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The effects of arguments and native versus non-native language use on the persuasiveness of requests in corporate settings

An experimental study

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Abstract

As globalization leads to an increase in multilingualism in businesses, language has become an important aspect of business communication (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). Research on persuasive messages (advertisements) indicates that the use of a non-native language is more positively effective towards persuasiveness than the use of a native language (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2016; Van Hooft & Truong, 2012). When it comes to business communication, making requests is one of the most frequent used speech acts (Park, Jeon, & Shim, 2021). When making requests, the use of argumentations and the presence of hierarchical levels show to be important factors to increase comprehensibility of requests and compliance with the request (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016; Hendriks, 2010; Langer et al., 1978; Parry, 2009). To date, it is unclear whether the use of argumentations and a native versus a non-native language have an effect on requests made in corporate settings, without hierarchical differences. This experimental study investigated the effects of arguments (present vs. absent) and language (native vs. non-native) on the persuasiveness of requests being made in corporate settings, without hierarchical differences between the requester and requestee. An online Qualitrics questionnaire provided 159 useable responses, of which the data was used to test two hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that individuals who receive a request with an argument will perceive the request as more persuasive than the individuals who receive a request without an argument. The second hypothesis was that individuals who receive a request in their non-native language will perceive the request as being more persuasive than the individuals who receive a request in their native language. The results for both hypotheses were found to be insignificant. Therefore, the findings of this research indicate that arguments, as well as the difference between a native and non-native language for a request do not affect the persuasiveness of a request being made in corporate settings, without hierarchical differences.

Introduction

As a result of globalization, multilingualism in societies and businesses is increasing (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). This leads to organizations having to set a corporate communication language (CCL). When choosing a corporate communication language, the adoption of English as a corporate communication language – lingua franca – is most common across multinationals, which according to Neeley (2012) is based on three reasons: competitive pressure, globalized contacts and work environments, and mergers and acquisition integrations across national boundaries. Therefore, the implementation of English can be beneficial to organizational goals. However, this often means that not everybody within the organization is able to communicate with colleagues in their native language, bringing its own inconvenience. The same situation appears in the Netherlands, where the dominant language in corporate settings is English (Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2004; Seidlhofer et al., 2006). English is not always understood correctly and appreciated, although it is used in almost all layers of Dutch society (Gerritsen et al., 2000, 2007; Meurs et al., 2006). Based on these findings, it is interesting to further investigate the effects of English language use on interactions in corporate settings in the Netherlands.

When focusing on interactions in corporate settings, requests are particularly, since there is limited research about requests in corporate settings. A successful request relies on the convincing and persuasive element within the request, such as argumentation. This requires linguistic tact that usually differs across languages, which potentially leads to inappropriate language use and nonconventional speech while making requests in non-native languages (Pinto & Raschio, 2007). For this reason, along with the findings that English language use is not always understood and appreciated in the Netherlands, it raises the question whether the use of English as a lingua franca in corporate settings in the Netherlands may affect the persuasiveness of requests, including their argumentations, being made in these settings.

Requests and argumentation

Requests and arguments can both be seen as speech acts, which is speech that naturally occurs during the transfer of information between at least two people (Searle et al., 1980). A request can be further defined as a mean to persuade a requestee to carry out a certain action or behaviour to the benefit of the requester. An argument is defined as a mean to regulate disagreement over all types of speech acts (Jackson & Jacobs, 1992). The use of requests and arguments often happens simultaneously in interpersonal contexts as well as in corporate

settings both nationally and internationally (Pinto & Raschio, 2007). In corporate settings, the use of requests was even found to be one of the most frequent used speech acts in communication (Park, Jeon, & Shim, 2021). Moreover, it was found that in more than a third of requests being made, the use of arguments is present to support requests in casual interaction (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016). This is not surprising, since multiple studies have provided evidence for the positive effects of using arguments to support requests in casual and institutional settings, leading to increased comprehensibility of the request and increased compliance with the request (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016; Langer et al., 1978; Parry, 2009). The use of argumentations to support requests have been found to be very effective in corporate settings as well. Employees' attitudes and intentions towards organizational change are found to be more positive and there is a decrease of conflict between the requester and the receiver of the request when a request is denied (Bies et al., 1988; Schaubroeck et al., 1994).

These findings suggest that the use of arguments in combination with requests can influence one's behaviour and is perhaps even necessary to persuade someone to perform an action or behaviour in various settings. This can be explained with the politeness theory, which states that the use of arguments can be seen as a politeness strategy to decrease the impact of face threatening acts, such as requests (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Garcia, 2013). To maintain face in interactions is important, since face is the public image that someone has and wants to uphold. The impact of a face threatening act could negatively influence both the speaker's and the requestee's face and their social relationships (Goffman, 1955). Therefore, the use of arguments can be useful in order to make a request seem more reasonable and thus acceptable to the requestee (Minei et al., 2018).

Politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) presents three social dimensions that determine whether a politeness device, such as argumentation is needed for a face threatening act. These social dimensions are 'social distance', 'power' and 'absolute ranking'. Although these three dimensions can all influence the perceptions of requests and responses to requests, the 'power' dimension is particularly interesting for this research, since differences in power are generally more common in corporate settings than social distance and absolute ranking (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Hofstede, 2001).

Differences in power level (i.e. hierarchical level) can also be described as power distance, which can be defined as the extent to which power is distributed unequally in institutions, organizations and social structures (Kirkman et al., 2009). According to Hofstede (2001), the presence of power distance is unavoidable and functional in organizations, where it is most common in manager-subordinate relationships. Hendriks (2010) found that differences

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in authority levels influence the perceived level of reasonableness and intention to comply with a request. In addition, differences in authority levels have proven to influence the reactions of employees to perceptions of injustice (Lee et al., 2000). A possible explanation for this is that a difference in hierarchical levels can influence the perceived obligations of the requester and requestee towards each other (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Hendriks, 2010).

Based on the previous literature it can be stated that the success of requests in various settings can be increased by using an argument. When looking at business settings in particular, differences in hierarchical level could also influence the perceptions and reactions towards requests being made, due to perceived obligations between the requester and the receiver of the request. However, it is not clear how arguments for requests will be perceived and what their effects are when the requester and the requestee are from the same hierarchical level.

Processing native and non-native language

As previously mentioned, corporate settings have become quite international. This results in people often speaking a non-native language at their workplace. Multiple studies have shown that the processing of a non-native language needs a higher level of cognitive effort to understand the message than for the processing of a native language, and that the use of a non-native language seems to attract more attention (Domzal et al., 1995; Hornikx & Starren, 2008; Piller, 2003). In the field of advertising, research regarding language in advertising is commonly focused on the effects of language on an individual's attitude, which is seen as an individual's disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to any aspect of an individual's world (Pratkanis et al., 2014). Multiple studies on native versus non-native language in advertising have indicated that the use of a non-native language is more effective in terms of positive attitudes towards the message, purchase intention and liking of the ad, than the use of a native language (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2016; Van Hooft & Truong, 2012). When specifically looking at English as a non-native language, Hornikx et al. (2010) found that native Dutch speakers preferred the use of English over Dutch in advertisement slogans. This indicates that the use of English as a non-native language in persuasive content might have a preference for native Dutch speakers.

Furthermore, research on the processing of a non-native language shows that bilinguals tend to evaluate words in their native language as emotionally more intense than the same words in their non-native language (Altarriba, 2003; De Langhe et al., 2011; Harris et al., 2003; Pavlenko, 2005; Puntoni et al., 2009). This can be explained by the findings that autobiographical memories determine emotional word intensity (Marian & Kaushanskaya,

2004). Since autobiographical memories in a person's native language are more common and emotional than those in a non-native language, native words tend to be seen as more emotionally intense (Puntoni et al., 2009). Moreover, Cheng (2011) researched the differences between native (English) and non-native (Chinese) speakers' responses to compliments. It was found that non-native speakers used a different set of responding strategies to compliments than native speakers, which was according to Cheng (2011) was the result of their culture and their limited non-native language proficiency. Based on these findings it could be expected that differences in responses to requests will be found between non-native and native speakers, since both compliments and requests are seen as speech acts (Searle et al., 1980).

Based on these findings, it can be stated that the use of native and non-native languages may have different effects on the processing of persuasive messages, the effectiveness of arguments and responses to speech acts. An especially interesting finding is that regarding persuasive messages in the form of advertisements, native Dutch speakers seem to have a preference for the use of English over Dutch. This raises the question whether these same effects will be found in corporate settings when using a Dutch versus English for requests accompanied by an argument, which can also be seen as persuasive messages.

Focus of research

In sum, the discussed literature suggests that the use of argumentation for requests and differences in hierarchical level can influence the success of requests by affecting their persuasiveness in terms of intention to comply. It is, however, uncertain whether the same effects will be present when there is no difference in hierarchical level between the requester and the requestee. In addition, previous research has showed that the use of a non-native language can affect attitudes towards persuasive messages and speech acts. Nevertheless, none of these findings relate specifically to arguments and requests. These findings, together with the findings that English language use is not always understood and appreciated in the Netherlands (Gerritsen et al., 2000, 2007; Meurs et al., 2006), not only raise the question whether the use of arguments for requests will influence their persuasiveness, but also whether the use of English as a non-native language will affect the persuasiveness of requests, including their argumentations.

