Non-native speakers' speech act modification effects on their perception

Master's thesis

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Abstract

Due to the English language becoming the global lingua franca, its usage worldwide and its adoption by companies as a main language, the number of non-native speakers of English is growing rapidly. Previous studies have shown that non-native speakers might possess lesser language skills than native speakers and this in turn might influence perception towards the non-native speakers and might result in pragmatic failure. Such deviations from the norm, such as distinct accents, spelling or grammar mistakes, or underuse of politeness strategies in speech act production, might negatively affect how a non-native speaker is regarded. Building on the knowledge from extant studies on speech acts and email communication, by means of an experiment the present study examined whether non-native speech variations in apology production have an influence on how non-native email writers are perceived by non-native speakers as opposed to native English writers. The results of the study showed that non-native evaluators did not judge non-native email writers differently than they judged native writers, due to the deviations from the native norm. The findings suggest that non-native speakers might not be affected by non-native speech deviations in apology production in email communication and that non-native deviations might not always result in pragmatic failure.

Introduction

The use of the English language in business communication has become an everyday practice and often a necessary skill to perform one's work (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). Due to globalization, communication in English between non-native English speakers has become the usual form of conversation. More specifically, in a global perspective one out of four people in the world's population are able to carry out a conversation in English (Crystal, 2003). As a result of the widespread of the language use, English has become a global lingua franca (ELF). Consequently, employees of a multinational company communicate internally with their colleagues on an international level (Kankaanranta, Karhunen & Louhiala-Salminen, 2018).

As the English language is broadly adopted as the main language by international companies, some employees are required to communicate in a language that is not their native language. Studies have demonstrated that language learners differ in their language skills and language use from native speakers. For example, non-native speakers have been observed to use fewer discourse markers than native speakers (Fuller, 2003), to underuse

lexical/phrasal modifiers and to omit greetings and closings in emails, as compared to native speakers (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011). Such non-native deviations from native speech have been shown to have negative effects. For instance, spelling or grammar mistakes and variations from the expected etiquette norms in the target language were shown to have a negative impact on the evaluations of the sender of the email (Vignovic & Thompson, 2010). Moreover, non-native accented speech has also been found to influence perceptions about the non-native speaker in a negative way (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2013, Mai & Hoffmann, 2014, Nejjari, Gerritsen, Haagen & Korzilius, 2012).

Furthermore, English language learners have been shown to not correspond to the expected politeness levels of that target language (Mir, 1992, Salgado, 2011, Trosborg, 1995), which might result in pragmatic failure. In the field of interlanguage pragmatics, it has been demonstrated that speech act modifications in requests may affect perceptions of non-native speakers (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016; Hendriks, 2010).

As the effects of language modifications have been demonstrated to affect the evaluations of non-native speakers, numerous studies concerning various branches of linguistics have been carried out. In the field of interlanguage pragmatics, language modifications have been addressed in the production of speech acts, such as apologies, requests or complaints. To date, however, only a few studies have looked into the effects of request modifications on the perception of the non-native speaker (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016; Hendriks, 2010). It was found that deviations in requests slightly influenced non-native speakers' perceptions of non-native email writers in a negative way (Hendriks, 2010) and that non-native speech deviations had a bigger negative impact on native speaker evaluations than on evaluations by non-native speakers (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016). To date, however, no studies have looked into the effects of deviations in the speech act of apologies, even though it was found that both speaker groups differ in apology production (Trosborg, 1995), thus providing a possibility for pragmatic failure. Moreover, evaluations by non-native speakers of both native and non-native speakers in the context of speech acts were not investigated and since the usage of English as a foreign language is rising, the non-native speaker reactions should be examined.

Thus, to gain more insights into how the speech modifications of non-native speakers affect perceptions of them, the present study addressed apology production by native and non-native speakers in business email communication and investigated whether the differences in apology realization by both speaker groups have an effect on the apologizers' perceptions by non-native speakers.

Literature review

English in email communication

Most of the studies analysing English use in email communication have concerned the academic and business communication fields. Studies investigating emails written by international students have found that students tend to fail to meet the expected politeness norms of email communication in the target language (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2005, Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011, Sims & Guice, 1992). In business email communication studies, it was shown that even though non-native speakers were aware of the politeness strategies, their language expressing politeness was less formal and more direct than that of native speakers, which might result in unfavourable evaluations by native readers (Maier, 1992). Another study found that technical language violations, such as spelling and grammatical mistakes, and variations from the etiquette norm may have a negative effect on the perceptions of the sender's personality (Vignovic & Thompson, 2010).

Indeed, the differences in language realization by native and non-native speakers in email communication seem evident and, due to these differences, L2 speakers might be perceived more negatively than native speakers. Previous studies mentioned above observed the negative effects in evaluations by native speakers, but due to the common practice of communication in English between non-native speakers, there is a need for studies investigating non-native speaker attitudes towards their counterparts. Therefore, the proposed study will add to the existing knowledge in that non-native speakers' perceptions towards non-native and native speakers of English in the context of email communication will be examined and compared. Moreover, to provide more insight into the language deviations influencing negative attitudes, the present study incorporated native and non-native speakers' realization of the speech act of apologies.

Speech act of apologies

The speech act of apology is considered to be an expressive act the aim of which is to preserve harmony between the speaker and the listener or the writer of the message and the receiver. The speaker is assumed to be the apologizer, whereas the listener is the recipient of the apology (Trosborg, 1995). Apologies occur in the event of a social norm violation (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). By apologizing, the offender acknowledges that he or she is responsible for the violation by which the recipient was offended, and which thus elicited the

need for the offender to apologize (Trosborg, 1995). According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the speech act of apologizing is face-threatening for the apologizer as the admission of responsibility is humiliating for the apologizer whereas it is face-saving for the apology recipient as he or she receives support by hearing the apology.

Apologies can be formulated by means of different strategies. The most common strategies applied in extant literature and in the research on speech acts of apologies were identified by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). The set of five strategies by which the apology can be formulated consists of two general and three situation-specific strategies. General strategies:

1. Expression of apology - formulaic expressions of apology. *E.g. I'm sorry, I apologize.*
2. Expression of responsibility - the speaker's admission of fault. *E.g. it's my fault.*

Situation-specific strategies:

3. Explanation - reasons for the violation. *E.g. the traffic was heavy.*
4. Offer of repair - the speaker's offer to compensate for the violation. *E.g. let me cover the expenses.*
5. Promise of forbearance - a promise that the violation will not occur again. *E.g. it won't happen again.*

In addition to using several strategies to make up an apology, speakers have the possibility to minimize the guilt or maximize the apology by the use of internal modifiers otherwise referred to as modality markers (Trosborg, 1995). In the former case, the downgraders used might serve as mitigators for the offence and thus lessen the blame of the offender. On the other hand, if the speaker intends to make the apology more intense, this can be achieved with the use of upgraders. Moreover, modality markers serve as indicators of the level of politeness. Trosborg (1995) identified eight categories of modality markers for both purposes. Downgraders:

