a higher score still indicated a higher level of positive politeness. The original questionnaire and an English translation can be found in Appendix B.

The 10 Likert-scale type questions each gave a score between 1 – 7 regarding the statements. The average of these scores indicated the perceived level of politeness for each

participant (Carson & Cupach, 2000). These averages are treated as interval data, which allows for a comparison between different samples on the basis of condition of non-verbal behaviour, gender, age, and education (Carifio & Perla, 2007). These analyses were performed with independent sample t-tests. The independent sample t-test allows for a comparison of two independent groups and determines whether or not there is statistical evidence for assuming a significant difference between the sample population means. None of the conditions featured the same number of participants after the exclusion criteria were applied, except for the connected gaze x gesture condition. Independent samples t-tests, however, do not require the same population samples. This inequality is therefore assumed to not affect the outcome of the independent samples t-test in any way.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a synopsis of the main results of this study which flowed from the statistical analyses done with SPSS on the quantitative data resulting from the Likert scale section of the questionnaire. The primary considerations are mean politeness scores per condition and several manipulations, as well as independent sample t-tests used to compare mean politeness scores. The interpretation of these results in the light of the hypotheses as mentioned above and predictions will be discussed in the following chapter.

4.2 Results and analysis

The data from the Likert scale section of the questionnaire was downloaded from the Qualtrics website and was subsequently edited and grouped in IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The politeness score for each participant was calculated. Numerical scores were attributed to the Likert-scale responses to allow parametric tests and identify politeness scores for individual participants (Carifio & Perla, 2007; Norman, 2010). This score resulted from the 10 Likert-type questions, which each provided a score between 1 – 7. The average politeness score per condition was calculated with the ‘Explore’ function of SPSS, which returned the mean scores per condition which can be found in Figure 2. The politeness scores given in this chapter have to be interpreted on a scale of 1 to 7; 1 indicating the lowest possible politeness score and 7 indicating the highest possible politeness score.

The mean values of the politeness scores of the different conditions were tested for normality with a Shapiro-Wilk test. The averted gaze x gesture condition returned a significance of $p = .895$, the averted gaze x no gesture condition returned a significance of $p = .492$, the connected gaze x gesture condition returned a significance of $p = .209$, and the connected gaze x no gesture condition returned a significance of $p = .445$. An additional Shapiro-Wilk test on the average politeness score across the total sample population returned a significance of $p = .179$. Neither the individual sample populations or the complete data set tested for significance, which indicates that none of the data sets significantly deviate from a

normal distribution and therefore can be used for an independent samples t-test.

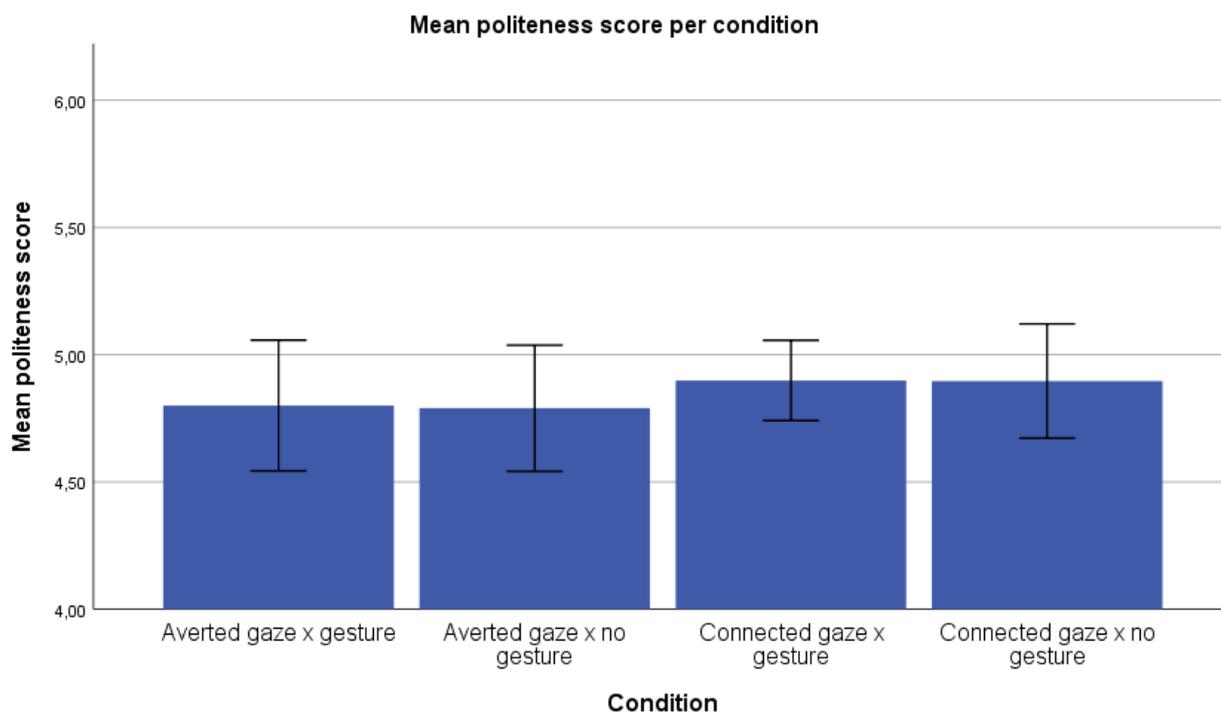


Figure 2. Mean politeness score per condition. Higher scores indicate higher perceived politeness. Error bars indicate 95% CIs.

