L2 Request Realization

an investigation into interlanguage pragmatics and speech act performance of Norwegian learners of English

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Summary

This thesis investigates the request realization of L2 speakers of English and aims to give an account of mainly three aspects related to that topic: Which strategy the participants in this study most commonly use, if (and how) social context might affect how the L2 speakers perform requests and how the social context affect whether the participants choose to perform the request using the unmarked or the remote modal. In order to investigate this, three research questions were formulated: 1) Which strategies do Norwegian learners of English prefer when performing requests? 2) How sensitive do they seem to be to the social factors of the context? 3) How does this seem to affect their choice of modals when making requests? The participants in this study are teenagers (aged 16-17) who all had Norwegian as their L1 and English as their L2. The data was elicited by distributing a questionnaire consisting of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and two multiple-choice tests. The Results show that there is a slight discrepancy between the strategies the participants use in their answers to the DCT and the one they choose in the multiple choice test: the request strategies the participants use in the multiple-choice test vary to a greater extent compared to the strategies they use in the DCT. The answers to the test eliciting which form of the modal auxiliary the participants prefer and how sensitive they seem to be to the social context showed that the participants chooses the remote modal when the social distance was great or the power was with the addressee.

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1 Introduction

Pragmatic competence is a central part of the speaker's communicative competence. To have the ability to adapt the language to the context and your interlocutor(s) is important when communicating with others. Most speakers acquire this knowledge as a result of experience and interaction with others. If you have acquired a second language, and mostly had teaching inside a classroom, how do you acquire pragmatic knowledge and, perhaps more importantly, become able to use this knowledge? This paper will investigate the speech act performance of second language learners. To investigate the general speech act performance of second language users is too big a task to take on for this thesis. Instead, I will focus on how Norwegian second language users of English perform Requests.

Requests are arguably an interesting speech act to investigate. A request is considered to be a possible face-threatening act (FTA) (Brown and Levinson 1987). Part of this study involves eliciting how the participants adjust their request strategies and if they are aware of the social context. Asking the participants to perform a potential FTA will arguably elicit their strategies and awareness of the social context efficiently. In order to investigate how non-native speakers perform requests I have formulated the following research questions:

1. Which strategies do Norwegian learners of English prefer when performing requests?
2. How sensitive do they seem to be to the social factors of the context?
3. How does this seem to affect their choice of modals when making requests?

The purpose of this project is to investigate the research questions above from an *interlanguage* perspective. This means that I investigate the participants' interlinguistic and pragmatic competence in order to describe how they perform requests. Even though I will occasionally use their first language as a possible explanation for their choices this is not a comparative study.

For this project I have elicited data from participants aged 16-17. The participants are students in lower secondary school. I chose this group of participants because they all have Norwegian as their first language (L1) and attended a mandatory course in English. That way, I could be certain that they all had English as their second language L2. Another reason was that this group was easily accessible. As this study had to be conducted within a certain amount of time, I needed to collect data efficiently and distributing the questionnaire among students in a school allowed me to do that.

To collect the data for this project, I used a questionnaire consisting of three parts: a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), a multiple-choice test and a shorter multiple-choice test. All three tests presented the participants with scenarios and asked them to either write their own answer or choose an alternative. When designing the questionnaire, I coded all scenarios according to the social factors *power*, *social distance* and *imposition*. The purpose of doing this was to make sure I had covered all possible combinations the social factors could take. A more detailed account of my method will be given in chapter 3.

Before I collected data for this project, I had some indications of what I might expect regarding Norwegians' knowledge of modal auxiliaries in English. As part of the process of designing the questionnaire, I distributed the test to a smaller group as a small pilot study. When I received their answers, the majority preferred *would* or *could* over *can* or *will* regardless of my coding. This is in line with the 'more the better strategy' common among second language users (Faerch and Kasper 1989).

In a news article translated from Norwegian to English, the writer shows excellent translation skills, apart from how she uses modal auxiliaries. In the example below, *can* does not communicate what the writer probably intended. *Can*, here, has the modal meaning of permission (if anything), but the writer probably wants to communicate probability.

> 'Vardø residents are worried about the danger of radiation, and that it (the planned radar system) can make them a bombing target,' local politician Ørjan Jensen of the Greens Party told Norwegian Broadcasting (NRK). (Berglund, 2016)

When it comes to how aware the participants might be of the social context and how this will affect their performance, it is my general assumption that Norwegians view their own language as less formal compared to English. This assumption is supported by Fretheim (2005, 145) who notices that Norwegians perceive themselves as more egalitarian compared to other West European cultures. If this is true, Norwegian learners of English might believe that they should include more politeness markers when speaking English compared to what they would have done in Norwegian.

In addition to the method section, mentioned above, the participants' answers will be presented in chapter 4. In chapter 5 I will discuss my findings and come back to my research questions to see if I have successfully answered them. Before I go into any of that, I will give some context to the topics covered in this project by accounting for some background theory and looking at previous research.

2 Theoretical Background

In the following section, I will set out the theoretical background of my project and touch upon some of the research that has been conducted within the same field. Because of the scope of this thesis, it would be impossible to go cover every aspect of the theories presented here. Pragmatic performance in SLA has been researched quite extensively. However, few studies have been conducted with participants with Norwegian learners of English and none studying requests specifically (I, at least, have been unable to find any). Therefore, I will discuss similar research with participants with another L1 and discuss how they might be relevant to this project. I will start by presenting theories within pragmatics and move on to theories from the field of SLA before moving on to the previous studies.

2.1 Speech acts

This project falls within the field of pragmatics. Different scholars define *pragmatics* differently as it is researched in several branches of language studies. Levinson (1983, 5) offers a general definition of *pragmatics*: "just as, traditionally, syntax is taken to be the study of the combinatorial properties of words and their parts, and semantics to be the study of meaning, so pragmatics is the study of language usage." This is by no means a fully satisfactory definition of pragmatics, as Levinson himself notes, but here this definition is sufficient. For the purpose of my project, I will focus on *speech act theory*, which is a central field within pragmatics aiming to account for how we use language to communicate. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the main points of this theory and how it is used in my project.

Speech act theory was first presented by Austin in a series of lectures, reprinted in *How to do Things with Words* (1975). Austin questions the focus on the use of words and sentences to state facts. He aims to show that in uttering words speakers can perform various acts of which making a statement is only one, and that on many occasions speakers do not make statements.

Austin (1975) suggests, but ultimately rejects a division of utterances into two main types: *constatives* and *performatives*. Constatives are speech acts that (merely) state facts about the world. Performatives are types of utterances that, according to Austin, are not descriptive and cannot be said to be true or false. Further, this kind of utterance is part of

doing the act. Austin gives examples such as 'I name this ship the *Queen Elisabeth*' (before smashing a bottle against the stem). With this, Austin aims to show that in uttering the words the speaker does not (or does not merely) give a description of the action, but performs the action itself (1975, 4-6). He further proposes that perfomatives fail unless uttered in the right circumstances and by the right person. Austin calls these *felicity conditions* and proposes the following rules for what he calls happy performatives:

1: There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that includes the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances and the participants must be appropriate for carrying out the act.

2: the ones involved must carry out the act properly and completely.

3: The participants involved must have the right thoughts and intention when conducting the act.

Since statements as well as obvious performatives like naming and promising have felicity conditions, the constative/perfomative distinction is untenable. Instead of the initial distinction between constatives and performatives, Austin proposed rather that all utterances may be used to perform three types of act: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act involves the words uttered and the propostion thereby expressed. The illocutionary act is the expression of this proposition with a certain illocutionary force, where such forces include requesting, apologizing, naming, stating etc. The perlocutionary act involves the result of the illocutionary act or what the speaker was aiming to achieve by performing the act. To illustrate the difference between locution, illocution and perlocution, I will use an example provided by Austin:

Act (A) (Locution): He said to me 'Shoot her!' (meaning by *shoot* shoot and referring by *her* to her)

Act (B) (Illocution): He urged (or advised, ordered) me to shoot her

Act (C.a): He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C.a): He got me to (or made me) shoot her. (Austin 1975, 101-102)

Indirect speech acts are central to the research in this paper as requests are often performed indirectly. Searle (1975) proposes a model that aims to account for how we understand the illocutionary act in indirect speech acts. He argues that when the speaker performs an indirect speech act the speaker performs two illocutionary acts: one where the force is determined by the words uttered and one with an distinct illocutionary force (Searle 1975, 59). Searle (1975) (alluding to Grice's theory of conversation: 1975) argues that what we need to understand indirect speech acts is this:

> [T]he apparatus necessary to explain the indirect part of indirect speech acts includes a theory of speech acts, certain general principles of cooperative conversation (…) and mutually shared factual background information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences. (Searle 1975, 61)

He further proposes that the hearer uses an inferential strategy to unpack the speech act to arrive at what the speaker means. Searle (1975) uses the following example to demonstrate this strategy:

Student X: Let's go to the movies tonight.

Student Y: I have to study for an exam.

Searle argues that student X follows steps 1–10 to arrive at the intended meaning of student Y's answers.

> **STEP 1:** I have made a proposal to Y, and in response he has made a statement to the effect that he has to study for an exam (facts about the conversation).
>
> **STEP 2:** 1 assume that Y is cooperating in the conversation and that therefore his remark is intended to be relevant (principles of conversational cooperation).
>
> **STEP 3:** A relevant response must be one of acceptance, rejection, counterproposal, further discussion, etc. (theory of speech acts).
>
> **STEP 4:** But his literal utterance was not one of these, and so was not a relevant response inference from Steps 1 and 3).
>
> **STEP 5:** Therefore, he probably means more than he says. Assuming that his remark is relevant, his primary illocutionary point must differ from his literal one (inference from Steps 2 and 4)
>
> **STEP 6:** I know that studying for an exam normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening, and I know that going to the movies normally takes a large amount of time relative to a single evening (factual background information).
>
> **STEP 7:** Therefore, he probably cannot both go to the movies and study for an exam in one evening (inference from Step 6).
>
> **STEP 8:** A preparatory condition on the acceptance of a proposal, or on any other commissive, is the ability to perform the act predicated in the propositional content condition (theory of speech acts).
>
> **STEP 9:** Therefore, 1 know that he has said something that has the consequence that he probably cannot consistently accept the proposal (inference from Steps 1, 7, and 8).
>
> **STEP 10:** Therefore, his primary illocutionary point is probably to reject the proposal (inference from Steps 5 and 9). (Searle 1975, 63)

Searle (1975, 63) notes that step 6 is essential. Without the necessary background information, the hearer will not be able to arrive at the intended primary illocutionary act.

There may be several motivations for performing a speech act indirectly. In the

example above, the speaker might be said to communicate a third illocutionary act. Namely that he wants to spend time with student X and that he would like to go to the movies some other time. Searle (1975) also acknowledges this point. Another strong motivation for performing an indirect speech act is politeness, a topic I will go into next.

2.2 Politeness

A number of scholars aim to explain how social surroundings affect language performance. In my project, discussion about politeness will be limited to the most influential theory of polite verbal behavior: Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987)[1]. In the following paragraphs I will give an account of their main points, and I start with their notion of *face*.

The concept of *face* is central to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. Their definition of *face* is derived from Goffman (1967) and the everyday expression of 'losing face' commonly used when someone is embarrassed or humiliated. They claim that: "[F]ace is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction." (Brown and Levinson 1987, 61) They also make the assumption that every (adult) member of society is aware that other members of the society have *face*.

They distinguish between *positive face* and *negative face*. *Negative face* refers to the speaker or hearer's claim to territory, the right to non-distraction (freedom to act from free will and the freedom from imposition). *Positive face,* on the other hand, refers to the desire that others approve of and appreciate one's personality and self-image (Brown and Levinson 1987, 61). Because *face* is constantly ignored, Brown and Levinson (1987, 62) argued that we rather should see *face* as wants rather than a norm and that *positive-* and *negative face* should be defined like this:

***Negative face*:** the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.

***Positive face*:** the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. (Brown and Levinson 1987, 62)

[1] Another influential scholar who aimed to explain how politeness plays a part in language is Leech, who proposed a politeness principle and several maxims of politeness.

Brown and Levinson claim that every 'competent *adult* member of society' (my emphasis) has the notion of, and is aware of, *face*. I would argue that younger people are also aware of their interlocutors' *face* and their own. The participants in this study were 16-17 years old and are (at least according to law) not adults. Most members of society would not describe them as such either. As I will show later on, the participants are highly aware of the notion of *face*.

There are certain utterances that will go against the wants of either the speaker or hearer's face. They call these acts *face threatening acts* (FTA). Brown and Levinson offer a list of acts they consider to be face-threatening. Here I focus on requests.