1. Downtoners - adverbials that express tentativeness. *E.g. just, simply, perhaps, maybe, possibly.*
2. Understaters - phrases that under-represent the situation. *E.g. a little bit, a second, not very much.*
3. Hedges - adverbials that add vagueness. *E.g. kind of, sort of, somehow.*
4. Subjectivizers - modifiers that express the speaker's attitude. *E.g. I think, I suppose, I'm afraid, in my opinion.*

Upgraders:

1. Intensifiers - adverbials that express lack of intention, regret or embarrassment. *E.g. I am terribly sorry, I did not mean any harm.*

2. Commitment upgraders - sentence modifiers that express commitment to the statement. *E.g. I was sure/certain/positive that..*

3. Cajolers - expressions that restore harmony between the speaker and the listener. *E.g. you know, you see, I mean.*

4. Appealers - expressions that elicit the listener's response. *E.g. don't you think?*

According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983), several factors influence the choices that the speaker makes regarding apology strategies. The speakers can be influenced by social power (the status of the interlocutors) or social distance (the familiarity between the interlocutors, whether they are friends, colleagues or one is a subordinate of the other). The speakers might also be influenced by several contextual factors, such as the severity of the offence and obligation of the speaker to apologize (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). In the case of a severe offence or if the offended person is of higher social power, the offender might express the apology in a more polite manner, use more intensification and use more strategies to express the apology (Olshtain, 1989). Moreover, contextual factors might have an effect on each other and in turn influence the realization of apology, meaning that the more severe the offence, the more the apology is required and thus elicit more intensification (Bergman & Kasper, 1993). In different cultures, the perception of situations might vary, and thus influence the act of apology. For instance, it was found that Thais and Americans differed in their evaluations of specific situations in terms of severity of the offence and obligation to apologize (Bergman & Kasper, 1993) which in turn might have an effect on the apology realization.

Cross-cultural studies investigating the speech act of apologies have found contradictory results. Some have found that native speakers of different languages tend to realize their apologies by using similar strategies. For instance, Olshtain (1989) did not observe any significant differences in apology realization by Hebrew, French, English and German speakers and Reiter (2000) found that native speakers of Spanish and English tend to use similar apology strategies in the same situations. Others showed that native speakers of different languages chose specific strategies to deal with the offensive situations (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008, Kim 2008, Ogiermann, 2009, Suszczyńska, 1999). The culture-specific realization of apologies might occur due to several reasons, such as distinct sociopragmatic norms or grammar (Geis & Harlow, 2009). Moreover, cultures might have different perceptions of what they consider an offence, the severity of it and the relationship between

the offender and the person offended (Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper & Ross, 1996). Thus, the strategies and intensification of the apology might be applied in a different manner according to the perception of the situation, sociopragmatic and language norms. Different cultures might not only differ in their apology realization patterns, but also in the likelihood of expressing the apology. To illustrate, the Japanese were found to be more prone to apologize for the same situations than Americans (Sugimoto, 1997).

Apology realization by non-native English speakers

The production of the speech act of apologies has been of interest in the field of interlanguage pragmatics. Studies have demonstrated that language learners often fail to correspond to the intended level of politeness (e.g. Mir, 1992, Salgado, 2011, Trosborg, 1995). It was found that L2 speakers include fewer modality markers than L1 speakers, which results in lower levels of politeness as opposed to the politeness levels used by native speakers (Mir, 1992, Salgado, 2011, Trosborg, 1995). Moreover, English language learners were observed to apply fewer apology strategies per apology than native English speakers (Salgado, 2011) or to differ in the usage of strategies (Mir, 1992). To illustrate, native speakers of Spanish who were learners of English, applied the strategy of expression of responsibility more rarely than it was applied by native speakers of English (Mir, 1992).

Contextual factors, such as severity of the offence, were found to have an impact on the number of apologies provided by both native and non-native English speakers (Mir, 1992). However, the number of responses produced by native speakers was higher than that of language learners. Moreover, the apologies provided in the context when the offence was severe were also more intensified. Another factor, social distance, was found to be influencing the number of strategies used to make up an apology. Native English speakers provided more strategies when they were unfamiliar with the hearer, whereas language learners tended to use fewer strategies while apologizing to a person who is not familiar to them in both their native Spanish language and in English (Mir, 1992).

The fact that non-native speakers demonstrated the same tendency in both their native and L2 language, even though the strategies in their L1 might differ from those of their L2, shows that language learners tend to transfer their behaviour from their native language. In the literature, the influence of the learners' native language is referred to as pragmatic transfer. Moreover, the variations from the norm and from what is expected might cause

pragmatic failure, which might result in misunderstandings between the hearer and the speaker (Thomas, 1983).

Effects of non-native language modifications

The non-native speakers' deviations from the target language norm have been demonstrated to have effects on the way the non-native speakers are perceived. For instance, non-native speakers holding a distinct accent were found to be judged less credible than native speakers (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2013), discriminated in business surroundings (Mai & Hoffmann, 2014) and judged more negatively by native speakers in terms of their attitudes towards the non-native speakers (Nejjari et al., 2012). Moreover, grammatical errors produced by non-native speakers were also shown to have a negative effect on the evaluations of the speaker (Derwing, Rossiter & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2002).

Even though the effects of non-native speech are evident, to date, only a few studies have looked at the effects of non-native speakers' speech acts, such as requests or apologies, and modifications (e.g. Hendriks, 2010, Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016). It was found that the speech act modifications in requests produced by non-native English speakers in email communication had slight negative effects on the evaluations by native readers in terms of attitude towards the non-native email writer (Hendriks, 2010). More specifically, the more modified the request was, the more agreeable the sender was perceived to be. Furthermore, native speakers were more likely to judge the personality of a non-native email writer in a more negative way than other non-native speakers (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016). To illustrate, lecturers who were native English speakers evaluated students, who were non-native English speakers and expressed requests in email communication, less favourably in terms of agreeableness and power than other non-native students. Moreover, some of the adjectives used by the lecturers to describe the non-native email senders were 'rude', 'too casual' and 'unsubtle'.

As the non-native speakers have been observed to be less affected by language modifications in non-native speech than native speakers in terms of forming their perceptions towards the non-native speaker, it would be beneficial to investigate whether their evaluations might differ when judging both native and non-native speakers and whether contextual factors such as severity of the offence and power distance. Thus, the research question has been formulated as follows: To what extent do non-native speech act modifications affect perceptions towards the apology email sender and how severity of the offence and power distance between the offender and the person offended influence these

perceptions? More specifically, the present study investigated non-native speakers' attitudes towards non-native and native speakers apologizing by email in a business context for severe and gentle offences committed towards either a boss or a colleague.

Method

In an experiment, non-native speakers of English were asked to evaluate email messages that included apologies produced by native and non-native speakers of English. The context of apologies differed with respect to the severity of offence and power distance. The texts in the emails differed in usage of internal modifiers and intensification of apologies. The texts were manipulated based on the observed differences while gathering the materials and based on existing knowledge in the literature. The stimulus was spread among four types of questionnaires.

Materials

The materials were manipulated based on three independent variables: speaker group (native vs. non-native), severity of the offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague). To gather authentic emails, native and non-native speakers of English were asked to produce apology emails following a specific context.