The columns in Figure 2 indicate the average politeness scores of the request FTA in the different multi-modal conditions as rated by the participants assigned to that specific condition. The request FTA with averted gaze and the gestures expressed in the deictic and beat dimensions was on average rated as 4.80 on the politeness scale. The request FTA with averted gaze and without gesture was on average rated as 4.78 on the politeness scale. The request FTA with connected gaze and the gestures expressed on the deictic and beat dimensions was on average rated as 4.89 on the politeness scale. The request FTA with only the connected gaze and no gesture was on average rated as 4.89 on the politeness scale. These initial scores led to a comparison of average scores in the different gaze conditions, gesture conditions, and sample populations grouped by gender.

The comparison of these different sample population groups was accomplished by grouping the data of equivalent gaze and gesture manipulations. This grouping created the overarching conditions of averted gaze and connected gaze. The same procedure was used to create the conditions of gesture and no gesture. The dimensions of gaze and gesture do not significantly influence each other's perception, wherefore the probability that this procedure did distort the data sets is negligible given that all other variables and factors are equal (Maricchiolo et al., 2009). Subsequently, the mean scores for each condition were calculated

and were compared with independent sample t-tests. The results of the mean score calculations and between-group comparisons can be found in Figure 3 and 4.

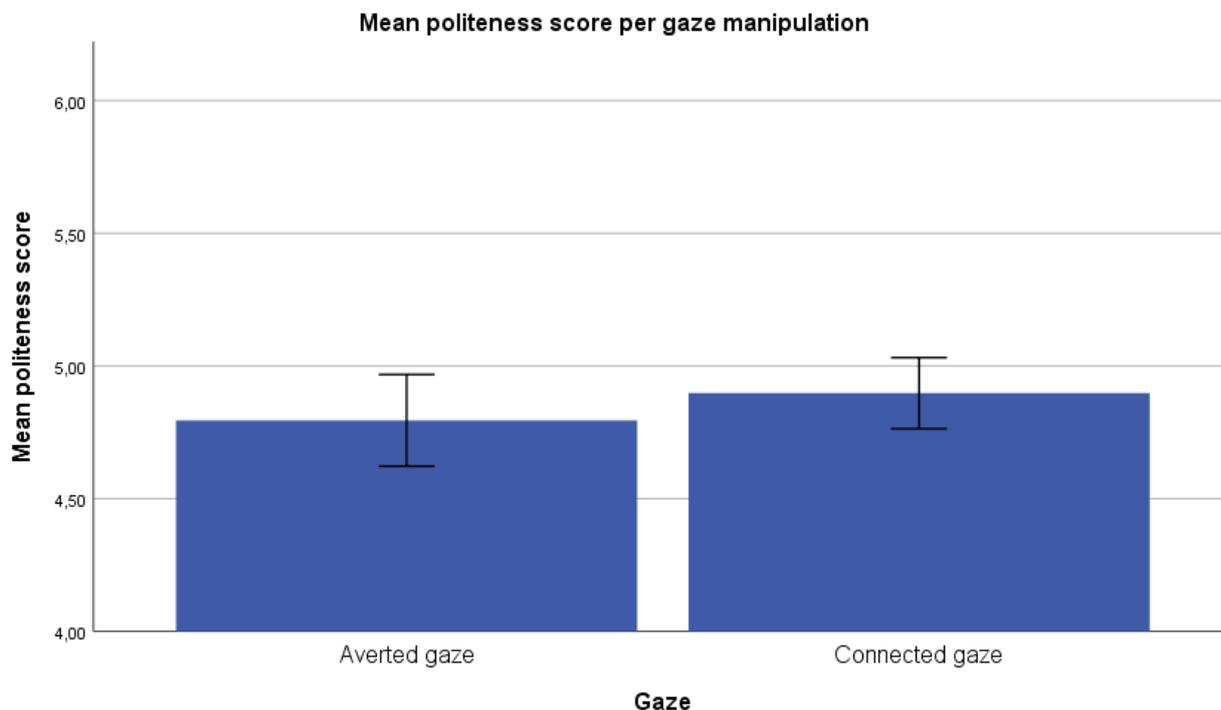


Figure 3. Mean politeness score per gaze manipulation. Higher scores indicate higher perceived politeness. Error bars indicate 95% CIs.

The columns in Figure 3 indicate the average politeness score of the request FTA for the connected gaze and averted gaze manipulation. The 95% CIs of the average politeness scores indicate that the average politeness score for that manipulation can be said to lie between the error bar borders with a confidence level of 95% when tested across the total sample population. These 95% CIs are [4.62, 4.96] for the averted gaze condition and [4.76, 5.03] for the connected gaze condition. On average, participants in the connected gaze conditions rated the actor as more polite ($M = 4.89, s = .52$) than participants in the averted gaze condition ($M = 4.79, s = .65$). This difference of -0.1 , 95% CI $[-.32 - .11]$ was not statistically significant $t(116) = -.948, p = .34$ (two-tailed).