Requests are considered to potentially threaten either the speaker's positive or negative face, and requests can potentially also threaten the hearer's face. This depends on the nature of the request and the surroundings (which are explained below). Generally, requests are mainly a threat to the hearer's negative face. By making a request, the speaker attempts to shape the future of the hearer, putting pressure on the hearer to do whatever the speaker is asking. If the speaker is asking for a favor, the request might threaten the speaker's positive face, mainly because of the chance of refusal from the hearer. Another reason is that the hearer might think badly of the speaker for making the request. This might be especially central with the group of participants in this study. Because they are 16-17 years old, they might be more concerned with being liked by their peers, or perhaps even more importantly, not embarrassing themselves in front of others. This is of course a concern for adults as well, but there might be a difference in what teenagers and adults consider embarrassing. We shall see an example of this later on when I present the answers from the participants.

Since making a request is a potential threat to both the speaker and the hearer's face, Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that one can use different strategies to avoid or mitigate this threat, and they claim that speakers take a set of variables into consideration when doing so:

> In the context of the mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid these face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat. In other words, he will take into consideration the relative weightings of (at least) three wants: (a) the want to communicate the content of the FTA x, (b) the want to be efficient or urgent, and (c) the want to maintain H's face to any degree. Unless (b) is greater than (c), S will want to minimize the threat of the FTA. (Brown and Levinson 1987, 68)

I want to argue here that one should add one point to the claim made in the above quotation. The speaker is probably most concerned with attending to the hearer's face, especially if he

wants the hearer to do something. However, one could also add the awareness of the speaker's own face to the points of consideration. Brown and Levinson (1987) do not say that is excluded from the speaker's consideration when performing an FTA, but do not mention it explicitly. For the purpose of this project, I would argue that it should be.

If the speaker considers the threat to the speaker's or his own face to be too great and the need for performing the act is not pressing enough, the speaker can choose to not perform the FTA. If he still wants to perform the act or needs to perform it, he can perform the act either *on*- or *off record*. To perform the act *off record* usually means that the speaker performs the act indirectly: e.g. using metaphor or irony. If the FTA is performed *on record*, the speaker can do this boldly without redress or with redressive action. When performing the act without redressive acting it is performed as directly as possible. Redressive action involves *giving face* to the hearer by using either *positive* or *negative politeness*. In using positive politeness, the speaker is attending to the hearer's positive face (the hearer's self- image and the want to be desirable to others). When using negative politeness, the speaker attends to the hearer's negative face (the hearer's want to claim territory and self determination) (Brown and Levinson 1987,68–70).

2.3 The social context

The social surroundings of the speech act play a central role in this thesis. In the discussion of my findings I will use social factors as part of the explanation for the choices the participants have made when giving their answers in the different situations I presented them with. This study will use Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of the social variables that might affect how the request is performed.

Brown and Levinson (1987, 74) assume that there are three main social variables which affect the performance of the speech act: social distance (D), relative social power of the speaker (PS) or addressee (PA) and the absolute ranking of imposition. The latter I shall refer to as either high imposition (HI) or low imposition (LI) later in this thesis. *Imposition* refers to the estimated cost to the hearer. This involves how much time and effort the addressee will have to put into what is asked of him. The term *imposition* is preferred over *cost* as this is estimated by the speaker and does not refer to what the actual cost is to the addressee. Likewise, D and P are not objective ratings of actual *power* or *social distance*. In the discussion of social factors in relation to speech act performance, Brown and Levinson

(1987, 74-76) point out that they are only interested in the actors' evaluations of this factor in the speech situation. Also, this is only relevant if speaker and hearer think there is a mutual agreement of the ranking of *power*, *distance* and *imposition*. As the scenarios the participants were presented with are constructed, the evaluation of the social factors was not made by the actual speakers, but when constructing the scenarios. As I will discuss later on, the participants might have assigned different values to the situation than what was intended.

2.4 Modal auxiliaries

Modality is a term that is researched within a variety of branches within several different fields, and consequently refers to different things in different academic and cultural research. Within linguistics, *modality* is sometimes used in a very broad sense to refer to expressions that reveal the speakers' attitude, or allow the speaker to comment on the surrounding text (Toolan 2010, 46). However, that sense of the term *modality* is too broad for this project. In my research I have focused on *modal verbs* and specifically the two pairs: *can/could* and *will/would*. I will therefore take a traditional, or narrow, view of the use of modals.

Can, *could*, *will* and *would* are along with *must*, *should*, *ought*, *may*, *might* and *shall* considered the full set of modal verbs in English. Like most word meanings, the semantics of each individual modal is not constant, but depends on the linguistic setting they occur in (Coates 1983, 4-5). Because my investigation of modals limits itself to *can*/*could* and *will*/*would* I will limit the subsequent discussion to those two sets.

The meaning of *will* is usually willingness, intention, prediction or as a marker of future time. (It is possible to argue here that in some cases where *will* is used to talk about the future, it no longer has a modal meaning.) The instances of *will* in this study mostly have the meaning of willingness or perhaps ability (will you be able to X?). Coates (1983) notes that the different meanings of *will* cannot always be separated because they are closely related and the line between them is 'fuzzy'. In 'will you be able to X', most people would say that *will* refers to the hearer's willingness, but there is an element of prediction there too.

Can generally has the meaning of permission, possibility or ability. In the part of the questionnaire that tests the participants' knowledge of modal verbs, *can* is only used in interrogative sentences. In these instances, *can* has the meaning of willingness. Coates (1983, 98) argues that from a pragmatic point of view, there seems not to be any difference between *can* and *will* in instances like 'can you hurry up? ' and 'will you hurry up?'.

In this study, I am mainly interested in the question of when the participants choose to

use the remote form of the modal auxiliaries. *Could* and *would* are considered to be the remote forms of *can* and *will* respectively. Grammatically, there is no difference between the use of remote modals and unmarked modals. (Huddleston 2002, 107) The distinction is arguably only pragmatic and perhaps semantic. The remote form is usually chosen to communicate a more tentative or hypothetical meaning (Coates 1983). But perhaps just as important to this project is that it marks an increased distance between the hearer and the speaker (Hasselgård et al. 2012, 166). *Could* and *would* also function as the past tense forms of *can* and *will* respectively. However, the remote meaning is much more common than the past time meaning (Huddleston 2002, 107). Also, the remote meaning is the only meaning considered in my project.

2.5 Interlanguage

Selinker (1972) defines *interlanguage* as the language system each learner constructs at any given point in development towards the target language. This process is in many ways similar to the one developing in the mind of a child constructing mental representations about an L1.

There are different approaches and understandings of *interlanguage*. Some (for example Selinker 1972) argue that the investigation of *interlanguage* is a means to identify the errors learners make. By looking at the errors, one can get insight into the processes of learning a second language. However, this view has been criticized by sociolinguists (e.g. Sridhar 1994) and scholars within the SLA field who argue that L1 users should not be used as a reference point when studying L2 learners. Their argument is that monolinguals and bilinguals are fundamentally different with respect to mental representation of language and language production. Larsen-Freeman (2006, 594) goes as far as to question the value of past findings in *interlanguage* research because they are based on the metaphor of 'a developmental ladder'. As the focus in this study is to investigate the speech act performance of L2 speakers of English without making comparisons to neither their L1 nor native speakers, I agree to some extent that L2 speech act performance should be seen as a valid and complete system without having to be compared to native speakers. This could be supported by the increasing status of English as lingua franca.

2.6 Second language speakers, naturalistic learners, instructed learners, L2 and foreign language

Ortega (2013, 6) directs some criticism at inconsequent uses of *second language teaching* and *foreign language teaching* in SLA research. As she says: "[it seems] as if the learning context were of little consequence". The learning context is in fact of great importance. The term *second language teaching* refers to naturalistic learners (learners who have acquired a second language informally by interacting with native speakers). *Foreign language teaching*, on the other hand, refers to *instructed learners* who have acquired a second language as a result of formal teaching. This terminology is however a bit confusing as the term *second language speakers* is used to refer to both naturalistic learners and instructed learners. Also, the distinction is not always clear-cut. The naturalistic learners might have had some language teaching inside a classroom. Likewise, the instructed learner might have spent time in an English speaking country. And there is the influence from TV, newspapers etc. and social media. Cook (2008) argues that there is no real difference between the way naturalistic and instructed learners acquire a second language: they appear to go through the same stages in the same order. Because of this, there might not be any need for distinguishing between different kinds of L2 learners (Cook 2008, 156-157).

The participants in this study have mainly learned English in a classroom setting and would be labeled *foreign language learners*. However, the focus on language teaching does not usually focus on pragmatic competence (at least not explicitly). Therefore, I shall assume that much of the participants' knowledge of this area is acquired outside the classroom. I will throughout this paper refer to the participants' L2 and to them as L2 speakers. In this context these terms will refer to them as *instructed learners*.

2.7 Pragmatics and SLA

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has been the subject of an increasing amount of second language (L2) research over the past couple of decades. The definition of ILP has changed through the years as researchers have gained more insight into the field. When researchers started to investigate ILP, the focus was on L2 users' performance and understanding with regard to speech acts and how this knowledge is required. Today's definition of ILP is somewhat broader. In addition to pragmatic knowledge and performance, it also includes the

knowledge about how language should be adjusted to different contexts. Also, the pragmatic knowledge is considered to be part of a general communicative competence (Taguchi 2012, 1).

Kecskes (2014, 3-4) argues that influence from speakers' cultural background is neglected in research in theoretical pragmatics. There are of course many universal features of human communication, but mental representation and language production is also highly culture specific. Further, Kecsjes (2012) argues that common cultural grounds are crucial when it comes to producing (im)polite language. English is spoken in many different cultures (and across cultures) and will have different norms for what is considered polite and impolite. The question then becomes which cultural norms one should expect the L2 users to adjust their language to: the country where English is the L1 of most, or the L2 (lingua franca) norms? The answer, according to Kecskes (2012, 210) is both and s/he argues that L2 speakers seem to be able to adjust according to their surroundings. However, Kecskes is critical of L2 speakers' and bilinguals' pragmatic performance being compared to L1 pragmatic performance. He wonders whether it might be beneficial to view ILP as a system of its own (Kecskes 2012, 1-3).

2.8 Previous studies

Faerch and Kasper (1989) investigate how Danish speakers modify their requests in English. By modification they refer to Blum-Kulka's (1989) theory of supportive moves: linguistic features that either soften or intensify requests. A more careful explanation of the supportive moves relevant to this project will be given in 3.4. Faerch and Kasper (1989) found that their participants generally either used zero supportive moves or limited their supportive moves to *grounders* (giving a reason for making the request). Faerch and Kasper also noted that the participants seemed to be 'playing it safe' by using a 'the more the better strategy' (1989, 245). This can be seen in this example:

> I am calling to hear if you can perhaps do your presentation. It is not what we have agreed on but it will fit better into the course structure. Of course you do not have to do it if you cannot manage. Then I have to think of something else. (Faerch and Kasper 1989, 240)

This phenomenon is well known within L2 research and Faerch and Kasper propose that this is caused partly by the learners' own investigation into language usage and partly the intermediate learner's urge to mark themselves as distinct from beginners (1989, 245). I would also argue that this shows learners' awareness of the social variables (Brown and

Levinson 1987). That they should adapt their language according to these variables.

Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011) tested the realization of requests performed by L2 users of Australian English. They elicited data by using role-play. The participants were grouped according to their proficiency level and their length of stay in Australia (Al-Gahtani and Roever 2011, 48). What they found was that there was some difference between the participants of high proficiency and those with low proficiency in the way that the advanced learners tended to use supportive moves to a greater extent. However, they also note that the beginners did make satisfactory requests and conclude that pragmatic knowledge was accessible to all regardless of their proficiency level (Al-Gahtani and Roever 2011, 59). Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011) did find another discrepancy between the groups of learners. They conclude that the greatest difference between the groups of participants was due to the length of their stay. Those who had had practice from socialization seemed to be more sensitive to the social factors in the role-play (59).

This study is different from the present one in the extent to which the participants were naturalistic learners. The participants in my study have mainly learned English in a classroom setting, but might have had influence from hearing English in the media and by interacting with others in English. Perhaps I can expect the participants to use few supportive moves because they are instructed learners. However, the influence from English-speaking media might function as a kind of language input. Note also that the participants in my study can be assumed to have fairly high proficiency in English. However, I have not tested this specifically and can therefore only assume this.