Firstly, a pre-test was carried out in order to test different situations which might be potentially used for the main experiment. Four different contexts with either gentle or severe offences committed towards either a boss or a colleague were tested. To illustrate, one of the contexts was missing a meeting, where the offenders missed a not very urgent brainstorming meeting with a colleague and an easily rescheduled one-on-one performance appraisal meeting (both gentle offences) and missed a team meeting during which the offender and his or her colleague were supposed to present their team's annual performance together and an annual company meeting during which the offender was appointed as one of the speakers by his or her boss (both severe offences). Other situations can be found in the Appendix A. The participants were asked to evaluate the situations in terms of severity of the offence ('This is a major offence'), perceived power distance between the offender and the person offended ('The person who is offended has authority over the person who committed the offence'), and the required politeness given the described situation ('In this situation, what level of politeness would be expected from the person who made the offence when writing an apology to the person who was offended?'). Each aspect was measured on a 7-point Likert

scale (1 = agree, 7 = disagree; for required politeness - 1 = very polite, 7 = not at all polite). To control for the effects of different contexts in the main experiment, only one context was used based on the high differences in evaluations of each situation in terms of all aspects measured.

The results of the pre-test showed that all of the situations were perceived as intended. A two-way ANOVA with as factors severity of the offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague) for perceived severity of the offence showed a significant effect of severity of the offence (F (1, 428) = 115.55, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .21$). The offences committed in the severe situations were observed as being more major ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.33$) than those in the gentle situations ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.66$). Also, there was a significant main effect of power distance (F (1, 428) = 5.27, $p = 0.22$, $\eta^2 = .01$). The situations where the offence was committed towards a boss were perceived as more severe ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 1.61$) than those committed to a colleague ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.76$). The interaction effect between severity of the offence and power distance was not significant (F (1, 428) = 1.45, $p = .230$).

A subsequent two-way ANOVA with the factor power distance showed that it had an effect on the perceived power distance (F (1, 428) = 324.19, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .35$). In the situations where the offence was committed to a boss, the perceived power distance was higher ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.60$) than in those committed to a colleague ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.64$). Severity of offence was also found to have an effect on the perceived power distance (F (1, 428) = 3.93, $p = .048$, $\eta^2 = .00$). In severe situations, the person offended was perceived to have more authority over the offender ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 2.02$), than in gentle situations ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.99$). The interaction effect between severity of offence and power distance was found to be not significant (F (1, 428) < 1). As for the required politeness in each situation, a two-way ANOVA showed a significant main effect of severity of the offence (F (1, 427) = 57.85, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$) and power distance (F (1, 427) = 5.426, $p = .020$, $\eta^2 = .01$). The participants required more politeness in severe situations ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.25$) than in gentle situations ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.36$). Moreover, the participants required more politeness in the situations where the offence was committed towards a boss ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.48$) than in those committed to a colleague ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.33$). The interaction effect between both of the factors was not significant (F (1, 427) = 1.30, $p = .256$). Finally, as mentioned above, only one context was chosen based on the highest differences in evaluations. As all the situations were perceived as intended, meaning that there were no significant differences in evaluations of their perceived severity, power distance and required politeness (all p's > .05), the context

of agreeing to a deal was selected as the differences in evaluations of this context on each aspect were the greatest.

To generate the email stimuli for the experiment, email texts in a business context were produced by native and non-native speakers of English. These email texts included apologies for a severe and a gentle offence and were directed towards a boss and a colleague from the sender's perspective. The native and non-native speakers who were asked to produce the texts were asked to write the email as if they were the offenders and they were provided with descriptions for each of the scenarios that included information about the severity of the offence and the power distance between the presumed recipient of the apology and the sender. More specifically, native and non-native speakers were asked to produce texts for four different situations for each speaker group so that the following structure could have been achieved:

Speaker group	Native	Non-native
Severity of offence + power distance	Severe + boss Severe + colleague Gentle + boss Gentle + colleague	Severe + boss Severe + colleague Gentle + boss Gentle + colleague

Each person was asked to produce two emails. In total, five speakers for each speaker group generated email texts, thus resulting in ten emails in total for each group.

The collected emails by the native and non-native speakers were used to provide the basis for the main experiment. The emails for the main experiment were manipulated based on three aspects: claims in the literature, results of the pre-test and observations of the emails collected from the native and non-native writers. It was observed in previous research that non-native speakers tend to use fewer modality markers as opposed to native speakers (Trosborg, 1995), thus the native speaker emails in the main experiment included more intensifiers. This tendency was also observed in the gathered emails. For instance, native speakers were more likely to use modality markers such as downtoners (e.g. 'Please let me know if you can *possibly*..'), whereas non-native speakers were more likely to omit these markers in their apology emails. Moreover, in the emails collected it was observed that native speakers tend to use more of some specific apology strategies or expressions, thus the observations were applied accordingly. To illustrate, native speakers expressed more opinion statements, (e.g. *I know*) than non-native speakers. The emails used for the experiment can be found in Appendix B together with the questionnaire.

Subjects

The subjects for the current study were recruited by means of personal networks and social media. Only one specific requirement for the participant selection was necessary, which was that they were non-native speakers of English. No incentives were offered to the participants apart from the opportunity to test their English language proficiency by completing the LexTALE test.

A total of 120 non-native speakers of English, 60% of which were female, took part in the study. The participants were on average 25-years-old ($SD = 6.3$) and most frequently held a bachelor's degree (45%). The native languages of the participants varied greatly, some examples are as follows: Dutch (41%), Lithuanian (20%), German (8%), French (5%), Chinese (3%), Polish (3%). The participants provided a fairly high self-reported English language proficiency score ($M = 5.93$, $SD = .88$) on a 7-point scale. Only 46 participants out of 120 took the LexTALE test. The participants were evenly distributed among the four types of questionnaires. Two separate one-way ANOVAS showed no difference in age (F (3, 116) < 1) or proficiency (F (3, 116) < 1) distribution among all four types of questionnaires. Moreover, chi square tests revealed that there were no relations between the type of questionnaire the participants were exposed to and their gender (x^2 (6) = 3.16, $p = .788$) and education (x^2 (9) = 6.12, $p = .728$).

Design

The study used a 2 (speaker group: native vs. non-native) x 2 (severity of the offence: severe vs. gentle) x 2 (power distance: boss vs. colleague) mixed-subjects design. Speaker group was a within-subject factor and both severity of the offence and power distance were between-subject factors. Each participant was exposed to two situations – a native and a non-native email where the offences differed with respect to the severity of the offence and to who the offence was committed.

Instruments

The experiment was carried out by means of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire measured the following variables: the personality of the sender, the perceived obligation of the sender to apologize, the perceived comprehension of the email and perceived politeness of the sender.

The personality of the sender was measured on three personality dimensions: status (intelligence, competence, ambition, education, and social class), agreeableness (sympathetic, tactful, considerate) and conscientiousness (dependable, responsible, systematic). The personality dimension of status was adopted from accentedness studies (Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert & Giles, 2012). Agreeableness and conscientiousness comprised adjectives and characteristics from the Big Five personality traits (Harvey, Murry, & Markham, 1995). Each aspect of each of the dimensions was measured with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree; e.g. 'I think the sender of the email is: intelligent') by asking the participants to indicate their opinion about the email sender on each of the items of the three personality dimensions. The reliability of the items comprising the personality dimension scales was good for status (α = .81) and agreeableness (α = .80), and acceptable for conscientiousness (α = .70) after removing the item 'dependable'. Finally, composite means were calculated for all of the three dimensions.