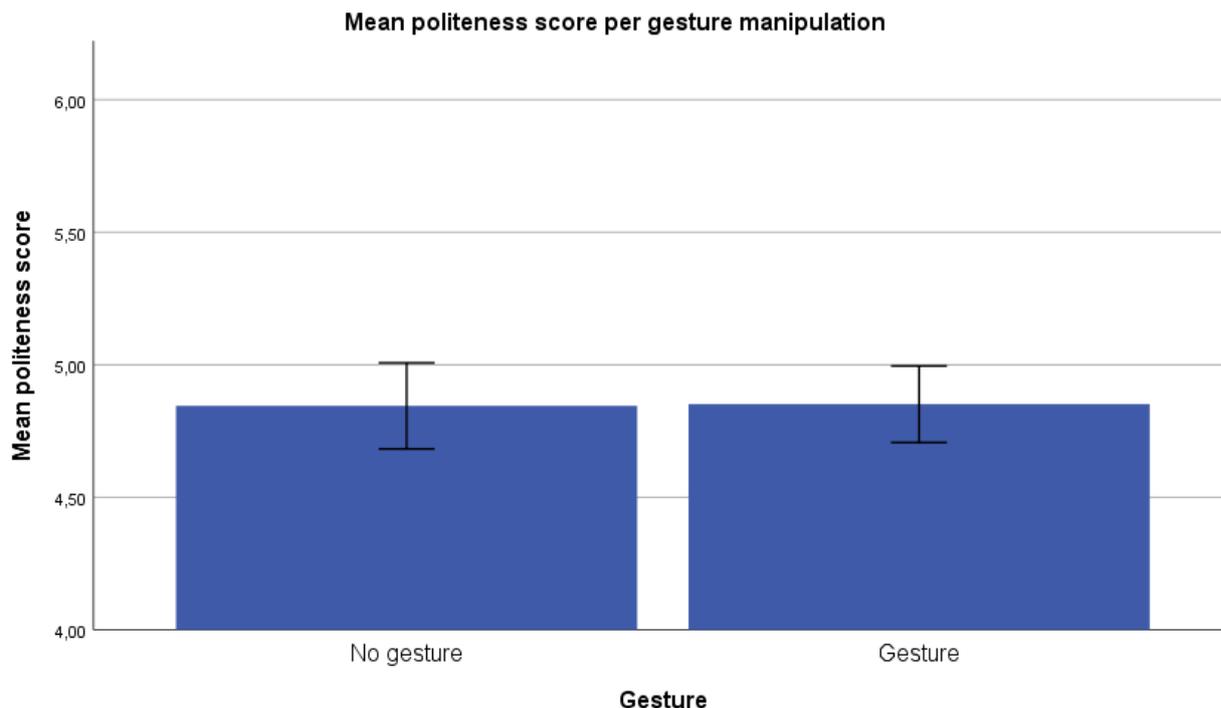


Figure 4. Mean politeness score per gesture manipulation. Higher scores indicate higher perceived politeness. Error bars indicate 95% CIs.

The columns in Figure 4 indicate the average politeness score of the request FTA for the gesture and no gesture manipulation. The 95% CIs of the average politeness scores indicate that the average politeness score for that manipulation can be said to lie between the error bar borders with a confidence level of 95% when tested among the total sample population. The 95% CIs are [4.68, 5.00] for the no gesture condition and [4.70, 4.99] for the gesture condition. On average, participants in the gesture conditions rated the actor as more polite ($M = 4.85$, $s = .55$) than participants in no gesture condition ($M = 4.84$, $s = .62$). This difference of -0.006 , 95% CI $[-.22 - .21]$ was not statistically significant $t(116) = -.056$, $p = .95$ (two-tailed).

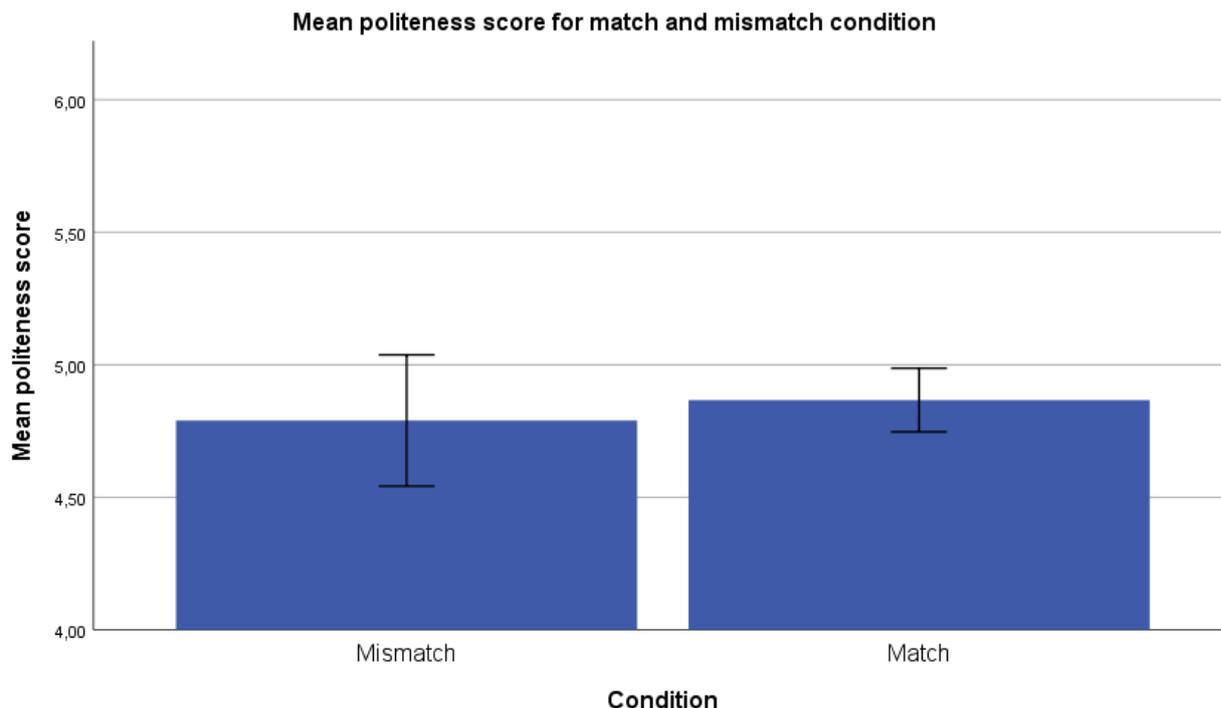


Figure 5. Mean politeness score for match and mismatch conditions. Higher scores indicate higher perceived politeness. Error bars indicate 95% CIs.