Fretheim (2005) conducted a contrastive survey of requests in English and Norwegian by looking at the English Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC). Even though I have not collected data of requests in Norwegian, and my research does not have a contrastive approach, Fretheim's (2005) research points out some significant differences that might be relevant to my research. Fretheim (2005, 150-152) discusses the use of the construction 'I wondered if + past tense'. The Norwegian equivalent of this construction is fairly common when making requests in Norwegian and is mainly used to get the hearer's attention and prepare him for the following speech act. An example of this construction is this: 'Jeg lurte på om det gikk an å bestille en taxi her' [I was wondering if I could order a taxi here (with you)]. Another well-established difference between politeness markers in English and Norwegian is the absence of *please* in Norwegian. There are some phrases that perhaps can be called an equivalent to *please*: *vær (så) snill/ vennlig* [be (so) kind] (Fretheim 2005, 152-153).

There seems to be a similarity between the use of modal auxiliaries and the level of directness. As mentioned above, the remote modal is used in English when for instance the social distance between the interlocutors is great. Similarly, in Norwegian one can use the past tense to soften the request (Fretheim 2005, 147). I would argue that the participants in my study probably are aware of these differences and that the constructions available in Norwegian do not always work in English and vice versa.

3 Method

3.1 Data types

The main part of the questionnaire (attachment 1) gives quantitative data, but the first part of the questionnaire elicits partly qualitative data. In this study, I wanted to test the participants' performances as a group and needed countable data. The quantitative data allows me to analyze the respondents' answers and control the variables that might affect their answers such as gender or situational variables. Because the greater part of the questionnaire consists of scenarios where the participants were asked to choose one of four possible answers, that part of the test does not necessarily give information about the participants' preferred request strategy. The multiple choices mainly elicit how directly, or indirectly, the participants would perform each request. The questionnaire arguably also mainly elicits the participants' explicit knowledge[2] about requests in English.

Part 1 has the form of a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and elicits a different data type than the rest of the test. Because the participants were asked to write their own answers to these scenarios, that part of the questionnaire, in contrast to the multiple-choice answers, elicits how the participants would prefer to make the request. Also, the participants might draw on their implicit knowledge in this part because they probably wrote the first answer that occurred to them.

3.2 Choice and argument for the method

In this research project, I have chosen to use a questionnaire to collect data. Using a questionnaire allows me to collect data efficiently within a fairly short time span. Questionnaires have many advantages, but have also been criticized. The following paragraphs will look into how this method can be useful and what limits it have been said to

[2] *Explicit knowledge* is here used in line with the account given by Ortega (2013, 87): *Explicit knowledge* (or explicit-declarative memory) is part of how knowledge is represented in *long-term memory*. This kind of memory supports consciously recollection of facts and events. Tulving (2002, 6) suggests that *explicit knowledge* can be further divided into *semantic knowledge* (general knowledge about the world) and *episodic knowledge* (the knowledge drawn from personal experience). The other kind of knowledge in *long-term memory* is *implicit-procedural memory*, that is, knowledge that has been automatized (what you do not know that you know).

have as well as how I have tried to avoid some of the problems. I will start with the advantages of using a questionnaire.

Because the participants were adolescent and could answer the questionnaire anonymously, I could avoid the bias of interviewer effect, increasing the reliability of the answers. Gillham (2007,7) explains that there are strong evidence of how the participants relate to the interviewer affects their answers. In this study the participants were 16-17 years old. I anticipated that if they were to give their answers in a one-to-one-interview, it would be highly possible that they would have given the answer they thought was the right one. If I had asked the participants to give their name on the questionnaire, the chance was there that a similar effect might well occur. My choice is supported by Gillham (2007,7) who points out that even though there probably are individual differences, many participants may be reluctant to commit themselves to the paper and feel freer if their answer is anonymous.

Questionnaires can be very versatile and elicit data efficiently (Dörnyei and Csizér 2012). The design of the questionnaire allowed me to elicit data about mainly three things. First, how L2 users of English, with Norwegian as their L1, perform requests and, second, which strategies Norwegian L2 users of English prefer. Finally, the questionnaire elicits data about the participants' knowledge about the use of modals when performing requests.

Like all methods in linguistic research, surveys have been criticized. Questionnaires have been criticized for not giving valid data and it has even been claimed that they are unsuitable as a method in linguistic research. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010, 6-10) point out that questionnaires can be a useful method in linguistics and are perhaps one of the most frequently used methods. Just the same, they argue that it is very easy to produce invalid data by the means of an ill-constructed questionnaire. There are a number of problems that may occur when constructing and administrating the questionnaire.

A central problem with second language research is the participants' proficiency level in the target language. If the questions are too demanding to read, the participants will most likely skip the question or give a random answer. To avoid this, I conducted a smaller pilot study using a questionnaire among some of the participants some time before designing the test used in the present study. I also did a pilot test with a small group who were not part of the group of the participants in the main study.

Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010, 9) also mention that *fatigue effects* commonly cause problems when using questionnaires to collect data. If the questionnaire is too long or too monotonous, the respondents are likely to lose interest and answer randomly or not at all. The

questionnaire designed for this project was originally fairly long. Also, I anticipated that the DCT would be more demanding to answer compared to the multiple-choice test as the participants had to write their own answers in the DCT. Even though the multiple-choice questions potentially required less effort from the participants, these questions were all similar in form. To avoid the *fatigue effect*, I adjusted the questionnaire in two main ways. First, the original questionnaire had eight scenarios in the DCT. By making four different versions of the test, each group only had to write two answers in the DCT. This made the test considerably shorter. I was testing the participants as a group and knew in advance that the number of participants would be relatively high. This allowed me to divide the questionnaire and still have enough answers.

Second, Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010, 9) point out that the *fatigue effect* tends to occur towards the end of the questionnaire. The last part of the questionnaire used in this project asked the participants to choose between two different forms of modal auxiliaries. In this part I reused some of the scenarios presented previously. This was done with the intention that the participants would spend less effort on understanding the scenarios.

3.3 Participants

Altogether, 77 pupils, aged 16-17, participated in the study. I decided to distribute the questionnaire among students with the same age because it would allow me to keep age as a constant variable. This study being a cross-sectional one, the results will strictly be limited to the students participating at that point in time. If someone were to go back and do a replication study, they might find a different result. However, the results will still contribute to indicate patterns in speech act performance of L2 users of English who have Norwegian as their L1.

After removing some invalid answers, 65 students make up the group of respondents to the questionnaire. All participants had Norwegian as their mother tongue. The group further consisted of 38 male and 27 female participants. The answers that are not among the results that I will report later on were taken out for various reasons. Questionnaires that were not completed or lacked some answers were removed for the reason that the number of answers should be equal for all the parts in the questionnaire. Answers from participants who had lived in an English speaking country were also taken out. Some of the participants were bilingual. One spoke Lithuanian and 3 spoke Urdu in addition to Norwegian. I decided to leave the bilingual participants out of the study because I wanted participants with Norwegian

as their first language. A second L1 might not affect their knowledge of English. However, in order to be able to control for the factors that affect the participants' performance, I decided to exclude their answers from the results.

The sampling in this project can be recognized as *convenience or opportunity sampling*. This sampling procedure involves selecting participants on the basis of geographical criteria or availability at a given time (Dörnyei and Csizér 2012, 81). The participants were selected because they were students in lower secondary school and would likely be present and available at the time I had arranged to visit the school. However, as Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) comment, like most cases of opportunity sampling, the selection of participants is not completely random. The participants in this study fulfilled certain criteria: most of them had Norwegian as their L1 and have relatively high proficiency levels in English. The participants I was interested in had learned English as a foreign language i.e. they had acquired English as a result of classroom teaching, and not (only) naturalistically. This would be an interesting group to test because pragmatic competence is usually not explicitly taught in Norwegian classrooms.

3.4 Questionnaire: design and distribution

As mentioned above, the questionnaire elicits mainly three aspects of the participants' competence with requests: their explicit knowledge, their preferred strategy for making requests and how sensitive they are to context and to meaning and usage of modal verbs. The questionnaire also gives the participants the opportunity to give reasons for their choices. This possibly elicits their general intuition of how context might affect request strategies.

The scenarios in the questionnaire used in this project are loosely based on the DCT used in the study conducted by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). Because the participants in that study were older then the participants in the current study, the scenarios had to be altered.

Knowing the age and the cultural background of the participants before distributing the questionnaire, I aimed to design the scenarios so that the situations would be as recognizable as possible to the participants. The aim was that the participants should be able picture themselves in the situations. That way I hoped that the participants would spend less effort on understanding the situation and concentrate on how they would have performed the request.

The scenarios from the DCT from Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) study that I chose to use

in my questionnaire had to be adjusted to be more recognizable to the participants. An example of this is the scenario below

> You are writing your thesis and need to interview the president of a university whom you don't know. You know the president is very busy, but still want to ask her/him to spare one or two hours for your interview. What would you say?

This scenario needed only some minor adjustments. Because of their age, they were unlikely to have knowledge of the structures of a university. So, adapting the situation to their surroundings seemed the best choice.

> You are writing a paper and need to interview the headmaster, whom you don't know. You know he/she is very busy, but still want to ask her/him to spare one or two hours for your interview. What would you say?

Because of the participants' age, the scenarios I coded as HI and PS were particularly difficult to adjust to what the participants might have experienced before. There are a number of things that can give the speaker great power. According to Brown and Levinson, one of the factors governing assignment of power is that H or S enter roles that give them power (1987, 78-79). These roles might be manager/employee or parent/child. The participants, being 16-17 of age, have probably experienced social power relative to younger children or perhaps among fellow students. However, I was after situations where the power was even greater and perhaps more formal. This is one reason why these scenarios were difficult to design: the participants were unlikely to have been in situations where they had such power.

After trying to find situations that I thought were recognizable, I ended up including some situations where they were asked to picture themselves as another person. I still aimed to limit these situations to familiar surroundings, as in this scenario:

> Imagine that you are the English teacher. Your class is working on a group project about American history. You have taught this class for nearly three years and know all the students well. Because of some changes in the school schedule, you want to ask one of the groups to present their project one week earlier than planned. How would you ask them?

In the scenario above, the student/teacher relation is highly recognizable to the participants, only from the hearer's point of view. I also included a few scenarios that perhaps were not as familiar. Like this one:

> Imagine that you are the leader of a big firm. You are short in manpower at the moment. Therefore, you want to ask one of your employees to work overtime in order to catch up with the workload. How would you ask him/her?

Even though the participants would not have experienced being the speaker in a situation like this, culturally, the situation is probably familiar. However, I tried to keep scenarios like that

to a minimum.

In the second and third parts of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to choose one out of four possible answers. The possible answers were designed to correspond to Blum-Kulka's (1989, 18) taxonomy of request strategies presented below.

> 1. Mood derivable: Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force ('Leave me alone'; 'Clean up the mess').
> 2. *Performatives*: Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named ('I'm asking you to clean up the mess')
> 3. *Hedged performatives*: Utterances in which naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions (I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier than scheduled')
> 4. *Obligation statements*: Utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act ('You'll have to move that car')
> 5. *Want statements*: Utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act ('I really wish you'd stop bothering me')
> 6. *Suggestory formulae*: Utterances which contain a suggestion to do x ('How about cleaning up?').
> 7. *Query-preparatory*: Utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability, willingness) as conventionalized in any specific language ('Could you clear up the kitchen, please?'; 'Would you mind moving your car?').
> 8. *Strong hints*: Utterances containing partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act ('You have left the kitchen in a right mess').
> 9. *Mild hints*: Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context ('I am a nun' in response to a persistent hassler).

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) explain that the nine strategies above should be viewed according to level of directness. When I made the possible answers, I used the taxonomy to form four different answers according to Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) suggested usage. A more careful explanation of how I coded the answers to the multiple-choice test will be given in 3.5.1.

When we perform speech acts, and produce language in general, the social environment has a great impact on how we choose to perform the speech act. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) look into which aspects of the social surroundings affect speech act performance and propose, following Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), that the most central social variables are *social distance*, *power* and *imposition.* One would expect that the closeness of the relation to the addressee affects the level of directness of the speech act realization. Likewise, the speaker probably adjusts their language according to the relative power of the addressee. The speaker also estimates how big the cost might be for the addressee when making a request. Brown and Levinson (1978) refer to this as *imposition*.

Initially, I included a social variable condition where the power was equal. I decided to leave that out and only include the variables where the power is either with the speaker or the hearer. The reason for this is that there would have been more possible combinations with the social variables. This would have caused the questionnaire to become considerably longer. An additional argument for leaving out the equal-power variable is this: Arguably when

performing requests, the power balance is never completely in balance. The power is always with either the speaker or the hearer depending on the nature of the request. The power is assigned either the hearer or the speaker according their relation or social status. There are some situations where the speaker and hearer might be said to have equal amount of power. For instance, between two friends or spouses. However, one might argue that the hearer would have the power in those cases as he or she has the power to refuse to do what the speaker is asking. On the other hand, one could argue that just by making the request the power is with the speaker. This is also a reason why it is difficult to design scenarios that are meant to be equal in power. The participants probably perceive the same situation differently and the chances are high that such situations might be interpreted differently among the participants as it takes only small changes to assign the power to the speaker or the hearer.