In order to do this, this study answered the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. *"What is the effect of an argument (present vs. absent) on the persuasiveness of a request, when the request is produced by a colleague from the same hierarchical level?"*

H1: The individuals who receive a request with an argument will perceive the request as more persuasive than the individuals who receive a request without an argument.

2. *"What is the effect of language (native vs. non-native) on the persuasiveness of a request, when the request is produced by a colleague from the same hierarchical level?"*

H2: The individuals who receive a request in their non-native language will perceive the request as being more persuasive than the individuals who receive a request in their native language.

Methodology

Materials

For this study, the independent variables were language (native e.g. Dutch /non-native e.g. English) and the presence of an argument (present/absent). As a result, four groups and four accompanying texts were used. The first group was exposed to a Dutch text containing a request without an argument. The second group was exposed to a Dutch text containing a request with an argument. The third group was exposed to an English text containing a request without an argument and lastly the fourth group was exposed to an English text containing a request with an argument.

The scenario, request and argument were based on those from the Minei et al. (2018) study, which have been pre-tested before usage and can be seen in Appendix 1. In their study Minei et al. (2018) use an illegitimate task request, which is described as a task which violates the boundaries of the work an employee believes falls within his or her formal role (Minei et al., 2018; Semmer et al., 2010). These types of requests could be seen as especially face threatening and would require an argument to decrease their face threat and increase their persuasiveness (Minei, et al., 2018), since they can evoke anger, grudge and vengeance amongst employees (Eatough et al., 2015).

The present study used a similar situation, request and argument as in the Minei et al. (2018) study. In the original request from Minei et al. (2018), the requestee is asked to pick up their colleague's dry-cleaning, which is not a common request in corporate settings in the Netherlands. Therefore, the request in this present study was changed to the request for picking

up your colleague's package, which is believed to be more common in Dutch culture, but would still be an illegitimate task request to make in a corporate setting.

The situation in this study was presented as: *"Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years' experience on this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work"* (Minei et al., 2018). The illegitimate task request included a task which falls outside of the employee's formal work role, described as followed: *"Imagine that your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question. "Can you pick up my package from the PostNL point by 4PM?"".* This request is seen as an illegitimate task request, since picking up your colleague's package is not part of the formal role in the presented situation. For the groups that received the request with an argument, the following argument was included to the request: *"I don't have time to run this errand myself"* (Minei et al., 2018).

Subjects

A total of 245 participants voluntarily took part in this study, without receiving any form of reward. From all responses 159 were usable, the remainder was excluded from the experiment. Within the excluded responses 71 were incomplete, 3 indicated no work experience and 12 indicated another mother tongue than Dutch. The participants were native Dutch speakers, who were found with the use of convenience sampling through personal networks and social media. When participants indicated not to be native Dutch speakers, they were automatically excluded from taking part in the study. The participants were aged between 18 and 61 years old ($M = 24.31$, $SD = 8.55$) and were mostly female (50,3%), followed by male (47,8%) and the remainder, who preferred not to indicate their sex (1,9%). The participants' work experience was between .08 and 41 years ($M = 6.53$, $SD = 7.30$). In terms of educational level, most participants' highest level of education was preparatory scientific education (37,7%, VWO), followed by university of research level (20%, WO), university of applied sciences (17,6%, HBO), secondary vocational school (11,3%, MBO), higher general continued education (7,5%, HAVO) and secondary school (3,8%, VMBO). The remainder of participants (1,3%) had another level of education as their highest level. In addition, the participants were asked to indicate their self-assessed English proficiency ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 0.84$) regarding their 'writing' skills ($M = 5.33$, $SD = 0.98$), 'speaking' skills ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.95$), 'listening' skills ($M =$

5.74, *SD* = 0.89), and 'reading' skills (*M* = 5.83, *SD* = 0.93) on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "*Extremely bad*" (1) to "*Excellent*" (7) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2010), for which the reliability was excellent α = .91.

Regarding distribution of the participants, a Chi-square test indicated that gender (χ^2(6) = 7.18, *p* = .304), educational level (χ^2(18) = 20.97, *p* = .281), and total years of work experience (χ^2(120) = 120.24, *p* = .48) were equally distributed among all conditions. Furthermore, a one way analysis of variance indicated that age (*F*(3, 155) = 1.39, *p* = .247) and self-assessed level of English proficiency (*F*(3, 155) = 1.18, *p* = .319) were also equally distributed among all conditions.