The columns in Figure 5 indicate the average politeness score of the request FTA for the gesture and no gesture manipulation. The 95% CIs of the average politeness scores indicate that the average politeness score for that manipulation can be said to lie between the error bar borders with a confidence level of 95% when tested among the total sample population. The 95% CIs are [4.74, 4.98] for the match condition and [4.54, 5.03] for the mismatch condition. On average, participants in the match conditions rated the actor as more polite ($M = 4.86$, $s = .56$) than participants in no gesture condition ($M = 4.78$, $s = .65$). This difference of -0.077 , 95% CI $[-.32 - .17]$ was not statistically significant $t(116) = -.612$, $p = .542$ (two-tailed).

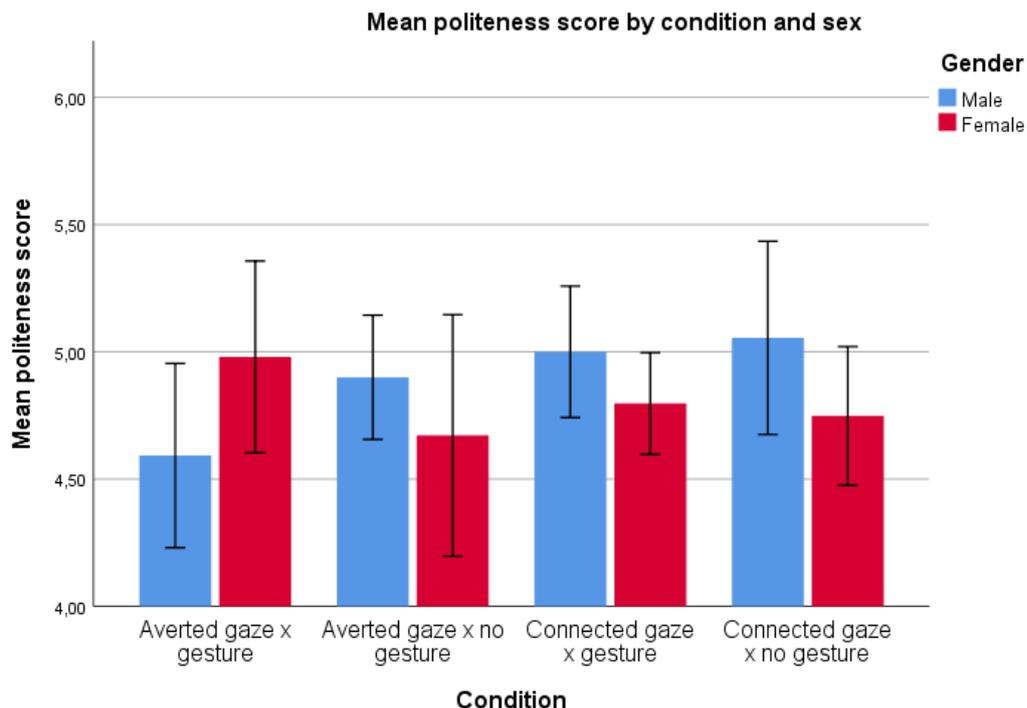


Figure 6. Mean politeness scores per condition and gender. Higher scores indicate higher perceived politeness. Error bars indicate 95% CIs.

The columns in Figure 6 indicate the average score per condition per gender. The average scores per gender within conditions were compared with independent t-tests. None of the differences in average politeness score between gender per condition was significant. Taken over the total sample population, male participants rated the actor as more polite ($M = 4.89$, $s = .57$) than female participants ($M = 4.8$, $s = .61$). This difference of $-.096$, 95% CI $[-.12, .31]$ was not statistically significant $t(116) = .89$, $p = .38$ (two-tailed).

The central research question addressed in this study is whether or not non-verbal behaviour affects the perceived politeness. The results of the current experiment suggest that none of the non-verbal manipulations significantly affected the perceived politeness. The research question was divided up into three different hypotheses resulting from the studies presented in the literature chapter. The presence of gestures was expected to increase the perceived level of politeness, whereas the absence of gesture was expected to have a negative influence on the perceived level of politeness (Beattie & Sale, 2012; Maricchiolo et al., 2009). When gestures expressed in the beat and deictic dimensions co-occurred with the speech in a request FTA, this did not significantly affect the perceived politeness. The mean politeness score in the gesture condition was increased by 0.2% when compared to the no gesture conditions. The connected gaze manipulation was expected to significantly increase the perceived politeness

level when compared to the averted gaze manipulation (Mason et al., 2005). When the gaze of the actor was manipulated to an averted gaze, this did not significantly affect the perceived politeness of the request FTA. The mean politeness score in the connected gaze condition was increased by 2.1% when compared to the averted gaze condition. Finally, a mismatch between the verbally and non-verbally expressed politeness was expected to decrease the perceived level of politeness (Beattie & Sale, 2012). A mismatch between the two non-verbal dimensions did not significantly affect the perceived politeness level. The mean politeness score in the mismatch condition was increased by 0.2% when compared to the match condition.

Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and evaluates the results of the current study individually and in light of the previous literature. The results do not speak to the hypotheses, therefore, possible explanations for these differences are provided here. Subsequently, the limitations of the current study and methodological improvements for future research are indicated. Since the results do not speak to the hypotheses this has some implications for the predictions made in the literature chapter. These implications provide the basis for an expansion of the research question addressed in this thesis. Finally, the study is summarised by stating the main findings which are translated to a possible practical application.

5.2 Discussion

The experiment employed in this study investigated the influence of the non-verbal dimensions of gaze and gesture on the perceived politeness of a request FTA. The experiment featured a 2x2 design which allowed for mean comparisons of different sample populations based on gaze manipulation, gesture manipulation, speech-non-verbal mismatch, and gender. The main findings refute the original hypothesis; perceived politeness is not significantly increased by employing gesture and gaze as non-verbal politeness strategies when co-occurring with speech. The condition in which gestures co-occurred with speech caused a microscopic increase on the perceived politeness of the hearer when compared with the no gesture condition. The connected gaze manipulation increased the perceived politeness substantially by 0.1. However, when moving from the raw numbers to the interpretation of the results, this increase in perceived politeness has to be read on a 7-point scale, indicating the relativity of this increase. A mismatch between the level of politeness in the verbal dimension and the non-verbal dimension did not decrease the perceived politeness. Finally, the comparison within conditions ordered by gender revealed that perceived politeness was not subject to gender bias.