Because I wanted to elicit the participants' awareness of the social variables that affect the speech act, I needed to be able to count them after collecting their answers. I also had to be able to measure how the social variables worked in different combinations. Table 1 shows how the social variables can be combined. The scenarios were designed so that each combination was presented in the test. It is however difficult to predict if the participants perceived the scenarios according to how I had coded them. The situational variables might be perceived differently by the participants than I intended as social settings and requests strategies are highly culture and age specific.

Power - Speaker	**Power - hearer**	**Distance**	**High imposition**	**Low Imposition**
-	+	+	-	+
-	+	-	-	+
-	+	+	+	-
-	+	-	+	-
+	-	+	-	+
+	-	-	-	+
+	-	+	+	-
+	-	-	+	-

Table 3.1: Possible combinations of the social variables.

3.5 Coding the answers

3.5.1 Coding the answers to the multiple-choice test

As mentioned above, the different parts of the questionnaire were different in form and asked the participants to give their answers either by choosing between four possible answers or writing their own requests. Because of this, the answers were coded differently. I will begin with how I have coded the possible answers in the multiple-choice test.

The possible answers were coded prior to the distribution. The basis for this coding was the taxonomy provided by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The full taxonomy lists nine different request strategies. However, to present the participants with nine different answers to choose between might be overwhelming and tiring. I therefore saw it as necessary to reduce the number of alternatives down to four. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) suggest that the list of universal request strategies can be grouped together according to the level of directness: *mood derivable*, *performatives* and *hedged performatives* are the most direct strategies. *Obligation statements* and *want statements* are grouped together as less direct strategies. *Suggestory formulae* and *query preparatory* are far more indirect according to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The strategies that are the least direct are *strong hints* and *mild hints*. It seemed reasonable to follow this grouping when coding the answers in the multiple-choice test. It should be noted here that coding is perhaps not the correct term in this case as it is more a question of designing. I aimed to design the four possible answers so that participants could choose between the four different directness levels. Because each grouping consisted of two or three strategies, I could adjust the possible answers to the situation. As I designed the possible answers, I saw that this was especially beneficial when it comes to the most direct strategies. I wanted to include four request strategies that potentially were equally plausible. From my experience with conducting a smaller questionnaire with this group previously, I knew that their proficiency level in English was quite high. Therefore, I anticipated that if I included a possible answer that was ‘out of place’ the participants would avoid this option and that could have affected the results. The scenarios in (1) and (2) are quite different: They were both coded as low imposition and social distance, but (1) was coded as power with the addressee and (2) as power with the speaker. In (1), few would have said ‘give me an extension on my paper’ while in (2) the surroundings might allow the speaker to perform the request in that way. Therefore I included a *hedged*

performative (I would like to ask to give me an extension on my paper) as the most direct strategy in (1) and a *mood derivable* (Make your bed again) in (2).

(1)

You have a paper due in one of your classes next week. However, you will be very busy this week and don't have any time to write it. Even though you don't know the teacher, you go to his/her office to ask for more time to write the paper. How do you ask for an extension?

(2)

After you're done with your national military service, you decide you want a military career, and stay on. You have now been promoted to Second Lieutenant. As you inspect the rooms of the newly arrived cadets, you see that one of them has not made his bed properly. How would you ask him to make his bed again?

3.5.2 Coding the answers to the DCT

This project uses the coding manual presented in Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). There are other coding manuals that I considered using for this project, for example one presented by Usó-Juan (2010). The argument for using this coding system is that it is of a more recent date. However, there are stronger arguments for using the coding in Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). First, the coding in Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) is far more extensive and offers a fuller description of the different coding categories. Second, the project the coding was first designed for is similar to this project. Like this project, Blun-Kulka et al. (1989) investigate the realization of requests with L2 users of English, whereas Usó-Juan (2010) investigates the effect of different treatments to improve the pragmatic competence of L2 users. Third, and perhaps most importantly, I used Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) taxonomy of universal request strategies to design the possible answers in the multiple-choice test. Also, many of the scenarios in the DCT are borrowed from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989).

As proposed in this manual, the requests should mainly be analyzed according to the head act. The head act is the minimal unit the speaker needs to make a request. This is the most central part of the coding in this project. I have labeled the head acts according to the strategies in the taxonomy above (figure 1). The examples below are from the material collected for this project. (1) and (2) illustrate what is considered the head act.

(1) ***Could you work overtime today***, to catch up with the massive workload?

(2) ***Can I*** *(please)* ***borrow a pen*** because I lost mine?

In the multiple-choice part of the questionnaire, the participants did not get the opportunity to choose the elements surrounding the head act, so I wanted to include this in the coding as well. However, the coding manual was designed for a project of a bigger size than the current one. Therefore, I have only selected a few of the coding categories Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) use to describe what happens outside the head act. The labels for the surrounding sequences I find necessary for this project are *Alerters* and *supportive moves*. In some cases, I also included the *request perspective*.

Alerters include elements that alert the hearer of the following speech act. *Alerters* can be realized in several ways: by addressing the hearer by his or her surname (3) or by using an *attention getter* (4-5)

(3) ***Mr. Nordmann***, I was wondering if you could please work some overtime since we are short in manpower.

(4) ***Excuse me***, please turn off your phone.

(5) ***Hey***, that's not ok!

Supportive moves are phrases that can either soften the imposition or try to make the act less face-threatening (mitigating supportive moves). Examples of such supporting moves are shown in (6) and (7).

(6) ***I know you are a busy man/women***, but would you be so kind to spare a couple of hours to answer some questions?

(7) ***I need to move the costumes for the school theatre***. Could I borrow your car?

Likewise, *aggravating supportive moves* can intensify the request. In (8) the speaker uses a threat to increase the force of the request.

(8) Could you please turn off your phone, ***or I'll be forced to take it away.***

Request perspective is not a label for single lexemes or clauses, but rather a comment on how the request is realized from the viewpoint of the hearer. Blum-Kulka et al. include *hearer dominance, speaker dominance* and *impersonal perspectives* in this category (1989, 278). Even though the participants mostly used pronouns or names to address a specific hearer, there were a few answers that I coded as *speaker dominant* (9). Because the majority of the answers were *hearer dominant* (10), I only marked the request if they were *speaker dominant*. I also labeled the request if it had an impersonal perspective even though this

involves only a few answers. Examples (11) and (12) show the difference between personal and impersonal request perspectives.

(9)

I am writing a paper and wondered if I could interview you? It will take about one or two hours.

(10)

Can you use your car to move the costumes?

(11) Could you please turn off your phone?

(12) Could the person whose phone is ringing please turn it off.

3.6 Statistics

The scenarios in the multiple-choice test aiming to elicit when the participants prefer to use the remote modal and when they think the unmarked modal is most suitable were not coded separately. The reason for this was that I reused some of the scenarios from the multiple-choice test eliciting request strategies. In this test, the *query preparatory* was used in both possible answers with the modal *can* or *will*: one alternative with the unmarked modal (*can*/*will*) and the other with the remote modal (*could*/*would*).

In this test I was interested in whether the results showed any effect of the variables – the different scenarios, and the different genders. Therefore, I performed a statistical test in order to calculate the *probability* that there was a real effect in each case. In order to do this, I performed a *chi-squared test*. This test allowed me to compare an expected frequency with the observed frequency. When performing a chi-squared test one has to decide on a null-hypothesis which yields an expected frequency. If the difference between the results expected if the null hypothesis were true and the observed results is greater than it is reasonable to attribute to chance one is able to reject this null-hypothesis (Johnson 2008). Since one can use the number the chi-squared test produces (χ^2) to calculate the probability of the null hypothesis being false, one can see whether and to what degree the results are statistically significant. To find out the probability (p) for sets of results in this project, I have used the standard chi-square table, as presented by Diez et al. (2015)

4 Results

In this chapter I give an account of the answers given by the participants. It is worth mentioning that the main focus in this project is not to compare the answers to the typical strategies used by native speakers of English. However, where it is of relevance, I will compare the results to strategies of native speakers in the general discussion, but this project has not collected data from native speakers and therefore has no data bearing this sort of claim. The main objective in this project is to test and describe how native speakers of Norwegian perform requests and how sensitive they are to social variables when they choose which strategy to use. Because of the latter, the results will be presented grouped by social variable. This means that scenarios that were coded similarly are presented together. I will not present the results from all the scenarios, but comment on findings that are the most central to the present study.

4.1 Distant relations and strangers

4.1.1 Power with the speaker and high imposition

In the part of the questionnaire where the participants were asked to choose one out of four possible ways to make the request, the two scenarios below were coded +D/P(S)/HI. Even though the situations aimed to be similar with respect to the social variables, the strategies the participants preferred were not.

The two scenarios read as follows:

> (1)
>
> Imagine that you are the headmaster. You're done for the day and you need a ride home. The teacher you usually car pool with, is absent. As you come out of your office, you see an assistant teacher, who you know lives close to you. You decide to ask him/her to give you a lift. What would you say?
>
> (2)
>
> You have just started in a new job as the manager in a bookstore. There's a lot to do and you don't have the time to finish the weekly report because you have to go to a meeting. You decide to ask one of the more experienced employees to finish the report for you. How would you ask him/her?

The answers to (1) show that 26(40%) of the participants would choose to perform the request using *query preparatories*. While the answers to (2), show that 39 (60 %) of the participants would have wanted to make the request in the form of a *hedge performative*. According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, 18), *hedge performatives* are far more direct than *query*

preparatories. Because the two situations are similar in coding, one would expect the strategies to be similar. However, even though both scenarios have been coded as high imposition, one might argue that (1) would potentially cost the hearer more than (2). To ask an employee to finish up some work for you might be of smaller cost to the addressee than asking an employee to drive you home. Another, perhaps more plausible explanation might be that the role of the employer arguably changes in (1) as he leaves the workplace. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 78), social power is context-dependent: power is assigned either the hearer or the speaker as they enter certain roles and is therefore not constant with either one. In both scenarios above, the power is with the speaker, which allows him to put a certain kind of imposition on the hearer. In (1) the speaker has stepped out of the role that assigns the power to him as the request is made outside the workplace. This could explain why many of the participants chose a more indirect request strategy in this situation compared to the one in (2).

The scenario that was coded +D/P(S)/HI in the DCT asked the participants to imagine they were the manager asking an employee to work overtime:

(3)

> Imagine that you are the leader of a big firm. You are short in manpower at the moment. Therefore, you want to ask one of your employees to work overtime in order to catch up with the workload. How would you ask him/her?

I coded the answers by identifying the head act and considered some supportive moves. According to the coding, most of the answers correspond to what Blum-Kulka et al.(1989) label *query preparatory*. A few examples of *suggestory formulae* and *obligation statements* could also be identified.

(4A)

Can you work late today? [head act: query preparatory]

(4B)

Are you able to work overtime today? [head act: query preparatory]

(4C)

Could you work overtime today [head act: query preparatory], to catch up with the massive workload [grounder]?

(4D)

Would you care to work overtime? [head act: suggestory formulae] We are a little short in manpower at the moment [grounder].

In addition to the head act (the minimum you need to make a request) some of the participants included a *grounder* to support the act. According to Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding manual, a *grounder* is a mitigating supportive move where the speaker gives his reason or justifies the reasons for making the request.

The head act in (4E) did not immediately fit into any of the request strategies presented in the manual used to code the answers. On the surface, the speaker is asking permission to make the request. I decided to code the act as a *query preparatory*.

(4E)
Could I ask you to work overtime? [head act: query preparatory] Unfortunately we are short in manpower [grounder] and I would really appreciate it.

According to Blum-Kulka (1989, 18), the request strategy should be determined according to the semantic understanding of the request. The content in the head act in (4E) is not very different from what Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) define as *query preparatory* 'could you work overtime'. It seems reasonable to label this act with *speaker dominance*. The focus is here on the speaker rather than the hearer. This could be seen as a strategy to attend to the hearer's negative face, as the hearer might feel less obligated to say yes. However, the speaker might perform the request in (4E) for the opposite reason: performing the request with *speaker dominance,* the speaker might attend to the hearer's positive face and the want of being desirable to others (desirable in the way that his or her help is needed). This could potentially make it more difficult for the hearer to give a negative answer.