The perceived obligation for the sender to apologize was measured by the participants' evaluation of the following statement: 'The sender of the email is obliged to apologize for the offence' on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). As it was claimed in the literature that obligation to apologize is a factor influencing the apology production in terms of intensification (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), thus was constructed for this study.

The perceived comprehension was measured by asking the participants to evaluate the email on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree) in terms of how clear, well-structured and informative they perceived the email to be (e.g. 'I think the email is: clear'). The measures were adopted from Hendriks (2010). The scale reliability was good (α = .82), thus composite means were calculated.

The perceived politeness of the sender was measured by asking the participants to judge to what extent they think the sender is polite on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). The measure was constructed for this study.

Moreover, in order to test the effectiveness of the manipulation, two questions were included to serve as manipulation checks. Namely, power distance and the severity of the offence. Both were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree), the former was measured by asking the participants to indicate whether they think that the receiver of the email has authority over the sender, the latter - whether the participants think that the offence is severe. The measures were constructed for this study.

Furthermore, the participants were asked to indicate their expected level politeness for the given situation by judging the following statement: 'Given the offence described in the situation and the relationship between the offended person and the offender, I would expect the apology to be very polite' on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). The measure was constructed for this study.

Additionally, the participants were asked to indicate their writing, reading and listening skills in English on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = poor, 7 = excellent). The reliability of the items comprising proficiency was good (α = .88), therefore composite means were calculated for the proficiency variable. Also, the participants were provided with the possibility to take an online vocabulary test LexTALE (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012), which was incorporated in the questionnaire. Both, the self-evaluation results or the results of the vocabulary test were used in order to control for their proficiency level, since more advanced language learners might detect the non-native modification pattern in English more easily.

Finally, the participants were asked to indicate their age, gender, education level and native language.

Procedure

There were four types of questionnaires created for the experiment and the stimuli were randomized and distributed as follows:

Questionnaire type	Native speaker	Non-native speaker
1st	severe + boss	gentle + colleague
2nd	gentle + colleague	severe + boss
3rd	severe + colleague	gentle + boss
4th	gentle + boss	severe + colleague

Not only the questionnaire type display was randomized, but also the display of the two of the emails in one type of questionnaire. In each type of questionnaire, the participants were exposed to the different levels of power distance and severity of the offence. The information about whether the sender of the email is a native or a non-native speaker was not disclosed explicitly, but some cues in the description of the email were provided, such as the names of the sender and receiver. Moreover, the description included information about the severity of the offence and the relationship between the sender and the person offended. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Statistical treatment

The analyses conducted for the main experiment were either univariate or multivariate ANOVAS. One aspect that should require attention is that before conducting the analysis, the variables in the data file were restructured into cases, meaning that it was restructured from a within-subjects design to a between-subjects design.

Results

1. Manipulation checks

To make sure that the manipulation was successful, in the main experiment the participants were asked to evaluate each described situation in terms of severity of the offence and power distance. The results can be found below in Table 1. A two-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in how the participants evaluated the severe and gentle situations (F (1, 231) = 34.34, p < .001, η^2 = .13). Gentle situations were observed to be less severe (M = 3.38, SD = 1.64) than the severe situations (M = 4.61, SD = 1.57). There was also a significant difference in how the participants judged the power distance between the offender and the person offended (F (1, 231) = 91.23, p <.001, η^2 = .28). In the situations where the offender apologized to a boss, the participants perceived the receiver of the email to have more authority over the sender (M = 5.69, SD = 1.57), as opposed to the situations where the apology was directed to a colleague (M = 3.63, SD = 1.80). The interaction effects between both factors were not found to be significant for both of the dependent variables (both p's > .05). Considering the results of these two questions, the manipulation can be deemed successful as the situations were observed as intended in terms of how severe the offence was and whether the person offended had authority over the offender.

Table 1.   Means and standard deviations for perceptions of the situations in terms of severity of the offence and power distance.

	Severity of offence M (SD)			Power distance M (SD)	
	Gentle	Severe		Colleague	Boss
Perceived severity of offence	3.38 (1.64)	4.61 (1.57)	Perceived power distance	3.63 (1.80)	5.69 (1.57)

2. Personality of the sender

The main aim of the present research was to investigate whether non-native speakers of English evaluated native and non-native speakers differently due to non-native speech modification affected by severity of offence and power distance. The results can be found below in Table 2. A three-way multivariate analysis for status, agreeableness and conscientiousness, with factors speaker group (native vs. non-native), severity of the offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague), showed that non-native speech act modifications did not have an effect on any of the personality dimensions (F (3, 229) < 1. In other words, the findings suggest that non-native speech modifications did not influence how the speaker was perceived by another non-native English speaker. Severity of the offence was shown to have a significant multivariate effect (F (3, 229) = 6.80, p < .001, η^2 = .08). The univariate analysis showed an effect on the evaluations of status (F (1, 231) = 14.74, p < .001, η^2 = .06), agreeableness (F (1, 231) = 13.13, p < .001, η^2 = .05) and conscientiousness (F (1, 231) = 15.80, p < .001, η^2 = .06) regardless of whether the email sender was a native or a non-native speaker. In the situations where the offence was gentle, the participants evaluated the emails writer more favourably in terms of status (M = 5.45, SD = .84), agreeableness (M = 5.39, SD = 1.04) and conscientiousness (M = 5.17, SD = 1.12) than in severe situations (M = 5.00, SD = .89; M = 4.86, SD = 1.10; M = 4.57, SD = 1.18, respectively). Power distance was not found to have a significant multivariate effect on neither of the personality dimensions (F (3, 229) = 2.00, p = .116). None of the interaction effects were found to have a significant multivariate effect (all p's > .05).

Table 2.   Means and standard deviations for personality dimensions (status, agreeableness and conscientiousness) towards both speaker groups, email writers for severe and gentle offences and writers to a boss and a colleague.

	Speaker group M (SD)		Severity of offence M (SD)		Power distance M (SD)	
	Native	Non-native	Gentle	Severe	Colleague	Boss
Status	5.31 (.86)	5.14 (.92)	5.45 (.84)	5.00 (.89)	5.17 (.92)	5.29 (.87)
Agreeableness	5.22 (1.13)	5.03 (1.06)	5.39 (1.04)	4.84 (1.10)	5.01 (1.07)	5.25 (1.12)
Conscientiousness	4.98	4.77	5.17	4.57	4.88	4.86

(1.20)	(1.17)	(1.12)	(1.18)	(1.13)	(1.25)

3. Perceived obligation to apologize

A three-way ANOVA with as factors speaker group (native vs. non-native), severity of offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague) revealed that apologies produced by non-native speakers of English were not evaluated differently from those of native speakers in terms of the obligation to apologize (F (1, 231) < 1). Moreover, the power distance between the offender and the person offended also did not have an effect on the obligation to apologize (F (1, 231) < 1). However, the analysis showed a significant main effect of severity of the offence (F (1, 231) = 43.59, p < .001, η^2=.16). The respondents felt that the person who committed a severe offence was obliged to apologize more (M = 5.55, SD = 1.42), than the person who committed the gentle offence (M = 4.20, SD = 1.68). The interaction effects between the factors were found to be not significant (all p's > .05). The results can be found below in Table 3.