Previous research has suggested that connected gaze positively influences the perceived empathy, a social attitude which can be employed as a non-verbal politeness strategy (Ambady et al., 1996; Mason et al., 2005). Furthermore, research into speech-accompanying gestures has found that speaker warmth and speaker composure, which are perceived as empathy by hearers, is negatively affected by the absence of gestures and

positively affected by the presence of ideational and conversational gestures (Ambady et al., 1996, Maricchiolo et al., 2009). Additionally, Beattie and Sale (2012) found that a mismatch between speech and co-occurring metaphoric gestures negatively affected speaker likeability and integrity. These findings were addressed in the current study to investigate the central research question of whether or not non-verbal behaviour influences perceived politeness.

The short answer to this is; no, the perceived politeness is not significantly affected by non-verbal behaviour, at least not as expressed through the dimensions of gaze or gesture. The results indicate that hearers did not perceive a speaker as more polite when the gaze was connected in interaction. Neither was the speaker perceived as less polite when he averted gaze. This finding may somewhat speak against the Western socio-cultural disposition that not making eye-contact is considered impolite. The explanation for this could be a spectrum for polite or impolite eye-contact behaviour. The frequency of aversion could be mapped onto this spectrum, where no aversion is the most polite and continuous aversion is the most impolite. The 'averted gaze' condition in the current experiment was classified as averted gaze because of the frequent aversion of eye contact, yet it would not appear as significantly less polite or impolite since the frequency of aversion did not cross the culturally determined boundary where the frequency of gaze aversion becomes impolite.

Employing beat or deictic gestures co-occurrent with speech did not significantly influence the perceived politeness of hearers. This finding differs from the results of Maricchiolo and her colleagues (2009) who had found a significant positive effect of both ideational and conversational gestures on the perception of empathy when compared to a no gesture condition. Deictic gestures were included in the ideational gesture category and beat gestures were included in the conversational gesture category. However, they are not the only types of gestures included. Ideational gestures additionally include iconic and metaphoric gestures, and conversational gestures additionally include cohesive gestures. According to Hadar, Burstein, Krauss, and Soroker (1998), deictic gestures do not fall into the ideational category since they are not gestures with a complex nature. This theoretical argument appears to be supported by the empirical findings of the current experiment; contrary to Maricchiolo et al.'s categorisation of deictic gestures as ideational, they do not fall into this category.

Maricchiolo et al. (2009) do not provide argumentation for their categorisation, wherefore Hadar et al.'s categorisation appears more suitable since it fits explicitly. Hadar et al. (1998) furthermore define deictic gestures as gestures which accompany pronominal expressions, whereas beat gestures are described purely as short and fast gestures which co-occur with speech (p. 60). This terminological distribution would place the gestures in the

current material predominantly in the deictic category rather than being expressed in both the deictic and the beat dimension. If this definition is adapted then both gestures in the gesture condition of the current experiment would fall outside Maricchiolo et al.'s ideational gesture category. On the basis of theoretical and empirical argumentation, it can thus be concluded that deictic gestures do not positively affect perceived politeness.

The results of the current study did not find any significant effects in the mismatch condition, contrasting with the second experiment of Beattie and Sale (2012). Their mismatch condition found significant negative effects on the perceived likeability and integrity of the speaker, two social attitudes which can be employed as other-oriented politeness strategies according to the principal component analysis of Ambady et al. (1996, p. 1002). The current study did not find any significant effects on the perceived politeness when the level of verbally expressed politeness and non-verbally expressed politeness did not match. The most viable explanation for this disparity is the experimental stimuli. The mismatch stimuli in the experiment of Beattie and Sale consisted exclusively of mismatches, reducing the applicability to actual interpersonal interaction. The perception of a speaker in an actual interpersonal interaction would be logically affected if none of the gestures matched their co-occurring speech.

Subsequently, the hypothesis that gestures could have the pragmatic function of communicating politeness when co-occurring with speech should not be discarded immediately. The results of the gesture manipulation speak to McNeill's hypothesis in a rather specific manner. McNeill (1985) postulated that beat gestures serve essential pragmatic functions in communication. Although he does not further specify which pragmatic functions might be employed by beat gestures, expressing politeness can most likely be excluded from this checklist. The significant effect of influencing social attitudes Maricchiolo et al. found was based on overarching gesture categories. Each of the individual types of gesture within these categories could be the locus of this effect. This implication would resonate with the conclusions drawn by Beattie and Sale (2012). Metaphoric gestures rather than beat gestures induced the significant effects of gestures on the perception of social attitudes they found. Investigating a possible effect of the alternative types of gesture, metaphoric and iconic, on the communicated social attitudes indicated by Ambady et al. (1996, p. 1002) could shine a light on whether or not these perceived social attitudes, and thus politeness, are influenced by gesture manipulation.

The gender bias in interpreting non-verbal communication presupposed by Hall (1978) did not surface in the data of the current experiment, as expected. This suggests that the

perception of politeness is not subject to a gender bias. However, these results can only be generalised to the population sampled by the group of participants; white higher educated Dutch 20 to 30 year old. The subgroup of the population with this particular socio-cultural background can therefore be concluded to judge the perceived politeness of the actor in the video without a gender bias.