4.1.2 Power with the speaker and low imposition.

(4)

> After you're done with your national military service, you decide you want a military career, and stay on. You have now been promoted to Second Lieutenant. As you inspect the rooms of the newly arrived cadets, you see that one of them has not made his bed properly. How would you ask him to make his bed again?

The scenario above was coded +D/P(S)/LI and might be said to be far out on that scale. The power the speaker has is that of a superior commander and one might well expect the majority of the participants to choose the *mood derivable* 'make your bed again'. The results show something quite different. 13 (20 %) of the participants chose *mood derivable* as the preferred strategy while 32 (49%) chose the answer that corresponds to *strong hints*: 'The beds need to be made properly before inspection'.

(5)

You are the head of the school football team. It's the beginning of the semester. You are giving a presentation to the new students about the club and encourage them to sign up. While you are giving your talk, the mobile phone of one of the first year students rings. You want to ask her/him to turn off the mobile phone. What would you say?

In (4F-G) the participants chose a slightly different strategy than when addressing one single person. Most of the participants chose a request that corresponds to *query preparatory*, but using what Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) call *impersonal request perspective.* When talking to a crowd, the speaker might well not know whom they are addressing in a situation like the one in the scenario above. However, the speaker might have chosen the *impersonal request strategy* even if he or she knew whose phone it was in order to avoid threatening the hearer's positive face.

(4F)

Could the person whose phone is ringing please turn it off. [head act: query preparatory (impersonal)]

(4G)

Excuse me [attention getter], whoever's phone is ringing, [general addresser] could you please turn it off. [head act: query preparatory (impersonal)] Thank you.

4.1.3 Power with the addressee and high imposition

(6)

Your aunt will be visiting from out of town and you want to meet her at the train station. However, her train arrives at 3:00 PM, but you have to work until 5:00 p.m. How do you ask your boss to let you out of work early?

The results show that there is a difference between the male and female participants when it comes to the preferred request strategy in the scenarios coded +D/P(A)/HI. The results from the multiple-choice test show that 17 (45%) of the male participants chose the alternative coded as *hedge performative* (I would like to ask you if I could leave two hours early today) while 10 (37 %) of the female participants chose this alternative. Among the female participants, 13 (49%) chose the alternative coded as *query preparatory* (Could you give me two hours off today?) compared to 11 (29%) of the male participants. The answers in the DCT also showed some difference between male and female participants.

(7)

> You are writing a paper and need to interview the headmaster, whom you don't know. You know he/she is very busy, but still want to ask her/him to spare one or two hours for your interview. What would you say?

The main difference between the examples below is that the female participants seem to support their request by using what Blum-Kulka et al.(1989, 287) calls a disarmer: the speaker tries to avoid an objection from the hearer by stating what the hearer might use to object to the request (4J-K). The male participants generally use fairly indirect strategies, but only use the head act and no supportive moves (4H-I).

(4H)

Could I use an hour or two to ask you some questions? [head act: query preparatory (speaker dominant)]

(4I)

Could you spare a couple of hours for an interview? [head act: query preparatory]

(4J)

I'm sorry,[attention getter] I know you're busy,[supportive move: disarmer] but I need to ask you some questions for my paper.[head act: strong hint]

(4K)

Could you please take some time to help me with my interview? [head act: query preparatory] I understand you are busy, but it would be very nice. [supportive move: disarmer]

4.1.4 Power with the speaker and low imposition

Of the scenarios that were coded +D/P(A)/LI, I want to focus on the situation below:

> (8)
>
> You and one of your classmates are trying to study in his/her room and hear loud music coming from his/her older brother's room. You don't know the brother, but you decide to ask him to turn the music down. What would you say?

Because the speaker will make the request to someone who is older and who they do not know, one would expect the participants to choose some of the more indirect strategies even though the imposition probably is quite small. The results show that the participants did choose indirect strategies on this task. In fact, 48 (74%) chose to perform the request as a *query preparatory*, 16 (25%) chose the alternative that corresponds to *strong hints* and 1 (2%)

chose the obligation statement. None of the participants would have performed the request as a *hedge performative*. Some of the students commented on this scenario saying that even though they had chosen one of the four alternatives, they would have preferred not to make the request at all.

For comparison, none of the participants wrote that they would have opted out when asking a teacher they did not know for an extension on a paper. Because of the age difference, one might expect that asking the teacher to give you an extension would threaten the speaker's face to a greater extent than asking your friend's brother to turn down the music. Perhaps the closeness in age is what causes some of the participants to avoid making the request. This scenario will be discussed further in chapter 5.

4.2 Close relations and acquaintances

4.2.1 Power with the speaker and high imposition

The scenarios presented so far have been coded for distant relations (+D). In what follows, I will present those that were coded for close or familiar relations (-D). I will start with the scenarios that were also coded as P(S) and HI.

In the multiple-choice test, the participants generally preferred to use either *query preparatory* or *strong hints*. If they were to ask a fellow student to be in charge of the student revue, 32 (49%) participants would have used the *query preparatory* and 19 (29%) would have asked by using a *strong hint*. When imagining they were the teacher asking their student to present their project earlier than planned, 24 (37%) participants chose to make the request by using the *query preparatory* while 32 (49%) chose *strong hints*. The scenario that was coded similarly in the DCT was:

(9)

> Imagine that you are in charge of the school theatre's costume group. You and some other students have worked hard to finish all the costumes. This year, the school has rented a scene off campus and you need to move all the costumes from the school and to this local theatre. You know that one of the other students has a car and want to ask him/her if he/she can use that to move the costumes. How would you ask him/her?

This situation was coded P(S) as the speaker being the leader of the costume group probably has some authority among the other students. The hearer arguably has some power here as well because of the possibly high cost of the favor. With this situation the participants seem to be sensitive to this. In all three examples below, the head acts are realized by a *query*

preparatory. In addition to the head act, the speaker uses supportive moves to either minimize the imposition or make it harder for the hearer to object. In (4K) and (4M), the speaker gives reasons for making the request (grounder) and aims to reduce the potential cost it might be for the hearer to drive the costumes by offering to pay tor the gas (imposition minimizer).In (4L), the speaker tries to minimize the imposition: *only if it is ok you though*. I had some trouble coding *I have noticed how hard you work, you are really talented* in the same request as it did not fit any of the existing categories in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding manual. I finally decided that the function in this request is to minimize the chance of refusal from the hearer by tending to his or her positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987) and appealing to him or her being a reliable person and labeled it as a kind of *disarmer*.

(4L)

Do you mind lending me your car this afternoon? [head act: query preparatory] I need to move the costumes to the theatre.[grounder] It would be a tremendous help, and I would pay the gas money [imposition minimizer]

(4M)

Hey! [attention getter] I have noticed how hard you work, you are really talented[disarmer]. I was also wondering[preparator] if we could use your car to move the costumes?[query preparatory] Only if it is ok you though[imposition minimizer]

(4N)

Hey![attention getter] Since our school rented a scene for us to perform on,[grounder] do you mind helping out by transporting the costumes over there in your car?[head act: query preparatory]

4.2.2 Power with the speaker and low imposition

With this combination of the social factors, I want to focus on the scenario in the DCT:

(10)

You have a part time job as an assistant coach for a children's swimming team. You have worked there for some time and know the children well. Today, one child is not behaving well and splashes water on another child. What would you say to make him/her stop?

The majority of the participants answered that they consider making the request insufficient and would rather interfere physically by going into the pool and separate the child from the others. The ones that wrote a request chose to use a *directive.*

(4O)

Stop splashing water!

(4P)

Stop!

(4Q)

Don't do that.

4.2.3 Power with the addressee and high imposition

When piloting the questionnaire, I asked those who contributed what request strategy they used most frequently when performing a request in Norwegian. The answer I got from most was a strategy similar to an offer or an invitation: 'kunne du tenke deg X' [could you fancy X (literal translation)]. Therefore, I decided to include a similar alternative in one of the scenarios in the multiple-choice test. I decided to code the alternative as *suggestory formulae* even though it is not completely in line with Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) definition. The scenario I decided to include this answer in was:

> (11)
>
> It's 4:00 p.m. and you have to go because you have football practice. Your parents are not home from work yet. You have to leave your younger sister, Nora, alone because her babysitter is late. You decide to ask your grandmother, who lives nearby, to take care of your little sister in the meanwhile. What would you say?

The participants' answers show that 33 (51%) of them chose this alternative (*Would you like to come and babysit Nora until the sitter gets here?*). Disguising the request as an invitation might be said to be a strategy to soften the imposition on the hearer. There is of course a possibility that the participants did not see the alternative answer above as an indirect request, but as a genuine suggestion. Only testing this on one scenario gives little evidence for either explanation.

The answers to the scenario in the DCT (12) show that although none of the participants wrote a request similar to the one above, they use other strategies to soften the imposition. The participants use *grounders* to explain the reason for the request. In addition, they appeal to the hearer by referring to how much it would mean to them, both explicitly and by referring to the friend. Assuming that the relation to the host family is close, this is a kind of *disarmer*.

(12)

You're studying abroad this semester and a friend would like to come and visit you. Your host family has a guest room and you want to ask them if your friend can use it while he/she's visiting. How would you ask them?

(4R)

A friend of mine would like to come visit me,[grounder] and I want to ask [preparatory]if she can use the guest room during her stay.[head act: query preparatory]

(4S)

One of my friends really wants to visit me,[grounder] and it would mean the world to me if he could stay here.[head act: strong hint]

(4T)

Can my friend use the guest room this week?[head act: query preparatory]

4.2.4 Power with the addressee and low imposition

All scenarios that were coded -D/P(A)/LI show similar results: the participants chose to perform the request by the means of *query preparatory* (4U) or *strong hint* (4T). In the DCT the students included only the head act. The answers are in line with what one might expect with a scenario like this. The power is arguably with the speaker, but because of the social closeness and low imposition no supportive moves are needed.

(4U)

Do you happen to have any glue?

(4V)

Can I borrow some glue?

4.3 Metacognition about the social factors

In addition to answering how they would have made the request in the different scenarios, the participants were given the opportunity to write a comment about why they had chosen to make the request the way they did. Not all the participants made a comment, but those who did point out some central factors. Some examples below:

1.

Because I wanted to be polite, and thought about who I was asking.

2.

Because I think it is important to be polite to everyone, but especially people like teachers and headmasters.

3.

I wrote them that way because I thought about who I was asking and if I knew them well.

Even though the questionnaire does not systematically elicit the participants' metacognition, the comments above show that they list at least social distance and closeness as important factors as well as politeness. That being said, some students also wrote that they did not know why they had answer the way they did or that their answer 'felt natural' to them. Because only some of the participants answered the question I will not use the result to say anything about the metacognition of the group as a whole, but the examples above show that some of the students are aware of the social factors that might affect the request strategy. The ones who did not answer, or answered that they did not know, might be just as sensitive to the social factors. Therefore, the results from the scenarios will be a better indication of how distance, power and imposition affect their choice of request strategy.

4.4 Modal auxiliaries

The participants were asked to choose which form of the modal *will/would* or *can/could* they would prefer with a few selected scenarios. Generally, the students' answers were as one would expect: they seem to be sensitive to the different social factors. There are however some findings that I will comment on as I present the results. Here, only some of the results will be presented. The results discussed here are in bold in table 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1 shows how the participants answered when they could choose between *can* and *could*. The first results I will present are the responses to the two following scenarios:

(1)
You are the head of the student council. You have a meeting with the other members. You need to write some notes, but you realize that you don't have any paper. You turn to the person sitting next to you and you know her/him very well. What would you say?

(2)

You have a part time job at the local library. Today, a man is making a noise and disturbing other people, who are trying to read. You've never seen the man before. However, you decide to ask him to be quiet. What would you say?

Results modal auxiliaries (overall results)							
Raw numbers		***can/could***			**Percentage**		
scenario	*coding*	*can*	could	total	*can*	*could*	Total
'turn down the music'	[+D/+P(A)/LI]	21	44	65	32	68	100
'borrow some paper'	[-D/+P(S)/LI]	**32**	**33**	65	**49**	**51**	100
'be quite in the library'	[+D/+P(S)/LI]	**21**	**44**	65	**32**	**68**	100
'borrow the guest room'	[-D/+P(A)/HI]	28	37	65	43	57	100
'ask for a sandwich'	[-D/+P(A)/LI]	40	25	65	62	38	100
	$\chi 2 = 10,5$	$0.02<p<0.05$	significant				

Table 4.1: General results can/could.