4. Perceived politeness of the sender

A three-way ANOVA with as factors speaker group (native vs. non-native), severity of the offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague) for the perceived politeness of the sender revealed that the non-native speech act modifications did not have an effect on how polite the participants perceived the speaker to be (F (1, 231) < 1), thus lack of modification and intensifiers in the apology did not influence the speaker to be perceived less polite as opposed to the native speaker. The factor severity of the offence was also not found to have a significant effect (F (1, 231) = 2.97, p = .086). The analysis showed a main effect of power distance on the perceived politeness of the email sender (F (1, 231) = 6.58, p = .011, η^2 = .03). Offenders apologising to a boss were perceived as more polite (M = 5.84, SD = 1.08) than the ones apologising to a colleague (M = 5.47, SD = 1.17). No interaction effects were shown to be significant (all p's > .05). The results can be found below in Table 3.

5. Required politeness in given situations

A three-way ANOVA was conducted with as factors speaker group (native vs. non-native), severity of offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague) for the required politeness in the given situations. Not unexpectedly, the speaker group did not have an effect on the required politeness in the given situation (F (1, 231) = 1.03, p = .312). But

both, severity of the offence (F (1, 231) = 13.61, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$) and power distance (F (1, 231) = 8.52, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .04$) were found to have significant effects on the required level of politeness. In severe offence situations the participants required more politeness ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 1.30$) than in gentle situations ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.35$). Moreover, apology aimed at a boss required more politeness ($M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.30$) by the participants than one aimed at a colleague ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.38$). There were no significant interaction effects between the three factors (all p's > .05). The results can be found below in Table 3.

6. Perceived comprehension of the email

A three-way ANOVA was conducted with as factors speaker group (native vs. non-native), severity of the offence (severe vs. gentle) and power distance (boss vs. colleague) for the comprehension of the email and showed that there were no significant differences in email comprehension when the emails were written by native or non-native speakers (F (1, 231) = 2.59, $p = .109$), then they were written to apologize for a severe or gentle offence (F (1, 231) = 1.58, $p = .210$), or when the apology was addressed either to a boss or a colleague (F (1, 231) = 1.03, $p = .312$). The interaction effects between the factors were found to be not significant (all p's > .05). The results can be found below in Table 3.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for evaluations on perceived obligation to apologize, perceived politeness of the sender, required politeness and email comprehension for both speaker groups, email writers for severe and gentle offences and writers to a boss and a colleague.

	Speaker group M (SD)		Severity of offence M (SD)		Power distance M (SD)	
	Native	Non-native	Gentle	Severe	Colleague	Boss
Perceived obligation to apologize	4.80 (1.76)	4.94 (1.62)	4.20 (1.68)	5.55 (1.42)	4.88 (1.67)	4.87 (1.72)
Perceived politeness	5.70 (1.14)	5.61 (1.13)	5.78 (1.15)	5.52 (1.11)	5.47 (1.16)	5.84 (1.08)
Required politeness	5.08 (1.40)	5.18 (1.32)	4.82 (1.35)	5.44 (1.30)	4.88 (1.38)	5.37 (1.30)
Email	5.43	5.21	5.42	5.22	5.26	5.38

comprehension	(1.02)	(1.14)	(1.11)	(1.06)	(1.10)	(1.07)

Conclusion and discussion

The main purpose of this present study was to investigate to what extent non-native speech variations from the native speech influence perceptions towards the non-native speakers. In the extant literature it was found that speech variations from the native norm, such as accented speech, grammar mistakes or production of speech acts, might have a negative effect on the native speakers' perceptions towards the non-native speakers. The present study provided more insight into the existing knowledge in that the evaluations of non-native speakers towards non-native and native speakers were investigated in the context of the speech act of apologies.

The results of the present study revealed that non-native speakers did not judge other non-native speakers more negatively for expressing less politeness than native speakers. Evaluations of both speaker groups by non-native speakers did not differ on three personality dimensions analysed, namely status, agreeableness and conscientiousness. This finding adds to the existing knowledge on speech act deviation effects on the speaker's perception as the present study compared perceptions by non-native speakers of both native and non-native speakers, whereas one of the previous studies examined how native speakers respond to non-native speech deviations in requests expressed in emails (Hendriks, 2010) and another looked into how native and non-native speakers' perceptions differ in evaluating non-native speakers' requests in emails that do not entirely correspond to the norm (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2016). The results of the former study suggested that more intensification in requests might positively influence the email sender's evaluations in terms of agreeableness by native speakers. In this study, more intensification in the native senders' emails did not affect the perceptions of non-native evaluators towards the email senders in any way. The most obvious difference that can explain the absence of modification effects in the present study is the participants. In the mentioned study the evaluators were native speakers, whereas in this study they were non-native speakers. Moreover, the personality dimensions varied in both studies, apart from agreeableness, as well as the speech act investigated. The latter study mentioned found that native speakers were more likely to evaluate a non-native speaker more negatively than non-native speakers, thus suggesting that non-native speakers are more lenient towards non-native speech. As this study showed that non-native speakers do not judge a non-native email writer more negatively due to speech deviations from the norm and

considering the results of previous studies too, the results of the present study suggest that non-native speakers are less susceptible to speech deviations in email communication.

Several reasons might explain the absence of the influence of non-native speech deviations on their perception. One possible explanation could be that non-native speakers are more lenient than native speakers in evaluating non-native speakers. In the online questionnaire, the participants were provided cues about who is the email sender and receiver, the names of the offender and the person offended were specified. Thus, the knowledge that the person is not a native speaker might have influenced the participants to be less strict in judging the non-native speech deviations from the norm.

Another possible reason why non-native speakers might be less susceptible to non-native speech deviations from the norm is pragmatic competence. Even though the participants were advanced speakers of English - the mean of the self-evaluation scores of English proficiency was 5.93 (SD = .88) on a 7-point scale and the LexTALE scores of the 46 participants indicated that they were advanced speakers of English, proficiency is not the only aspect that determines pragmatic development. Exposure to the language that the speaker is learning was shown to have a bigger influence on pragmatic competence than the level of proficiency (Matsumura, 2003). Moreover, being involved in the culture of the target language increases the level of conformation to sociopragmatic norms of the target language (Kasper, 2010). Thus, even though the participants were of high proficiency, due to the lack of native like pragmatic competence, they might not have been affected by the non-native speech deviations.

Another explanation might have to deal with the nature of communication, more specifically, written versus spoken communication. In studies investigating accented speech, it was found that non-native accented speech had a negative effect on how the speaker was perceived. For instance, non-native speakers evaluated other non-native speakers having a distinct accent as being less competent than the ones with a slight or native accent (Hendriks, van Meurs & de Groot, 2017). Moreover, in the present experiment, the emails written by native and non-native speakers were comprehended equally well. However, in accentedness studies it was often the case that having a distinct accent negatively influenced the comprehensibility of the speaker (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). It might be possible that the effect of an accent which is present during the whole speech is stronger than the effect of underusage of intensifiers or less polite expressions.