Design

The design used for this study was a 2 (language: native vs. non-native) x 2 (argument: present/absent) between subjects experimental design, as presented in figure 1. Each participant was exposed to one condition – a text with or without argument in either their native (Dutch) or non-native (English) language.
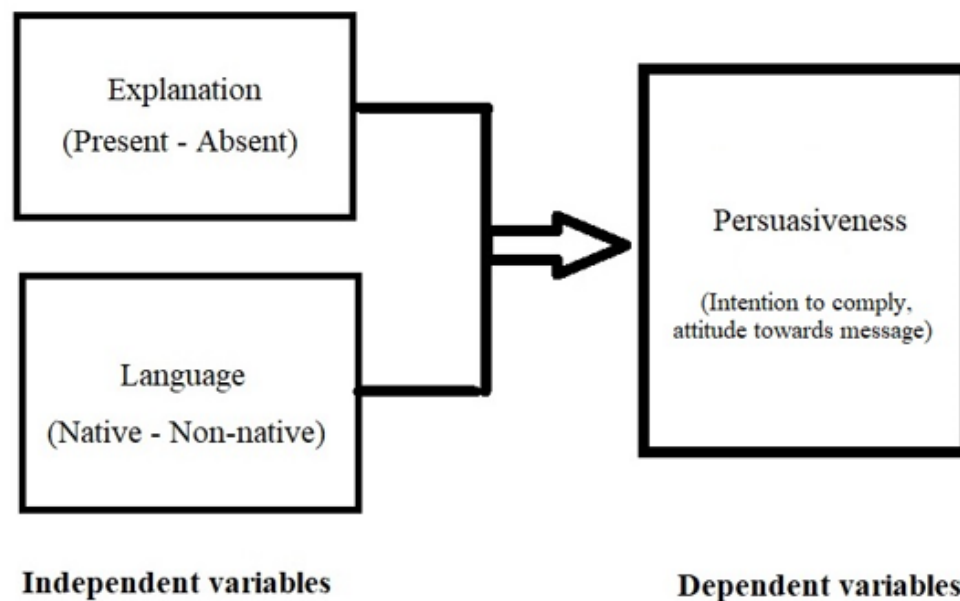
Figure 1. Analytical model of independent and dependent variables.

Instruments

The dependent variable of this study was persuasiveness. This has been measured by measuring the participants' intention to comply and their attitude towards the request. To measure the intention to comply, participants were asked to fill in their level of agreement to the statements *"I intend to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point", "I will pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point", "I am willing to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point"* and *"I plan to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point"* on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "*Definitely not*" (1) to "*Definitely*" (7) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2010), for which the reliability was excellent $\alpha = .91$. To measure the attitude towards the request, participants were asked to answer to the statement *"Picking up the package by 4PM is: .."* on a semantic differential scale containing the following items: *"good – bad", "unpleasant – pleasant", "harmful – beneficial", "interesting – boring"* and *"wise – unwise"* (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2010). The reliability for this scale was acceptable $\alpha = .75$, after deleting item *'interesting - boring'*. The scores on items 1, 4 and 5 were reverse coded (1 = 7, 2 = 6, 3 = 5, 5 = 3, 6 = 2, 7 = 1), before a mean score was calculated. Consequently, intention to comply and attitude towards the request were calculated into a compound variable, named persuasiveness.

Procedure

The experiment was conducted with English as a standard language, which means that all information besides the materials was provided in English. The materials were either completely Dutch or English. The subjects that participated in this study were invited through the online and offline network of the researchers of this study. While reaching out to potential subjects, it was made clear that there would be no reward for participating in this study. Once the subjects were found, the questionnaire made on Qualtrics, was send to them in a link via e-mail or Whatsapp, with the request to fill it in. Through this link, they were randomly assigned to one of the four groups. Before starting the questionnaire, the participants saw the instructions regarding the procedure and the expected duration of the questionnaire. After this, they were asked to fill in a form regarding informed consent and in which they stated to agree with the fact that their answers would be used in this study. Secondly, the participants had to answer personal questions regarding demographic information and their self-perceived proficiency in English. After this, the participants had to read the scenario with the request, which was presented to them in their native (Dutch) or non-native (English) language, with (present) or without (absent) an argument based on the group they were assigned to. After reading the text,

the participants continued to the part of the questionnaire regarding the persuasiveness of the request, which was be measured with their intention to comply and their attitude towards the message. Once these questions were answered, they entered the last page in which they were thanked for their participation in this study. It took the participants 3.58 minutes on average (M = 3.58, SD = 17.91, Range = 192.90 minutes, minimum = 0.88 minutes, maximum = 193.78 minutes) to complete the questionnaire.

Statistical treatment

To analyse the data, two one-way analysis of variance were used. First, a one-way analysis of variance was used to analyse the effect of an argument on the persuasiveness of a request. Secondly, a one-way analysis of variance was used to analyse the effect of language on the persuasiveness of a request. For both analyses persuasiveness was analysed with the compound variable 'persuasiveness'.

Results

This experimental study has investigated whether the use of an argument (present vs. absent) and language use (native vs. non-native) have an effect on the persuasiveness of requests made in business contexts without hierarchical differences among native Dutch requestees.