In the scenario in (1), 32(49%) of the students would have used *can* while 33(51%) would have used *could*. With the situation presented in (2), 21(32%) would have performed the request with *can* and 44 (68%) with *could.* Both scenarios have been coded as P(S) and LI. The difference is that (1) was coded as –D while (2) was coded as +D. The results show that the participants seem more likely to use the remote modal when the hearer is a stranger. There might also be other factors than the social distance that make the participants want to soften the request in (2). For example, minimizing the threat to the hearer's face.

The scenario in (3) has been coded -D/+P(A)/HI and the one in (4) was coded -D/+P(A)/LI. Even though the power is with the addressee in both scenarios, one would expect slightly different results with these two situations because of the level of imposition. To ask a host family to lend you a guest room is potentially of much higher cost than asking your aunt for a sandwich. Therefore, one would expect a higher score for the remote modal in the answers to (4).

(5) is coded similarly to (2), the only difference is that (5) has been coded +P(A). One would expect more answers of *could* here, but the occurrences of *can* and *could* are the same with both (2) and (5).

Table 4.4 shows the comparisons done between the scenarios where one of the social factors are opposites. Above, I have commented on the scenarios in pairs also visible in table 4.4. From this table it is also possible to read that the results for *can* and *could* are statistically significant except for the comparison between (3) and (4).

(3)

You are in Florida to visit your aunt. It has been a long journey and when you arrive at your aunt's house, you are really hungry. You are supposed to have dinner in a couple of hours, but you want to ask your aunt if you can have a sandwich now. How would you ask her?

(4)

You're studying abroad this semester and a friend would like to come on a visit. Your host family has a guest room and you want to ask them if your friend can use it while he/she's visiting. How would you ask them?

(5)

You and one of your classmates are trying to study in his/her room and hear loud music coming from his/her brother's room. You don't know the brother, but you decide to ask him to turn the music down. What would you say?

The participants' answers (table 4.1) partly show the tendency I expected to see. In the scenario in (3), 40 (62%) preferred to use *can* and 25 (38%) would have used *could*. If the students were to ask their host family if their friend could use the guestroom (4), 28 (43%) of the participants chose *can* and 37(57%) chose *could*. As anticipated, the rate is higher for *can* in (3), but for (4), the results are not quite as expected. The number of participants who chose *can* is higher than anticipated.

Table 4.2 shows how the participants answered in the scenarios where they could choose between *will* and *would*. I will comment on the two scenarios are presented in (6) and (7).

Raw numbers		***will/would***			**Percentage**		
scenario	coding	*will*	*would*	total	*can*	*could*	total
'extended deadline'	[+D/+P(A)/HI]	7	58	65	11	89	100
'student revue'	[-D/+P(S)/HI]	**23**	**42**	65	**35**	**65**	100
'work overtime'	[+D/+P(S)/HI]	**17**	**48**	65	**26**	**74**	100
	$\chi 2$= 30,2	p>0,001	significant				

Table 4.2: General results *will*/*would*

(5)

You're the leader of the student revue. The premiere is in two weeks, but you have to go away for a couple of days. So, you decide to ask one of the other students, who also is a close friend, to be in charge while you're away. How would you ask your friend?

(6)

> Imagine that you are the owner of a big bookstore. It is the beginning of the semester, and you are very busy. Today you want to extend business hours by an hour. So, you decide to ask your clerk, whom you've just hired, and don't know that well yet, to stay after opening hours. What would you say?

When asking a fellow student to be in charge of the student revue (5), 23 (35%) of the participants would have used *will* while 42 (65%) preferred *would*. The results show that there is a slight difference between the male and the female participants here (table 4.3). The majority of both male and female students prefer the remote model. However, the answers from the male participants show an almost even spread between *will* and *would*: 17 (45%) of the male participants chose *will* with this scenario while 21(55%) chose *would*. The answers from the female participants show a clear tendency to choose the remote model in this case. 6 (22%) of the female participants would have used *will* and 21(78%) would have used *would*.

scenario	coding	will		would		total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
'student revue'	[-D/+P(S)/HI]	17	6	21	21	65
$\chi 2=3,5$	0,05<p<0,1 (not significant)					

Table 4.3: Gender differences with the 'student revue' scenario

Table 4.3 is an excerpt from the table in attachment 2 showing the participants' answers sorted by gender. The chi-squared test shows that the difference in the answers from the male and female participants compared was not significant. In facts none of the comparisons between the genders were. This might indicate that there is no real difference between the genders or that the test failed to elicit that difference. However, the p-value for the comparison in table 4.3 is close to significant. Something that might indicate that the results are close to disregarding the null-hypothesis: that the participants chose their answers randomly. Just the same, the results presented here are unable to prove that there is a gender difference when it comes to whether the remote or unmarked modal is preferred.

If the participants, imagining themselves as the manager, were to ask an employee to work overtime (6) the results show no significant difference between the genders. With this scenario, the general results show 17(26%) would use *will* and 48(74%) would have used *would*.

The scenario in (6) was coded -D/+P(S)/HI while the one in (7) was coded +D/+P(S)/HI. Because of the high imposition in both situations, one would expect that to result in a high number of *would*, and a lower number for *will*. The social closeness in (6)

would perhaps give responses a slightly higher rate of *will*. The general results presented above suggest that the participants are sensitive to this. However, the imposition is arguably higher in (6) compared to (7). In (7) the manager is asking the employee to give up a couple of hours, while in (6) the hearer is asked to take on extra responsibility for several days. This might explain why some of the participants would prefer the remote modal. Given that the comparison between (6) and (7), considering the results from male and female participants combined, proves to be significant (table 4.4) suggests that D affects the participants' choice between the unmarked and the remote modal.

Senario	**Coding**	***will***	***would***	**total**	**$\chi 2$**		
'work overtime'	[+D/+P(S)/HI]	17	48	65	27,4	p >0,001	significant
'extended deadline'	[+D/+P(A)/HI]	7	58	65			
'student revue'	[-D/+P(S)/HI]	23	42	65	10,2	0,001<p<0,005	significant
'work overtime'	[+D/+P(S)/HI]	17	48	65			
		Can	***Could***				
'borrow some paper'	[-D/+P(S)/LI]	32	33	65	4,01	0,02<p<0,05	significant
'be quiet in the library'	[+D/+P(S)/LI]	21	44	65			
'borrow the guest room'	[-D/+P(A)/HI]	28	37	65	2,35	0,1<p<0,2	not significant
'ask for a sandwich'	[-D/+P(A)/LI]	40	25	65			
'turn down the music'	[+D/+P(A)/LI]	21	44	65	8,13	0,001<p<0,005	significant
'be quiet in the library'	[+D/+P(S)/LI]	21	44	65			

Table 4.4: comparing the social factors

5 Discussion

In chapter 4, I presented the answers the participants gave to the different parts of the questionnaire. In this chapter, I will discuss these results and look at specific answers that were unexpected or interesting. This is also where I look back at my research questions and discuss whether I have answered them or not and if my findings can say something about the request realization of Norwegian learners of English. I will also revisit some of the previous studies from chapter 2 to see how my findings relate to them. I will start by looking at the first two research questions: which strategies the participants in my project use to perform requests, and how sensitive they seem to be to the social context of the scenarios.

5.1 Request strategies

The reason for treating the request strategies and the social context together is that the participants' choice might have been affected by the social context of the scenarios. Also, how the participants perform the requests is the only data I have to indicate whether they are sensitive to social factors or not. If the participants use the same strategy regardless of how I have coded the scenarios, it may indicate that they do not pay any attention to the social surroundings. If, however, they vary their strategies, it could indicate that they are sensitive to the social context. In this study, I have also coded the answers to the DCT for supportive moves. This also contributes to saying something about the participants' judgment of the different scenarios.

The results presented in the previous chapter show that the there is a slight difference between the answers to the multiple-choice test end the DCT. In both the tests *query preparatory* was the most frequent strategy. However, in the multiple-choice test, *hedged performatives* and *mild hints* were also quite frequent. In the DCT, there were a few instances of *performatives* and *strong hints*, but *query preparatories* make up the majority of the request strategies here. In chapter 4, 22 answers from the DCT were presented among them 14 were coded *query preparatory*.

As mentioned in the method section, the main reason why I included a DCT in addition to the multiple-choice test in the questionnaire was that there was a chance the participants preferred a strategy I had not included in the possible answers. The fact that *query preparatories* make out the majority of the participants' answer to the DCT might indicate

that this is the strategy they prefer.

One possible reason why *query preparatory* is the most frequent strategy in the DCT could be that it is a 'safe' choice. According to Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) overview of universal request strategies (presented here in 3.4), *query preparatory* is the most indirect way a speaker can perform a request where the illocutionary force is directly communicated.

The fact that the participants use a wider range of strategies in the multiple-choice test might be explained by the fact that they were given more options. This might mean that they did not know about other strategies when writing their own answers. It might also be that they varied their answers just for the sake of variation or that they thought they were expected to. There is also a chance this is due to the way I have coded their answers. The coding was done according to the manual presented by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), but also involved a great deal of my judgment. The answers would perhaps have been coded differently if the project had been conducted by someone else.

Perhaps the results show a difference between the requests the participants are able to produce and their knowledge about what they think is the most suitable choice. Assuming that this is what the results reflect here, only the DCT has successfully elicited which strategies the participants most commonly use when performing requests. These results might indicate a difference between the participants' explicit and implicit knowledge. When producing language spontaneously, the speaker often uses the linguistic knowledge that has been automatized (and available in implicit memory). However, it is not certain that the method used here provides evidence for this. The participants had time to think when answering the DCT. If one were to investigate whether implicit and explicit memory was the reason for the discrepancy in the results presented above, one would have to put some pressure on the participants when performing the DCT e.g. by ask them to complete the task within a certain timeframe.

The fact that the results show little variation in the head act might indicate that participants were not sensitive to the social factors in the scenarios. Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011) found that participants who had socialized to a lesser extent with native speakers tended to be less sensitive to the social context when making requests. However, even though the participants in the current study are instructed learners, that does not mean they should be categorized as learners who have not had influence from native speakers. First, the participants from Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011)'s study were beginners. Even though I have not collected information about the participants' proficiency level, it is arguably safe to

assume that they have a medium to high profiency level of English given their age and the fact that Norwegians start learning English in Elementary school. Second, it would be wrong to assume that the participants in this project have not had influence from native speakers. In fact, most of them have probably had a good deal of influence from native speakers. Even if the participants have not interacted with native speakers of English themselves, it is safe to assume that they have had influence from media e.g. from TV, newspapers or social media.

5.1.1 Supportive moves

Even though the participants use *query preparatories* in the majority of their answers to the DCT, I would argue that they are in fact sensitive to the social context. My main reason for claiming this is the fact that they include supportive moves in their requests.

Most of the time, they use *mitigating supporting moves* (elements surrounding the *head act* aiming to mitigate the request e.g. to soften the *imposition*). Only one *aggravating supportive move* (elements surrounding the *head act* aiming to increase the force of the request) was found. Most frequently the participants use *grounders*, but they also use *disarmers* and *imposition minimizers.* In some respects, my findings are in line with what Faerch and Kasper (1989) found in their investigation of supportive moves in requests performed by Danish L2 speakers of English. Like the participants in Faerch and Kaspers' (1989) study, the participants in my study most frequently use *grounders*. However, Faerch and Kaspers report that their participants also frequently preformed the request using only the *head act*. In this study, the participants also performed some requests with zero supportive moves, but I would not argue that they perform similarly to the participants in Faerch and Kaspers' (1989) study. The participants in this study included supportive moves more often than they omitted them.

When it comes to the amount of supportive moves the participants use, the participants show little tendency towards the phenomenon Faerch and Kasper (1989) call 'the more the better strategy'. However, (1) might be seen as an instance of this, but that is the only request where I would argue this is the case and it is therefore not representative for the participants' performance as a group.

(1) Hey! [attention getter] I have noticed how hard you work, you are really talented[disarmer]. I was also wondering [preparator] if we could use your car to move the costumes?[query preparatory] Only if it is ok you though[imposition minimizer]

The fact that the participants mostly use mitigating *supportive moves* arguably proves that the participants are attending to the hearers' face as this is likely to soften the threat to the FTA. I would argue that this indicates that they are in fact sensitive to social factors.

5.2 Some interesting or unexpected answers

There were some scenarios that elicited some interesting answers. I will now look at some of them more closely.

The 'army bed' scenario ((4), section 4.1.2) and the 'swimming pool' scenario ((10), section 4.2.2) were designed to elicit how the participants would perform the request in situations where they were expected to use one of the more direct strategies. In the 'army bed' scenario, the power balance is arguably far out on the scale of unbalanced power (the power being with the speaker). In the 'swimming pool' scenario (10), the need to communicate was bigger than the threat to the speaker or hearer's face: something that one would expect to cause the speaker to prioritize performing the speech act over attending to the hearer's or teit own face (Brown and Levinson 1987).