Moreover, in business email communication studies investigating perceptions towards non-native speakers, less formal and more direct communication of non-native speakers was

shown to impact the email sender evaluation by a native speaker in a negative way (Maier, 1992). Also, it was found that technical language violations might negatively affect perceptions of native speakers towards the non-native email senders (Vignovic & Thompson, 2010). The experiment material of the present study did not include spelling or grammar mistakes which might be perceived as more salient than modifications in politeness in apology expressions. Thus, also considering that in the present study the participants evaluating the emails were non-native speakers of English and that they might lack native like pragmatic competence, the speech deviations in apology expression might have not been enough to affect their perceptions of the non-native email writers.

Alongside providing additional insights into non-native speaker perception, other findings of the study provided support for the effects of relational and contextual factors. As it was stated in previous literature (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain, 1989; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983), the findings of the present study showed that more politeness is required when apologizing for an offence committed towards a person in a higher position that the offender, in this case a boss, and that the offender is more obliged to apologize in the event of a severe offence. However, the main difference between this and the before mentioned studies that should be addressed is that the studies were also focused on apology production. For instance, Bergman and Kasper (1993) asked the participants to evaluate the given situations in terms of severity of offence and obligation to apologize, and after to provide apologies for the same situations. Whereas in this study, the collected apologies served as stimulus for the experiment and not as an item of analysis, however, the perceptions of the offences and required politeness levels were evaluated by the participants. Thus, the findings suggest that the general perception regarding the relational and contextual factors and their effects might be rather consistent throughout different cultures, as the participants of this study were from various countries.

Overall, the findings of the present study suggest that non-native speech deviations from the native norm in apology production do not necessarily result in pragmatic failure and do not necessarily in turn negatively influence perceptions of non-native speakers, even though it was claimed by speech act production studies that the manner how non-native speakers form requests or apologies might result in the contrary. Also, the findings suggest that even though the non-native speakers are advanced speakers of English they still might lack native like pragmatic competence, meaning that they might be less observant in detecting modifications in politeness expressions in apologies and in turn might not be affected to the same extent as native speakers.

Limitations and future research

Firstly, as the main finding of the present study was that the non-native speech act deviations in apology expressions did not affect perceptions towards the speakers, future research could investigate whether and to what extent other more salient factors might have an influence on non-native speakers' perceptions. For instance, future studies could examine whether non-native speakers might be more observant and affected by grammar mistakes in terms of perceptions.

Moreover, the results of the present research showed that the offenders of gentle situations were evaluated more positively than those of severe offences. Thus, future research could address this by examining more thoroughly the effect of the severity of the offence and the underlying reasons influencing more favourable evaluations towards offenders of less major offences.

Furthermore, as it was mentioned in the discussion section, exposure to the language and its culture influences pragmatic competence more than the language proficiency. Thus, future research could take this effect into account and investigate whether non-native speakers, who have been exposed to the culture of the language they are learning, are more susceptible to non-native speech variations from the norm and in turn influenced when forming perceptions towards the speakers, as opposed to the language learners who have not been exposed to the culture of the target language.

The present study might have been limited in that comprehension of the email was measured by only asking the participants to evaluate the email in terms of how clear, well-structured and informative they perceived it to be. An alternative measurement of comprehension (e.g. Nejjari et al., 2012) could be asking the participants to briefly paraphrase the main idea of the message which could serve as a more elaborate means of determining whether the participant actually understood the message.

Moreover, there were no differences in how the participants perceived the native and non-native email senders in terms of politeness. However, in general, senders of both speaker groups were perceived as more polite when apologizing for a severe offence as opposed to a gentle one, thus it might signal that the manipulation of native and non-native apology intensification was not observed by the non-native participants even though the emails were manipulated based on observations from collected emails for the experiment and literature. Also, the focus of the reader might have shifted from the apology itself as it was presented in a wider context, specifically an email message. Therefore, future research investigating

effects of apology production could manipulate the apology in a different manner and context.

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Appendix A

Scenarios tested in the pre-test:

1. Missing a meeting

Gentle + boss: The offender missed a one-on-one performance appraisal meeting with his or her boss and did not inform him or her beforehand. However, they can reschedule the meeting easily as both of them are quite flexible that week.

Gentle + colleague: The offender missed a meeting with his or her colleague without informing him or her in advance. The purpose of the meeting was to brainstorm ideas for a solution to a particular problem. But as both of them are quite flexible that week and the problem is not an urgent one, the meeting can be easily rescheduled without impacting the issue.

Severe + boss: The offender missed the annual company meeting during which he or she was appointed as one of the speakers by his or her boss. As he or she failed to notify his or her boss beforehand, the boss was forced to fill his or her place.

Severe + colleague: The offender missed a team meeting during which he or she and his or her colleague were supposed to present the team's annual performance together. As the offender did not notify the colleague in advance, he or she had to unexpectedly make the presentation alone.

2. Vacation

Gentle + boss: The offender planned his or her vacation without discussing with his or her boss beforehand how would it affect the team's workload during that time as they are all working intensely on a particular project. However, the offender being away during that time period won't have a big impact on the team.

Gentle + colleague: The offender planned his or her vacation without discussing with his or her colleague beforehand how it would affect the colleague's workload during that time as they are working on the same project together. But apparently, the offender being away for that time period won't affect the colleague's work much.

Severe + boss: The offender has a colleague with who he or she is working on a project together. The offender planned his or her vacation and did not discuss the impact on the colleague's workload of the offender being absent during that time period. Apparently, the offender being away during that time period is an issue as the deadline for the project is coming.

Severe + colleague: The offender is working intensely with his or her team on a particular project. The offender planned his or her vacation without discussing with his or her boss beforehand how would it affect the team's workload during that time. As it appears, the deadline for the project is coming and the offender being absent around that deadline will strongly affect the team.

3. Incident in the parking garage

Gentle + boss: The offender accidentally bumped into his or her boss's car in the parking garage but thankfully left no marks.

Gentle + colleague: In the parking garage, the offender accidentally bumped into his or her colleague's car but left no marks.

Severe + boss: The offender felt a little distracted and exhausted after today's meeting's with potential clients and accidentally bumped into his or her colleague's car and left deep scratches.

Severe + colleague: Rushing to a meeting, the offender accidentally bumped into his or her boss's car in the parking garage. Sadly, the crash left deep scratches in the boss's car.

4. Agreeing to a deal

Gentle + boss: The offender's boss is away on vacation and he or she had to meet a potential client to discuss a deal that the offender and the boss were working on together. Due to the boss being absent, the offender had to make a decision alone and agreed to some changes in the deal without notifying the boss. Anyway, the deal turned out to be beneficial for the company.

Gentle + colleague: The offender was working together with his or her colleague on a deal with a new potential client. While the colleague was away for vacation, the offender met the client alone and agreed to a deal without the colleague's knowledge. Anyway, the deal turned out to be beneficial for the company.

Severe + boss: While the offender's boss was away for a business trip, he or she had to meet a potential client with who both the offender and the boss was negotiating. The client wanted to make some detrimental changes to the deal, or otherwise, they would not sign. The offender had to act quick and agreed to the deal without discussing it with the boss. Not only the offender challenged the boss's trust, but the deal turned out to be not profitable for the company.