The methodology opted for in the current study was founded on positivist argumentation. The implication that non-verbal behaviour could affect perceived politeness could only be tested if all other aspects of the micro- and macro-context were controlled for. The macro-context, consisting of the independent variables power, distance, weighting of imposition, and culture, was controlled for by the introductory text, stimuli details, and participant selection. The micro-context, consisting of all verbal and non-verbal aspects of the video stimuli, was controlled for by the scripted text and stimuli selection. The online questionnaire subsequently allowed to control the number of participants for each condition. The control over these aspects which was thereby obtained was necessary to create equal conditions for statistical comparison.

The unanticipated findings suggest two options for future research into the non-verbal expression of politeness; either the stimuli have to be designed in such a way that a digital presentation would no longer be an impediment, or the presentation of the stimuli has to be altered to create an even more naturalistic setting. The first option would imply that the visibility of the manipulations has to be exaggerated to the extent that they are visible on even a small smartphone screen. While the execution of this might not be a grand complication, the generalizability of the results to actual societal context would be significantly diminished. The second option has some implications. The Likert-scale questionnaire with video stimulus is probably the most appropriate online method for testing multimodal manipulations, enhancing the naturalistic setting would, therefore, mean taking the testing offline. The offline realisation of this interaction could be staged between an actor and the participant, after which the participant completes a similar questionnaire or is interviewed to create more qualitative data. This approach would be a somewhat arduous alternative, and prone to creating differences between interactions. If financial aspects would be a minor limitation, recent developments in augmented reality and virtual reality technology could be a suitable solution here. Virtual reality glasses could be used to present a pre-recorded request in isolation. Augmented reality glasses could present a pre-recorded request while keeping the background noise for strong generalizability to actual interpersonal interaction in context.

The averted gaze condition was created by letting the actor avert his gaze for at least four times in each video. A still of this averted gaze can be found in Appendix C. The direction of the aversion was not identical for each manipulation, although the magnitude was similar and can be determined precisely in this still. What emanates from this magnitude of aversion is that, although it may be naturalistic, it might not be salient enough to be noticed when presented online. This magnitude of aversion could easily go unnoticed in the context of actual interpersonal interaction, an effect which is augmented by presenting the video on a computer screen. This could be a plausible explanation for the lack of difference in politeness rating between the connected and averted gaze conditions.

The gesture condition was created with the same rationale as the gaze condition; the actor was instructed to use those gestures of which the use in interaction would appear most natural to him. This approach resulted in gestures expressed in the deictic and beat dimensions. As described above, these gestures co-occurred with the utterance of *mij* ('me') and *jij* ('you'). These gestures do not have a fixed meaning when studied in isolation of the linguistic context.

However, when acted out between two interlocutors with the same Dutch socio-cultural background they almost always have the same pragmatic meaning; emphasising the utterance of precisely these two words. Presupposing the fact that all participants have a higher education, the same socio-cultural background, and have not been influenced by non-verbal behaviour in a foreign language it is rather plausible that the semantic meaning of these gestures in the current context is salient over the pragmatic meaning. The participants then perceive the gestures as a semantic utterance which matches the linguistic content, and from an efficient conversational point of view do not, and need not, to assign further meaning to the gestures. This explanation leads to the logical conclusion that the pragmatic meaning of the utterance, therefore, is not affected.

A weakness of the current study is that the experiment did not employ a control condition. Hostetter (2011) aptly incorporated this as a selection criterion for her meta-study. This experiment, however, compared the influence of two different types of non-verbal behaviour without having a condition without manipulations. Although the full implications of the current data become more challenging because of this shortcoming, the manipulation of gestures made including a control condition impossible in the light of the previous literature. Namely, the absence of gesture negatively affects the hearer's perception of a speaker's empathy (Maricchiolo et al., 2009), whereas the presence of iconic, metaphoric, and deictic gestures positively affect the hearer's perception of a speaker's empathy, likeability, and

truthfulness (Beattie & Sale, 2012; Maricchiolo et al., 2009). These findings appear to create a binary distinction for presenting a gesture manipulation to the speaker in this context; neither manipulation is a valid baseline. Designing a 'neutral' control condition, therefore, appears to be unattainable in the context of the current literature.

The theoretical implications of the results with regards to PT are rather straightforward. The non-verbal politeness strategies conceived by Ambady et al. (1996, p. 1002) map onto the positive and negative politeness strategies in PT. This implies that the non-verbal manipulations employed in the experiment, which theoretically would have influenced empathy, likeability, and truthfulness, could be considered positive politeness strategies. Considering that the questionnaire employed in this study was aimed at determining the perception of the politeness level on behalf of the participants, the results can be interpreted to predict how the hearer would perceive the non-verbal expression of politeness. Deictic gestures and gaze connection did not influence the social attitudes mentioned above and therefore cannot be considered positive politeness strategies. However, this inherently creates possibilities for future research. If specific non-verbal behaviour can be identified as the locus of effect for affecting either of the social attitudes they could be classified as a non-verbal expansion of the equivalent verbal politeness strategy.

The possible effect of the non-verbally communicated politeness, therefore, needs to be investigated in a cross-cultural setting and focus on the macro-context of the socio-cultural or economic background of the interlocutors while keeping the micro-context of the interaction the same. The results from these investigations could furthermore argue for or against the universality claim of PT. If the non-verbal politeness strategies can be employed with the same non-verbal behaviour in intercultural settings and thereby influence the perceived politeness in a similar manner, this could argue for the universality of non-verbal politeness strategies.

The slightly contradictory results may be argued for by the processing speed of verbal and non-verbal information a hearer is confronted with. The short temporal nature of the video and request might prompt the participant to mainly focus on the verbal message rather than the non-verbal behaviour, purely because people are behavioural beings and the verbal message is our primary focus in an utterance. In reviewing additional literature, no actual data was found on the order or rate of processing co-occurring verbal and non-verbal information. However, an EEG experiment could be developed to test for any differences in processing speed of similar verbal and non-verbal information. This argument and its appurtenant research perhaps belongs more in the field of psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, or

psychobiology, but could prove to be essential for the methodological context of the current research.