The answers to (10) show that the participants picked up on the urgency to perform the request, perhaps even more so than I had anticipated as many of the participants wrote that they would act physically instead of performing the request verbally. Also none of the participants included supportive moves in their answers.

The answers to (4) however, were surprisingly indirect. The majority would have performed this request using what Blum-Kulka et al.(1989) labels *mild hints* which is one of the most indirect strategies according to the coding used in this project. This might indicate that they did not understand the scenario in line with how I had coded it. It might also be the case that they recognized the scenario assigned great power to the speaker and took it that a sign of great power is that you don't have to demonstrate it. Alternatively, keeping their age in mind, they might have seen the recruit as their peer and seen themselves in the role of the speaker acting as a friend or a caring older sibling.

As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, Norwegians typically see themselves as more egalitarian compared to those from other West European countries (Fretheim 2005, 145). If this is true, or if the participants believe it to be true, they might think that they should be more indirect or include more politeness markers when speaking English compared to when they speak Norwegian. Such a different is illustrated in George Orwell's *Homage to*

Catalonia where he describes what living in a revolutionist community does to the language and how it changes when the society does:

> It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. (…)[w]aiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and even ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared. Nobody said '*Señor*' or '*Don*' or even '*Usted*'; everyone called everyone else'Comrade' and 'Thou', and said '*Salud!*' instead of '*Buenos dias*'. (Orwell 1964,6)

This might explain the surprisingly indirect answers to the 'army bed' scenario.

In the 'headmaster interview' scenario the answers might indicate that the participants did not take the social context into consideration (either consciously or subconsciously) when writing their answer. I commented when presenting the results that there was a gender difference between the answers. The female participants included more supportive moves than the male participants. This could mean that the male participants were less sensitive to the social context compared to the female participants.

The answers in (4H-K) might reflect the linguistic discussion about women tending to modify their language to a greater extent than men as discussed by Mark Liberman (2004):

> In her influential (1975) work *Language and Women's Place,* Robin Lakoff depicted a typical female speech style, allegedly characterized by the use of features such as hesitations, qualifiers, tag questions, empty adjectives, and other properties, which she asserted to have a common function: to weaken or mitigate the force of an utterance.

There also has been some general political interest in the topic gender and speech styles. For example: Marcus (2011) argues that women undermine their credibility in the work place by using minimizing language and how even female politicians tend to talk themselves down by using words such as *just*.

However, I cannot say whether this is a tendency among Norwegian learners of English in general. It is important to remember that the questionnaires were randomly distributed among four different groups. Only one of the four groups gave an answer to this scenario. Therefore, these results might not say anything about the group as a whole. However, it seems to indicate that there is a difference between the male and the female participants in that particular subgroup of the participants.

A scenario where I would argue that the participants showed awareness of the social context is 'the ringing phone' scenario (presented in (5), section 4.1.2). Here the participants were asked how they would have asked a stranger in the audience to turn off a phone that was ringing. Here, the majority of the participants chose to perform the request with the impersonal request perspective. It is possible to argue that the speaker did not know whose phone was ringing and simply performed the request this way for practical reasons. That

might very well be the case, but the speaker might also be attending to the speaker's own positive face. If the speaker addresses the phone-owner directly, he risks being identified as the one interrupting the rest of the audience and might be thought less of by the other listeners. It is also possible to argue that the speaker is attending to the hearer's negative face. To be the addressee of a request is considered a possible threat to negative face by Brown and Levinson (1987). And being the addressee of a request with an audience present is arguably even more of a threat to the hearer's face.

The answers to the scenario shown in (8), section 4.1.4 were quite interesting mainly because the answers reflect the age of the participants. The participants were asked how they would have asked a friend's older brother to turn down the music. Evidently, the participants felt obligated to choose an answer to this scenario as all participants gave an answer. However, as mentioned in chapter 4, several participants commented that they would have preferred to not make the request. These participants wrote that they thought it would be too embarrassing to perform the request. In chapter 2, I argued that the speaker is not only aware of the hearer's face, but also his or her own face. I also want to argue that the participants who wrote this kind of comment about this scenario showed that they are sensitive to the social factors surrounding the speech act. In terms of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, we can say that in such cases the speaker does not consider the need to communicate as greater than the threat to (mainly) his or her own face (and perhaps also the hearers' face). The speaker is attending to (or saving) his or her own positive face. It is also possible to argue that participants have been considering the hearer's negative face. If they had performed the request, they would have limited the older brothers' freedom to play loud music if he wanted to. Because the participants in my project are teenagers they are arguably more sensitive to how an FTA might threaten their own face than an adult speaker would be. There might have been other scenarios where the participants would have preferred to not make the request, but did not comment on it as they did in the scenario in (8). If I were to conduct a similar experiment later, it would have been interesting to include an option where the participants could choose to say nothing.

5.3 Modal auxiliaries

The research question related to the modal auxiliaries was: if they are sensitive to the social context, how does this seem to affect their choice of modals when making requests? In order to investigate this, I compared scenarios where one of the social variables changes to see if

the participants' answer changes. I treated *can* and *could* separately when presenting the results and will start by discussing them separately here too.

The scenarios I compared with *can*/*could* (table 4.4) allowed me to see how *power* and *social distance* affect their answer. I will start with social power.

Comparing 'turn down the music' (+D/+P(A)/LI) and 'be quiet in the library' (+D/+P(S)/LI) the answers are identical even though the power shifts from A to S. It seems social distance or closeness does not affect the participants' answers. This might indicate that the social power does not affect the form of the modal auxiliary the participants use. These results could also be due to how I have coded the answers or it may be that there are some elements in the scenarios that affect their choices. The results show a preference for *could* in both cases - something that makes sense with 'turn down the music'. In 'be quiet in the library' the participants might find it necessary to be more polite as they might think an employee in the library ought to be service minded towards their visitors. It might also be that they are attending to the hearer's positive face, for example wanting the addressee to feel welcome.

Using the scenarios 'turn down the music' (+D/P(A)/LI) and 'asking for a sandwich' (-D/P(A)/LI) to compare +D and -D, it is evident that the number of answers for *could* declines when the coding goes from +D to –D. It is often claimed (e.g. Huddleston and Pullum 2002), that one of the uses of the remote modal is to mark an increased social distance between the speaker and the hearer. It seems from the results that the participants are sensitive to this.

With *will/would* much the same tendency is statistically visible. The comparisons I was able to make here show how sensitive the participants might be to *power* and s*ocial distance.* Comparing 'work overtime' (+D/+P(S)/HI) and 'extended deadline' (+D/+P(A)/HI), the instances of *will* are reduced when power shifts from S to A. Comparing 'student revue' (+D/+P(S)/HI) to 'work overtime' (+D/+P(S)/HI), the instances of *will* drop when the –D becomes +D. I would argue that the participants are sensitive to the social context and use *would* when the social distance increases or the power is with the addressee.

The results to one of the scenarios with *will*/*would* showed some difference between the answers from the male and female participants. The result indicated that the female participants were more likely to choose the remote modal. However, the chi-squared test shows that these result are not statistically significant. Therefore, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about gender differences from the data collected for this project.

Looking at the results from *can/could* and *will/would* together, the difference is arguably bigger between the unmarked and the remote modal with *will* and *would*. The participants prefer the remote modal over the unmarked one in all instances where this modal was tested. A possible explanation for this pattern could be transfer from the Norwegian use of modals. *Kan* (*can*) and *kunne* (*could*) is arguably equally common when performing requests in Norwegian while there is a clearer distinction between *vil*/*ville* (*will/would*). *Vil* is more frequently used as a finite verb while *ville* is more frequent when functioning as the modal auxiliary. For further studies, it would have been useful to collect answers form the participants in Norwegian to test if this is a valid point or not. It is also worth mentioning that the investigation of modal auxiliaries in requests done in this project is fairly limited. It would have been interesting to conduct a larger study about the distribution of modal auxiliaries in L2 request performance. In a larger study, one could also have looked into other modal expression.

Over all, the results from the scenarios testing the remote/unmarked modals show that the participants tend to use the remote modal when the social distance is great or the power is with the addressee. There are however no reliable results for how *imposition* affects the form of the modal. Returning to the research question, it seems that the participants are sensitive to the social context and the data indicate that this affects their use of the modal auxiliaries tested here.

6 Concluding remarks

The purpose of this project has been to investigate request realizations of L2 speakers of English. The main focus has been to elicit which strategy/strategies the participants use most frequently when performing requests. A second focus has been to investigate whether the participants are sensitive to the social context and adjust their request strategy accordingly. In addition to this I have also looked into the participants' use of the modal auxiliaries *can* and *will* in requests. More specifically I have investigated whether they prefer the unmarked modal or the remote modal and how social context affects their choice.

My first research question asked which strategies the participants most commonly use when performing requests. Above, I discussed whether the questionnaire had successfully elicited this. I will conclude that the DCT gives information about which strategies the participants use when performing requests while the multiple choice questionnaire gives information about the participants' judgment of which strategy is most suitable. It seems the participants prefer to perform the request using *query preparatories*.

I also discussed above whether the participants are sensitive to the social context of the scenarios. This discussion relates to my second research question. I argued above that there are several aspects in the answers indicating that the participants frequently attend to the hearer's face or to saving their own. They also frequently use supportive moves to modify the head act in their requests. I therefore conclude that the participants can be said to be sensitive to the social context.

I also asked in the introduction whether the participants were sensitive to social factors in their choice of unmarked or remote modals. The results showed that the participants were more likely to choose the remote modal when the scenarios were coded with +D. The test used here was not able to show whether the this was the case with P(A) or HI. If more scenarios had been included in the multiple-choice test for modals, it would have been possible to have more situations that were coded similarly. This way I could have crosschecked the results. However, that is arguably one of the trade-offs with covering a several topics in one questionnaire.

6.1 Limitations and further studies.

The method I have used in this project has allowed me to elicit, from a fairly big group of participants, information about a relatively broad spectrum of elements involved in request realization. A consequence of covering several topics in one paper is that there was not enough space to go into depth in each of the different topics covered here. More research is needed to investigate all of my research questions further. In particular, it would have been interesting to investigate the social factors further. In the questionnaire, I gave the participants the opportunity to give reasons for their choices. Answering this question was optional, but some of the answers given here were potentially interesting. It would be useful to elicit further information about metacognition in relation to pragmatic performance from L2 speakers of English, and to do so more systematically.

As mentioned in the discussion, the use of modals needs more research, or at least a study of its own where one could go into depth. Finally, I suggested above that the slightly different answers to the DCT and the multiple-choice test might indicate that there is a difference between the participants' knowledge and their performance. A study investigating this would be very interesting.

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Attachments

Attachment 1: The original Questionnaire (with social variables)

Discourse Completion Test

Your answer is anonymous; so don't put your name on the questionnaire.

Age:

Gender: ☐Male ☐Female

Mother tongue:

Have you lived in an English speaking country?

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, what country did you live in?

How long did you live there? (Please be as specific as you can)

Have you lived in a non-English-speaking country where you had to use English to communicate?

☐Yes ☐No

If yes, what country did you live in?

How long did you live there? (Please be as specific as you can)

Are you in the IB program?

☐Yes ☐No

Part I

While you're answering the following questions, imagine that you, and everyone around you only, speak English. Read the following scenario and picture yourself in that situation. Write down what you would have said. There is no right or wrong answer.

1.[+D/+P(A)/HI]

You are writing a paper and need to interview the headmaster, whom you don't know. You know he/she is very busy, but still want to ask her/him to spare one or two hours for your interview. What would you say?

2. [+D/+P(A)/LI]

It's the first day of school. Your new English teacher wants you to fill out a form where you answer a few questions about what you expect from this class. You can't find your pen and want to ask if you can borrow one from your teacher. How would you ask your teacher?

3.[+D/+P(S)/HI]

Imagine that you are the leader of a big firm. You are short in manpower at the moment. Therefore, you want to ask one of your employees to work overtime in order to catch up with the workload. How would you ask him/her?

4.[-D/+P(A)/HI]

You're studying abroad this semester and a friend would like to come and visit you. Your host family has a guest room and you want to ask them if your friend can use it while he/she's visiting. How would you ask them?

5.[-D/+P(S)/LI]

You have a part time job as an assistant coach for a children's swimming team. You have worked there for some time and know the children well. Today, one child is not behaving well and splashes water on another child. What would you say to make him/her stop?