Severe + colleague: The offender and his or her colleague were working on a deal with a new potential client. The offender's partner could not attend the meeting during which they were supposed to sign the contract. The client wanted to make some significant changes to the deal and the offender agreed without discussing with his or her partner beforehand. Not only the offender challenged the partner's trust, but the deal turned out to be not profitable for the company.

Appendix B

Each person was exposed to two emails in total (to one native speaker email and one non-native speaker email) that differed in severity of offence and power distance. In total, there were four types of questionnaires. Below the distinction of the email groups (types of questionnaires) is made in bolded italics. After each email, the participants were exposed to the same perception questions and later to demographics and proficiency questions. Below the perception questions are demonstrated only after the first email of the first type of questionnaire to avoid unnecessary repetition and the demographics and proficiency questions are demonstrated after the last email.

Questionnaire:

You are invited to participate in a research project which is being conducted by a master's student at Radboud University. The procedure involves filling out an online questionnaire, which will take approximately 10 minutes. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The data collected will be made fully anonymous.

INSTRUCTIONS: The purpose of this study is to investigate evaluations of emails. You will be provided with short descriptions of two situations to which an email was written. After, you will be asked to evaluate the emails on a number of aspects. After completing the questions, you will have the possibility to complete the Lexical Test for Advanced Learners of English (LexTALE) if you wish to test your knowledge of English. Should you want more information on the research project, please feel free to contact the student at l.daugirdaite@student.ru.nl

CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Choosing the "Agree" option below indicates that:

• you have read the above information

• you voluntarily agree to participate

• you are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline your participation by choosing the "Disagree" option.

○ Agree

○ Disagree

Questionnaire 1 - Native+severe+boss

Imagine the following situation:

Noah Cromwell is a business consultant working for a multinational IT company called MJ Solutions. While his boss, Abigail Morton, was away for a business trip, Noah had to meet a potential client that they were both negotiating with. The client wanted to make some detrimental changes to the deal, or otherwise, they would not sign. Noah had to act quickly and agreed to the deal without discussing it with his boss. Not only did he challenge Abigail's trust, but the deal turned out to be not profitable for the company and ineffective for the client in that Noah's company was not able to meet the agreed terms. Thus, he feels obliged to express his apology to Abigail for the unfortunate situation and wrote the following email:

Dear Abigail,

Please accept my heartfelt apologies for the decisions I have made and the damage it has caused to the company. Dealing with the client on my own because you were away, in my opinion, seemed like a good decision for the company at the time. The client was rather persistent, and I simply thought it would be beneficial for our relationship with this client, if I dealt with it straight away. I regret not informing you when the client told me he wanted to make some detrimental changes to our deal. I am terribly sorry for taking the lead in such a crucial deal and for the consequences it has brought. Also, I am extremely sorry to challenge your trust, but I hope you can still trust me, and we can remain working together in the future.

Kind regards,
Noah Cromwell

Perception question block

For each of the scales below, please indicate the option which corresponds to your opinion best.

I think the sender of the email is:

Intelligent

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Competent

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Ambitious

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Educated

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Cultured

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Sympathetic

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Tactful

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Considerate

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Dependable

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Responsible

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Systematic

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Polite

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

I think the email is:

Clear

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Well-structured

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Informative

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

The sender of the email is obliged to apologize for the offence

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

The receiver of the email has authority over the sender

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

I think the offence committed by the sender of the email is severe

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Given the offence described in the situation and the relationship between the offended person and the offender, I would expect the apology to be very polite

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Totally disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

Questionnaire 1 - Nonnative+gentle+colleague

Imagine the following situation:

Marijn Jansen is working in the sales department of a multinational company called X Technologies which offers IT solutions for businesses. He and his colleague Bram van Zijl were working together on a deal with a new potential client. While Bram was away for vacation, Marijn met the client alone and agreed to a deal without Bram's knowledge. Anyway, the deal turned out to be beneficial for the company and no harm was done. However, Marijn still feels bad about not informing Bram as they were always working as a team and made all the decisions together, so he feels the necessity to express his apology and wrote the following email:

Dear Bram,

I feel obliged to inform you that I met with our client and we already agreed on the deal and moved forward with it. Despite the success of that deal and you being away on vacation, I would like to apologise for not informing you before taking the final decision on this deal. I accepted that deal because that was a one-time opportunity. I hope this action has not damaged our relationship as co-workers. I am looking forward to working with you again on future cases.

Kind regards,
Marijn Jansen

Perception question block

Imagine the following situation:

Emily Crawford is working in the sales department of a multinational company called X Technologies which offers IT solutions for businesses. She and her colleague Charlie Gresham were working together on a deal with a new potential client. While Charlie was away for vacation, Emily met the client alone and agreed to a deal without Charlie's knowledge. Anyway, the deal turned out to be beneficial for the company and no harm was done. However, Emily still feels bad about not informing Charlie as they were always working as a team and made all the decisions together, so she feels the necessity to express her apology and wrote the following email:

Dear Charlie,

I feel obliged to inform you that I met with our client and we already agreed on the deal and moved forward with it. Despite the success of that deal and you being away on vacation, I would like to sincerely apologise for not informing you before taking the final decision on this deal. I accepted that deal because that was a one-time opportunity. I know we were supposed to discuss it together and I hope this action has not damaged our relationship as co-workers. I am looking forward to working with you again on future cases.

Kind regards,
Emily Crawford

Perception question block

Questionnaire 2 – Nonnative+severe+boss

Imagine the following situation:

Nicolas Montez is a business consultant working for a multinational IT company called MJ Solutions. While his boss, Zoe Reyes, was away for a business trip, Nicolas had to meet a potential client that they were both negotiating with. The client wanted to make some detrimental changes to the deal, or otherwise, they would not sign. Nicolas had to act quickly and agreed to the deal without discussing it with his boss. Not only did he challenge Zoe's

trust, but the deal turned out to be not profitable for the company and ineffective for the client in that Nicolas' company was not able to meet the agreed terms. Thus, he feels obliged to express his apology to Zoe for the unfortunate situation and wrote the following email:

Dear Zoe,

I wanted to express my sincere apologies for the decisions I have made and the damage it has caused to the company. Dealing with the client on my own because you were away, seemed like a good decision for the company at the time. The client was rather persistent, and I thought it would be beneficial for our relationship with this client, if I dealt with it straight away. I regret not informing you when the client told me he wanted to make some detrimental changes to our deal. I am very sorry for taking the lead in such a crucial deal and for the consequences it has brought. Also, I am really sorry to challenge your trust, but I hope you can still trust me, and we can remain working together in the future.