Effect of argument

A one-way analysis of variance showed a non-significant effect of the presence of an argument on the persuasiveness of requests (F (1, 158) = 1.48, p = .226).

Effect of language

A one-way analysis of variance showed a non-significant effect of language on the persuasiveness of requests and their arguments (F (1, 158) = .63, p = .430).

Conclusion and discussion

The aim for this study was to add to the broadening of both the practical and scientific knowledge of the effects of arguments and language on the persuasiveness of request made in a work setting without differences in hierarchical levels. This was done by means of the following research questions: 1)*"What is the effect of an argument (present vs. absent) on the persuasiveness of a request, when the request is produced by a colleague from the same hierarchical level?"*, 2) *"What is the effect of language (native vs. non-native) on the*

persuasiveness of a request, when the request is produced by a colleague from the same hierarchical level?". In addition, the following hypotheses were tested: H1) *"The individuals who receive a request with an argument will perceive the request as more persuasive than the individuals who receive a request without an argument".* H2) *"The individuals who receive a request in their non-native language will perceive the request as being more persuasive than the individuals who receive a request in their native language".*

The findings regarding the first research question of this study show no effects of using an argument on the persuasiveness of a request. In addition, regarding the second research question, no effect of language was found on the persuasiveness of a request. Consequently, the first, as well as the second hypothesis has to be rejected. As a result, it can be concluded that the use of arguments (present vs. absent) and differences in language (native vs. non-native) do not have an effect on the persuasiveness of requests, produced in a work setting without differences in hierarchical levels.

Effect of argument

The findings regarding the effects of using an argument on the persuasiveness of a request are, unexpectedly, contradicting with findings from previous studies. Multiple studies indicated that the use of an argument with a request could lead to increased comprehensibility of the request, increased intention to comply with the request and more positive attitudes towards the request (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016; Bies et al., 1988; Langer et al., 1978; Parry, 2009; Schaubroeck et al., 1994). Moreover, Minei et al. (2018) suggest that using an argument could lead to a request being perceived as more reasonable. Therefore, based on previous literature, it was expected that the use of an argument for a request would increase the persuasiveness of that request. However, the findings show this was not the case. A possible explanation for these contradicting findings might be that the argument *"I don't have time to run this errand myself"* (Minei et al., 2018) did not give enough explanation for the request. Since the requester and the requestee have the same job description it would be expected that they have a similar workload. Therefore, asking the requestee to pick up a package solely based on the argument that the requester does not have time to do this him/herself, could have been perceived by the respondent as unreasonable.

In addition, the absence of differences in hierarchical levels between the requester and the requestee in this study might have influenced the results. Since differences in hierarchical levels can affect the perceived obligations between the requester and the requestee (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Hendriks, 2010), an absence of these differences could have led to the requestee

having less obligatory feelings towards the requester. This possible explanation for the findings could be tested in future studies, by giving additional context to the argument addressing why the requester has no time to perform the task.

Another important aspect that could explain these findings can be found in the method that is used. In the method, the description of the relationship between the requester and the requestee is limited to that they are colleagues with the same amount of workload and tasks. There is no additional context provided regarding the relationship between the requester and the requestee in terms of their interpersonal relationship. Having no background information about the interpersonal relationship between the requester and requestee has shown to raise questions amongst the participants, as they were questioning whether the requester and requestee were merely colleagues or whether there was a deeper relationship between the requester and requestee. As described by Brown & Levinson in their politeness theory (1987), social distance between the speaker and the listener could also influence the response towards a face threatening act. Since a request is seen as a face threatening act, it could be possible that the absence of a interpersonal relationship has led to the believe that there is a large social distance between the requester and the requestee, which might have influenced the responses to the request. Although these concerns about the relationship between the requester and the requestee could have influenced the results, this present research aimed to focus only on the hierarchical aspect in the relationship between the requester and the requestee.

It could be interesting for future studies to address the interpersonal relationship between the requester and the requestee, to broaden the practical and scientific knowledge regarding the use of arguments for request in the workplace, as well as for the role that the interpersonal relationship between colleagues has in these types of situations.

Effect of language

The findings for the effect of language on the persuasiveness of requests are contradicting with previous findings, which was not expected. Some studies indicated that the use of a non-native language in persuasive messages, such as advertisements, has more potential to generate positive attitudes towards a message than a native language has (Hornikx & Van Meurs, 2016; Van Hooft & Truong, 2012). Especially the study by Hornikx et al. (2010) presented a potential preference for English language use in persuasive messages amongst Dutch natives. The same results were expected for the present study, since requests are seen as persuasive messages as well. However, the present study has not found these same effects for request as previously found for other persuasive messages.

One of the main possibilities that could have led to this deviation in findings is the difference in nature between requests and advertisements. Although both requests and advertisements are seen as persuasive messages, a request is seen as a face threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and an advertisement is not. Because of this, it could be the case that the use of a native language versus a non-native language for a face threatening act does not have the same effects on persuasiveness as for advertisements.