6. [-D/+P(A)/LI]

Your class is working on a group project where the result is going to be a wall poster. You are almost done, but you need some glue to in order to finish. You want to ask your teacher, whom you know quite well, if he/she can provide you with some glue. How would you ask him/her?

7. [+D/+P(S)/LI]

You are the head of the school football team. It's the beginning of the semester. You are giving a presentation to the new students about the club and encourage them to sign up. While you are giving your talk, the mobile phone of one of the first year students rings. You want to ask her/him to turn off the mobile phone. What would you say?

8. [-D/+P(S)/HI]

Imagine that you are in charge of the school theatre's costume group. You and some other students have worked hard to finish all the costumes. This year, the school has rented a scene off campus and you need to move all the costumes from the school and to this local theatre. You know that one of the other students has a car and want to ask him/her if he/she can use that to move the costumes. How would you ask him/her?

Why did you choose to write the requests the way you did in the eight scenarios above?

Part II

While you're answering the following questions, imagine that you, and everyone around you only, speak English.

Read the scenarios presented below and mark the one answer you find best.

Mark only <u>one</u> answer for each scenario.

1.[+D/+P(S)/HI]

Imagine that you are the headmaster. You're done for the day and you need a ride home. The teacher you usually car pool with, is absent. As you come out of your office, you see an assistant teacher, who you know live close to you. You decide to ask him/her to give you a lift. What would you say?

☐ I want to ask you if you could give me a ride home today.

☐ I really wish you could give me a lift. My usual ride is home with the flue.

☐ Can you give me a ride home today?

☐ My usual ride is sick today. You have a car right?

2.[+D/+P(S)/HI]

You have just started in a new job as the manager in a bookstore. There's a lot to do and you don't have the time to finish the weekly report because you have to go to a meeting. You decide to ask one of the more experienced employees to finish the report for you. How would you ask him/her?

☐ I have to go to a meeting. Do you think you could finish the report?

☐ I have to run to a meeting, you'll have to finish the report for me.

☐ Would you finish the report for me, please? I don't have the time.

☐ The report has to be in by the end of today and I don't have the time.

3. [+D/+P(A)/HI]

Your aunt will be visiting from out of town and you want to meet her at the train station. However, her train arrives at 3:00 PM, but you have to work until 5:00 p.m. How do you ask your boss to let you out of work early?

☐ I would like to ask you if I could leave two hours early today.

☐ You have to let me go two hours early today.

☐ Could you give me two hours off today?

☐ If I could get off work two hours earlier today it would be great.

4[+D/+P(A)/HI]

You are at you school when you discover that there's something wrong with your computer. You have to finish your paper, which is due tomorrow. One of the teachers is very skillful in fixing computers. You don't know him/her. However, you want to ask him/her to fix your computer. What would you say?

☐ I want to ask you something. Could have a look at my computer?

☐ It seems there's something wrong with my computer.

☐ Do you think you're able to fix my computer?

☐ You have to take a look at my computer!

5.[-D/+P(S)/HI]

You're the leader of the student revue. The premiere is in two weeks, but you have to go away for a couple of days. So, you decide to ask one of the other students, who also is a close friend, to be in charge while you're away. How would you ask your friend?

☐ I want to ask you if you can take over for me while I'm away.

☐ You need to be in charge the two weeks I'm away.

☐ Could you be in charge while I'm away?

☐ How would you like to be in charge while I'm away?

6.[-D/+P(S)/HI]

Imagine that you are the English teacher. Your class is working on a group project about American history. You have taught this class for nearly three years and know all the students well. Because of some changes is the school schedule, you want to ask one of the groups to present their project one week earlier than planned. How would you ask them?

☐ I want to ask you if you could present a week earlier than planned?
☐ Are you able to present your project one week earlier than planned?
☐ Your group will have to present a week earlier than planned.
☐ Do you think you could be ready to present a week earlier than planned?

7. [+D/+P(A)/LI]

You and one of your classmates are trying to study in his/her room and hear loud music coming from his/her older brother's room. You don't know the brother, but you decide to ask him to turn the music down. What would you say?

☐I would like to ask you to turn down the music

☐You need to turn down the music

☐Could you turn down the music, please?

☐It's really hard to concentrate when the music is so loud.

8. [+D/+P(A)/LI]

You have a paper due in one of your classes next week. However, you will be very busy this week and don't have any time to write it. Even though you don't know the teacher, you go to his/her office to ask for more time to write the paper. How do you ask for an extension?

☐ I would like to ask to give me an extension on my paper.

☐ You need to give me an extension on my paper.

☐ Are you able to give me an extension on my paper?

☐ I don't think I will be able to finish my paper in time for the deadline.

9. [-D/+P(A)/HI]

You have been invited to go to a concert with some of your friends, but you don't have the money for your ticket. You decide to ask your mom for the money. What would you ask her to persuade her to give you the money?

☐Do you think you could give me some money for a concert ticket?

☐I really want to go to this concert, you have to give me the money.

☐Can you give me some me some money for the concert ticket?

☐All my friends are going to the concert, but I don't have the money.

10.[-D/+P(A)/HI]
It's 4:00 p.m. and you have to go because you have football practice. Your parents are not home from work yet. You have to leave your younger sister, Nora, alone because her babysitter is late. You decide to ask your grandmother, who lives nearby, to take care of your little sister in the meanwhile. What would you say?

☐ I want to ask you to come and watch Nora until the babysitter gets here.

☐ You have to come and watch Nora for a while.

☐ Would you like to come and babysit Nora until the sitter gets here?

☐ Nora's babysitter is late and I have leave for football practice.

11. [+D/+P(S)/LI]

After you're done with your national military service, you decide you want a military career, and stay on. You have now been promoted to Second Lieutenant. As you inspect the rooms of the newly arrived cadets, you see that one of them has not made his bed properly. How would you ask him to make his bed again?

☐Make your bed again

☐You have to make your bed again

☐How about making that bed properly?

☐The beds need to be made properly before inspection.

12. [+D/+P(S)/LI]

You have a part time job at the local library. Today, a man is making a noise and disturbing other people, who are trying to read. You've never seen the man before. However, you decide to ask him to be quiet. What would you say?

☐Excuse me, I have to ask you to be quiet, please.

☐You have to be quiet inside the library.

☐Can you possibly be quiet, please?

☐Sir, you are disturbing the other people in the library.

13.[-D/+P(S)/LI]

You are the head of the student council. You have a meeting with the other members. You

need to write some notes, but you realize that you don't have any paper. You turn to the person sitting next to you and you know her/him very well. What would you say?

☐ Give me a sheet from your notepad.
☐ I need you to give me a sheet of paper.
☐ Would you give a piece of paper, please?
☐ Do you have any paper to spare?

14. [-D/+P(S)/LI]

You're studying at home. Your younger brother opens the window and the cold wind blows right into your face and bothers you. You want to ask him to close it. What would you say?

☐Close the window

☐You have to close the window.

☐Can you close the window, please?

☐ It's getting cold in here

15. [-D/+P(A)/LI]

It's your father's 50th birthday. You have written a speech and put together a slide show to celebrate your father. As you are about to start, you realize that you forgot to turn off the lights. You see that your uncle is sitting next to the light switch and want to ask him to turn the lights off. How would you ask him?

☐ Turn off the lights, please.

☐ Can you turn off the lights?

☐ Do you think you could turn off the lights?

☐ Oh, I forgot to turn off the lights.

16.[-D/+P(A)/LI]

You are in Florida to visit your aunt. It has been a long journey and when you arrive at your aunt's house, you are really hungry. You are supposed to have dinner in a couple of hours, but you want to ask your aunt if you can have a sandwich now. How would you ask her?

☐ Do you think I can have a sandwich before dinner?

☐ I really wish I could have a sandwich before dinner.

☐ Would it be ok if I had a sandwich before dinner?

☐ It's been a long journey. I'm starving.

What did you take into consideration when choosing the answers to the scenarios above?

Part III

While you're answering the following questions, imagine that you, and everyone around you only, speak English.

Read the scenarios presented below and mark the one answer you find best.

Most of the scenarios you may recognize from part II. Please choose an answer for all the scenarios, even if you already gave an answer in the previous part.

Mark only <u>one</u> answer for each scenario.

1. [+D/+P(A)/LI]

You and one of your classmates are trying to study in his/her room and hear loud music coming from his/her brother's room. You don't know the brother, but you decide to ask him to turn the music down. What would you say?

☐Could you turn down the music, please?

☐Can you turn down the music, please?

2. [+D/+P(A)/HI]

Your English midterm test is in a few weeks, and you find that the date of the test is the same as that of your brother's wedding. You decide to ask the teacher whom you don't know personally to rearrange another day especially for you to take this test. What would you say?

☐Will it be possible for you to set up a later date for me to take the midterm test?

☐Would it be possible for you to set up a later date for me to take the midterm test?

3.[-D/+P(S)/LI]

You are the head of the student council. You have a meeting with the other members. You need to write some notes, but you realize that you don't have any paper. You turn to the person sitting next to you and you know her/him very well. What would you say?

☐Could you give me a piece of paper, please?
☐Can you give me a piece of paper, please?

4. [+D/+P(S)/LI]
You have a part time job at the local library. Today, a man is making a noise and disturbing other people, who are trying to read. You've never seen the man before. However, you decide to ask him to be quiet. What would you say?

☐Can you quiet down please?

☐Could you quiet down please?

5. [-D/+P(A)/HI]

You're studying abroad this semester and a friend would like to come on a visit. Your host family has a guest room and you want to ask them if your friend can use it while he/she's visiting. How would you ask them?

☐ Could my friend use the guest room while visiting?

☐ Can my friend use the guest room while visiting?

6. [-D/+P(A)/LI]

You are in Florida to visit your aunt. It has been a long journey and when you arrive at your aunt's house, you are really hungry. You are supposed to have dinner in a couple of hours, but you want to ask your aunt if you can have a sandwich now. How would you ask her?

☐ Could I have a sandwich please?

☐ Can I have a sandwich please?

7. [-D/+P(S)/HI]

You're the leader of the student revue. The premiere is in two weeks. You have to go away for a couple of days so you decide to ask one of the other students, who also is a close friend, to be in charge while you're away. How would you ask your friend?

☐ Will it be possible for you to be in charge while I'm gone?

☐ Would it be possible for you to be in charge while I'm away?

8. [+D/+P(S)/HI]

Imagine that you are the owner of a big bookstore. It is the beginning of the semester, and you are very busy. Today you want to extend business hours by an hour. So, you decide to ask your clerk, whom you've just hired, and don't know that well yet, to stay after opening hours. What would you say?

☐ Will it be possible for you to stay a bit longer today?

☐ Would it be possible for you to work some overtime today?

What did you take into consideration when choosing the answers to the scenarios above?

If you have any other comments on anything in the questionnaire, please write them here.

Attachment 2: Results modal auxiliaries sorted by gender

Raw numbers			***can/could***						
scenario	coding	can		could		total			
		Male	Female	Male	Female		$\chi 2$=	p	
'turn down the music'	[+D/+P(A)/LI]	11	10	27	17	65	0,47	p>0,3	not significant
'borrow some paper'	[-D/+P(S)/LI]	19	13	19	14	65	0,02	p>0,3	not significant
'be quiet in the library'	[+D/+P(S)/LI]	13	8	25	19	65	0,15	p>0,3	not significant
'borrow the guest room'	[-D/+P(A)/HI]	14	14	24	13	65	1,45	0,2<p<0,3	not significant
'ask for a sandwich'	[-D/+P(A)/LI]	20	20	18	7	65	3,07	0,05<p<0,1	not significant
Percentage									
'turn down the music'	[+D/+P(A)/LI]	29	37	71	63	200			
'borrow some paper'	.[-D/+P(S)/LI]	50	48	50	52	200			
'be quiet in the library'	[+D/+P(S)/LI]	34	30	66	70	200			
'borrow the guest room'	[-D/+P(A)/HI]	37	52	63	48	200			
'ask for a sandwich'	[-D/+P(A)/LI]	53	74	47	26	200			
Raw numbers			***will/would***						
scenario	coding	will		would		total			
		Male	Female	Male	Female				
'extended deadline'	[+D/+P(A)/HI]	6	1	32	26	65	2,40	0,1<p<0,2	not significant
'student revue'	[-D/+P(S)/HI]	17	6	21	21	65	3,50	0,05<p<0,1	not significant
'work overtime'	[+D/+P(S)/HI]	11	6	27	21	65	0,37	>0,3	not significant
Percentage									
'extended deadline'	[+D/+P(A)/HI]	16	4	84	96	200			
'student revue'	[-D/+P(S)/HI]	45	22	55	78	200			
'work overtime'	[+D/+P(S)/HI]	29	22	71	78	200			