Kind regards,
Nicolas Montez

Perception question block

Questionnaire 3 - Native+severe+colleague

Imagine the following situation:

Emily Crawford is working in the sales department of a multinational company called MJ Solutions that offers IT solutions for businesses. She and her colleague Charlie Gresham were working on a deal with a new potential client. Emily's partner could not attend the meeting during which they were supposed to sign the contract with the client. The client wanted to make some significant changes to the deal, and Emily agreed without discussing with her partner beforehand. Not only did she challenge his partner's trust, but the deal turned out to be not profitable for the company. Thus, Emily feels obliged to express her apology to Charlie for the unfortunate situation and wrote the following email:

Dear Charlie,

I wanted to contact you in terms of the project that we were working on together. During the meeting I was responsible for both of us as you were unavailable during the time of the

meeting. I simply had to make the decisions on the spot. I would like to express my sincere apology for not contacting you or trying to somehow postpone the deal so that we could make the decisions together. I damaged your trust in me - I am extremely sorry. I promise that I have learned from my mistake and no such thing will happen in the future. I hope you can forgive me.

Regards,

Emily Crawford

Perception question block

Questionnaire 3 - Nonnative+gentle+boss

Imagine the following situation:

Bertha Olsen is a business consultant working for a multinational IT company called X Technologies. While her boss, Tilde Kristensen, was away for vacation Bertha had to meet a potential client to discuss a deal that she and her boss were working on together. Due to Tilde being absent, Bertha had to make a decision herself and agreed to some changes in the deal without notifying her boss. Anyway, the deal turned out to be beneficial for the company and no harm was done. However, Bertha still feels bad about not discussing it with Tilde, so she feels the necessity to express her apology to her boss and wrote the following email:

Dear Tilde,

I am writing to you regarding the project we were working on together. During your vacation I had an opportunity to agree with the clients to proceed with the project, however, I had to make some changes the clients asked for. I wasn't able to contact you and get the agreement to the changes required. I wanted to apologise as I understand that working together and communicating is the key of the structure of working in a team. I appreciate your support and I did not mean to offend or in any way to marginalize your role in the creation of the deal. During future projects this will not happen again.

Kind regards,

Bertha Olsen

___

Questionnaire 4 - Native+gentle+boss

Imagine the following situation:

Noah Cromwell is a business consultant working for a multinational IT company called MJ Solutions. While his boss, Abigail Morton, was away for vacation Noah had to meet a potential client to discuss a deal that she and her boss were working on together. Due to Abigail being absent, Noah had to make a decision himself and agreed to some changes in the deal without notifying his boss. Anyway, the deal turned out to be beneficial for the company and no harm was done. However, Noah still feels bad about not discussing it with Abigail, so he feels the necessity to express her apology to his boss and wrote the following email:

Dear Abigail,

I am writing to you regarding the project we were working on together. During your vacation I had an opportunity to agree with the clients to proceed with the project, however, I had to make some changes the clients asked for. I wasn't able to contact you and get the agreement to the changes required. I wanted to sincerely apologise as I understand that working together and communicating is the key of the structure of working in a team. I truly appreciate your support and I did not mean to offend or in any way to marginalize your role in the creation of the deal. I assure you, during future projects this will not happen again.

Kind regards,
Noah Cromwell

___

___

Questionnaire 4 - Nonnative+severe+colleague

Imagine the following situation:

Günter Fischer is working in the sales department of a multinational company called X Technologies that offers IT solutions for businesses. He and his colleague Walter

Zimmermann were working on a deal with a new potential client. Günter's partner could not attend the meeting during which they were supposed to sign the contract with the client. The client wanted to make some significant changes to the deal, and Günter agreed without discussing with his partner beforehand. Not only did he challenge his partner's trust, but the deal turned out to be not profitable for the company. Thus, Günter feels obliged to express his apology to Walter for the unfortunate situation and wrote the following email:

Dear Walter,

I wanted to contact you in terms of the project that we were working on together. During the meeting I was responsible for both of us as you were unavailable during the time of the meeting. I had to make the decisions on the spot. I would like to apologise for not contacting you or trying to postpone the deal so that we could make the decisions together. I damaged your trust in me - I am very sorry. I promise that I have learned from my mistake and no such thing will happen in the future. I hope you can forgive me.

Regards,
Günter Fischer

Perception question block

Demographics
Please indicate your personal details below.

Gender

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (3)

Age

_____

Education

○ Secondary education or less (1)

○ Undergraduate level (2)

○ Graduate level/Bachelor's degree (3)

○ Postgraduate level/ Master's level (4)

○ Doctoral degree/PhD (5)

○ Other (6) _____

Native language

_____

Please   evaluate   your   English   language   skills:

Writing

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Poor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Excellent

Reading

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Poor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Excellent

Listening

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Poor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Excellent

Lextale

If you wish to complete the LexTALE English test click on 'Continue'. If you wish to finish the survey, click on 'Finish'.

○ Continue

○ Finish

This test consists of about 60 trials, in each of which you will see a string of letters. Your task is to decide whether this is an existing English word or not. If you think it is an existing English word, you click on "yes", and if you think it is not an existing English word, you click on "no". If you are sure that the word exists, even though you don't know its exact meaning, you may still respond "yes". But if you are not sure if it is an existing word, you should respond "no". In this experiment, we use British English rather than American English spelling. For example: "realise" instead of "realize"; "colour" instead of "color", and so on. Please don't let this confuse you. This experiment is not about detecting such subtle spelling differences anyway.

You have as much time as you like for each decision. This part of the experiment will take about 5 minutes.

You will be able to see your results after completing the test.

If everything is clear, you can now start the experiment.

Click on 'yes' if you think it is an existing English word, 'no' if you think it is not an existing one.

	Yes	No
Platery (1)	○	○
Denial (2)	○	○
Generic (3)	○	○
Mensible (4)	○	○
Scornful (5)	○	○

Stoutly (6)	○	○
Ablaze (7)	○	○
Kermshaw (8)	○	○
Moonlit (9)	○	○
Lofty (10)	○	○
Hurricane (11)	○	○
Flaw (12)	○	○
Alberation (13)	○	○
Unkempt (14)	○	○
Breeding (15)	○	○
Festivity (16)	○	○
Screech (17)	○	○
Savoury (18)	○	○
Plaudate (19)	○	○
Shin (20)	○	○
Fluid (21)	○	○
Spaunch (22)	○	○
Allied (23)	○	○
Slain (24)	○	○
Recipient (25)	○	○

Exprate (26)	○	○
Eloquence (27)	○	○
Cleanliness (28)	○	○
Dispatch (29)	○	○
Rebondicate (30)	○	○
Ingenious (31)	○	○
Bewitch (32)	○	○
Skave (33)	○	○
Plaintively (34)	○	○
Kilp (35)	○	○
Interfate (36)	○	○
Hasty (37)	○	○
Lengthy (38)	○	○
Fray (39)	○	○
Crumper (40)	○	○
Upkeep (41)	○	○
Majestic (42)	○	○
Magrity (43)	○	○
Nourishment (44)	○	○
Abergy (45)	○	○

Proom (46)	○	○
Turmoil (47)	○	○
Carbohydrate (48)	○	○
Scholar (49)	○	○
Turtle (50)	○	○
Fellick (51)	○	○
Destription (52)	○	○
Cylinder (53)	○	○
Censorship (54)	○	○
Celestial (55)	○	○
Rascal (56)	○	○
Purrage (57)	○	○
Pulsh (58)	○	○
Muddy (59)	○	○
Quirty (60)	○	○
Pudour (61)	○	○
Listless (62)	○	○