Another possibility is that the face threatening act was diminished, but not measured. A possible explanation for this can be found in a study on native speakers' assessment of (im)politeness of non-native speakers' requests by Mohammadi and Tamimi Sa'd (2013). The results of the study show that the major elements which contributed to the evaluation of a request made by a non-native speaker were the level of directness, use of certain semantic formulas, in-group markers, honorifics and lack of pre-requests. These are all aspects which have not been taken into consideration in this present study. Moreover, the self-assessed English level of most participants who took part in this present study was intermediate on average. If this level of English is accurate, it could have limited the influence of the non-native language on the persuasiveness of the request, as the native and non-native language could have been processed in the same way.

Lastly, the execution of this study could explain these findings. While analysing the data, it appeared that the distribution of respondents over the independent variable 'language' was not fully equal due to uncomplete responses. The inequality of distribution over this could have led to distorted results.

Limitations, recommendations and implications

There are few limitations to this study, which can be overcome in future studies as follows. Firstly, the materials used in this study might lack crucial information for the respondents regarding the relationship between the requester and requestee, and the account that was used during the experiment. As previously mentioned, the situation described to the respondents focussed solely on the requester and requestee being colleagues. This led to confusion for some of the respondents, leaving them wondering if there was any kind of deeper interpersonal relationship between the requester and requestee. In addition, the argument used in the experiment might have been lacking important explanatory information regarding the reason for the request. For example, it is not mentioned why the requester does not have time to pick up the package. Since the requester and the requestee have the same job description and

therefore the same workload, the lack of information as to why the request was made could have led to the request being perceived as unreasonable.

Both these limitations can quite easily be overcome in a future study. The confusion about the interpersonal relationship can be overcome by either presenting the respondents more information about the absence or presence of an interpersonal relationship, or the presence of an interpersonal relationship can be implemented as a variable in a future study. These adjustments can add to a broadening of the scientific and practical knowledge of the present research, by providing more information about the role that relationships have in the persuasiveness of requests.

Secondly, it appeared that some respondents left incomplete responses. This led to the exclusion of these responses, but consequently to an unequal distribution for the independent variable 'language'. Although these responses were excluded from the results, it would have been more beneficial to this study if all responses were completed. This limitation also can be easily overcome in future studies, by making all questions obligatory to answer.

The findings of this study also suggests some recommendations for future studies, which are not based on limitations. Future studies could take into account the elements 'level of directness', 'use of certain semantic formulas', 'in-group markers', 'honorifics' and 'lack of pre-requests' as described by Mohammadi and Tamimi Sa'd (2013), since they are believed to contribute to the evaluation of requests made in a non-native language. While doing this, future studies could incorporate both spoken and written language. Kim et al. (2020) found that native and non-native languages are processed differently when it comes to spoken and written language. Combining the differences in processing spoken and written language to the differences in processing native and non-native languages regarding requests could lead to interesting results. Moreover, future studies could replicate the present study with a non-native language for which participants' self-assessed level is lower to the minimum of understanding a language. By doing this, the effect of language could potentially become more distinct and besides the results could be compared to those of the present study to see how different levels of non-native language knowledge influence persuasiveness of a request. Another possibility by which the effects of a native versus a non-native language can be investigated is by using a non-native language in which the respondents are sufficient enough to understand it, but

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contribute to the evaluation of requests made in a non-native language. While doing this, future studies could incorporate both spoken and written language. Kim et al. (2020) found that native and non-native languages are processed differently when it comes to spoken and written language. Combining the differences in processing spoken and written language to the differences in processing native and non-native languages regarding requests could lead to interesting results. Moreover, future studies could replicate the present study with a non-native language for which participants' self-assessed level is lower to the minimum of understanding a language. By doing this, the effect of language could potentially become more distinct and besides the results could be compared to those of the present study to see how different levels of non-native language knowledge influence persuasiveness of a request. Another possibility by which the effects of a native versus a non-native language can be examined is by using a non-native language other than English. This may not only lead to different results regarding the effects of other non-native languages on the persuasiveness of requests, but also towards the effects of a non-native language in different sufficiency levels, assuming that the sufficiency will vary across languages.

The present study provides new insights into understanding the effects of using arguments and a native versus non-native language on the persuasiveness of requests made in corporate settings, without hierarchical differences between the requester and requestee. The findings of this study indicate that using an argument does not have an significant effect on the persuasiveness of a request. Moreover, it indicates that there are no significant differences between the use of a native versus a non-native language on the persuasiveness of a request. Although these results are insignificant and unexpected, they are contributing to the scientific and practical knowledge on this subject. This study shows that in corporate settings without hierarchical differences, the use of an argument does not increase the persuasiveness of an argument. This finding broadens the findings by Minei et al. (2018), which indicate that the use of an argument has a positive effect on the persuasiveness of a request when there is a difference in hierarchy between colleagues. This study also presents new insights for the theoretical knowledge on language use in persuasive texts. The findings show no effects of a native versus a non-native language on the persuasiveness of requests, which implies that the effects of language on advertisements do not hold up on all forms of persuasive texts.