This argument is supported by the material used by Maricchiolo et al. (2009), who found significant positive effects on the perception of social attitude. Their stimuli consisted of a video of an actor which lasted for 150 seconds. The rate of gestures in the material of the current study is similar, approximately 13 gestures per minute, although the time participants have to process both the verbal and non-verbal information is much shorter. The current study is limited in this aspect by the type of FTA chosen. Therefore, future research should investigate identical non-verbal behaviour co-occurring with different types of FTA interactions.

The assumption taken from the work of Arndt and Janney (1995) was that politeness in conversational interaction could be expressed multi-modally. However, what they do not mention in their article is the interaction between these modalities. The current study views the interaction of multiple modalities within the communicative system as a complex symbiotic mechanism which cooperates to convey the same message through these different modalities (McNeill, 1985). The expression of positive politeness through non-verbal modalities could, therefore, be redundant given the context of the positive politeness strategy expressed linguistically in the request FTA.

The results of the current study shine a light on the empirical question posed by Ambady and his colleagues on specifying the non-verbal behaviours which could convey politeness (1996, p. 1010). Their principal-components analysis categorised non-verbal politeness strategies according to the linguistic positive and negative politeness strategies conceived by Brown and Levinson. These non-verbal politeness strategies were ranked according to the correlated social attitudes which were communicated through the indistinct non-verbal behaviour of the participants. What the current results have confirmed is that the other-oriented politeness strategy of non-verbally expressing empathy cannot be communicated through beat gestures, deictic gestures, and connecting gaze. They furthermore have confirmed that a verbal – non-verbal mismatch does not negatively affect the other-oriented politeness strategies of likeability and truthfulness.

Eliminating these manipulations from the vast list of potential non-verbal politeness strategies narrows down the possible answers to this empirical question, although the concept of this study creates suggestions for further research. If any of the social attitudes expressed in the description of non-verbal politeness strategies can be confirmed to be communicated

through specific non-verbal behaviour, this would help specify the answer to the current research question. Future research could focus on the investigation of non-verbal behaviour co-occurring with speech which conveys either of the social attitudes which resulted from the principal-components analysis in the study of Ambady and his colleagues.

The comparison of politeness scores across genders revealed that no gender bias exists for the interpretation of politeness. This result agrees with the solidarity politeness system and equality of rights which are manifested in the Dutch culture (Hofstede, 2003; Ulijn, 1995). It furthermore implies that the assessment of politeness in Dutch culture is not influenced by gender, leading to postulate that future research into perceived politeness would not need to counterbalance the sample population of a condition for gender meticulously.

5.3 Conclusion

Brown and Levinson's seminal Politeness Theory incorporates the Cooperative Principle, the notion of face, and politeness strategies together with the socio-cultural context delineated by power, social distance, and weight of imposition to propose a universal theoretical framework which describes and predicts the use of politeness. The primary goal of the current study was to empirically investigate whether perceived politeness is affected by specific non-verbal behaviour as well as verbal, as proposed by the authors. This investigation was done by conducting an experiment where the same request interaction was presented with manipulations of gaze and gesture, while controlling for socio-cultural and situational contextual variables as accurately as possible, and tested for perceived politeness.

Gaze and gesture were found to influence the perception of empathy, likeability, and truthfulness, social attitudes indicated as non-verbal politeness strategies by Ambady et al. (1996). Surprisingly, the main finding is that the perceived politeness is not significantly affected by either gaze or gesture. Independent t-tests revealed that there were no significant differences in the perceived level of politeness between gesture and no gesture conditions as well as between connected gaze and averted gaze conditions. The second significant finding is that a mismatch between the non-verbal and verbal levels of politeness did not influence the perceived level of politeness. Both findings contrast with previous research on the non-verbal expression of social attitudes. An additional interesting finding is that gender does not influence the perception of politeness.

These results have a number of methodological, theoretical, and empirical implications. The methodology of this study was founded on a positivist approach supported by epistemological argumentation. While this approach was theoretically validated, it did not

elicit the expected effects. Future research into the effect of non-verbal behaviour on politeness is, therefore, advised to present the stimuli offline. This change in methodology is expected to remove any methodological issues raised by investigating an interactional phenomenon online. The offline presentation of stimuli can be done with staged interpersonal interactions. These can be videotaped and consequently qualitatively analysed. An alternative possibility is to present the interaction via augmented reality or virtual reality. This approach decreases the probability of confounding factors influencing the stimuli but could affect the implications for face-to-face interaction.

It would be interesting to investigate the spectrum of non-verbal behaviours which can communicate the social attitude of politeness. Understanding this socio-cultural phenomenon in its entire scope would aid in exposing culturally determined norms and values. This understanding can then be a powerful theoretical tool to manage intercultural interactions on an individual level. This theoretical tool could be applied by those people whose daily interactions benefit from a conscious knowledge of non-verbal communication of politeness; (international) businessmen, healthcare personnel, teachers, public speakers, virtually everyone whose profession brings them in contact with other people.

This investigative study is the only empirical investigation into the effect of specific non-verbal behaviour on the perceived politeness, and as such has shone a light on the non-verbal expression of politeness. Further research into the non-verbal communication of politeness should focus on identifying more non-verbal behaviours which could communicate either of the social attitudes suggested by Ambady and his colleagues (1996) and, therefore, be employed as non-verbal politeness strategies. Identifying these non-verbal behaviours will further the understanding of the non-verbal communication of politeness. Furthermore, if specific non-verbal behaviours can be identified as the locus of effect for influencing politeness, this could expand the reach of Politeness Theory into multi-modal dimensions.