Regarding practical implications, the results found in this study can be useful in corporate settings. As it is common for colleagues to make requests to one another, the findings can help to tailor and understand the success or failure of requests being made when there is no hierarchical difference between colleagues.

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Appendix

    1. **Minei et al. (2018) study**

1.1 Original materials Minei et al. (2018)

The situation described in the study by Minei et al. (2018) was as followed: *"S.J. works as an administrative assistant. S.J. has 10 years' experience on this job and is proud of the hard work that is put into the job every day. S.J.'s primary work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work."*. The request used in the study was *"Today, one of the executives that S.J. works for requests that S.J. run a personal errand, saying "I need you to pick up my dry-cleaning today by 4 p.m."* accompanied by the following argument *"I don't have time to run this errand myself."*

1.2 Edited materials for the present study

The situation described in the present study for the Dutch condition was as followed: *"Beeld u in dat u als administratief assistent werkt in een multinationale organisatie in Nederland. U heeft 10 jaar ervaring in deze functie en bent trots op het harde werk dat u iedere dag levert. Uw werkzaamheden betreffen het voorbereiden van documenten, rapporten, en brieven; het beantwoorden en doorverbinden van telefoongesprekken; het bijwonen van vergaderingen, het notuleren van vergaderingen, het begroeten van bezoekers en bepalen of zij toegang krijgen tot bepaalde personen; het bijhouden van de boekhouding; en het verrichten van algemene kantoorwerkzaamheden.* The request used in this condition was: *"Uw collega met dezelfde functie en ervaring als u benadert u met de volgende vraag: "Kun je mijn pakketje ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt voor 16:00?"* accompanied by the following argument (only for the condition with argument) *"Ik heb geen tijd om dit klusje zelf te doen."*

The situation described in the present study for the English condition was as followed: *"Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings and taking minutes, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing*

general office work. The request used in this condition was: "*Your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question: Can you pick up my package from the PostNL point by 16:00 hrs?*" accompanied by the following argument (only for the condition with argument) *"I do not have time to run this errand by myself."*

2. Questionnaires

2.1 Condition 1: English with an account

Dear participant,

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

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

✳

I have read and understood the above information

○ Yes

○ No

✳

I agree to participate in this study

○ Yes

○ No

---

*

I am 18 years or older

○ Yes

○ No

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

What is your native language/mother tongue?

○ Dutch

○ Other

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

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

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

_____

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

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

○ Prefer not to say

✱

What is your age?

_____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ Vmbo

○ Havo

○ Vwo

○ Mbo

○ Hbo

○ Wo

○ Other

Please indicate your English proficiency on the following aspects:

	Extremely bad	Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good	Excellent
Speaking	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reading	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listening	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Below, a work situation is presented to you. Please read it carefully, you will have to answer some questions about the situation.

Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings, taking notes during meetings, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work.

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

Below, you see some questions regarding this situation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I intend to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Good	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Bad
Unpleasant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Pleasant
Harmful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Beneficial
Interesting	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Boring
Wise	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Unwise

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.2 Condition 2: English without an account

Dear participant,

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

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

---

✳

I have read and understood the above information

○ Yes

○ No

✳

I agree to participate in this study

○ Yes

○ No

✳

I am 18 years or older

○ Yes

○ No

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

What is your native language/mother tongue?

○ Dutch

○ Other

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

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

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

_____

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

What is your gender?

◯ Male

◯ Female

◯ Other

◯ Prefer not to say

✳

What is your age?

_____

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

◯ Vmbo

◯ Havo

◯ Vwo

◯ Mbo

◯ Hbo

◯ Wo

◯ Other

Please indicate your English proficiency on the following aspects:

	Extremely bad	Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good	Excellent
Speaking	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reading	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Listening	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Below, a work situation is presented to you. Please read it carefully, you will have to answer some questions about the situation.

Imagine that you are working in a multinational organisation in the Netherlands as an administrative assistant. You have 10 years of experience in this job and are proud of the hard work that you put into your job every day. Your work tasks involve preparing documents, reports, and letters, answering and directing phone calls, attending meetings, taking notes during meetings, greeting visitors and deciding if they should gain access to specific individuals, bookkeeping, and performing general office work.

Your colleague with the same job and experience approaches you with the following question. "Can you pick up my package from the PostNL point by 16:00?"