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Appendices

Appendix A. *Introductory text videotaped request*

The aim of this text is to introduce the socio-cultural contextual variables relevant to the videotaped request utterance. The information is designed to give the participants as much socio-pragmatic detail about the situation as possible in order to allow them to respond in a way similar to how they would react in a face-to-face interaction. What needs to be evident from the text is the social relationship between the speaker or requester in terms of power and social distance, and the relative weight of imposition of the request. The power distance and social distance has been kept as neutral as possible in this text, in order to prevent this from becoming a confounding variable of the request:

Je bent op werk en ziet een collega van dezelfde afdeling (-P) naar je toe lopen. Je kent hem al sinds je bij dit bedrijf bent komen werken, vijf maanden geleden (-D). Jij en jouw collega spreken elkaar bijna dagelijks, maar meestal gaat het over werkgerelateerde of algemene, alledaagse onderwerpen (-D). Naast op sociaal vlak goed met elkaar overweg te kunnen (-D) hebben jullie ook een goede professionele relatie; als je vragen hebt kun je meestal naar hem toe komen (-W) en af en toe helpen jullie elkaar met de opdrachten die jullie van het afdelingshoofd krijgen (-W). In principe hebben jullie je eigen verantwoordelijkheden (slightly +D), maar zijn jullie wel onderdeel van het afdelingsteam (-D) dat samen werkt aan een eindproduct.

Momenteel zijn jullie allebei druk met jullie eigen project. De afgelopen dagen heb je hard gewerkt waardoor de werkdruk vandaag minder is (-W). De hoeveelheid werk van de afgelopen dagen maakte je uitgeput, maar de afgelopen twee nachten heb je een goede nachtrust gehad waardoor je weer lekker in je vel zit (-W). Jouw collega staat nu recht voor je en begint tegen je te praten...

Video

Reageer je op zijn vraag, en zo ja, hoe?

Response tekst box

English version:

You are at work as you see one of your colleagues from the same department as yours (-P) walking towards you. You have known him since you started working here five months ago (-D). You speak each other daily, but usually about work-related subjects or small talk (-D). Your professional relationship is on par with your social relationship; if you are stuck on one of your projects you can usually ask him for help (-W) and sometimes you get assigned to the same project by your department manager. You both have your own projects, but at the same time you are both part of the team that is your department (-D).

Currently, you have each been working on your own projects. You have been working vigorously for the past few days, which means that today you are having a relatively empty schedule (-W). The increased workload from the past few days made you feel exhausted but you have had two decent nights of sleep, and you are feeling quite well (-W). Your colleague has reached your desk and starts talking...

Video

Do you respond to his request, and if so, how?

Response text box

Appendix B. *Scripted tekst actor video*

This brief, scripted text was given to the anonymous actor to perform the request in the speech-gesture combination. Any names have been left out of the text in order to inhibit participants making associations. The same accounts for the lexico-grammatical choices made, which are kept as neutral as possible and slightly informal. Furthermore, the number of speech acts of the request is kept as low as possible to make the effort of keeping the aspects mentioned above the same less strenuous for the actor, but still retaining a normal request sequence:

“Hoi, hoe gaat het? Ik ben bezig met een project voor onze afdeling. Tot nu toe ging het prima, maar ik kom momenteel niet echt verder. Je zal wel druk zijn met jouw eigen project, maar zou je mij een uurtje kunnen helpen?”

Response text box

English version:

‘Hi, how are you doing? I am working on a project linked to our department. The process has been going quite well so far, but I am kind of stuck at the moment. I know you must be quite busy with your own project, but I was wondering if you could help me out for a few hours?’

Response text box

Appendix C. Video still from averted gaze condition

Appendix D. Likert-scale questionnaire

The questions used in this questionnaire are aimed at testing the perceived politeness of the actor in the request video. Each question is based on the politeness strategies as described by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Scollon and Scollon (2002). Negatively worded questions were added to increase the internal consistency of the questionnaire (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011).

Dutch version

Gericht op het testen van het waargenomen niveau van beleefdheid (een hogere score is een indicatie van een hogere waargenomen beleefdheid):

- Deze persoon is attent
Heel erg oneens (1) – Heel erg eens (7)
- Deze persoon is direct
Heel erg oneens (1) – Heel erg eens (7)
- Deze persoon houdt rekening met anderen
Heel erg oneens (1) – Heel erg eens (7)
- Deze persoon is optimistisch
Heel erg oneens (1) – Heel erg eens (7)
- Ik zou me met deze persoon kunnen identificeren
Heel erg oneens (1) – Heel erg eens (7)
- Ik voel me gehinderd door deze persoon
Heel erg eens (1) – Heel erg oneens (7)
- Deze persoon is afstandelijk
Heel erg eens (1) – Heel erg oneens (7)
- Deze persoon is pessimistisch
Heel erg eens (1) – Heel erg oneens (7)
- Ik zou me vriendelijk gedragen tegenover deze persoon
Heel erg oneens (1) – Heel erg eens (7)
- Deze persoon is formeel
Heel erg eens (1) – Heel erg oneens (7)

English version

Aimed at testing the composite construct of politeness (higher score indicates a higher perceived politeness):

- This person is attentive
Completely disagree (1) – Completely agree (7)
- This person is direct
Completely disagree (1) – Completely agree (7)
- This person takes the well-being of others into account
Completely disagree (1) – Completely agree (7)
- This person is optimistic
Completely disagree (1) – Completely agree (7)
- I could identify myself with this person
Completely disagree (1) – Completely agree (7)
- I feel impeded by this person
Completely agree (1) – Completely disagree (7)
- This person appears remote
Completely agree (1) – Completely disagree (7)
- This person is pessimistic
Completely agree (1) – Completely disagree (7)
- I would behave friendly towards this person
Completely disagree (1) – Completely agree (7)
- This person is formal
Completely agree (1) – Completely disagree (7)