Below, you see some questions regarding this situation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I intend to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I plan to pick up the colleague's package from the PostNL point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Good	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Bad
Unpleasant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Pleasant
Harmful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Beneficial
Interesting	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Boring
Wise	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Unwise

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.3 Condition 3: Dutch with an account

Beste participant,

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

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

---

✱

Ik heb de bovenstaande informatie gelezen en begrepen

    ◯ Ja

    ◯ Nee

✱

Ik stem in met deelname aan de studie

    ◯ Ja

    ◯ Nee

✱

Ik ben 18 jaar of ouder

    ◯ Ja

    ◯ Nee

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

Wat is uw moedertaal?

    ◯ Nederlands

    ◯ Anders

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

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

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

_____

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

Wat is uw geslacht?

- ○ Man

- ○ Vrouw

- ○ Anders

- ○ Zeg ik liever niet

---

*

Hoe oud bent u?

_____

Wat is uw hoogste afgeronde opleiding?

- ○ Vmbo

- ○ Havo

- ○ Vwo

- ○ Mbo

- ○ Hbo

- ○ Wo

- ○ Anders

Geef aan hoe goed uw Engels is op de volgende gebieden

	Extreem slecht	Zeer slecht	Slecht	Noch slecht noch goed	Goed	Zeer goed	Extreem goed
Spreken	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Schrijven	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lezen	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Luisteren	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

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

"Kun je mijn pakketje ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt voor 16:00? Ik heb geen tijd om dit klusje zelf te doen."

Hieronder ziet u een paar vragen over deze situatie

	Volledig mee oneens	Oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Eens	Volledig mee eens
Ik neem mezelf voor om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ik zal het pakketje van de collega ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben bereid het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ik ben van plan om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Als ik het pakketje van mijn collega ophaal bij het PostNL afhaalpunt is dat:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Goed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Slecht
Onaangenaam	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Aangenaam
Schadelijk	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Gunstig
Interessant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Saai
Verstandig	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Onverstandig

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

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2.4 Condition 4: Dutch without an account

Beste participant,

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

Uw deelname is vrijwillig en u kunt op ieder moment stoppen met deelnemen. Al uw antwoorden blijven vertouwelijk en anoniem, dit wil zeggen dat uw antwoorden niet naar u persoonlijk te herleiden

zullen zijn. Onderzoeksdata zullen opgeslagen worden volgens de richtlijnen van de Radboud Universiteit. Mocht u vragen of opmerkingen hebben, neem dan contact op met ons via alesso.dibinoudis@ru.nl

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＊

Ik heb de bovenstaande informatie gelezen en begrepen

○ Ja

○ Nee

＊

Ik stem in met deelname aan de studie

○ Ja

○ Nee

＊

Ik ben 18 jaar of ouder

○ Ja

○ Nee

End of Block: Blok 1 NL

Start of Block: Blok 2 - NL

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

Wat is uw moedertaal?

○ Nederlands

○ Anders

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

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

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

_____

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

Wat is uw geslacht?

○ Man

○ Vrouw

○ Anders

○ Zeg ik liever niet

✳

Hoe oud bent u?

_____

Wat is uw hoogste afgeronde opleiding?

○ Vmbo

○ Havo

○ Vwo

○ Mbo

○ Hbo

○ Wo

○ Anders

Geef aan hoe goed uw Engels is op de volgende gebieden

	Extreem slecht	Zeer slecht	Slecht	Noch slecht noch goed	Goed	Zeer goed	Extreem goed
Spreken	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Schrijven	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lezen	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Luisteren	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Blok 4 - NL

Start of Block: Blok 5 NL No Account

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

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

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

Hieronder ziet u een paar vragen over deze situatie

	Volledig mee oneens	Oneens	Enigszins mee oneens	Neutraal	Enigszins mee eens	Eens	Volledig mee eens
Ik neem mezelf voor om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ik zal het pakketje van de collega ophalen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ik ben bereid het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ik ben van plan om het pakketje van de collega op te halen bij het PostNL afhaalpunt	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Als ik het pakketje van mijn collega ophaal bij het PostNL afhaalpunt is dat:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Goed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Slecht
Onaangenaam	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Aangenaam
Schadelijk	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Gunstig
Interessant	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Saai
Verstandig	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	Onverstandig

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

_____

_____

_____

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_____

3. Statement of own work

Statement of own work

Sign this *Statement of own work* form and add it as the last appendix in the final version of the Bachelor's thesis that is submitted as to the first supervisor.

Student name: ___Kayleigh Engelen___

Student number: ___S1087381___

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DECLARATION:

a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (https://www.ru.nl/facultyofarts/stip/rules-guidelines/rules/fraud-plagiarism/) and with Article 16 "Fraud and plagiarism" in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programme of Communication and Information Studies.

b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words

c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature: _____

Place and date: ___12-6-2022___